

Chapter 36 Justification (Right Legal Standing Before God) – How and when do we gain right legal standing before God?

1. Key points

- a. At conversion, God considers our sins forgiven and he imputes Christ's righteousness to us.
- b. While Protestants affirm justification by faith alone, Catholics affirm justification by a combination of grace and meritorious works.
- c. We are justified through faith in Christ because faith is the attitude of total dependence on him.

2. Summary

- a. At the moment of conversion, in response to our faith, God justifies us (Romans 3:26, 28; 5:1; Galatians 2:16). "Justification is an instantaneous legal act of God in which he (1) thinks of our sins as forgiven and Christ's righteousness as belonging to us, and (2) declares us to be righteous in his sight."
- b. The Greek verb *dikaioō* most commonly means "to declare righteous" (Luke 7:29; Romans 4:5). Paul uses it in an explicitly legal sense in Romans 8:33–34, writing, "Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn?" (ESV). The Hebrew term *tsādak* also supports the legal understanding of justification (Deuteronomy 25:1); Isaiah 5:23 condemns those "who justify the wicked for a bribe" (NASB). Again, we see this term means "to declare righteous" rather than "to make righteous." Hence, theologians call justification a forensic declaration.
- c. When God justifies us, he declares us to be righteous in his sight. In other words, we no longer have any penalty to pay for any sin (Romans 8:1, 33–34), and we are actually righteous in God's sight. We have not moved from a state of sinful rebellion to a state of simple neutrality; rather, God has fully forgiven our sins (Romans 4:6–12), and he has put righteousness on us (Isaiah 61:10; Romans 3:21–22; 4:3; 5:19).
- d. In this second aspect of justification, then, God imputes Christ's righteousness to us: he thinks of it as belonging to us, or he accredits it to us (Romans 4:3, 6; 5:17). When Adam sinned, God imputed his guilt to all mankind (Romans 5:19). When Christ died, God imputed our sins to Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21). When we trust in Christ, God imputes Christ's righteousness to us (1 Corinthians 1:30; Philippians 3:9; Romans 3:21–22). The gospel rests on justification by faith in the perfect Messiah, Jesus Christ. On this very issue, the Protestants sought to reform the Roman Catholic Church, affirming that justification does not make us good and that it is not based on our own intrinsic goodness (as if we had any). If

justification changed us and then declared us righteous according to our intrinsic goodness, we would remain unrighteous and unforgiven—sin would still remain in us, and our past sins would still separate us. Paul then could not speak of God’s free gift of righteousness and eternal life (Romans 5:17; 6:23).

- e. Catholics understand justification as an internal transformation toward holiness. Justification begins at baptism, and it continues only if we continue in faith in the teachings of the Catholic Church (rather than mere continued faith in Christ for forgiveness of sins). In other words, the Roman Catholic Church teaches justification as infused righteousness rather than imputed righteousness. God gives us some level of internal righteousness, though we cannot be sure just how much. Hence, “the degree of justifying grace is not identical in all the just.... The measure of the grace of justification received varies in the individual person who is justified, according to the measure of God’s free distribution and to the disposition and the co-operation of the recipient himself.” In the end, the Catholic view of justification bases our eternal life with God partially on our merit and works, in contradiction to the clear testimony of Scripture (Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8–9).
- f. No one will be able to accomplish justification through works; it is a free gift (Romans 3:20–24). God’s grace is unmerited and wholly accomplished in Christ (Ephesians 2:8–9; Titus 3:4–7).
- g. God justifies us through faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 3:23–26; 5:1; Galatians 2:16). Scripture does not teach that our faith earns God’s favor, or that faith is the intrinsic goodness in us for which God justifies us. God justifies us through faith as an instrument or means, not as an activity, and he does so because of the work of Christ (Romans 5:17–19). It seems that God chose faith as the instrument of justification rather than love or wisdom or peace because “faith is the one attitude of the heart that is the exact opposite of depending on ourselves. When we come to Christ in faith we essentially say, ‘I give up! I will not depend on myself or my own good works any longer... Therefore, Jesus, I trust you and depend on you completely to give me a righteous standing before God.’”
- h. Does James contradict this? James 2:24 says, “A person is justified by works and not by faith alone.” Yet James uses the term “justify” in a different sense. Rather than describing a declaration of righteousness, James uses the term to indicate a demonstration of righteousness. The Greek verb *dikaioō* certainly allows this (Luke 10:28–29; 16:15). This sense fits other uses of the term in James (James 2:21), and it fits with James’ repeated insistence that works prove the reality of a living faith (James 2:18, 26).
- i. The doctrine of justification by faith alone matters. This doctrine gives real hope to unbelievers to whom God offers full, free forgiveness. This doctrine also gives believers real confidence, as “there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

