

APPLYING TRUTH TO LIFE

Grace Gatherings

THEOLOGY NIGHTS | JUNE 12, 2024

GRACE CHURCH
WILLIAMSBURG

Question 19

Explain the biblical categories of past, present, and future sanctification.

Past, present, and **future** categorize the biblical doctrine of sanctification into three distinct but related categories as this doctrine applies to our relationship to Jesus Christ (as believers).

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“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.”

“The concept is not of sin being totally eradicated (that is to claim too much) or merely counteracted (that is to say too little, but of a divinely wrought character change **freeing** us from sinful habits and **forming** in us Christlike affections, dispositions, and virtues.”

(J.I. Packer quoting from Question #35 of the Westminster Confession)

Question 19

Explain the biblical categories of past, present, and future sanctification.

Sanctification addresses our holiness before God, the fact that we have been made holy, that we must grow in holiness, and that we will one day, in the new heaven and new earth, live with God in our perfect holiness entirely without sin.

Question 19

Doctrines related to that work of making us holy at the moment of our salvation:

Calling: God **calls on all** to repent. His call to His **elect effectively** brings them to repentance.

Regeneration: God gives us **new spiritual life**—a new heart to know, love, and obey Him.

Conversion: By God's gift of faith, we **repent** of sins and **trust** Christ for our salvation.

Justification: God **declares** us to be in **right legal standing** before Him because He **credits** us with the perfect righteousness of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Adoption: God, through our faith in Christ, makes us **members of His family.**

Question 19

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

*“Or do you not know that the **unrighteous** will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be **deceived**...”* Our unrighteousness and deception rendered us spiritually dead to God. In that state, we could not know God or enter His kingdom.

The list here is not exhaustive. Paul uses other lists in a similar way: Galatians 5:19-21; Colossians 3:5, 8-9; 1 Timothy 1:8-11.

Notice the end of verse 10—Paul repeats the warning of what unforgiven sins and our state of unrighteousness (not sanctified/set apart/ made holy) do to us in relation to God.

Question 19

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

*“And such **were** some of you...”* This was our death. What happened to us and in us? What changed? How? When?

*“But you were **washed**...”* Here is our first category/aspect of our sanctification: *apelousasthe* (from *apolouo*) = to cleanse; to wash off or to wash away.

*“... but you were **sanctified**...”*: *hegiasthete* (from *hagios*) = to consecrate, make holy, sanctify. Inwardly holy for outwardly living in holiness.

*“...but you were **justified**...”*: *edikaiothete* (from *dikaioo*) to pronounce, declare righteous; to put right with; to justify.

Question 19

All of this refers to what happens in us as we come to faith in Christ, believing that He died for us on the cross as our substitute.

J.I. Packer refers to this as **relational** sanctification: The work of Christ on the cross where we are **permanently** set apart to God—“Where God through Christ purchased and claimed us for Himself.”

Question 19

Acts 20:28, 32—When did Christ **purchase** and **sanctify** you? At the cross.

Question 19

Acts 26:18—What are the elements of spiritual **transformation** effected by Jesus dying on the cross and on behalf of believers?

1. Open spiritual eyes
2. Turn from darkness to light
3. Turn from authority of Satan to God
4. Receive forgiveness of sins
5. Receive an inheritance
6. Have been sanctified by faith in Christ

These changes happen as we are born again, washed, cleansed, made alive in Christ.

Question 19

Hebrews 10:10

Hebrews 10: 12, 14

Titus 3:5—Regeneration and renewing refer to God setting us apart to Himself in salvation. He saved us to join us to Himself forever. That is a **permanent** reality.

Question 19

To sanctify means to make holy or to be set apart from sin and to God. In one sense, our being made holy by the saving grace of God is **past tense**; our holiness (sanctification) is a **fixed** reality accomplished for us by Christ and applied to us in the moment of our salvation.

This means **believers are holy people**. “All believers are saints because all believers have been set apart by a holy God and have been united to the holy Lord Jesus.” (*Biblical Doctrine*). Believers are placed in spiritual union with Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:17

Question 19

This **spiritual union** (regeneration) accomplishes a past-tense spiritual reality for every believer—we **have been** crucified with Christ (Gal. 2:20), we **have died** with Christ (Rom. 6:8), and we **have been** buried and raised with Christ (Rom. 6:3; Col. 3:1). Believers **have been** made holy in Christ.

This means **believers are new creatures in Christ**. We have a new heart and a new nature.

2 Corinthians 5:17; Titus 3:5-6; James 1:17-18; 1 Peter 1:3, 23, 25

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