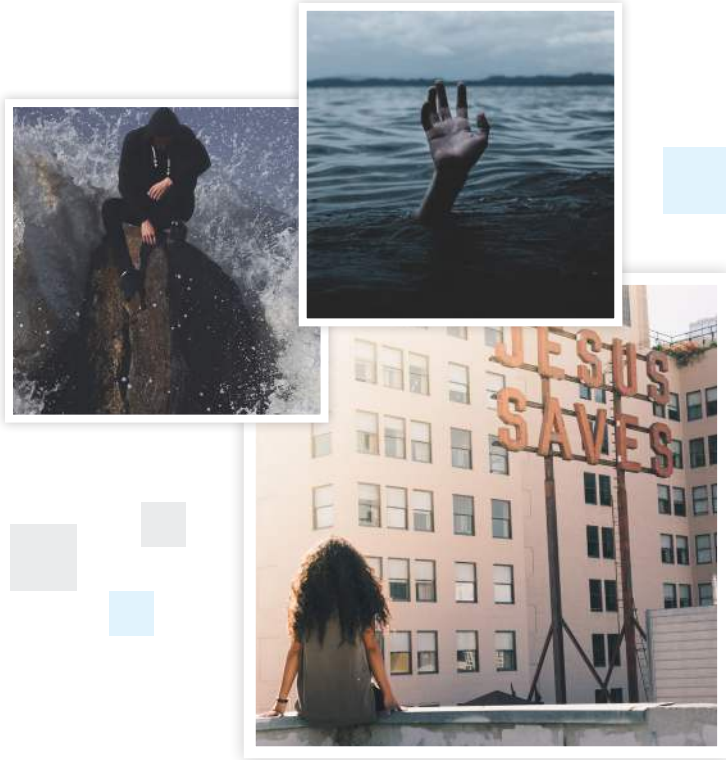


# P Protestant University



STUDY GUIDE | LESSON 3

# SOLA FIDE



In the gospels we read about a boy being tormented by a demon, often being thrown into fire and water in order to kill him. Can you imagine how desperate his parents were to free their precious son? They would have done anything, yet they were powerless. Now they find hope for the first time. They hear of a man who has performed many miracles, healed all kinds of diseases, and even cast out demons. Maybe He can free their son.

In desperation, the father pleads with Jesus to deliver his son. He presents his case to the great Healer, and Jesus says to him, "All things are possible to him who believes." The father believes but, realizing he also has some doubt, cries out, "Lord, I believe, help my unbelief." Jesus intervenes and the demon is cast out. The son is saved!

As this father's faith was needed for the healing of his son, so our faith is needed for salvation from sin. This lesson will focus on *sola fide* (faith alone).

### **What is faith?**

What is faith and what role does it play in our salvation? How do we get it? Who or what must we have faith in? Can we rely on ourselves? It is vital to know the answer to these questions, so let's get started.

Here is one definition of faith: "an act of the intellect, prompted by the will, by which we believe what has been revealed on the grounds of the authority of God, who revealed it."

### **Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?**

---

---

The above statement is taken from the *Old Baltimore Catechism*. The statement sounds good at first, but it has a major flaw: It claims faith itself is initiated by *us*, through our will and intellect.

### **Read Romans 12:3. Where does faith come from?**

---

---

God has given faith to each of us. Just as God gave you fingers and toes, a mouth and a nose, He has given you a measure of faith. The verse we just read is telling us that faith is not something we manufacture or initiate. It is given to us by God.

### **Read Hebrews 11:1. How does the Bible define faith?**

---

---

---

According to this verse, faith is believing that what you hope for and haven't seen yet is as real as what you can touch and see today. This kind of faith believes what God says regardless of reason and feeling.

The Medieval Church promoted the idea that people's works contribute to their salvation. The Protestant Reformation presented a different view—that eternal salvation is received by faith in what Christ did for us on the cross, apart from our works. One group taught people to put faith in Christ plus their works while the other taught people to put their faith in Christ alone.

### **What have you placed your faith for salvation in?**

---

---

Let's look at what Adventist church co-founder Ellen White said on this subject. "Let the subject be made distinct and plain that it is not possible to affect anything in our standing before God or in the gift of God to us through creature merit. Should faith and works purchase the gift of salvation for anyone, then the Creator is under obligation to the creature. The light given me of God places this important subject above any question in my mind. Justification is wholly of grace and not procured by any works that fallen man can do...There has been too little education in clear lines upon this point" (*Faith and Works*, p. 19-23).

### What stands out to you in this quotation?

---

---

---

---

Did you catch her emphasis on the importance of justification by grace through faith?

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has proclaimed the three angels' messages in Revelation 14 as imperative for our day. Is there a connection between that and the justification by faith? Let's look at what Ellen White has to say on the subject. "Several have written to me, inquiring if the message of justification by faith is the third angel's message, and I have answered, 'It is the third angel's message in verity.'" (*Review and Herald*, April 1, 1890). Is it possible, then, to proclaim the three angel's messages without teaching justification by faith? The answer is "no."

**Read Revelation 12:17 and 14:12. What does the Bible say about God's people at the end of this world's history?**

---

---

---

---

God's people are clearly commandment-keeping people. Adventists believe that the fourth commandment in particular a sign of allegiance to God in the face of a counterfeit day of worship. Does this mean we are saved by faith and works? We looked at how impossible it is to be saved by works in the previous lesson. How do we harmonize these teachings?

**Read Exodus 20:8-11 and Deuteronomy 5:12-15. What two reasons does God give for establishing the Sabbath?**

---

---

---

Scripture tells us that God gave us the Sabbath as a reminder that He is both Creator and Deliverer. In lesson 2 we saw that the Bible teaches we are all enslaved to sin, with no way out except through Christ. The Sabbath, then, would be a weekly reminder of how God rescued us from sin and eternal death.

**What should be our focus on the Sabbath?**

---

---

---

God wants us to focus on His redemption of us on the Sabbath. Sabbath-keepers should be foremost in proclaiming justification by faith alone.

**Read Philippians 3:3. What does the Bible say about works and salvation?**

---

---

---

We are to glory in Christ and not our own efforts.

**Read Philippians 3:9 and Isaiah 64:6. Where does our righteousness come from?**

---

---

---

Our righteousness is 100 percent given to us by Jesus Christ and received by faith. What should our attitude be toward God regarding this significant truth? How should this affect our attitude toward others, whether in the church or outside the church?

**Read Romans 10:16-17. How can our faith in Christ grow?**

---

---

---

There is only one way for us to be righteous—through faith in the righteousness offered to us by Christ. This faith, not works, is imperative to our salvation. We—like the father and son we read about earlier in the lesson—can't save ourselves. We are powerless and have no hope except for Christ. We stand face to face with Jesus, and He says to us, "Child, I can save you if you have faith in my righteousness." Your eternal life is on the line every bit as much as the life of the boy was on the line in Jesus' day. Will you put your faith in Christ's righteousness offered freely to you? Will you confess any doubts and say, "Jesus, I believe, help my unbelief"? He will always answer this prayer.

Today is the day of salvation. Today you can put your faith completely in the righteousness of Christ to save you if you haven't done so already. Will you do that now? And if you have already, will you reaffirm your complete faith in Christ's righteousness for you? Share your thoughts with Him in prayer.