

Life Principles Center

Course: Understanding What Has Changed

T1_CB_L1: You Are Justified (AT021)

Introduction:

If you have taken the course entitled, “Now That You Believe,” then you have already learned the extent of God’s great love for you. He sent His one and only Son to forgive you of your sin, redeem you at a costly price, and reconcile you to Himself. Now, in this course, entitled “Understanding What Has Changed,” we will examine some dramatic changes that have taken place in our lives since we accepted Christ.

Friends, Jesus Christ did not die on the cross to simply forgive and redeem us. He also did it to crucify our old sin nature and conform us to His image. He placed the guilt of all our sin on Himself, and declared us holy before God.

Sin no longer has power over us. Jesus Christ has enabled us to triumph over sin! From the very beginning, God provided for your salvation and restoration. When you begin to understand the total transformation God has completed in you, you will have a better picture of His ultimate purpose for your life.

Lesson 1, Section 1

Objectives: At the end of this section of Lesson 1, you should be able to:

- A. Recognize the meaning of justification, and explain its three characteristics.
- B. Understand the relationship between justification and righteousness.

Scripture

Read Romans 5:1, 17-21

(v. 1) Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (v. 17-21) For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who received the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in the life through the One, Jesus Christ. So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted

justification of life to all men. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous. The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Lesson 1

In the previous course, *Now That You Believe*, we examined some key elements in the life of the believer. We saw that God loves us just as we are, and that He has therefore forgiven, redeemed, and reconciled us. He acted not because we *deserved* the salvation that He offers, but because in His love, He knew that we desperately *needed* that salvation and that there would be no way for us to attain it apart from His intervention. Having laid this groundwork in our studies, this second course will begin to explore how God's gracious act has changed each of us who have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord. In this first lesson, we will see how God has justified us through His Son.

We need to understand that the issue of justification is crucial to a Christian's belief system. If we have a skewed perception of this important matter, then we will be unable to adequately perceive our liberty and freedom in Christ Jesus. Justification is not simply an impressive-sounding theological word that preachers use; instead, it is the basis and foundation of everything we believe as Christians! Truly, there is no way for us to enjoy the victorious Christian life unless we understand what it means to be justified according to Scripture.

The best place to start is to simply examine what the word "justification" means. In Greek, the original language of the New Testament, the word for "justification" comes from the same root word as does the term translated "righteous." Therefore, justification and righteousness are fundamentally connected. When we say that a man is justified, we mean that he has been declared righteous in the eyes of God. He has been acquitted of his guilt and the righteousness of Jesus Christ has been placed upon him.

How can this be? We have seen in the previous course that man is deeply sinful and that no one is righteous. (Romans 3:10-18, 23) Yet, the doctrine of justification claims that every believer is declared righteous by

God Himself. This is only possible because of Christ's atoning sacrifice on the cross. (Romans 3:23-24) God has not ignored our sin, nor has He declared that it is irrelevant. Instead, recognizing the seriousness of sin and the fact that it separated us from His pure holiness, God judged each one of us, found us guilty, and then delivered our punishment to His Son. Christ was our substitute; He bore the punishment that we deserved. Therefore, through Him, atonement has been made for our sin and Holy God can once again look upon us without impugning His perfect righteousness.

Q1: *True or False? Our justification in Christ is like a judge finding a criminal "guilty" and then taking the penalty for the crime upon himself rather than placing it upon the true guilty person.*

There are three central points that we must grasp, each of which is laid out in this statement: GOD has justified us by GRACE through FAITH. The three things we can see here are the *who* (God), *why* (God's grace), and *how* (through faith) of justification.

This means that our justification is a gift that God freely gave because of His great love for us. There is no way that we could have earned our own standing as "righteous;" therefore, God acted to secure our justification *for us*. (2 Corinthians 5:21) We enter into this saving relationship with God by accepting His Son in faith, or in other words, by believing the Gospel and receiving Christ as our Savior.

Q2: Multiple Choice. *Which of the following statements does not belong? The three characteristics of justification explain:*

- A. *who justified us*
- B. *why we were justified*
- C. *when each person's justification takes place*
- D. *how our justification is made complete*

Lesson 1, Section 2

Objectives: At the end of this section of Lesson 1, you should be able to:

- A. Recognize the contemporary relevance of your justification in Christ.
- B. Distinguish between justification and sanctification, and comprehend how that understanding correlates to the way you relate to God on a daily basis.

