

THE REFORMATION
Sola Fide...Faith Alone
Ephesians 2:8-9

The first great Reformers like Martin Luther, John Calvin, and Ulrich Zwingli never summed up their teaching with the tidy set of *five phrases* we now know as the **five solas**. The **solas developed over time** as a way of capturing the essence of what the **Reformation** was mainly about in its dispute with the **Roman Catholic Church**.

Sola is **Latin** for “alone” or “only.” The **five solas** are:

- **Sola Scriptura** (*as taught with the final and decisive authority of Scripture alone*)...inspired...inerrant...infallible...sufficient...authoritative...complete.
- **Sola Gratia** (*by grace alone*)
- **Sola Fide** (*through the means of faith alone*)
- **Solo Christo** (*on the basis of Christ alone*) (Acts 4:12).
- **Soli Deo Gloria** (*to the ultimate glory of God alone*)

Are we justified by **faith alone** apart from *any contribution* or *merit* of our own?

The heart of the **Reformation** is the clause: *We are justified before God...or Justification before God is...* Only after *justification* can the *five phrases* follow and do their magnificent work to *define* and *protect* the *gospel* from any and all unbiblical dilution.

Justification is the declaration of righteousness by God for sinners through His grace in Christ. Sanctification is the application of that justification in the life of the sinner by the work of the Holy Spirit.

All *five phrases* serve to *modify* God’s work of *justification* ...how sinners *gain a right standing with God* so that He is one hundred percent for us and not against us.

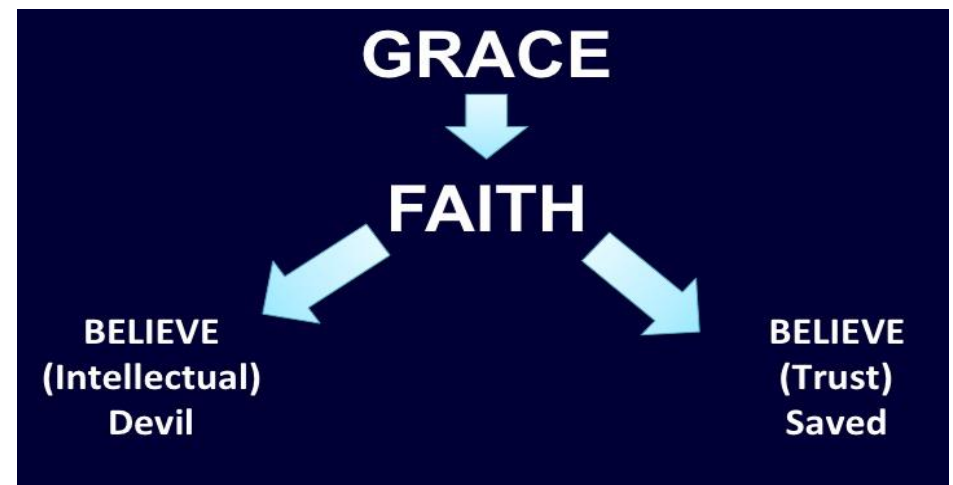
The **five solas** provide wonderful clarity about the *crux of the Reformation* and *the heart of the Gospel*, when and if the clause that the *five prepositional phrases modify* is “*Justification before God is...*”

Justification before God is...

- **By grace alone**, with no merited, earned, or deserved favor whatsoever...(no effort from man)...
- **On the basis of Christ alone**, with no other sacrifice or righteousness as the basis or source...
- **Through the means of faith alone**, not including any human works whatsoever...
- To the end that all things lead ultimately to *the glory of God alone...*
- As taught with final and decisive authority in the *Scriptures alone*.

That is why evangelical **Protestants** see the **Reformation** as simply *a call back* to the **Bible...biblical Christianity**.

Defn: FAITH...the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1)...Taking God at His Word.



Intellectual belief...Acknowledge that something or someone exist...

*“You **believe** that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.”*

~James 2:19

BELIEVE + TRUST = SAVING FAITH

*“If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and **believe** in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person **believes**, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.”*

~Romans 10:9-10

Chair and Key Illustration...

The difference between **FAITH** and **PRESUMPTION** is knowing that God has spoken.

HEAR GOD → OBEY GOD → PLEASE GOD

*“Without **faith** it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must **believe** that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.”*

~Hebrews 11:6

I. What Faith Conveys:

- Assurance

*“Now **faith** is the **assurance** of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”*

~Hebrews 11:1

Faith...is a compound word: **stasis** means *to stand*... **hupo** means *under*. It describes a *foundation*.

In ancient Greek literature **hupostasis** was used as a legal term referring to *documents disclosing the ownership of a person’s property...the evidence of ownership.*

- Conviction...Principle (*Deep belief/trust*)

*“...The proof of your **faith**, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but **believe** in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, obtaining as the outcome of your **faith** the salvation of your souls.”*

~I Peter 1:7-9

Implies a deeper manifestation of the inward assurance.

- Commitment...A picture of Lordship

This is where Jesus Christ has *authority* and *rule* over all things in the life of a believer.

*“Therefore, having been **justified by faith**, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction **by faith into this grace** in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.”*

~Romans 5:1-2

II. What Faith Does:

- Faith Obeys

*“Since you have in **obedience** to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been **born again** not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God.”*

~I Peter 1:22-23

- **Faith Endures**

*“Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with **endurance** the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of **faith**, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”*

~Hebrews 12:1-2

- **Faith Works**

*“...**Faith** without works is useless...**faith** without works is dead”*

~James 2:20, 26

*“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the **work of the Lord**, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.”*

~I Corinthians 15:58

It was the result of the **Reformation** that drove **William Tyndale** to have a single focus all his life? It was the rock-solid conviction that all humans were in **bondage to sin... blind, dead, damned, and helpless**...and that God had acted in Christ to provide **salvation by grace through faith**. This is what lay hidden in the **Latin Scriptures** and the church system of **penance** and **merit**. This is why the Bible had to be translated. He wrote...

“Faith, the mother of all good works, justifies us, before we can bring forth any good work: just as the husband marries his wife before he can have any lawful children by her.”

(William Tyndale)

Man is **lost, spiritually dead, and condemned**. But God is **sovereign**, Christ is **sufficient**...and **faith is all**. Bible **translation** and Bible **truth** were **inseparable** for **Tyndale**, and in the end, it was the truth...especially the truth of **justification by faith alone**...that ignited **Britain** with **Reformed fire**. It's also what ultimately brought the death sentence to this Bible translator.

We are justified...

- **By God by grace alone...**
- **On the basis of Christ's blood and righteousness alone...**
- **Through the means, or instrument, of faith alone...**
- **For the ultimate glory of God alone...**
- **As taught with final and decisive authority in Scripture alone.**