

You Are a New Creation

Q. What is sanctification?

A. Sanctification is the work of God's free grace by which our whole person is made new in the image of God, and we are made more and more able to become dead to sin and alive to righteousness.

(Westminster Shorter Catechism Q&A #35)

“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 Thessalonians 2:13)

Recently, my three-year-old son has become fascinated with bugs. As we all know, young children are constantly vacillating between a variety of pastimes, toys, activities and television shows that they find the most interesting in any given moment. And with summer in full swing (*bringing with it a host of Floridian insects, critters and vermin*), my son has developed a fascination with bugs. And in particular, my son has zeroed in on his favorite in the insect family, the larva we know as the caterpillar. No matter where we are, as soon as he spots a small grub crawling around on the ground, he squeals out in ecstatic joy, “Daddy! O daddy, look...it’s a caterpillar!”. And as soon as my son spots a caterpillar, one of my favorite things to do is to ask him, “Now son, what happens when a caterpillar goes into his cocoon?”, and my son will joyously exclaim, “He does his meta-moe-fow-sees!” (*my best attempt to capture the cuteness of his three-year-old phonetics*).

My son, while having trouble with pronouncing the word “*metamorphosis*” is absolutely correct. Caterpillars (*or larva*) at one point in the stages of their development, go through a process that is commonly referred to as *metamorphosis*. Caterpillars, after they are born, begin to ingest large quantities of leaves causing them to grow long and plump. At one point those plump larva begin to shed their skin, stop eating, hang themselves upside down and then begin to spin their own personal cocoon or chrysalis. And once they have thoroughly encased themselves in their cocoon, the transformation begins to take place. *Metamorphosis* (*from two Latin words: “meta” and “morphe” which literally means “to change form”*) ensues, and what once was nothing more than a chubby grub crawling around on the ground, now has radically transformed into a beautiful and majestic butterfly.

I share all of this to illustrate a beautiful and powerful spiritual reality that occurs in the life of every single Christian believer, and that is the reality of the believers’ “*sanctification*”. Just like “*justification*” and “*spiritual adoption*”, that word “*sanctification*” is a word that is hardly ever used anymore by Christians, but is one that is

vitaly important for the life of every true believer. You see every Christian is engaged in the activity of sanctification. Every single believer on this planet is in the process of being *sanctified*. But what does that mean? What is the doctrine of sanctification? Our catechism defines it by saying, *“Sanctification is the work of God’s free grace by which our whole person is made new in the image of God, and we are made more and more able to become dead to sin and alive to righteousness.”*

First of all, our catechism tells us that sanctification *“is the work of God’s free grace”*. In other words, sanctification is a free gift given to us by God in which He initiates or begins a brand new transformation in us. Well what is that transformation? Our catechism goes on to say, *“our whole person is made new in the image of God”*. Simply put, sanctification means that God is in the process of making us NEW. The moment that we placed our faith and trust in Jesus, God the Holy Spirit began in us the process of *spiritual metamorphosis*. He began to cause us to spiritually *“change form”*. Just as a caterpillar who is transformed in their cocoon, the Christian is being transformed into a brand new creation. As the Apostle Paul writes, believers are those who are being *“renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”* (Ephesians 4:23-24).

If you are a Christian, you are being *sanctified*, that means that God is in the process of making you HOLY. God is in the process of transforming you more and more into the image and likeness of your savior, Jesus Christ. Every believer is in the process of going through a *spiritual* metamorphosis. Minute by minute, day after day, year after year, the Holy Spirit is causing you to *“become dead to sin and alive to righteousness”*. The Holy Spirit is causing us more and more to hate our sin, to flee from it, and to pursue greater obedience to God’s Word. Just as we read in 2 Corinthians 5:17, *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”*

Dig Even Deeper into God’s Word!

2 Thessalonians 2:13

Ephesians 4:23-24

Romans 6:4,6

Romans 8:1