C. Examine attitudes of unbelief and indifference toward sin due to faulty ideas about justification and forgiveness.

So now, even though we were all stuck in sin, helpless to redeem ourselves, and “haters of God” (Romans 1:18-32), we can be called God’s children, “heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:7). Obviously, this fact has implications upon our behavior and character. No longer are we floundering through the world with no purpose and no hope. Now, the Holy Spirit has entered into our hearts and lives, and we have become “co-heirs” with Jesus, full “children of God” (Romans 8:16-17). Upon our acceptance of Christ as Lord, we have become “new creations” and our old selves have been put away. (2 Corinthians 5:17) It’s crucial to understand that your newness in Christ is declared as of the moment you receive Him. You are justified *today*.

J1: Knowing that God has changed His entire view of you on the basis of His grace, how do you feel about your new identity? Write your response in your journal, confessing any unbelief you may have.

Notice the order of events: *first* we come to Christ, and *then* our attitudes and actions change. Too many people delay a decision for Christ because they have a pious desire to wait until their lives are clean enough to approach God. My friend, these people are going about this backwards! God is not interested in how “clean” we can make ourselves; He knows that we can never improve our lives enough to make us worthy of Him. Instead, He desires for us to come to Him just as we are, so that *He* can begin to change and improve our lives from the inside out. This process is called sanctification and is completely separate from justification. Remember that our justification was completed with the sacrifice of Christ two thousand years ago, while our sanctification is the day-to-day purification of our lives under the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit.

J2: Now that you understand you are justified in God's sight no matter what the actions of your life reflect, how does this change the way you come to God on a daily basis? Does it free you to be honest about your sin with Him, confessing it—knowing He doesn't take away your robe of righteousness, or declare you unworthy to sit in His presence? Respond in your journal.

Understanding that our justification is something outside of ourselves that God has already completed is quite freeing for the Christian. This means that we are not trapped beneath an endless list of dos and don'ts that we must meticulously maintain in order to be saved. (Galatians 3:2-5; 5:1) Our best behavior cannot and will not secure our eternity with God; only the blood of Jesus can do that.

This is certainly not a license to sin or act however we please, though! The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit changes us from the inside; this means that as God works within us to change our attitudes, there will be a positive affect on our actions. Because we are clothed in the righteousness of Christ (Galatians 3:27), the Spirit within us will work to daily conform our actions to those of Jesus, so that we begin to develop a sincere Christ-like attitude. (Philippians 2:5-11)

J3: Ask the Lord to show you ways in which your actions reflect the work He has done inside of you and praise Him for that. Then, ask Him to reveal areas of your life where you have let indifference or faulty doctrine lead you to sin, rationalizing it by abusing God's forgiveness and justification. Record your thoughts, praises, and prayers in your journal.

As we grow in our understanding of justification and the impact that Christ's saving work has on our lives, Jesus will become more and more real to us. As such, the next natural step in our study will be to consider the full implications of the crucifixion in each of our lives, which we will explore in the next lesson of this course, "You Are Crucified."

Q3: Carefully read Romans 5:8-9. Then, without looking at your Bible or the Scripture passage on screen, fill in the blanks below:

"But God _____ His own love toward us in that while we were yet _____, Christ died for us. Much more then, having been _____ by His _____, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him" (Romans 5:8-9).

J4: As you grasp the magnitude of how Christ's sacrifice on the cross changed you and transformed how God sees you, what do you want your life to reveal?

Prayer

Father, we thank You that You made the provision, for we never could have—that it's not based upon us, but upon You; that it's not temporary, but eternal; that it is the work of the Spirit of God within our hearts. And I pray today in Jesus' name that somebody who has never received Jesus Christ as their Savior may recognize there's nothing they can do until, first of all, they receive Christ as Savior and Lord by faith and repentance—that is, willing to confess their sin to You, willing to have You change their attitude, their actions, and their affections. And the moment we're willing and the moment we receive, by faith, Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, it all comes to pass and then it begins to work itself out. Father, we thank You for somebody who will kneel right when we finish and ask You, the Lord Jesus Christ, to come into their heart. We pray, Father, for those who want to grow in the Lord, who really want to be what You want them to be, not just want to go to church, not just church attendance, but the making of saints. I beg of You, dear God, in Jesus' name, that Your Spirit's conviction would be so heavy upon many today that they would respond. And then I pray, Father, for many of Your children who've been in bondage for years, who've never seen their position in You before, that by simple faith they'd be willing to pray this prayer:

Heavenly Father, by faith I receive my position with all of its wonderful eternal provision in Jesus Christ. In His name I pray.

