



The Christian life is one of transformation where the sinful person is reconciled and reconnected with God and healed from the various wounds of our sin and sin nature. In theological circles, this process is divided into three distinct works: Justification, Sanctification, and culminates in Glorification. The guiding distinction of these three are: Justification means we have been saved from the penalty of sin. Sanctification means we are being saved from the power of sin. Glorification means we will be saved from the presence of sin. These three are a spiritual process that God actually works within us (Philippians 2:13) and we join Him, or participate in the process. Within each of these we have a role (obedience), and God has a role (grace and power).

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DISCUSSION #1: RECONCILIATION

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In this discussion we will explore the biblical teaching of reconciliation. Reconciliation can be generally defined as the restoration of friendly relations.

MY STORY | Starting Place

Share a relationship where there was “bad blood” between two people and they were led to or found resolution.

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For in him [Jesus] all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. Colossians 1:19-20

What do you think the author means by “whether on earth or in heaven?” According to this passage, what (all) is being “reconciled” back to God? We often think of reconciliation as between people, but what is significant about all that is being reconciled back to God? What else could this include?

For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. Romans 5:10

The Bible teaches that we were enemies of God. What does his grace and mercy toward us communicate about God's love, heart, and nature?

What did God have to overlook, accept, or deal with in order to reconcile us back to Him?

What do people need to accept or deal with in order to be reconciled back to God?

Why do you think some people simply choose not to be reconciled back to God? What are some motives or reasons for this?

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Read 2 Corinthians 5:11-21.

This passage states that those who have been reconciled back to God embrace an active role in His greater work. Discuss what this looks like for the followers of Jesus.

As God's ambassadors in this world, what do we need to overlook, accept, or deal with in order to embrace our role in the ministry of reconciliation?

Does the passage (or the rest of the Bible) give any boundaries we should not cross in the ministry or reconciliation?

MOVING OUTWARD | Faith in Action

Who comes to mind this week that you need to pray for or pursue as God's ambassador of peace, hope, and restoration?

DISCUSSION #2: JUSTIFICATION

The Christian life is one of transformation where the sinful person is reconciled and reconnected with God and healed from the various wounds of our sin and sin nature. In theological circles, this process is divided into three distinct works: Justification, Sanctification, and culminates in Glorification. The guiding distinction of these three are:

Justification means we have been saved from the penalty of sin.

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Glorification means we will be saved from the presence of sin.

These three are a spiritual process that God actually works within us (Philippians 2:13) and we join Him, or participate in the process. Within each of these we have a role (obedience), and God has a role (grace and power).

In this discussion we will explore the biblical teaching of justification, that we have been saved from the penalty of sin.

MY STORY | Starting Place

Do you have a story of a time you were freed from a big burden (a debt, a consequence, an unmanageable expectation)?

DIGGING DEEPER | Practical Biblical Application

Engage with the statement: *Justification means we have been saved from the penalty of sin.*

What are the human realities of the penalty of sin? What were the cascading results of this in the lives of both individuals and the collective humanity?

There are three key theological points to discuss regarding justification.

1. Justification is a result of God's grace in response to saving faith (Romans 3:21-26; Romans 4:2-3; Philippians 3:9; Galatians 2:16-17). Based on these passages, discuss both God's role and our role in this supernatural work.

2. The results of Justification (Romans 5:1; Romans 5:9; Titus 3:7). Make a list of the results of justification as listed in these passages.

How are the results of justification a "game changer" in the lives of Christians?

Conversely, what does it look like for these to NOT be true in an individual's life? What are the natural consequences of one not being justified with God?

3. Justification gives us hope and perspective for our faith journey (Romans 5:1-21; Romans 1:17)

What does the work of Justification do to a person's identity, their sense of self worth?

What should the life of a Christian look like living in response to the work of Justification?

In times of struggle, how can this truth bring one back to the anchoring hope of our faith?

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Is it important to remind ourselves of the reality of our justification? Why or why not?

How can an individual remind themselves of the liberating reality of being justified by God?

