

FAMILY WORSHIP HELPS

WEEK 32

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

QUESTION 32: *What benefits do they that are effectually called partake of in this life?*

ANSWER: They that are effectually called do in this life partake of justification, adoption, and sanctification, and the several benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from them.



MONDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 103A

Scripture: Read Romans 8:28-30

Key Thought: *Believers receive benefits from Christ in this life.*

Questions:

- ☞ Are some blessings provided by Christ reserved for the life to come? What are some examples?
- ☞ Are some blessings provided by Christ received in this life?
- ☞ What are the three chief blessings mentioned in the *Catechism* answer?
- ☞ Can you think of other blessings we receive in this life?
- ☞ When do we become new creatures in Christ? What is new about those who believe?

Prayer

Notes: The next few questions of the *Shorter Catechism* will explore the incomparable blessings that come to believers through Christ. The *Catechism* divides these blessings into those received in this life, at death, and in the resurrection. Our focus for the next five weeks will be on the blessings we receive through Christ in this life. Begin by challenging your children to think of examples of blessings that are reserved for us in the life to come. Next, discuss the fact that the benefits purchased for us by Christ begin in this life, noting the three main blessings mentioned in the *Catechism* answer: justification, adoption, and sanctification. Explain that these terms will be defined more carefully over the next few weeks, but give them a general idea of the meaning of these words. Emphasize the fact that the power of the Holy Spirit applying the work of Christ to us makes us new creatures. Our transformation into new creatures does not await our glorification in heaven after we die, but begins at the moment of our effectual calling. The character and image of Christ should be more and more apparent in the lives of His children as they grow in grace.



TUESDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 103A

Scripture: Read Romans 5:15-21

Key Thought: *In Christ we have a new status.*

Questions:

- ☞ What is the first benefit listed in the *Catechism* answer?
- ☞ What legal terms are used by Paul in Romans 5:15-21?
- ☞ What legal penalty was the result of Adam's offense?
- ☞ What "righteous act" does Paul refer to in verse 18?
- ☞ What is the legal effect of that righteous act?

Prayer

Notes: Our purpose today is to provide a general introduction to the doctrine of justification. This is the first benefit that we receive through Christ in this life. Help your children to see that justification is a legal term, like those used in courtrooms today. Ask them to identify specific legal terms from the verses in Romans (i.e., offense, judgment, condemnation). Explain that the result of Adam's offense was the legal penalty of death, which Adam received as a representative of the whole human race. Ask them to identify the "righteous act" mentioned by Paul in verse 18 and help them to see that it refers to the death of Christ in the place of His elect. Show them that like Adam, Christ stood before God as a representative and that we are justified by what He accomplished for us. Explain that the word "justify" means to make righteous. It is the righteousness of Christ transferred to us, however, and not any righteousness of our own, that allows us to stand before God without being condemned. The first benefit we receive through Christ is a new legal standing before God, having been condemned to death, we are declared "not guilty."



WEDNESDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 103A

Scripture: Read Galatians 4:1-7

Key Thought: *In Christ we have a new identity.*

Questions:

- ☞ Do you know anyone who is adopted?
- ☞ How does one who is adopted receive a new identity?
- ☞ When were we transformed from slaves to sons?
- ☞ What is the sign that the Spirit of adoption has come to our hearts? (see v. 6 and Rom. 8:15)
- ☞ What privileges do we receive as sons of God?

Prayer

Notes: The second benefit received in this life by those who are effectually called is adoption. Most children have at least a general idea of what this term means, since they either know or have heard about other children who are legally adopted into families. Discuss with your children the features of adoption in terms of imparting a new identity, new responsibilities, and new privileges to the one who is adopted. When the Scriptures speak of our adoption, the focus is on the love of God in drawing us near to Himself through Christ and the inheritance that we have received in His name. Explain to your children that our adoption was accomplished “when the fullness of the time had come,” that is, when God sent Christ into the world to live and die for us. We became sons of God through Christ when He accomplished our redemption, so that our identity does not depend upon anything we do. Furthermore, our new identity in Christ is seen “in this life” as the characteristics of children of God are perfected in us through the Spirit. In Galatians 4:6 as well as Romans 8:15 we find that an immediate mark of receiving the Spirit of adoption is crying out “Abba, Father!” This shows us the centrality of prayer as a sign that our hearts have been changed from enemies of God to sons of God. Prayerlessness and adoption are incompatible. Those who are children of God will seek the face of their Father.

 THURSDAY

Praise: Sing Psalm 103A

Scripture: Read 1 Thessalonians 5:14-24

Key Thought: *In Christ we have a new nature.*

Questions:

- ☞ Should Christians seek to be holy? What does that mean?
- ☞ What commands does Paul give to the Thessalonian Christians?
- ☞ Does anyone who has not been converted have the ability to do these things?
- ☞ By what power is a believer in Christ able to do what is right?
- ☞ What does the word “sanctify” mean?
- ☞ Who is it that accomplishes the work of purifying us and making us holy?

Prayer

Notes: The third benefit received in this life by those who are effectually called is sanctification. Help your children understand the meaning of this word, showing them that it refers to being holy toward God and set apart from the world. In later lessons we will have opportunity to discuss the details of the doctrine of sanctification. For now, direct your children to the general truth that those who believe in Christ are given a new nature that is inclined by God toward

holiness. It is sad that in these days of spiritual darkness the idea of seeking to be holy is looked upon as undesirable or even prideful. Show your children that God's will is for His children to be holy, and that He provides guidance and direction for us in how to live lives that are free from sin. Explain that the accomplishment of sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers, and not the result of our efforts, so that we have no room to boast of spiritual progress. Still, those who are called by Christ are given a new nature that progresses in purity and godliness by the power of God and this progress should be evident in the lives of the saints.

 FRIDAY

Praise: Sing Psalm 103A

Scripture: Read Hebrews 10:19-25; Philippians 1:6; Romans 8:30

Key Thought: *In Christ we have a new hope.*

Questions:

- ☞ To whom do we owe thanks for our justification, adoption, and sanctification?
- ☞ What confidence do we have from Philippians 1:6?
- ☞ If our hope was based on what we must do, could we have such confidence?
- ☞ What responsibilities do we have? Where do we look for strength?

Prayer

Notes: The *Catechism* affirms that the benefits of justification, adoption and sanctification are received by those who are effectually called, along with “the several benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from them.” We will see in later lessons that these accompanying benefits center around the confidence, assurance, and hope that we have in Christ that those who have been saved by His grace will persevere in Him until the end. Since it is by the power of God alone through Christ that we are justified, adopted, and sanctified, it is also by His power that we will be glorified. As we see visible evidence of our new status, identity, and nature by the grace of God, our hearts are assured that He has indeed begun a good work in us which will be carried through to completion by His power. Our responsibility is to “walk worthy of the calling to which we have been called” in daily reliance upon the strength which God provides.



Note: Only five lessons per week are included. You are encouraged to lead your family in worship seven days a week. On weekends, you may want to review or build upon the lessons from the previous week, discuss the sermon from Sunday morning, or work on questions from the Catechism or memory verses. These lesson suggestions are intended to provide a simple framework for parents to build upon. You are not limited to this content. The habit of morning and evening family worship is the biblical ideal. We hope you can use these lessons as a starting point for the development of a blessed practice of family worship in your home.