And Father, that simple prayer of faith, I know, will change the heart, the life of multitudes of people. And this is my prayer today, that all You have provided for us to be, we might become in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Homework

Scripture Memory:

The Scripture memory assignment for this course is given below. Be sure to commit this passage to memory before moving on to the next lesson. Then, practice reciting it over and over throughout this course.

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Life Principles Center

Course: Understanding What Has Changed

T1_CB_L2: You Are Crucified (AT091)

Introduction: This lesson is divided into two sections to help you complete the entire lesson at your convenience. In order to renew your mind with God's Word and give you an accurate view of Him, it's very important that you take time to complete each assignment before moving on to the next lesson.

Lesson 2, Section 1

Objectives: At the end of this section of Lesson 2, you should be able to:

- C. Review and evaluate what you learned in the previous lesson.
- B. Commit Galatians 2:20 to memory.

Scripture

Read Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Lesson 2

The average Christian has never heard of many of the things you may have already studied in *Faith Foundations*, such as redemption, reconciliation, and justification. They may know something about God's unconditional love and forgiveness, but by and large they are just coasting through their spiritual lives. They may be regular church-goers and may even give time or money to the ministry, but too often people believe that *this* is what constitutes the Christian life. They could not be further from the truth. Even though these acts are important, they should not be the focus of our faith.

Most people, whether they admit it or not, do not see the normal Christian life as sufficient. Something always seems to be missing, or the joy of Christ seems to be just out of reach. The truth is, my friend, that until you and I understand the real meaning of the Christian life and what God has provided for us, we will struggle through one defeat after the other.

Galatians 2:20 offers radical insight into our faith. This verse is crucial to understanding our place in God's plan and should be the center

of our Christian lives. Writing to the Galatian church, Paul declares, “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.” In this small passage, Paul lays down a principle that has earth-shattering consequences still today, 2,000 years later.

Q1: Before progressing through the rest of this section, rehearse Galatians 2:20 until you have it memorized. Then, without looking at Scripture, fill in the blanks below:

"I _____ crucified _____ Christ; and it is _____
 _____ I who live, but Christ lives _____ me; and the life which I
 _____ live in the flesh I live _____ in the Son of
 God, who loved me and _____ Himself up for me" (Galatians
 2:20).

Lesson 2, Section 2

Objectives: At the end of this section of Lesson 2, you should be able to:

- Understand the significance of Paul's use of the word *crucified*.
- Understand the significance of Scripture memory.
- Recognize why you, and all believers, still sin.
- Examine your life to pinpoint areas of non-victorious living and brainstorm ways to embrace the work Jesus did at the Cross.

The key points of this matter can be distilled into three specific questions. First, *who was crucified?* Well, we should well know that Jesus Christ is the One who hung on the cross. Yet, in this passage, Paul clearly announces that he has been crucified himself. Paul wrote this about 30 years after Jesus' death and resurrection; how then can he say that he was crucified with Christ—especially since he was not a follower of Christ until after the events of the Cross had come and gone?

Paul uses a word in this passage that means something like “co-crucifixion.” This means that while Jesus was the One who physically hung on the cross, every man and woman on earth hung there with Him. The crucifixion is not something that happened to someone back in the depths of history; it is something that has happened to each and every one of us *through* Jesus 2,000 years ago.

Second, we can ask *when was the crucifixion?* Without getting too technical, let me explain the importance of the verb tense of the word translated “crucified.” It is in the perfect tense, which means it is an action that occurred in the past that still has lasting implications to this

day. In terms of the crucifixion, Paul is saying that the historical event of Jesus death and resurrection has the same impact and relevance today as it did the day it happened. In essence, the crucifixion cannot and will not “wear off.”

While the event itself happened long ago, we only experience its reality when we receive Jesus Christ as our Savior. What we may or may not do today has no effect on the fact that the sin of all mankind—including each one of us individually—was nailed to the cross with Jesus. Therefore, the only thing left for us to do today is to accept what He has already done for us. (Ephesians 1:3-4)

Third, we can ask *what was crucified?* Obviously, neither you nor I have been physically nailed to the cross with Jesus, so what is Paul talking about? The answer can be seen in another important passage, Romans 6:5-11. Here, the apostle declares in verse 6, “Knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with.” Therefore, it is our *old self* that was nailed to the cross with Jesus.

