

FAMILY WORSHIP HELPS

WEEK 35

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

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.



MONDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 51D

Scripture: Read John 17:13-19

Key Thought: *Sanctification is a work of God's free grace.*

Questions:

- ☞ What does it mean that sanctification is a "work" rather than an "act"?
- ☞ Using your own words, explain the differences among justification, adoption, and sanctification?
- ☞ By whose will and power are all three of these accomplished?
- ☞ How did Jesus pray that God would sanctify His disciples?
- ☞ How does God use His Word to sanctify us?

Prayer

Notes: We now turn our attention to the doctrine of sanctification. Remind your children of what it means to speak of sanctification as a "work" of God's free grace. Discuss the difference among these three great benefits that come to us through our effectual calling and also how they build upon one another. First, Christ pays our penalty so that we are declared "not guilty" before God's judgment seat (justification); second, the Father gives us a new identity, adopting us into His royal family for the sake of His beloved Son (adoption); and third, the Holy Spirit cleanses and transforms us into pure and holy sons and daughters of the King who reflect the perfect nature of Christ (sanctification). God pardons, purchases, and purifies us. All three of these benefits are the work of God's free grace, not dependent upon any worthiness in us or any merit in what we do. On the contrary, we are utterly unworthy and our actions deserve the opposite of His grace. There is, however, a notable difference between justification and adoption, on the one hand, and sanctification on the other. As acts of God, justification and adoption are accomplished once and for all as the finished work of Jesus Christ is applied savingly to us by the Holy Spirit. Sanctification, however, is a work that continues throughout the course of our earthly lives. Sanctification has been described as a synergis-

tic work, in which both God and man are both active. It is ultimately the gracious work of the Spirit within us, but we are also commanded to exercise faith and obedience in using the means of grace that God has provided for our purification. It is the work of the Spirit, accomplished through the strength the Spirit supplies, to the glory of God alone, but the believer is not passive in the process.



TUESDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 51D

Scripture: Read I Thessalonians 5:14-24

Key Thought: *In sanctification we are renewed in the whole man.*

Questions:

- ☞ Is there any part of the life of a believer that should not be set apart to God? What parts of your life do you tend to regard as “unspiritual”? How should these be sanctified to God?
- ☞ Is moral virtue the same as sanctification? Why or why not?
- ☞ Is sanctification primarily a change of behavior or a change of heart? How does one affect the other?

Prayer

Notes: The doctrine of sanctification deals with the progression of the believer in holiness by the inward working of the Holy Spirit. This holiness, according to the *Catechism*, is not restricted to only a part of the life of the Christian, but is a renewing of “the whole man.” This is why Paul prays, “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” There is a temptation to regard certain parts of our lives as “unspiritual” or “secular” and therefore not to self-consciously serve God through them. Show your children that every part of the believer and his life is to be sanctified, and challenge them to identify any areas of their lives which they have regarded as unconnected with their identity as a follower of Christ. Next, point out that sanctification is a change of heart, by the power of the Holy Spirit, which produces changes in behavior. Many confuse morally upright behavior or religious activity with sanctification, but this is a dangerous mistake. It is possible for people to change their behavior and therefore deceive themselves into thinking that they are holy. A person may appear to be righteous, but have a corrupt heart. True holiness, however, is the gift of God through His Spirit, who changes the heart. When the heart is transformed, the behavior follows. The renewing of “the whole man” works from the inside out.



WEDNESDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 51D

Scripture: Read Colossians 3:1-17

Key Thought: *In sanctification we are renewed after the image of God.*

Questions:

- ☞ How was the image of God in man affected by his fall into sin?
- ☞ What are the “old man” and the “new man” in verses 9-10?
- ☞ How is the image of God in man affected by sanctification?
- ☞ According to verses 12-17, what attributes of God are to be reflected in the lives of His children? Are they reflected in your life?

Prayer

Notes: We have seen in the previous *Catechism* questions how man was created in the image of God and how that image was tarnished and corrupted by man’s fall into sin. Remind your children of these things and then show them that the process of sanctification is a renewal of the image of God in man. The “old man” Paul speaks of in verse 9 refers to the sinner before conversion, whose deeds are described in verses 5-9. The “new man” of verse 10 refers to the believer after conversion. He is changed from a sinner to a saint. He is made a new creation in Christ. It is as if he died and rose again with Jesus as a new man. That new man reflects the image of God in ways that the old man never could because of its corruption. Walk your children through verses 12-17 and ask them to identify specific attributes of God that are to be reflected in the lives of His renewed children. Challenge them to examine their own lives for the presence or absence of these qualities. Ask forgiveness for the shortcomings that are identified, and pray for grace to “put on” the new man to the glory of God.



THURSDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 51D

Scripture: Read Romans 6:1-11; Luke 9:23-26

Key Thought: *Through sanctification we die more and more unto sin.*

Questions:

- ☞ In what way does Christ make us alive? In what way does He make us dead?
- ☞ What does it mean to die more and more unto sin?
- ☞ How do believers identify with Jesus in His death?
- ☞ How are dying to sin and dying to self related?

Prayer

Notes: There are two complementary aspects of the work of sanctification in the life of a believer, one negative and the other positive. The negative aspect is the putting off of the old nature, which the *Catechism* refers to as “dying more and more unto sin.” The positive aspect is the putting on of the new nature, which is described as “living more and more unto righteousness.” Today’s lesson examines the first of these. We often speak of the gospel of Jesus Christ as bringing life to those who were

dead in sin. There is, however, an aspect of the gospel of Christ which brings death to believers. Paul speaks of this truth in Romans 6:1-11, explaining that those who are in Christ have “died to sin,” been “baptized into His death,” been “buried with Him,” and were “crucified with Him.” Discuss with your children what it means to be dead to sin and show them the relationship between Paul’s teaching in Romans 6 and the words of Christ in Luke 9:23-26.

 FRIDAY

Praise: Sing Psalm 51D

Scripture: Read Ephesians 4:17-32

Key Thought: *Through sanctification we live more and more unto righteousness.*

Questions:

- ☞ If we “put off” the old man, what must be “put on” in his place?
- ☞ In verses 25-32, how does Paul show the way that sanctification replaces sin with righteousness?
- ☞ What does it mean to “grieve the Holy Spirit”?
- ☞ Does the Holy Spirit force us to do what is right?

Prayer

Notes: The second, positive aspect of sanctification is the putting on of the new nature, or living more and more unto righteousness. This replacement of sin with righteousness in the life of the believer is seen in Paul’s counsel in Ephesians 4:17-32. Show your children the way the apostle contrasts the former wicked practices of his audience with the righteous practices they are to pursue instead. This active pursuit of righteousness is the work of the Holy Spirit, and yet it must be noted that the Spirit does not force believers to practice righteousness against their will. Therefore, Paul warns against “grieving the Holy Spirit,” which refers to resisting His inward call toward holiness by stubbornly persisting in sin. The children of God are called to faithfulness in the pursuit of holiness, knowing that it is God who works in them, both to will and to do for His good pleasure.



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.