

Each week of 2019 we will take a brief look at one or more questions from the Westminster Shorter Catechism. To read previous weeks' briefs go to [oakhillpca.com/wsc](http://oakhillpca.com/wsc)

Q. 35. *What is sanctification?*

A. 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.

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

A. 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.

In these questions, the Catechism is still reflecting on the work of the Holy Spirit, started with Q. 29. The Holy Spirit makes us "partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ" (Q. 29). The Spirit makes us "partakers" by "uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling" (Q. 30). This effectual calling is the renewing work of the Spirit where he enables "us to embrace Jesus Christ" (Q. 31). Questions 32-36 all explain the benefits we enjoy because of this gracious work of the Spirit.

Last week we highlighted justification and adoption. We noted that these are one-time, completed acts of God's grace. Notice the change of words when the Catechism speaks of sanctification. This is the "work of God's free grace." The change emphasizes that sanctification is an ongoing work of God in our lives. It is not complete until we die or Christ returns (see. Q. 37).

In the Greek, sanctification comes from the same word group as holy. In a nutshell, sanctification is the process of becoming holy. The Catechism explains that this process has three parts.

**1. *Renewal of the Whole Man After the Image of God.*** The Spirit works the truth of the Gospel into our hearts, minds, and wills in order to transform our "whole man."

**2. *Die Unto Sin, or Mortification of Sin.*** To die to sin means to hate sin, turn away from sin, and come out from the power of sin. Romans 8:13 says that this happens only "by the Spirit."

**3. *Live Unto Righteousness, or the Vivification of our Spirit.*** As sin "dies" in our hearts, we are to love and delight in Jesus more and more. This process brings to life (more and more) holy affections for God and his will.

In a "catch-all" manner, Q. 36 highlights that all blessings flow from these works of God: justification, adoption, and sanctification. Because of the work of God's grace we can be assured of peace, joy, security, love, and preservation.