This brings up a new question, *what is our “old self”?* Our *old self* is the sinful nature that permeated our lives before our saving relationship with Jesus. It is appropriate to discuss the “old” nature as opposed to the new, as 2 Corinthians 5:17 clearly reveals that in Christ, we have become something altogether *new*. There, we see that “the old things (have) passed away; behold, new things have come.” Our acceptance of Jesus as Lord did not *change* our old nature; instead, the Holy Spirit entered into our lives to *replace* the old nature. Rather than simply being an *improved* version of our past selves, we are now something totally new and different. Jesus has exchanged our old lives for the new lives He has to offer. For this reason, we can confidently proclaim that our old sinful nature is dead forevermore. We know this because each of our sinful natures suffered the deathblow on the cross with Christ.

Q2: *What is the significance of the Greek word Paul uses for crucified? Choose the best answer.*

- A. *It means Jesus was crucified on the cross.*
- B. *It means that our sins were put to death with Christ on the cross.*
- C. *It means that our old sinful natures were crucified once and for all through Jesus' death on the cross.*
- D. *It means Christ's sacrifice 2,000 years ago has a lasting impact on how we live our lives today.*

E. All of the above

Sin desires to tear us down. However, in Christ, sin has been defeated in our lives once and for all. Therefore, since sin cannot outright destroy us, the devil will instead attempt to rob us of our joy and freedom by convincing us that we are the same sinning people that we have always been. The Enemy may whisper, “New creation? No you’re not; just look at you, still sinning away like you’ve always done. There’s nothing new about your spirit.”

Remember that these are the Deceiver’s lies. The truth is that we *are changed*. We can never again be what we once were. That old self has been crucified, killed, and replaced with the Holy Spirit of God Himself.

J1: As you understand the tools the Tempter uses to deceive you and rob your peace, why is memorizing Scripture such as Galatians 2:20 vital to living a victorious Christian life? Respond in your journal.

Now, this does not mean that we will stop sinning once we receive Christ into our hearts. Even though the old self has been put away, we still commit sins because we are still operating within a physical body that has all the same drives and desires that it had before our salvation. The difference is that we once sinned because it was in our very nature to do so; now, however, our sins are the results of our own foolish pride or lack of faith. We see a problem, desire, or need and we seek to solve or meet it ourselves, without God’s help. When we turn away from Him and strike out on our own, we sin—that is we “miss the mark” as we learned in Course One's first lesson.

Q3: True or False? As believers, we now sin not because it's in our nature to do so, but because we fail to trust God with every aspect of our lives.

If you are struggling because you do not feel victorious in your Christian life, make sure that you have fully absorbed this crucial point. Remember that our best efforts cannot bring about ultimate success; instead, victory is achieved by embracing the work that God has already done for us and allowing Him to work in and through our lives.

J2: In what areas of your life do you tend to still struggle with sin? What are some ways you can daily encourage yourself to embrace the work of Christ in you, and yield to His leading instead of yielding to sin?

Not only do we share in Christ's crucifixion, but also in the glorious outcome of that saving act. Through Him, as we will see in the next lesson of this course, "We Have Been Glorified."

Prayer

Father, we thank You for what You've provided. All the human effort of all humanity, from Adam up to this present day, could never provide what You provided for us at the cross. Lord God Almighty, I pray in Jesus' wonderful, blessed, exciting, powerful name, that the truth of this message may sink deep, deep, deep to the spirit of every person who's heard it. That like that hook deep down in the fish would catch, they would not be able to wiggle themselves out of it, nor to forget it, nor to ignore it, [nor to] to brush it aside, but to claim our wonderful position in Christ Jesus. Christ in us, our hope for the present, and our hope of glory. Not human effort, not struggling, not trying, but just trusting. And Lord God, You know in my own heart, I could never thank You enough for what You're teaching me in my own heart, in my own life, freeing me, liberating me, and helping me to understand, what for years, I struggled against because I could not comprehend it. Therefore, Lord, I know that it must be the Spirit who does the teaching and not the preacher. And I pray today in the name of Jesus that Your Spirit will now take this truth and make it a living reality in the life of every single person who's heard it today. Thank You, God, for being so loving, so kind, so gracious, so good. And I want to ask You, Father, for somebody today who's never been saved. No hope for life eternally, and no help here and now. Give them the courage and the wisdom to step out today and not to wait. And then all the rest of us, Lord, who've heard to believe, to start simply believing You, God, and doubting the Devil. We've believed him so long—to our utter defeated misery. Now, we want to believe You, Lord. God, we want to believe You because You're faithful, and we thank You for the beautiful results that will continue to grow in each one of our lives is my prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.

