

The Answer

Words matter, whether you're writing a romantic note or reviewing your auto insurance policy. Jesus affirmed the authority and integrity of Scripture down to *"the smallest letter"* and *"the least stroke of the pen"* (Matthew 5:18). Revelation 22:18-19 solemnly warns us not to add to or take away from Scripture.

Words matter. The word for "sexual immorality" (Greek *'porneia'*), for example, clearly establishes that sexual activity is reserved for marriage alone (Hebrews 13:4). Jesus is described as *"the Word"* (John 1:1) for he is the ultimate revelation of God's character. The entire Bible, containing over 700,000 words, exhaustively reveals God's will for his creation.

Five Key Words That Reveal How to Get Right With God:

- 1. Getting Right With God Is Acquired by _____ (Faith).**
 - a. *"But now, a righteousness from God, apart from the law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe."* Romans 3:21-22. Getting right with God comes not by works, but by faith (Greek *'pistis'*).
 - b. You must trust in Christ with your mind (through understanding the Gospel), your will (by agreeing that the Gospel is true), and your emotions (by embracing and experiencing God). Faith in Jesus is analogous to having faith in your spouse when you marry – an 'all in' commitment!

- 2. Getting Right With God Is Established By _____ (Justification).**
 - a. *"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace."* Romans 3:23-24. When we are justified (Greek *'dikaios'*), we are "declared righteous". Being justified by Jesus is analogous to being convicted of a crime in a courtroom, and then having someone else offer to serve your sentence.

- 3. Getting Right With God Is Given By _____ (Grace).**
 - a. *"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace."* Romans 3:23-24. Grace (Greek *'charis'*) is "unmerited favor". Receiving grace from God is analogous to receiving a large inheritance from a rich relative. You receive this not because of anything you do or who you are. It is given only because of who you are related to.
 - b. *"But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant."* Hebrews 12:22-24.

- 4. Getting Right With God Is Accomplished By _____ (Redemption).**
- a. *“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.” Romans 3:23-24. Redemption (Greek ‘*apolutrosis*’) refers to paying a ransom to free a prisoner from his captors. Jesus did this. *“The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give life as a ransom for many.” Mark 10:45.**
 - b. Just as ransoms have been paid to free heiress Patti Hearst or businessman Walter Kwok in modern times, so did Jesus pay a ransom – not to Satan, but to his Father for our release from sin and death (Hebrews 9:14).
- 5. Getting Right With God Is Paid By _____ (Sacrifice).**
- a. *“God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished.” Romans 3:25.* This sacrifice of atonement (Greek ‘*hilasterion*’) was offered once a year by the Jewish people (Leviticus 16) when two goats were offered to God.
 - b. One goat was killed, with its blood sprinkled on the Mercy Seat (the covering of the Ark of the Covenant), therefore appeasing the wrath of God against sin (propitiation). The high priest would place his hands on the other goat, confessing the sins of the people and then sending this goat into the wilderness, removing their sins (expiation).

Every person can be made right with God – by faith, justification, grace, redemption, and sacrifice. On April 3, 33 AD, at 3 pm, at the exact time when 250,000 Passover lambs were being sacrificed, Jesus cried out from a cross, “It is finished”. *“He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.” (Hebrews 9:12).* Are you trusting in Him?

Discussion Questions

The Answer

1. Have you ever studied a note from a friend trying to discern exactly what they meant? Have you ever studied an insurance policy trying to discern what is covered and what isn't? What did Jesus say about the importance of words (Matthew 5:18)? What does Revelation 22:18-19 teach? How can we be sure that Hebrews 13:4 forbids any sexual activity outside of marriage? Why do you think Jesus is called "the Word" in John 1? Why do you think God gave us over 700,000 words in the Bible?
2. Read Romans 3:21-26. What does this passage teach about faith? How can we be confident that faith includes trusting in Christ with your mind, your will, and your emotions? How is faith in Christ similar to the faith we place in our spouse when we marry? What is taught in this passage about justification? How does the analogy of the courtroom help you to understand what it means to be justified? Why is it important to understand that we are not only declared "not guilty", but "innocent"?
3. What is taught in this passage about grace? How does the analogy of receiving a large inheritance help us to visualize what grace is all about? What is taught in Hebrews 12:22-24? What is taught in Romans 3:21-26 about redemption? What did Jesus say about this in Mark 10:45? Have you ever watched a TV show or movie about paying a ransom to release a prisoner? What did you learn? Have you heard of Patti Hearst or Walter Kwok? Why is it important to understand that the ransom Jesus paid to release us from our sins was not paid to Satan but to God? What is taught in Hebrews 9:14?
4. What is taught in this passage about sacrifice? How do the sacrifices that the Jewish people make (as taught in Leviticus 16) help us to understand the sacrifice that Jesus made for us? Why is it important that we understand what happened to each goat that was sacrificed on the Day of Atonement? How does this demonstrate what Jesus has done for us? Why is it important that we see the role that faith, justification, grace, redemption, and sacrifice each play in the plan of salvation? How did Jesus become the ultimate sacrifice as taught in Hebrews 9:12? Are you trusting in Jesus?