3. The order of salvation (*Ordo Salutis*)

- a. Election (God’s choice of people to be saved)
- b. The gospel call (proclaiming the gospel message)

- c. Regeneration (being born again)
- d. Conversion (faith and repentance)
- e. **Justification (right legal standing)**
- f. Adoption (membership in God's family)
- g. Sanctification (right conduct of life)
- h. Perseverance (remaining a Christian)
- i. Death (going to be with the Lord)
- j. Glorification (receiving a resurrection body)

4. Explanation and scriptural basis

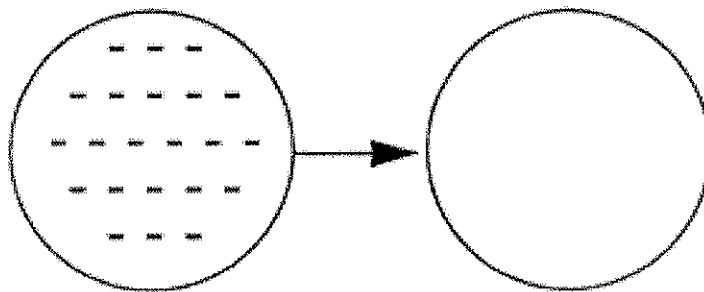
- a. Justification is an instantaneous legal act of God in which he
 - i. Thinks of our sins as forgiven and Christ's righteousness as belonging to us, and
 - ii. Declares us to be righteous in his sight.

5. Justification includes a legal declaration by God

- a. "To justify" usually means "to declare righteous."
 - i. "Forensic" means "having to do with legal proceedings."
 - ii. Romans 3:20
 - iii. Romans 3:26
 - iv. Romans 3:28
 - v. See also Deuteronomy 25:1; Proverbs 17:15; Isaiah 5:23

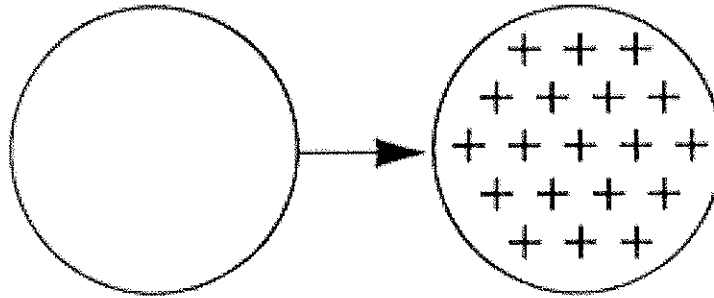
6. God declares us to be just in his sight

- a. God declares that we have no penalty to pay for our sin (Romans 8:1; 4:6-8).
 - i. Forgiveness makes us morally neutral, but does not give us favor with God.
 - ii. Forgiveness of sins is simply one part of justification.



- b. God also declares that we are righteous in his sight (Isaiah 61:10; Romans 3:21-22; 4:3; 5:19).
 - i. God must declare us to actually be righteous in his sight.

- ii. God imputes Christ's righteousness to us as the other part of justification.



- 7. God can declare us to be just because he imputes Christ's righteousness to us
 - a. God thinks of Christ's righteousness as belonging to us (Romans 3:21-22; 4:3, 6; 1 Corinthians 1:30; Philippians 3:9).
 - b. Imputation is central to the heart of the gospel, and it has happened twice already:
 - i. God imputed Adam's sin to us.
 - ii. God imputed our sin to Christ.
 - c. If justification changed us internally, and then we are declared to be righteous based on how good we actually were in life:
 - i. We could never be declared perfectly righteous in this life because sin still remains in our lives.
 - ii. There would be no provision for past sins committed before we were changed internally, and hence no confidence before God.
 - d. The Roman Catholic view of justification is that it changes us internally and makes us more holy within.
 - i. It begins at baptism.
 - ii. It is infused, not imputed.
 - iii. People cannot be sure they are in a state of grace.
 - iv. People can experience varying degrees of justification.
 - v. Our eternal life with God is based both on God's grace and our merits.
- 8. Justification comes to us entirely by God's grace, not on account of any merit in ourselves
 - a. Romans 3:20
 - b. Romans 3:23-24
 - c. Ephesians 2:8-9
- 9. God justifies us through our faith in Christ
 - a. Scripture never says we are justified because of the inherent goodness of our faith.
 - i. Our faith does not have merit before God.
 - ii. Our faith is the means or instrument of justification.
 - b. Why faith?
 - i. It is the one attitude of the heart that is the exact opposite of depending on ourselves (Romans 4:16; Ephesians 2:8-9).
 - c. What about James 2:24?