Homework

Scripture Memory

Be sure to review your Scripture memory assignment for this course!

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Transcript of Audio/Video Teaching Clip

Do you feel defeated, discouraged, or overwhelmed? Is there sin in your life that seems to keep eating away at your joy and hope?

Friends, it's not the will of God for you to live a defeated life. Romans, chapter six verse six says, "Knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin." What you were before you were saved was nailed to the cross and crucified with Jesus Christ. Not according to your feelings or your reasoning, but according to the Word of God.

It's not natural for you to sin any more, because your old sin nature is dead. Now, you might be thinking, "Then, why do I still struggle with sin?"

Well, all of us still live in human bodies. Our bodies have desires and drives, and we still have our own will. God didn't cancel that out when He crucified our old natures.

Please don't miss this. There's one reason you and I sin against God. We sin when we try to meet our need or gratify our desire. Instead of living by faith as the Bible tells us, we choose not to trust that God will give us what we need. Our sin, then, is because of our unbelief.

But two thousand years ago when Jesus Christ died for your sin and my sin, everything that you and I will ever need was provided for at the cross. Jesus said, "It is finished."

So the life God wants you and me to live is the life of faith. What is the believer's ultimate responsibility? To believe the Lord God Almighty and His testimony, and walk in that belief every day.

Listen, there are only two people you and I can believe: God and the devil. God says He's given us everything we need to live victoriously over sin. The devil tells us we're weak, and we're trying to be something we're not.

So we need to respond by saying, "Satan, I'm not trying to be something I'm not. I'm a saint—sanctified, loved, forgiven, redeemed, reconciled, justified, crucified. I'm just being what God has made me in Christ Jesus."

Life Principles Center

Course: Understanding What Has Changed

T1_CB_L3: You Have Been Glorified (AU061)

Introduction: Second Timothy 2:15 says, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth." For that reason, we encourage you to complete each assignment before progressing to the next lesson. This lesson is structured with two separate sections to help you maximize your study time.

Lesson 3, Section 1

Objectives: At the end of this section of Lesson 3, you should be able to:

- D. Reflect upon Romans 8:37 and apply it to your life.
- E. Examine your life to see how God's glorification process is evident since your salvation experience.

Scripture

Read Romans 8:29-39:

For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Just as it is written, "For Your sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered." But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Lesson 3

In previous lessons, we examined several aspects of the Christian life. Of all the things that Christ has done for us, many of them are described in the past tense. For example, past lessons have discussed how we *have been* forgiven, redeemed, and reconciled. But now, as we come to this lesson, *You Have Been Glorified*, we seem to stumble across an apparent contradiction: *How can we say we have already been glorified when we still have so much trouble with sin and when we still occasionally experience such bitter defeat in our Christian lives?* Moreover, what do we even mean when we say that we have been “glorified”?

To understand glorification, we need to take a close look at three different areas. First, we need to look at *God’s plan for mankind*. The reason why so many people fail to understand their position as glorified by God is that they do not see themselves within His “big picture.”

God’s big picture begins with *creation*. He created this world and everything in it, and His love overflowed for the man and woman He set upon the earth. However, when sin entered the world and mankind was placed in peril, God acted to bring *salvation* to fallen man. He did this through the perfect sacrifice of His only Son Jesus Christ, as we have studied throughout the previous lessons.

Along with that salvation came *restoration*. Through Christ, God will restore to sinful man all that was lost in the Fall. What a restoration! This means that the image of God can once again shine in the heart of men! However, God’s plan does not stop there. As part of this restoration, God has chosen to actually *glorify* us. In Romans 8:16-17, Paul declares, “The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.” So you see, our glorification is the last step in God’s big picture.

Now that we see that progression, we must notice the second major area, which is *God’s provision for glorifying us*. Perhaps you are uncomfortable with the idea of being glorified *yourself*. After all, shouldn’t we be the ones glorifying *God*? (Galatians 1:4-5; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 13:21)

When we glorify God, we mean to extol, honor, and praise Him above everything else in the universe. However, when God glorifies us, it is something different. Our glorification has greater consequences than just being honored or lifted up. It speaks of a continual process by which

God is working to perfect our lives. We see this in Philippians 1:6, "He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus."

J1: Carefully read Romans 8:37. How does this verse relate to the "greater consequences" of God's current work to make your character more like His? (Be specific about the struggles God is enabling you to conquer.)

