

The Problem with Relative Righteousness; the a Fortiori of Salvation, Imputation of Plus-R, & Blessings: Filling up the Deficiency; Thieme: Capacity Righteousness

10. Faith that results in salvation must have as its object the Person and work of Christ. The sinner must recognize that he is separated from God by a barrier composed of six insurmountable problems: (1) sin, (2) the penalty of sin, (3) physical birth, (4) relative righteousness, (5) the character of God, and (6) our position in Adam.
11. Each of these is removed by the work of Christ and permits anyone to place his faith in Christ with full confidence that he is no longer condemned, is delivered from the lake of fire, is imputed eternal life, and will go to heaven when he dies.
12. One of the insurmountable problems is our relative righteousness: our good works, compared to the saving work of Christ on the cross, are considered by God to be the equivalent of dirty menstrual cloths (Isaiah 64:6).
13. When this and the other components of the barrier are removed at the cross then anyone who believes in Christ is imputed God's perfect righteousness.
14. This sets up a grace pipeline through which justice imputes whatever righteousness demands: whatever righteous approves, justice must bless; whatever righteousness disapproves, justice must discipline.
15. The objective of the believer is to serve God, and the way this is accomplished is through Bible study by which one learns what God desires of us.
16. The imputation of blessings in time requires less effort from God than it took to save us, in fact, it may be stated as an a fortiori rationale.
17. A fortiori is a Latin term that means literally, "with greater or stronger reason." It is defined by *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* as, "a conclusion arrived at with greater logical necessity than the one previously accepted."
18. If Proposition A is considered the more difficult, then it may be concluded, with greater reason, that Proposition B, which is less difficult, will not be withheld.
19. If the justice of God can perform the more difficult task of imputing to us His righteousness, then it follows, a fortiori – with stronger reason – that the justice of God can do the less difficult task of imputing blessings in time.
20. In verse 3 we learn that the justice of God judged the sinful nature's production in Christ.
21. This is done for a purpose: "In order that the legal requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us."
22. The phrase "might be fulfilled" is the Greek word, **πληρώω, plēroō**, and means "to fill up a deficiency."

23. But what is it that is deficient? It is not righteousness for it has been imputed to the new believer. What is it that the Law requires? Fulfillment. And the only way the mandates of the Word can be fulfilled is by keeping them.
24. Therefore, the “deficiency” is the lack of blessings possessed by the believer due to his ignorance of doctrine which defines those things he is to accomplish as a servant of Christ.
25. To full up the deficiency of blessings he must grow in grace and develop “capacity righteousness,” which is the capability to enjoy the blessings that come down the grace pipeline without forgetting their source.
26. Here are some excerpts that correlate one’s capacity for blessings with the level of his spiritual growth:

Thieme, R. B., Jr. *Christian Integrity*. 3d ed. (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 2002), 46, 57, 66, 189-90:

Only through doctrine can we keep pace with God's timing. God not only gives us all the blessing that we have the capacity to receive and appreciate, but also gives us the means for developing that capacity: the divine dynasphere. (p. 46)

As (the believer) makes the transition from ignorance to cognizance of doctrine, the believer creates in his soul capacity for blessings. The believer's capability to receive and appreciate divine grace enables God to prosper him without distracting him and halting his spiritual momentum. Capacity from Bible doctrine in the soul converts potential for blessings into reality. (p. 57)

Bible doctrine in your soul creates Christian integrity, which is your capacity for life, blessing, and happiness. (p. 66)

No matter what your particular blessings may be, that prosperity becomes a test of your capacity. Will you become so preoccupied that you forget the source? Will you complain about what you do not have rather than appreciate what you have? Will you forget that God gave you everything you possess and that He alone sustains you in this life? (pp. 189-90)

Spiritual prosperity in the soul is the basis for enjoying all the temporal prosperity that God can provide. The easiest thing in the world, however, is to lose your capacity. Your spiritual prosperity can disappear even though you still possess all the overt accouterments of happiness. If you neglect Bible doctrine, that is all that is necessary for your capacity to evaporate. Momentum must be continually maintained; no believer can afford to neglect the perception of Bible doctrine.

The perception of doctrine in gate four not only produces love for God, but also creates and maintains capacity for the blessings that He desires to pour out upon us as the demonstration of His love, integrity, and grace in the angelic conflict. (p.190)

27. As the Holy Spirit pours doctrine into our *kardiais* our deficiency of knowledge is gradually overcome. Once righteousness is imputed then the knowledge of righteousness must follow. Spiritual advance through Bible study fulfills this objective and blessings follow.