- i. James 2:24 “You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone” (ESV).
 - ii. James is using “justify” in a different sense from the way Paul uses it.
 - iii. It can also mean “demonstrate or show to be righteous” (Luke 10:28-29; 16:15; Romans 3:4; Matthew 11:19).
 - iv. This sense fits well with the context of James 2.
 - v. James is concerned to show that mere intellectual assent is not a real faith. Real faith is evidenced by fruit.
- d. Practical implications of this doctrine:
 - i. Genuine hope to unbelievers who know they could never make themselves righteous before God.
 - ii. Confidence that God will never make us pay the penalty for sins that have been forgiven on Christ’s merits (Romans 8:1).

Chapter 37 Adoption (Membership in God’s Family) – What are benefits of being a member of God’s family?

1. Key points
 - a. After regeneration and conversion, and distinct from justification, God adopts the elect into his family, with many resultant privileges.
2. Summary
 - a. “Adoption is an act of God whereby he makes us members of his family.” We have plenty of scriptural evidence for this event. For instance, John 1:12 says that believers “become children of God.” Paul, in Romans 8:14–17, says that we are “sons of God” and that we “have received the spirit of sonship.” Scripture regularly speaks of God’s people with “family” language. In fact, as God’s children, we are also brothers and sisters to one another (Romans 9:7–8; Galatians 4:28), and Jesus stands as the firstborn, elder brother among many siblings (Romans 8:29). The Holy Spirit bears witness in our hearts to our adoption (Galatians 4:4–7), and this adoption is the result of God’s great love (1 John 3:1–2). While we enjoy many benefits now, we look forward to the fullness of our adoption at the resurrection (Romans 8:23).
 - b. Adoption takes place after regeneration and conversion. We become sons and daughters of God after we respond to him in faith (Galatians 3:23–26). It also occurs separately from justification; God certainly could not accept us into his presence without justification, but he certainly could without adoption. In adopting us as well, God has chosen to pour out great privileges on us in our relationship with him. As stated, adoption shows God’s great, unmerited, and unconditional love (1 John 3:1–2).
 - c. We enjoy many benefits as God’s adopted children. First, we can relate to God as his beloved children rather than as his enemies or slaves (Galatians 4:7; Romans 8:15–16). In other words, we can enjoy his clear love for us (1 John 3:1–2), his

understanding of us (Psalm 103:13–14), his care for our needs (Matthew 6:32; 7:11), and an inheritance in the heavenly places (Romans 8:17; 1 Peter 1:4). Second, our Father has sent us the Holy Spirit to lead us and give us victory over the power and love of sin (Romans 8:13–14). Third, God disciplines his children (Hebrews 12:5–6). While on first glance this might strike us as an unpleasant aspect of adoption, it is a beautiful gift from God through which he trains us up in righteousness and holiness (Hebrews 12:10–11). Fourth, we enjoy the privileges of family life in the church; we have countless brothers and sisters (1 Timothy 5:1–2; Mark 3:31–35). Essentially, the whole church is working together as a family for the glory and honor of our Father. We bring him honor as we imitate him and live holy lives (1 Peter 1:14–16; Ephesians 5:1; Philippians 2:15).

3. The order of salvation (*Ordo Salutis*)
 - a. Election (God's choice of people to be saved)
 - b. The gospel call (proclaiming the gospel message)
 - c. Regeneration (being born again)
 - d. Conversion (faith and repentance)
 - e. Justification (right legal standing)
 - f. **Adoption (membership in God's family)**
 - g. Sanctification (right conduct of life)
 - h. Perseverance (remaining a Christian)
 - i. Death (going to be with the Lord)
 - j. Glorification (receiving a resurrection body)

4. Scriptural evidence for adoption
 - a. Adoption is an act of God whereby he makes us member of his family.
 - i. John 1:12 "Children of God"
 - ii. Romans 8:14-17 "The Spirit of adoption as sons", "Abba! Father!"
 - iii. John 20:17
 - iv. 1 John 3:1-2

5. Adoption follows conversion and is an outcome of saving faith
 - a. In response to saving faith, God has adopted us into his family.
 - i. Galatians 3:26 "Through faith"
 - ii. John 1:12

6. Adoption is distinct from justification
 - a. Regeneration and justification
 - i. Regeneration makes us spiritually alive and able to relate to God
 - ii. Justification has to do with our standing before God's law
 - b. Adoption
 - i. Adoption makes us members of God's family with the privileges of family membership.
 - ii. Adoption has to do with our relationship with God as our Father.

