

WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH SHORTER CATECHISM

LESSON # 22 (Q2LES9) - SANCTIFICATION, AND THE SEVERAL BENEFITS QUESTIONS # 35 & 36

1. **Prayer**

2. **Bible reading:** EPHESIANS 4: 1 - 32

3. **Review:** We are still working on the process of redemption. Man is born into an estate of sin and misery, with a will only to do evil. Through the application of God's Word, and the work of His Spirit, man is called to God. When that calling has convinced man of his sin and misery, enlightened his mind in the knowledge of Christ, and renewed his will, that calling becomes effectual, but only through the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and not from anything man has done to deserve it. When the task of effectual calling is completed, two things (milestones) happen simultaneously. The new believer is justified and adopted. Justification is based on the righteousness of Christ, whereby our sins are pardoned, and God accepts us as righteous in His sight. Adoption is the acceptance into God's elect, and the bestowing of all the rights of the sons of God.
4. **Introduction:** When the justification and adoption milestones occur, a new process begins. This process, called sanctification, is covered in SC questions 35. Question 36 covers the benefits, which accompany or flow from the three benefits of effectual calling, justification, adoption and sanctification. It is the first of three SC questions that cover benefits received from Christ.

5. **Questions:**

Question 35: **What is sanctification?**

Answer: **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.**

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

Answer: **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.

6. DIGRESSIONS

- a. At this point, the WCF and the LC seem to digress from the SC, and understanding becomes more complicated. Up to this point, it has been easy to follow all three together. From now on, it will take work. For instance, WCF chapters 14 (Of Saving Grace) and 15 (Of Repentance unto Life), while applicable to sanctification, fit better into Questions 86 and 87 of the SC. But, in the LC, Repentance unto Life (LC Q76) is covered in the discussion of sanctification (LC Q75). It is interesting how much more the LC contains than the SC. We will spend the next three lessons sorting this out.

7. SANCTIFICATION

- a. Sanctification. A quick check of my trusty New Webster's 20th Century dictionary gives us a definition of "sanctification" which simply says "a sanctifying or being sanctified."

And of sanctify, "to make holy; specifically,

- (a) to make free from sin; to purify;
- (b) to set apart as holy; to consecrate;
- (c) to make (a person) holy.

These are certainly part of what we are talking about, but not all of it, and certainly not enough to enable us to understand sanctification.

- b. Last week we pointed out that justification and adoption were acts which are applied to us immediately when the Spirit grants us faith, whereas sanctification is a process. Both SC q's 31 and 32, and LC q's 70 and 74 define justification **and** adoption as "acts" of God's free grace. Note the difference in the answer to SC q 35 and LC q 75, which say that sanctification is the "work" of God's free grace. Sanctification is a "task", not a milestone.
- c. The LC, q75, reminds us at this point, that the process is God's, and that this is all predestined, saying, "*whereby they whom God hath, before the foundation of the world, chosen to be holy,*"

8. THE PROCESS

- a. Talking about sanctification, the LC, q 75 adds to this, saying, *“Having the seeds of repentance unto life, and all other saving graces, put into their hearts,”*

What are we being told here?

That the seed is planted. (Eph 3: 16 – 19 ⁽¹⁶⁾*That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;* ⁽¹⁷⁾*That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,* ⁽¹⁸⁾*May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breathe, and length, and depth, and height;* ⁽¹⁹⁾*And to know that love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.”*)

This is kinda like going through boot camp, or college. When you graduate, you are the BMOC, but when you get out into the world, you are the new guy on the block. That’s how it is with sanctification, you have reached a major plateau when you are justified, but it is just the beginning.

- b. Both the LC q75 and the SC q 35 say, *“and renewed in the whole man after the image of God”*.

What does this mean?

(Eph 4: 22 – 24 ⁽²²⁾*That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;* ⁽²³⁾*And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;* ⁽²⁴⁾*and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”*)

- c. What is meant by **“after the image of God”**?

What does this mean? Does this sound familiar?

- Remember question 10? How did God create man? *God created man male and female after his own image,*
- And how was God’s image described in SC q10? *“in **knowledge, righteousness and holiness,** with dominion over the creatures.* Remember (Col 3:10 *“And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:”* and Eph 4:24 *“and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”*

We are in the process of being renewed to the state in which man was created, where mankind was before the fall, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness; in the image of God.