What is God's process of perfecting us? It is all that we have been studying so far: it is the process of forgiveness, redemption, reconciliation, justification, crucifixion, and now, glorification. Romans 8:29-30 reveals that before we were even born, God knew us and chose to restore to us all that was lost in the Fall. All of human history has been part of this process, which will continue until it is perfected at the glorious return of Christ. (1 John 3:1-3)

J2: Examine your life since you received Jesus as Savior. Ask Him to reveal areas of growth and glorification He's brought about. (For instance, is there a spiritually unhealthy habit from which He has freed you? Or is there a lie you once believed but now recognize it as deception?)

Lesson 3, Section 2

Objectives: At the end of this section of Lesson 3, you should be able to:

- Understand God's motivation in glorifying His children.
- Understand how it's possible to still sin and yet be declared "glorified" by God.
- Distinguish between God's glory and the glorification of man.
- Identify the four aspects of God's glorifying process that preserve us.

Are you surprised that God's plan for us did not end at our salvation? He knew that it would not be enough for us to be saved. He wants our lives to radiate and magnify His own goodness. Our glory does not come from what we do ourselves, but from what God does within and through us.

Q1: Multiple Choice: God's motivation for glorifying us was:

- A. To rescue us from our sin.*
- B. His desire for every aspect of our lives to reflect His goodness.*
- C. Both of the above.*

D. None of the above.

The third area we must examine is *the way God preserves us by glorifying us*. Like the verbs in the previous lessons, *glorification* here is an action that was completed in the past, yet has lasting consequences still today. Unlike the others, though, our glorification is something that was done in the past but will not be experienced fully until some future time.

First, glorification involves a perfect standing with almighty God. This is what is implied by our being “like Christ” in 1 John 3:2. The old sin principle that once dominated our lives will no longer bother us once we are fully glorified.

Q2: *True or False? Even though we have been glorified, sin still exists as a struggle because the fullness of our glorification is coming in the future.*

Second, our glorification involves a completely new family. We are now members of the Body of Christ, joined together in a special bond to every individual believer in Jesus Christ throughout all time. So, our new family is not simply those with whom we may live for a time, but rather all of those with whom we will spend eternity with God.

Third, beyond our new family, our glorification will make us citizens of a new habitation. Philippians 3:20 explains, “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.” This means that while we are still *in* the world, we are no longer *of* the world. (John 17:11-18)

Fourth and finally, our glorification will result in a renewed body. Philippians 3:20-21 continues, “(Jesus) . . . who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of his glory.” This means that in eternity, we will still have our bodies, but they will be very different. They will be eternal, resurrection bodies. (1 Corinthians 15:35-50)

Q3: *Which of the following is NOT an aspect of God's preservation for us through His glorification process:*

- A. *We are given perfect standing with the Lord.*
- B. *We are given the same exaltation or praise as God is given.*
- C. *We are given new citizenship in heaven.*
- D. *We are given a new family in the Church body.*
- E. *We are given new, resurrected bodies.*

All of these things will bring about the completion of God's original plan at the time of Creation. You may say, "Well, I need that right now!" Friend, I promise you that you have all you need right now. Jesus Christ is alive inside of you. We are in a continuing process of becoming more and more like Him. This is not happening because of anything that we have done ourselves, but because Christ Himself is working in and through our lives to bring about our ultimate perfection. Through Him, we are—and will be—glorified.

Prayer

Our Father, we thank You and praise Your holy name for what You've provided in Christ. And to think that You see us all packaged together, and in the process of working out Your perfect will in our lives, You've already settled our eternity as we receive Christ as our Savior. We don't have to worry about if anybody's going to be more glorified than the other, that's none of our business. You've already settled all that. We just want to praise Your holy name. And we think about how miserable so many people in this world are, how wretched life is for so many, how little purpose so many people have for living, and yet You have given us the most glorious purpose there is to live. And that is that Christ living within us could be seen somehow in some way by someone else. Father, I pray that this whole series of messages on the cross would become a part of our thinking about ourselves and about this world, and motivate us to holy living, loving devotion and praise and adoration to You, and a life of service—not compelled by the words of someone else, but constrained, as Paul says, by the love of Christ who is within us. And this I pray in Jesus' name for His sake. Amen.

Homework

Scripture Memory

Be sure to review your Scripture memory assignment for this course!

