

Above All...Know God!

Q. What benefits in this life go with or come from justification, adoption, and sanctification?

A. The benefits that in this life go with or come from justification, adoption, and sanctification are: the assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Spirit, and growing and persevering in grace to the end of our lives.

(Westminster Shorter Catechism Q&A #36)

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

(Romans 5:1-2)

Over the past few days we've been taking a look at the three most important words in the Bible that we hardly ever use. These words are: *justification, spiritual adoption and sanctification*. So far we've learned that "*justification*" is a legal declaration wherein a sinner is made right with God. When a person places their faith and trust in Jesus Christ, God declares them to be "*just*" or "*right with God*" by forgiving all their sins (*past, present and future*) and transferring Jesus' perfect record to their account.

Next we learned about spiritual adoption. We discovered that while everyone in this world is a creation of God, not everyone on this planet is a *child of God*. In order to become one of God's children, we must be spiritually *adopted* into God's family. When a person is justified (*made right with God*) by faith in Christ, they are automatically adopted into God's family, receiving all the benefits and privileges of being God's sons and daughters. They are given a brand new name (*i.e. Christians: those who belong to Jesus Christ*), and receive a spiritual inheritance beyond their wildest dreams (*i.e. eternal life in Heaven with the God of the universe!*).

Finally, we learned about the third most important word found in the Scriptures, that is, *sanctification*. Sanctification is that process where God the Holy Spirit transforms believers into brand new creations. As soon as someone is saved, a spiritual metamorphosis begins to take place. In a process that will last our entire lives here on this planet, God causes us day by day, moment by moment, year after year, to hate and flee from our sinful habits more and more, and to begin to obey God's commands and follow His Word more closely. In essence, while we won't become *sinless* until we are glorified in Heaven with Christ, believers will begin, in this life, to *sin-less*. God is sanctifying His children. He is in the lifelong process of making us more *holy*!

Now the question arises, *“What good is it for me to know and understand all of this? Why is it so important for me to know and comprehend what justification, spiritual adoption and sanctification are?”*. For many Christians in our world today, studying doctrine and theology is seen to be a waste of time. *“Why study theology?”* they say, *“it’s more important for me to focus on living a good life”*. Unfortunately, this is the mindset of many Christians in our present generation. However, it’s not the mindset of the Bible. The Apostle Paul, in writing the book of Romans (*his magnum opus on Christian theology*), spends 11 out of 16 chapters dealing with doctrine...and only 5 chapters dealing with the practice of Christian living! He spends 11 chapters unpacking the doctrines of justification, adoption and sanctification before he begins to launch into his exposition of practical matters such as serving others or how Christians are to relate to authorities, etc. Why does he do that? It’s because Paul understood that what we BELIEVE will always determine how we BEHAVE. Our DOCTRINE will always determine our DEVOTION. Our core CONVICTIONS will always determine our CONDUCT.

Our catechism asks us the question, *“What benefits in this life go with or come from justification, adoption, and sanctification?”*. In other words, the Westminster Divines who wrote this confession of faith were asking, *“what good is it for believers to understand and believe these doctrines? What impact with understanding and believing in justification, adoption and sanctification have in the Christian life here and now?”* And they answered by saying that when we come to know and believe these doctrines we will have in this life, *“the assurance of God’s love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Spirit, and growing and persevering in grace to the end of our lives”*.

Do you desire to receive deep and lasting assurance of God’s love for you? Do you need a clear conscience? Do you want to be free from the guilt of your many sins? Do you need a larger dose of grace and mercy in your life? Then pick up your Bible and a few study tools and begin to study theology! Did you know that the word *“theology”* is simply a term that means *“God study”*? That’s all it is! Theology is the study of God. And studying and knowing the God of the Bible is the greatest pursuit a person can ever undertake, and one that will provide endless blessings and benefits in this life. What are you waiting for? Start learning about our great God today!

Dig Even Deeper into God’s Word!

1 John 4:16
Romans 15:13
Philippians 1:6