How can Christians in community remind each other and celebrate the hope and victory of being justified by God?

MOVING OUTWARD | Faith in Action

Completely forgive a debt this week.

DISCUSSION #3: SANCTIFICATION

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In this discussion we will explore the biblical teaching of sanctification, which means we are being saved from the power of sin.

MY STORY | Starting Place

What is the most significant change you have experienced in our journey with God? Is there a specific area of transformation you are especially thankful for? Is there any area of transformation that you still want to experience?

DIGGING DEEPER | Practical Biblical Application

Engage with the statement: Sanctification means we are being saved from the power of sin.

What do you believe the “power of sin” is? How does it take hold of an individual?

There are three key theological points to discuss in regards to sanctification.

1. Sanctified by truth (John 17:14-19)

What is “truth” as outlined in the Bible?

What do you think Jesus is actually praying for in this passage?

2. We are a new creature (Galatians 2:20; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Romans 6:1-23;

The Bible teaches that the spiritual work God does within a Christian in Justification makes them a new creature (i.e. something dies within them and something new is born or animated within). How is this good news in the reality of Sanctification in our lives?

How is this different than trying harder to be a good person?

3. Set apart for new purposes (2 Timothy 2:21; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Philippians 1:6; 2 Peter 1:2-4; Colossians 3:1-5)

An aspect of Sanctification is that God sets us apart for new purposes. What are those purposes as outlined in the above passages?

How can one intentionally work with God in this endeavor?

GROWING TOGETHER | Spiritual Friendship

In your spiritual journey, what has God done in your personal sanctification process? What specific area(s) has he worked most significantly?

What was your part and His part in that process?

MOVING OUTWARD | Faith in Action

Who can you encourage this week in the work God wants to do in their life? What aspect of your sanctification can you share to encourage them, and maybe model how we join God in this beautiful work?

DISCUSSION #4: GLORIFICATION

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In this discussion we will explore the biblical teaching of glorification, which means we will be saved from the presence of sin.

MY STORY | Starting Place

Do you feel the grind of sinful patterns in your life? What would it feel like to have that lifted; like waking up and the cold you had the night before has disappeared?

DIGGING DEEPER | Practical Biblical Application

Engage with the statement: Glorification means we will be saved from the presence of sin.

“Saved” is a completed state which, with Glorification, means we are fully delivered from the chain and power of sin.

What do you think the presence of sin means? As God works through that in our Sanctification, what all do you think he is accomplishing? Clearly our liberation, but what do we learn about God’s heart and ourselves in that messy process?

There are two key theological points to discuss in regards to justification.

1. We are being transformed to become more and more like Jesus (2 Corinthians 3:18; Philippians 3:20-21).

What points are outlined in these passages?

This is ultimately the progressive work of Sanctification leading toward Glorification. What does this process look like?

2. Our glorification process will be complete when we see Jesus again (Colossians 3:4; 1 John 3:2)

Why do you think we do not experience the culmination of God’s work, Glorification, within our physical lives, but only at the return of Jesus?

How or why does the coming of Jesus complete our Glorification process?

What does our waiting and “working out our salvation with fear and trembling” (Philippians 2:12) produce in our hearts and tangibly in our lives? Why does God make us wait for Glorification?

In the life of a Christian, God gives us victories in one area of life and often reveals a new area of our heart that He wants to work in. In His grace, He never reveals the full scope of our sanctification process.

Why do you think He doesn't show us all the areas of our brokenness at once?

GROWING TOGETHER | Spiritual Friendship

How have you experienced the reality of God's progressive work within your life?

Is it always joyful, or is it painful sometimes? How? Why?

What do you think it will feel like when our Glorification process is complete and we see Jesus? What will it be like to cross that finish line and celebrate the ultimate victory of Jesus with all God's people?

MOVING OUTWARD | Faith in Action

Imagine being completely free from sin. It will be something like a person born blind given sight and not only seeing shapes and colors, but the clarity of...everything! Take some time this week to meditate (in prayer, silence, or journaling) on this amazing reality that awaits us!