7. The privileges of adoption

- a. There are many privileges to adoption in how God relates to us:
 - i. We can speak to God and relate to him as a good and loving Father (Matthew 6:9; Galatians 4:7; Romans 8:15-16).
 - ii. God loves us (1 John 3:1).
 - iii. God understands us (Psalm 103:13-14).
 - iv. God takes care of our needs (Matthews 6:32).
 - v. God gives us many good gifts (Matthews 7:11).
 - vi. God gives us the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13).
 - vii. God gives us a great inheritance in heaven (Galatians 4:7; Romans 8:17; 1 Peter 1:4).
 - viii. We are led by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:14).
 - ix. God disciplines us as his children (Hebrews 12:5-6).
 - x. We can share in Christ's sufferings and subsequent glory (Romans 8:17).
- b. There are privileges to adoption that affect how we relate to one another and our personal conduct:
 - i. We are all members of one family (1 Timothy 5:1-2; 1 Corinthians 1:10; Matthew 12:50).
 - ii. We are to imitate our Father (Ephesians 5:1; 1 Peter 1:14-16).
 - iii. We can honor our Father (Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:15; 1 John 3:10).

Chapter 38 Sanctification (Growth in Likeness to Christ) – How do we grow in Christian maturity? What are the blessings of Christian growth?

1. Key points

- a. Sanctification begins at regeneration, progresses in life, and comes to completion at death.
- b. Sanctification affects mind, body, volition, emotion, and spirit—it affects the whole person.

2. Summary

- a. “Sanctification is a progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and like Christ in our actual lives.” Sanctification differs from justification in several key aspects. For instance, in justification, every Christian experiences a once-for-all-time, God-wrought, perfect legal standing. In sanctification, Christians experience and cooperate with a continuous, not-yet-perfect internal transformation.
- b. Sanctification begins at regeneration. When we are born again, we begin the process of renewal (Titus 3:5), and we cannot remain in a sinful pattern of life (1 John 3:9). In some sense, we can speak of this initiating moment of sanctification as a completed event (1 Corinthians 6:11; Acts 20:32) because it marks a distinct break from the dominion of sin (Romans 6:11, 14, 18; Colossians 1:13). Through the indwelling Holy Spirit, we can now overcome temptation.
- c. Sanctification progresses during our earthly life. We grow in sanctification, and we gain greater power against sin (Romans 6:19); God’s power is transforming us into his image “from one degree of glory to another.” We are becoming more like Christ, and our new nature undergoes continual renewal (Colossians 3:10). In fact,

the New Testament epistles overflow with exhortations to holiness because the authors expect that we will grow in Christlikeness. Progress in sanctification varies between believers, and in some very rare cases—if a person has no good Christian fellowship, or if they never attend to Scripture and prayer—a believer may not appear to experience much progress at all. Such a situation, however, is “highly abnormal.”

- d. When we die, our sanctification will be completed, at least for our souls (Hebrews 12:23; Revelation 21:27). Because redemption involves the whole person, our bodies will also experience complete sanctification at the Lord’s return (Philippians 3:21; 1 Corinthians 15:23, 47–49).
- e. Jesus commands us to be perfect (Matthew 5:48); Paul tells us to make our holiness perfect, and he prays for God to sanctify us wholly (2 Corinthians 7:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:23); John says believers do not sin (1 John 3:6). Do these verses indicate that we can reach sinless perfection in this life? On inspection, they do not teach this. It is a false assumption that God will always enable obedience to his commands; no one can obey all of his moral laws. When Jesus commands moral perfection, he is pointing out that God’s standard should be our own. We cannot reach it, and therefore we need some means of grace and forgiveness. Paul also is pointing to a goal. He states, not that any person can reach moral perfection, but that believers should yet pursue it. Because John uses the present-tense verb form, 1 John 3:6 is better translated, “No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him” (cf. 1 John 3:9).
- f. Many verses state that no person can reach sinless perfection. Ecclesiastes 7:20 tells us that “there is not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sins.” Jesus even instructs his disciples to pray daily for the forgiveness of their sins (Matthew 6:11–12). Paul commands the Roman church not to let sin “reign” or “have dominion” over them (Romans 6:12, 14), which seems to make clear that believers will continue to wage war with sin during their earthly lives. James 3:2 even says, “We all make many mistakes,” and 1 John 1:8 says, “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us”! The clear record of Scripture is that it is not possible for believers to be completely free from sin in this life. At the same time, this does not imply that we have no hope of progress (Romans 6). We will progress in sanctification and in closeness to God, and as we do, we will grow in our awareness of the presence of sin within us (Job 42:5–6; Isaiah 6:5).
- g. God and man work together in the process of sanctification (Philippians 12:12–13). God the Father works in us to have right desires, and he equips us to do right things (Philippians 2:13; Hebrews 13:20–21). God the Son earned our sanctification (1 Corinthians 1:30), and he exemplified our goal (Hebrews 12:2; 1 Peter 2:21; 1 John 2:6). God the Holy Spirit dwells in us and transforms us (1 Peter 1:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Galatians 5:22–23).
- h. We play a passive role in sanctification. We yield to God’s work within us, and we depend on him to transform us into the image of Christ (Romans 6:13, 19; 12:1). We also play a very active role in sanctification. Indeed, Paul urges us to work out

