

BE
CONFORMED
TO JESUS

 DISCIPLESHIP
BOOKLET

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LIVING IN FREEDOM

APPLYING THE TRUTHS OF JUSTIFICATION

We previously discussed how our justification is a once and for all legal declaration that the Lord has rendered based on Christ's obedient life, sacrificial death, and victorious resurrection. Justification, however, is not just something for us to think on in a theoretical way. God's justification of us has practical and tangible effects for our lives. Grasping this will help us move into greater truth and a closer relationship with the Lord Jesus.

Living in the freedom that justification brings does not mean that our sin nature is gone. The Bible is clear that fighting sin is an ongoing battle for the believer (see the discussions on sanctification for more). The freedom that justification brings is a freedom that enables us to leave our guilt and shame at the cross and embrace the abundant, full life that God has for us. It is for freedom that we have been set free (Galatians 5:1).

3. What does it mean to believe God is “faithful and just”?

4. What does the end of this verse promise God will do? If true confession has occurred, what then should be the result in our lives? Results of our emotions?

LIVE IN FREEDOM

Read Galatians 5:1-6

7. What do you think the “freedom” of justification should produce in the life and attitude of the Christian?

8. Paul tells his readers not to again submit to a yoke of slavery (verse 2), then he explains what he means in the verses following—especially verse 4. What is the yoke that our flesh is always drawn to? (Read Romans 3:20 for help)

9. How will submitting to this “yoke” cause us to be miserably frustrated, soaked in self-condemnation?

SUMMARY

1. Justification is a once and for all legal declaration made by God the Father based on the life and work of God the Son.
2. Our justification frees us to live in a new way, without condemnation.
3. The freedom that justification brings allows us to leave our guilt and shame at the Cross because it has been fully and finally dealt with.
4. We must constantly remind ourselves of the gospel in order that we would not submit again to a works-based approach to righteousness.

NOTES

PUT OFF AND PUT ON

APPLYING THE TRUTHS OF SANCTIFICATION AND CHRIST'S VICTORY

We have already seen that in sanctification, it is God who empowers and transforms us. Nevertheless, there is another simultaneous reality that we see across the New Testament: By faith, we must be actively pursuing this transformation, putting ourselves in the presence of God to be transformed by him (2 Corinthians 3:17-18). We cannot be passive. By the grace of God and the empowering work of the Holy Spirit, we actively pursue holiness.

One way the Scripture speaks of what our active pursuit looks like, a favorite illustration of the Apostle Paul, is through the image of putting off and putting on. We are to put off the old man and put on Christ. We do this by God's grace, but it still requires action on our part. This week, we will consider what this looks like Biblically and practically.

Read Colossians 3:1-17

3. What do you think it means that “Christ is your life”? Is this true for you? (v.4)

4. After reading verses 5-9, are there any sins of which the Lord is convicting you?

5. Focusing on verses 12-15, how can you personally respond and obey in the circumstances of your life? What is God calling you to “put on?”

6. (See verses 15-16) What is the connection between sanctification and unity in the body? How can you pursue unity in the church and help other believers around you grow in their sanctification?

9. Why is it essential to keep in mind that this entire battle for obedience must flow out of Christ's victory and finished work? What will happen if this doesn't remain our hope?

SUMMARY

1. Sanctification is an ongoing process that the Bible describes in several ways. One way is through the imagery of putting off the old and putting on the new.
2. We are to be active in our sanctification, and this means we are to actively put on the new man as we seek to grow in Christlikeness.
3. As we grow and continue to put on Christ, the things of God begin to grow in appeal and we begin to lose our taste for sin.
4. We must be vigilant and active, never making provision for the flesh as we seek to be transformed into the image of Christ.

NOTES

THE RENEWED MIND

APPLYING THE TRUTHS OF SANCTIFICATION AND CHRIST'S VICTORY

It is difficult to emphasize just how significant the relationship between the mind and our sanctification truly is. Across both the Old and New Testaments, God makes it clear that what we dwell on in our hearts and minds will make or break us. This is an incredibly encouraging truth, while also a bit disturbing. What kinds of things are you filling your mind with? What kinds of music? Entertainment? Conversation? Education? News?

As we saw in a previous section on sin, the effects of sin are so pervasive that every part of us has been affected. Our bodies break down, our emotional lives are damaged, our hearts are wicked, and our minds have been skewed. We are called to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength (Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27). This means that something needs to happen to our minds for our love of God to be as it should. Our minds must be renewed! The good news is, for those who believe the gospel, through regeneration their desires and minds have been radically altered—for good! Yet again, this pursuit is ongoing and we must be active by faith.

3. In what areas of life are you being conformed to the world? How do you need to practically respond in pursuing mind renewal?

4. Being transformed through mind renewal comes through fundamental things like Bible reading, prayer, fellowship, intentionality in what we place before our eyes, etc. Why is it often so difficult to do things that are so basic?