- d. According to the WCF, LC and SC, two things happen to believers during this process. What are they?

We are enabled, more and more,

- To die unto sin. (**Rom 6:6** *“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.”*)
- And to Live unto righteousness. (**Rom 6:4** *“therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”*)

WCF chapter 13, paragraph 3 says: *“In which war, although the remaining corruption, for a time, may much prevail; yet through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part doth overcome; and so, the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”*

- e. Can sanctification be completed in this life?

No.

- Christ was the only perfect man.
- While we contain the sinful nature inherited from Adam, we cannot be perfect.
- Sanctification can therefore only be completed when we join Christ.

WCF, chapter 13, paragraph 2 notes: *“This sanctification is throughout, in the whole man; yet imperfect in this life, there abiding still some remnants of corruption in every part: whence ariseth a continual and irreconcilable war; the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.”*

- f. Once justified, is the process of sanctification something we do ourselves?

- Although we are the subjects of sanctification, we are not the authors or cause. We can still defile ourselves, but we cannot cleanse ourselves.
- Sanctification is the work of God, wrought by His Spirit. (**2 Thes 2:13** *“But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.”*)

- g. The WCF, in chapter 13, paragraph 1, says of sanctification: *“They who are effectually called and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them, are further sanctified, really and personally, through the virtue of Christ’s death and resurrection, by His Word and Spirit dwelling in them: the dominion of*

the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified; and they more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces, to the practice of true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.”

9. JUSTIFICATION vs SANCTIFICATION

a. LC question 77, and TV's first question are how justification and sanctification differ. How do justification and sanctification differ?

- In justification, God imputeth the righteousness of Christ
In sanctification, his Spirit infuseth grace, and enableth the exercise thereof;
- In justification sin is pardoned
In sanctification, sin is subdued
- In justification, all believers are free of the revenging wrath of God, that they never fall into condemnation
Sanctification is not equal in all, nor in this life perfect in any way, but growing up to perfection

It is interesting to note this last point. Sanctification is not equally applied. Some it may grasp quickly and strongly. In others it may be slow, and be a long process. Others may grasp it, then fall away for a while.

10. “the several benefits”

- a. The subject of the benefits of redemption becomes complex at this point, and we will be discussing it over the next two lessons.
- b. What are the types of benefits enjoyed by those who are justified, adopted, and sanctified? (LC q 82)

Three types of benefits.

- Benefits of this life - as discussed in this question.
 - Benefits at death - discussed in question 37.
 - Benefits at the resurrection - discussed in question 38.
- c. Today we will begin our look at the benefits believers receive in this life.
 - d. What benefits, **in this life**, belonging to those who are justified, adopted and sanctified? (LC q 83)
 - Assurance of God’s love.
 - peace of conscience
 - Joy in the Holy Ghost
 - Increase of grace
 - perseverance therein to the end
 - e. Assurance of God’s Love - Knowledge that we are saved & God loves us. (**Rom 5:5** *“And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”*)
 - f. Peace of conscience - Knowledge of forgiveness of our sins. (**Rom 5: 1 – 2** *“(1)Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: (2)By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”*)
 - g. Joy in the Holy Ghost - (**Rom 14:17** *“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”*)
 - h. Increase of grace - (**Proverb 4:18** *“But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”*) TV sights this as sure evidence of sanctification.
 - i. Perseverance therein to the end - (**1 John 5:13** *“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of*

God.”) Subject covered at length in the LC, question 79, also chapter 17 of the WCF. We’ll discuss it in a minute.

- i. Why is it that all that are justified, adopted & sanctified do not attain these benefits?

TV says: “Because all have not a sight and sense of their justification, adoption, and sanctification, **but are under doubts, and therefore fear that God doth hate them, and not love them; therefore they have troubles of conscience instead of peace, and sorrow in spirit instead of the joys of the Holy Ghost.**” How do we overcome this fear?

- k. Once we have been justified and adopted, and sanctification is in progress, can we again fall into sin?

Chapter 17, paragraph 3 of the WCF says: *“Nevertheless, they may, through the temptations of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins; and, for a time continue therein: whereby they incur God’s displeasure, and grieve His Holy Spirit, come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts, have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded, hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgment upon themselves.”*