

**The Greatest Letter Ever
Accepted By God
Romans 4:1-16**

Introduction: Thinking It's Better To Make Butter

For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law. (Romans 3:28)

What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, discovered in this matter? (Romans 4:1)

Two Important Words

- Justified: To be completely accepted by God
- Credited: Calculated and applied to our account

How Can I Be Accepted By God?

1st Misunderstanding: We don't become acceptable to God by doing good works (vv. 1-8)

- It eliminates bragging (vv. 2-3)

If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. What does Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." (Romans 4:2-3)

See Genesis 15:1-6

- It's a gift and not wages (vv. 4-5)

Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation. However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness. (Romans 4:4-5)

- It's the same for David (vv. 6-8)

David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the one to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: "Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord will never count against them." (Romans 4:6-8)

Summary: Using the examples of Abraham and David, Paul says, "You don't become acceptable to God by doing good works. You believe God by faith."

2nd Misunderstanding: We don't become acceptable to God by religious rituals (vv. 9-12)

- The Place of Religious Rituals

Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We have been saying that Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness. Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before! (Romans 4:9-10)

- The Purpose of Circumcision (vv. 11-12)

3rd Misunderstanding: We don't become acceptable to God by keeping the law (vv. 13-16)

- Why would Paul use Abraham as an example?

It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. (Romans 4:13)

- What then is the purpose of the law?

For if those who depend on the law are heirs, faith means nothing and the promise is worthless, because the law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression. (Romans 4:14-15)

4th Misunderstanding: We think something more is needed to be acceptable to God

- James and Paul (James 2:21-24)

Why Did God Base Our Acceptance As Only By Faith?

Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. (Romans 4:16)

Note: The promise of God's grace is guaranteed

Conclusion: God's Don't-Do-it-Yourself Kit