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Life Principles Center

Course: Understanding What Has Changed

T1_CB_L4: Conformed to His Image (AU131)

Introduction: What makes a successful student? The Lord answers, "Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it" (Joshua 1:8). Divided into two sections, this lesson contains assignments that you are encouraged to finish before continuing to the next lesson.

Lesson 4, Section 1

Objectives: At the end of this section of Lesson 4, you should be able to:

- F. Define the sin principle.
- B. Distinguish between man's soul and his outer appearance.

Scripture

Read Romans 8:28-29

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren.

Lesson 4

For the past eight lessons, we have thoroughly examined seven vital aspects of our relationship with Christ, as well as the implications that relationship has on our daily lives. Now, as we finish this second course of study, we will take a look at one last point in our transformation toward Christ-likeness: our conformity to His image.

We see in Romans 8:29 that it is God's intention for us to be conformed to the image of Jesus. However, we often have trouble understanding what this means and how we are to go about achieving this goal. Many of us, in fact, may see this passage as a command to live a life just as Jesus Himself did.

To this end, perhaps we have made an effort to do only what Jesus would do, reading the Bible, responding to others' needs, and being as godly as we know how to be. However, if you're like me, it probably did not take you long to realize that something in this plan of action is wrong.

It is not easy to be like Jesus, and we will always—*always*—fall short. Romans 3:23 describes the sin principle: Even at our best, we still battle against our old sinful natures. Therefore, we are utterly incapable of living a life completely modeled by Jesus Christ, the perfect Son of God.

Q1: *True or False? The sin principle can be paraphrased by the following sentence: Until we are completely conformed to God's image, sin causes us to fall short of God's holiness in its fullest form.*

We see that it is God's design for us to be like Christ, but we also know that it is *impossible* for us to live a sin-free life. (Romans 3:10-18) *(If you are unclear about this important point, refer back to Course 1, Lesson 1)* So, what are we to do?

First, we need to understand what it means to be *conformed*. A general definition is *to be brought into the likeness of something or someone*. What is this "likeness" to which we are being conformed? The moment you accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, something happened inside of you. The Holy Spirit came into your heart and took up residence in your life.

A person's soul represents his spiritual life, emotions, mind, and will. His *body* makes up the rest of his being. With his body, he expresses the content of his soul, through interacting with others, particular habits, behaviors, and so forth. When God speaks of conforming each of us into the image of Christ, He is referring to both aspects—*body and soul*.

Q2: *Complete this sentence with the most appropriate word: Your soul is a combination of how you feel, what you _____, and how or what you think.*

do

decide

F. believe

want

Lesson 4, Section 2

Objectives:

At the end of this section of Lesson 4, you should be able to:

- A. Understand what it means to be conformed to Christ and how this process occurs.
- B. Distinguish between God's *indwelling* and His *unveiling*.

- C. Identify areas in which God has allowed uncomfortable or painful things to unveil Himself in your life.
- D. Identify issues, habits, or attitudes God wants you to relinquish.

The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit brings radical changes to our souls immediately. Our bodies will also be changed into eternal, resurrection bodies on the day of Christ's return, as discussed in the previous lesson. Many changes in our lives are not immediate; rather, our conformity to Christ is an ongoing process. (Philippians 1:6)

To be "conformed to His likeness" does not mean that we will each gradually become *Christ Himself*. Instead, it is more of a *derived likeness*, whereby we *reflect* the person of Jesus in and through our own lives. For example, you may have many physical similarities to one of your parents. For some, the resemblance is so strong that you cannot help but know at first glance that two people are closely related. In the same way, God desires your life to so closely reflect Jesus Christ that others can't help but look at you and say, "Wow, there's something special about that person. I wonder what he has that I don't?"

You may be reading this and saying to yourself, "Well, I sure have a long way to go before I get to that point." You're right—you *do* have a long way to go. And so do I. A hard truth to accept is that in order to reach this goal, you and I must absolutely *stop trying to achieve it*.

Conformity to Christ is not something that we can earn. There is simply no way for us to do this ourselves, no matter how much we strive to imitate Jesus. Even at our best, we fall dismally short of God's righteousness and the perfect life of His Son Jesus. (Isaiah 64:6)

Q3: Choose the statement that is *NOT* true:

- A. In order to be conformed to Christ, we must quit trying to achieve it.
- B. Being conformed to Christ means gradually being transformed into Him.
- C. Reflecting Christ's character accurately describes how conformation is expressed in our lives.