STAY FOCUSED

Read Isaiah 26:3-4

7. What does this passage teach, and how can you put this into action?

SUMMARY

1. Our minds are a battlefield, and to have victory in this battle we must, by God's grace, be active and engaged.
2. Our minds need to be renewed due to the pervasive impact of sin, and this renewal is possible by the work of God in the Word and church.
3. Renewal begins by engaging with the Scriptures on a consistent basis and filling our minds with the things of God.
4. As our minds are renewed and we think on things that honor the Lord, our inclination to choose sin over righteousness begins to lessen as we see the beauty of Christ in the gospel.

NOTES

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

APPLYING THE TRUTHS OF SANCTIFICATION AND CHRIST'S VICTORY

The Christian life is a life of battle. It is a life of warring against the flesh and against the sins and temptations that weigh us down. Scripture is clear that there are spiritual forces at work in the world today. References to the “prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2), the “evil one” (2 Thessalonians 3:3), and the devil as a “roaring lion” (1 Peter 5:8–9) in the New Testament point us to a critical, yet unseen, reality.

We are not without hope in the face of such forces because we are not fighting from a position of weakness. We fight with the knowledge that the victory has already been won because of Christ's death and resurrection! The victory of Jesus over sin, death, and the grave empowers his people to fight with confidence and faith. We believe that because of Christ's victory, no spiritual force can separate us from the love of God that is ours in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:37–39).

3. What is the only offensive weapon mentioned? How does this change the way you think about fighting sin and the enemy?

4. What is the connection between prayer and the Word? Why is prayer essential in spiritual warfare? Who can you ask in your life to keep you accountable to consistent prayer?

Read Ephesians 6:19–20

5. What did Paul desire the result of this prayer and fighting to be? What did he want the opportunity for in his own life?

6. Are you engaged in the task of evangelism and mission? How do you think your engagement in this task will relate to the level of war in your life?

9. How does a person “take a thought captive?”

**SATAN’S TACTICS TO RUIN
AN IMAGE BEARER**

Deceive You (John 8:44; Genesis 3:1-5)

Disqualify You (2 Timothy 2:26)

Distract You (Matthew 4:8-10)

Discourage You (Revelation 12:9-10)

Kill You (John 8:44)

10. Which of these tactics are you feeling the most strongly in your life right now? What are some promises from Scripture you can call to mind to fight against these tactics when they come against you?

SUMMARY

1. The Christian life is a life of battle and war. This includes spiritual warfare that happens around us in realms unseen.
2. We do not fight from a position of weakness. The ultimate victory has already been won by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
3. We fight from victory for victory by consistently engaging with the Word and with God through fervent prayer.
4. Satan will come against us in various ways, but the promises of God are steady and true. Nothing can separate us from the love of God that is ours in Christ Jesus.

NOTES

SUFFERING WITH HOPE

APPLYING THE TRUTHS OF SALVATION AND JUDGMENT

Few things cause more dissonance in the Christian life than suffering. We are promised life that is abundant and full (John 10:10), yet we are also told we must share in the sufferings of Christ (Philippians 3:10). These two ideas are not opposed to each other, as we believe the whole of Scripture to be true. Suffering comes to every life, and for the believer the question becomes this: how do we suffer? Not “how” in the sense of the actual cause of suffering, but “how” in the sense of our response to suffering.

Believers are called to suffer with hope. This hope comes not from ourselves, but from the promises of the Lord Jesus that have been revealed to us in sacred Scripture. No suffering can separate us from the love of God that is ours in Christ Jesus. This hope in God does not put us to shame, for there is nothing steadier we can hope in! Directly related to the issue of suffering are some of the truths we have already studied—especially truths related to promised glorification of the church and Christ’s judgment of evil.

Above all, we look to our Lord Jesus and his suffering. For in his suffering, it has been dramatically demonstrated that from the worst of suffering and death, God has worked most powerfully for his glory and our good.

SUMMARY

1. Following Jesus comes with a promise that we will indeed suffer.
2. Because of God's justification of us, nothing can separate us from him. His love for us is unbreakable.
3. Because of God's promises of sanctification, suffering has the effect of refining our character and making us like Christ.
4. Because of God's promises of glorification, we do not grieve without hope! We grieve knowing death or Christ's return is only the beginning.
5. Because of God's promises of judgment, we can take heart, for God will right every wrong done to us in this life.

NOTES

APPENDIX: RESOURCES FOR SPECIFIC ISSUES

As you walk with Jesus and pursue greater conformity to his character, you will encounter challenges along the way. Perhaps most often, challenge comes as the Holy Spirit reveals an area of weakness and sin that needs to be addressed. Other times, you will be faced with a difficult trial or circumstance in family, relationships, or work. As you live on mission and pursue discipleship, you will meet people who need counsel or encouragement as they wrestle with difficulties and sin struggles.

We have put together a set of resources that address specific issues with God's Word and with the goal of Christlikeness. Don't suffer and struggle alone! Utilize these resources personally or in your d-group as you see fit and the Holy Spirit leads.

The resources are available at the link below or by scanning the QR code.



<https://www.highview.org/discipleship/resources>

