

Westminster Shorter Catechism Study
Session 17
The Benefits in This Life of Being Born Again

Q. 35. What is sanctification?

A. Sanctification is the work of God’s free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.

Q. 36. What are the benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification?

A. The benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification, are, assurance of God’s love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end.

Sanctification

“The phrase “to sanctify” is used in two different senses in Scripture—to consecrate, to set apart to a holy use (John 10:36; Matt. 23:17), and to render morally pure or holy (1 Cor. 6:11; Heb. 13:12).

SANCTIFICATION is used in this latter sense.

As REGENERATION is an act of God’s free grace, so sanctification is a progressive work of the same free grace. It is gratuitous, for Christ’s sake, and it is effected by the supernatural power of the Holy Ghost,

The means of sanctification are of two distinct orders—inward and outward.

The inward means of sanctification is Faith. Faith is the instrument of our justification, and hence of our deliverance from condemnation and of our communion with God; the organ of our union with Christ, and hence of our communion with him in his Spirit and life. Faith, moreover, is that act of the regenerated soul whereby it embraces and experiences the power of the truth, and whereby the inward experiences of the heart and the outward actions of the life are brought into obedience to the truth.

The outward means of sanctification are—

[1] The Truth as revealed in the inspired Scriptures (John 17:17, 19; 1 Pet. 1:22; 2:2).

[2] The Sacraments (Matt. 3:11; 1 Cor. 12:13; 1 Pet. 3:21).

[3] Prayer. This it effects both as a gracious exercise of the soul, and as the covenanted condition of our reception of all spiritual blessings (John 14:13, 14).

[4] The gracious discipline of God’s providence (John 15:2; Rom. 5:3, 4; Heb. 12:5-11).

Ezek. 36:25 "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.

26 "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

27 "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

Phil. 2:12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;

13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

2 Thess. 2:13 But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth,

2 Corinthians 7:1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God

Romans 6:6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

7 For he who has died has been freed from sin.

8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,

9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him.

10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.

11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.

13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

"Perfect sanctification is never attained in this life. All Christian perfectionists admit that defects of knowledge, feeling, and will remain as long as we are in the body...The best Christians are most humbly sensitive to their own defects, are daily filled with shame and contrition, and apply constantly to the cleansing blood of Christ and to the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost. The standard of Christian holiness is the holiness of God and the example of Christ. The personal claim of sinless perfection is an evidence of a low sense and standard of sin, of spiritual pride, and of a diseased self-consciousness. Experience shows that it is a very dangerous symptom, and presages a direful fall. The signs of grace are humility, eager desire to press on and advance to a higher standard, self-forgetfulness, absorption of thought and affection with Christ, entire consecration to the service of God and man." – A.A. Hodge

1 John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

Assurance of God's Love

Romans 5:5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Romans 8:38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come,

39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Peace of Conscience

Romans 5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

1 Peter 3:21 There is also an antitype which now saves us -- baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

Phil. 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Joy in the Holy Ghost

Romans 14:17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

1 Thess. 1:6 And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit,

7 so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe.

Increase of Grace

Prov. 4:18 But the path of the just is like the shining sun, That shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.

Romans 8:29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

2 Cor. 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord

Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Perseverance to the End

Phil. 1:6 being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;

Eph. 1:13 In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,
14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

John 6:37 "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.

38 "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

39 "This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.

40 "And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

John 10:27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.

28 "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

29 "My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.

30 "I and My Father are one."

1 Peter 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Rom. 8:38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come,

39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.