

## **Matthew 5:17-20**

### **Perfect righteousness**

#### **Context**

**The Messiah defines the true nature of Kingdom life: The Sermon on the Mount (5:1-7:29)**

- a. **The character of Kingdom people (5:1-12)**
  - 1. **Attitude toward self: humble hunger for righteousness (5:1-6)**
  - 2. **Attitude toward others: passion for peace (5:7-9)**
  - 3. **Attitude toward enemies: joy in face of persecution (5:10-12)**
- b. **The calling of Kingdom people (5:13-16)**
  - 1. **Salt: (5:13)**
  - 2. **Light: (5:14-16)**
- c. **The conduct of Kingdom people (5:17-7:27)**
  - 1. **In respect to moral purity (5:17-48)**
    - a. **The letter of the law. (5:17-20)**

17 Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. 18 For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished. 19 Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and so teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches {them,} he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I say to you, that unless your righteousness surpasses {that} of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.

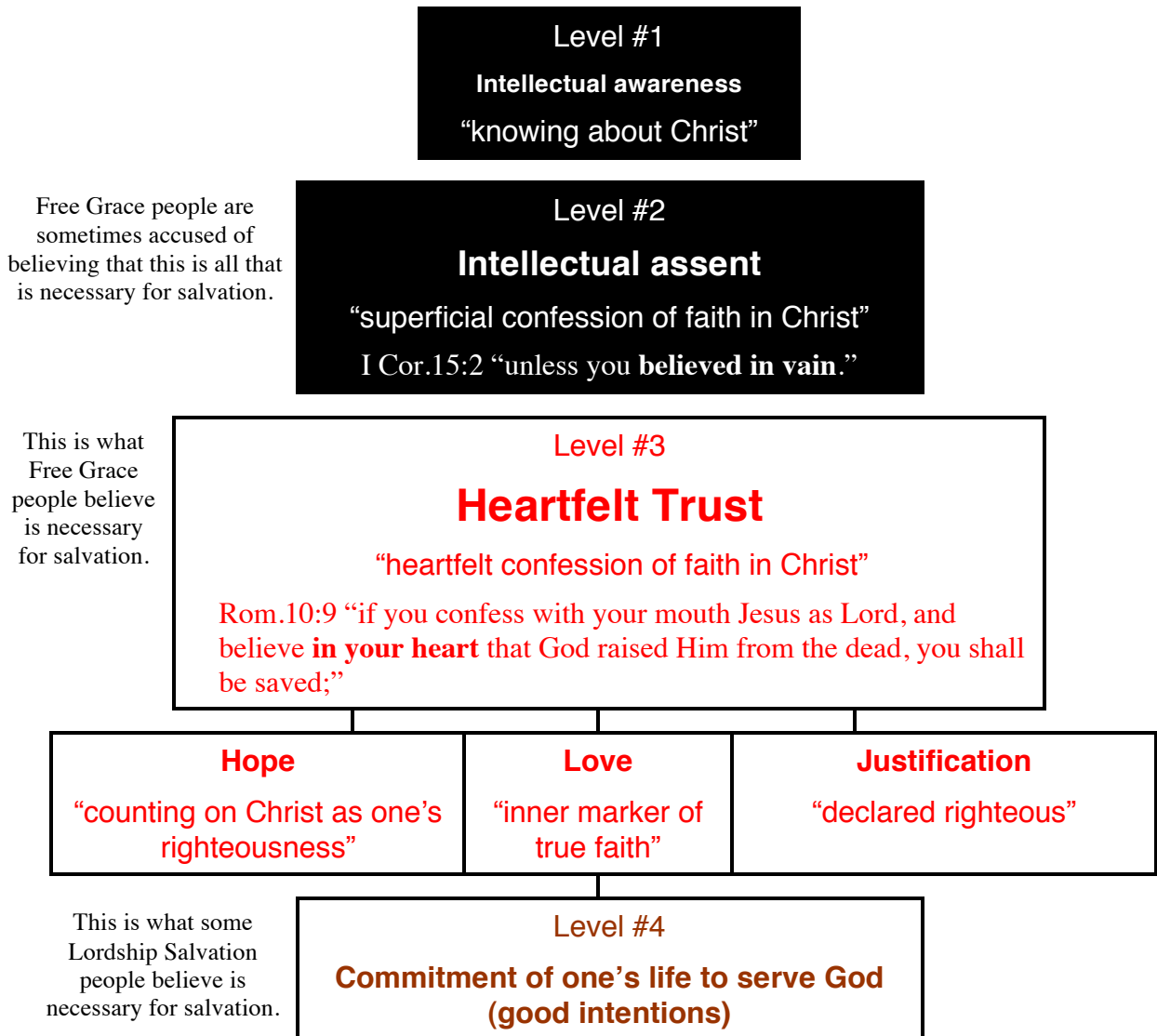
- A. **The demands of the Law were fulfilled by Christ for us not through us.**
  - 1. See [apptoteach.org](http://apptoteach.org) (theology file #107)
  - 2. Jesus posture before the Law

<b><i>He elevates its standard</i></b>	<b><i>He embraces its sanctity</i></b>	<b><i>He eliminates its sting</i></b>
“You have heard it said, but I say . . .”	“I have not come to destroy but to fulfill.”	“abolishing in His flesh the enmity . . .”
He raised the bar so that all would be humbled.	All that it demanded was fulfilled by Him.	He set all believers free from the Law’s Covenant curse.

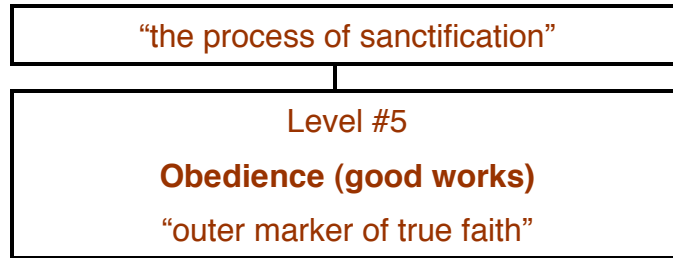
- B. **Are works of righteousness necessary to saving faith?**
  - 1. See [apptoteach.org](http://apptoteach.org) (theology file #713)
  - 2. Four different understandings of the relationship between faith and faithfulness.

<i>The Jewish position</i>	<i>The Roman Catholic position</i>	<i>The Lordship Salvation position</i>	<i>The Free Grace position</i>
Faithfulness is all that matters	Faithfulness is an <b>expression</b> of faith	Faithfulness is a <b>marker</b> of faith	Faithfulness is a <b>fruit</b> of faith
Faithfulness = Faith	Faith = Faithfulness	Faith/Faithfulness	Faith > Faithfulness

3. There are degrees or levels of Christian knowledge (St. Augustine) and commitment. The point of dispute is with respect to a distinction between Level #3 and #4. Does true saving faith require a level #4 or #5 commitment (The Lordship Salvation view), or is level #3 all that is required (Free Grace view)?



Other Lordship  
Salvation people  
believe this is necessary  
for salvation.



- True faith is more than intellectual awareness or assent.
- True faith does not take the form of faithfulness.
- True faith always produces inner fruit (hope and love).
- True faith normally produces outer fruit (faithfulness).