The good news, however, is that we do not *have* to strive for it ourselves. God Himself will accomplish our conformity through two crucial steps, *indwelling* and *unveiling*. First, God indwells every believer with the Holy Spirit. This indwelling Spirit is fundamentally important to believers for many reasons, as will be discussed in future lessons. For now, though, it is important that you understand that a primary role of the Holy Spirit is

to reveal the message of Christ to us, and through us to others. (John 16:13) The presence of the Spirit changes us from the inside out, implanting a life within us that we could never reproduce or imitate within our own hearts.

Second, with the Holy Spirit indwelling each of us, God is in the process of *unveiling* the life of Christ within us. That is, He is reshaping our lives in such a way that what we now have inside—the Spirit of the Lord—will be seen by others.

Q4: True or False? While God's indwelling occurs as a one-time act, His unveiling of Himself through you is a continual work.

God's unveiling in us is often done through trial and tragedy. Very often, there are parts of our lives that need to be chipped away, just as a master sculptor chips rough edges off of a work in progress. We do not usually enjoy losing things that are important to us, but these hardships may be the times when God is removing what He knows to be hindrances from our lives. Because He alone knows the “big picture” (as discussed in the previous lesson), He knows exactly what needs to be removed or reshaped.

J1: Write about a trial or hardship God has used to make you more Christ-like.

In closing, let me give you a beautiful illustration of this point. When he set out to produce the now famous statue of David, Michelangelo chose to begin with a discarded piece of stone. When later asked how he managed to carve the masterpiece from that particular rough rock, the artist replied, “I did not carve David. I saw David in that piece of stone and, with the tools, I simply let him out.” This is what God is doing in our lives. When He looks upon us, He sees His Son Jesus Christ. Then, with His tools—our families, friends, hardships, and failures—he chips away the excess to “let Jesus out.”

J2: Consider Romans 8:28:

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

How has God used this verse to change your viewpoint of these three things: (1) letting go of striving to achieve His likeness, (2) controlling your circumstances, and (3) responding to life's trials and tragedies?

Our conformity to Christ is not about what we can *do* or *become*. It is about what God can reveal in our lives. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, then that is the very One that will be revealed as the Master Sculptor works in your life.

J3: What is the Lord leading you to surrender to Him so that you will more completely reflect His character?

Prayer

Our Father, we thank You that some prayers we pray, You just lovingly ignore them. When we pray Lord, stop, stop, stop, stop. When Your purpose is to keep on working, because You have seen that beautiful finished product. We want to ask You today in Jesus' name, the One who lives within us through the Holy Spirit. We want Him, Christ—who is Your image—we want Him reflected through us, in every facet of our life. And Father, we know that the first step in that is to receive Your Son Jesus Christ as our Savior, and that gets Him on the inside. And only then can the work begin. So we want to ask You for those who are unsaved, who are wasting their life. They may be enjoying some portions of it, but they're wasting it from Your perspective. Would you speak to their heart today, Father, and help them to understand that You have the highest purpose, the greatest goal, the most exciting, supernatural, eternal, divine promise for them if they will only submit to You? I pray for people to be saved today, those there in their homes to get on their knees at the end of this service and repent of their sins and, by faith, receive Jesus Christ as their Savior, confessing their wrong—most of all their unbelief that they have not yet until this moment surrendered their life to You. Then, I want to pray, Father, for every single one of us who fought against You, rebelled against You, criticized, rationalized, blamed, that today by faith, we would be able to say:

Lord, I accept You as Master Craftsman in my life. Along with You, I accept every tool You sent into my life to shape me into Your likeness. I submit to You and to Your ultimate purpose to be conformed to Your likeness in my life.

Father, I pray that every one of us would be willing even now, be willing to say that to You out of a heart of sincerity and commitment. And we will thank You and praise You for it in Jesus' name, Amen.

Homework

Scripture Memory Review

Fill in the blanks to complete this course's memory verse.

*I have been _____ with _____; and it is _____
_____ I who _____, but _____ in me;
and the _____ which I now _____ in the _____ I live
by _____ in the Son of God, who _____ me and _____
_____ up for me.*

Galatians _____ : _____

Conclusion

When I think about how God justified me, how He glorified me, how He conformed me to the image of His Son, and how He so effectively dealt with my sin problem, I am still awed by the amazing grace that He has shown us. The truth is, He didn't have to any of that, but He chose to. He did it because He loves us and He wants us to have a relationship with Him. As we conclude this course, I pray that these new insights have brought you closer to Him, praising almighty God for the great things He has done.