



fortress press

discussion guide

Fortress Press Video

n. t. wright on paul and the faithfulness of god

Justification and Spirit in Galatians 2
and Romans 8 with Richard B. Hays



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Use the following questions for personal reflection, essay composition, and classroom discussion.

Galatians 2: 11-21

1. Richard Hays outlines four important aspects of his interpretation of Paul's understanding of justification as found in Galatians 2:11-21.
 - a) In Hays's first point, what is Paul's understanding of the "truth of the Gospel"? In Paul's eyes how has Peter's table fellowship practice denied that truth? For Paul, how is the practice of table fellowship central to questions of justification?
 - b) Paul, says Hays, does not reject his Jewish identity but rather relies on Torah to say that justification comes, not from the law, but from God's faithfulness. How does Hays then tie participation in the new life of Christ and Jesus' act of loving and giving of himself to the faithfulness of God?
 - c) Summarize Hays's understanding of Paul's theology of justification as outlined in Galatians 2:11-21.
 - d) Which of N. T. Wright's responses to the points made by Dr. Hays were most helpful to you? Why?
 - e) Which points made by Dr. Hays or Dr. Wright do you want to think about or inquire into further?
2. N. T. Wright says that while justification and being in Christ are joined at the hip for Paul, justification and participation are not synonymous. Some scholars have argued that justification and participation are in opposition to each other, but Hays and Wright agree that the fusion of the two is a better interpretation. What are your thoughts? Why is this argument important in interpreting Paul's theology?
3. How, in your understanding, are the faithfulness of God, the faithfulness of Christ, and human faith/faithfulness intimately connected in Paul's theology as outlined in these Galatians verses? In one or two sentences, summarize your understanding of Paul's theology of justification.

Romans 8

1. In this conversation about Romans 8 you see leading Paul scholars working through questions that they are still exploring and questions about which they wonder. What do you take away from observing this animated and candid exchange? What further questions does the conversation raise for you?
2. N. T. Wright and Richard Hays each identify why Paul's writings "light them up" and why they have given so much of their scholarly careers to thinking and writing about Paul. What is it about Paul and his letters that raises interest and passion in you?