

The Most Important Words We Never Use

Q. What benefits do those who are effectively called share in this life?

A. In this life those who are effectively called share justification, adoption, sanctification, and the other benefits that either go with or come from them.

(Westminster Shorter Catechism Q&A #32)

“Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.”

(Romans 8:30)

As someone who loves a good book, I recently read an article online that weighed heavily upon my heart. The topic of the article was on illiteracy, and the facts which were revealed in the article were sobering to say the least. According to an extensive study which was conducted in 2014, 32% of American adults can't read. Just let that number sink in for a moment. That means that approximately 14% of the population in our country are completely illiterate. The article went on to describe the fact that almost a quarter of American adults read below a 5th grade level and almost 20% of high school graduates are in fact illiterate. These statistics become even more distressing when we stop to reflect on the many consequences of illiteracy in our country. Studies have found that 2/3 of students who are not proficient in reading by the end of 4th grade will end up in jail or on welfare. Students who don't read proficiently by the 3rd grade are four times likelier to drop out of school. And nearly 85% of the juveniles who face trial in the juvenile court system are functionally illiterate, proving that there is a close relationship between illiteracy and crime.

You may be wondering why I'm spending time writing about illiteracy in today's devotional. The reason is simple: not only is our country plagued by illiteracy, the Church is also faced with another epidemic...BIBLICAL ILLITERACY among Christian believers. As researchers George Gallop and Jim Castelli put it, "*Americans revere the Bible—but, by and large, they don't read it. And because they don't read it, they have become a nation of biblical illiterates.*" In 2012, Lifeway Research Group polled almost 3,000 Protestant Christians and found that only 19% of these practicing evangelicals read their Bibles every day. That means that over 80% of believers in this country aren't reading their Bibles. Albert Mohler Jr., President of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary writes, "*Fewer than half of all adults can name the four gospels. Many Christians cannot identify more than two or three of*

the disciples. According to data from the Barna Research Group, 60 percent of Americans can't name even five of the Ten Commandments."

As a pastor, these statistics are very distressing, and they should cause you to take pause and reflect on this crisis as well. You see, our catechism asks the question, *"What benefits do those who are effectively called share in this life?"* and the answer the Westminster Divines give is, *"In this life those who are effectively called share justification, adoption, sanctification, and the other benefits that either go with or come from them."* If you are among the majority of American Christians (*approximately 80% who don't read the Bible on a daily basis*), those three words (*justification, spiritual adoption and sanctification*) mean nothing to you. And that is a huge problem since the Bible teaches that these three words are the most important words for Christian believers to understand! Our catechism describes these three words as the main *"benefits"* or blessings that a Christian receives when they are saved by God's grace. Over the next three days we are going to take a closer look at these three words, the most important words that we hardly ever use. Today, take a stand against biblical illiteracy. Pick up God's Word. Read it, study it and share it with a lost and dying world that is in desperate need of the Bible!

Dig Even Deeper into God's Word!

1 Corinthians 1:30

1 Corinthians 6:11

Ephesians 1:5

Psalms 119:97-104