our salvation (Philippians 2:12), the author of Hebrews orders us to chase after holiness (Hebrews 12:14), John tells us that we purify ourselves through hope in Christ (1 John 3:3), and Peter instructs us to go all out in the pursuit of sanctification (2 Peter 1:5). We must recognize both our passive and active roles in this work: we must trust God to work in us, and we must obey his commands.

- i. Sanctification brings transformation to our minds (Colossians 3:10), our emotions (Galatians 5:22–23), our wills (Philippians 2:13), our spirits (2 Corinthians 7:1), and our bodies (1 Thessalonians 5:23; Romans 6:12; 1 Corinthians 6:19–20). In short, it progressively conforms our whole person into the image of Christ (Romans 8:29).
- j. Scripture offers many motivations for growth in sanctification, including love for God (John 14:15), a desire for a clear conscience (1 Timothy 1:5), a desire to serve God’s kingdom well (2 Timothy 2:20–21), a desire to see others trust in Christ (1 Peter 3:1–2), a desire for blessings (1 Peter 3:9–12), a desire to avoid displeasure (Hebrews 12:3–11), a desire for heavenly rewards (Matthew 6:19–21), a desire for closeness to God (Matthew 5:8), a desire for emotional health (Philippians 4:9; Hebrews 12:1–2), and a desire simply to do what is right (Philippians 4:8). Growth in sanctification will bring us great joy (Romans 14:17).

3. The order of salvation (*Ordo Salutis*)

- a. Election (God’s choice of people to be saved)
- b. The gospel call (proclaiming the gospel message)
- c. Regeneration (being born again)
- d. Conversion (faith and repentance)
- e. Justification (right legal standing)
- f. Adoption (membership in God’s family)
- g. **Sanctification (right conduct of life)**
- h. Perseverance (remaining a Christian)
- i. Death (going to be with the Lord)
- j. Glorification (receiving a resurrection body)

4. Explanation and scriptural basis

- a. Sanctification is a progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and like Christ in our actual lives.

5. Differences between justification and sanctification

Justification	Sanctification
standing	l condition
for all time	uous throughout life
y God’s work	operate
t in this life	rfect in this life
me in all Christians	r in some than in others

6. Three stages of sanctification

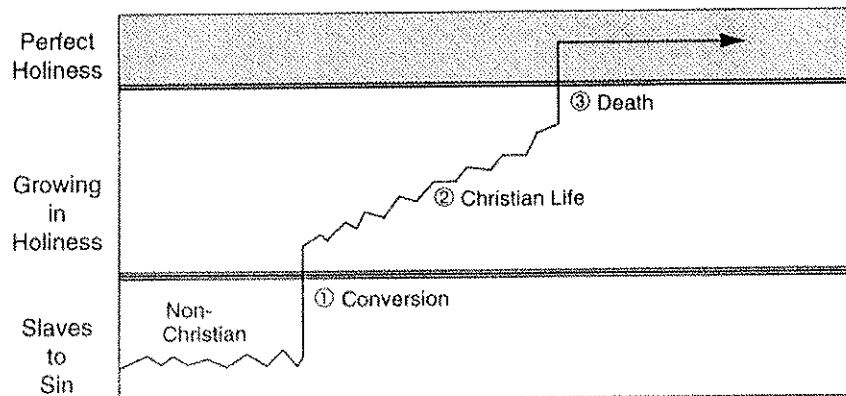
a. Sanctification begins at regeneration

- i. Definite moral change occurs at regeneration (Titus 3:5).
- ii. This can be spoken of as the first stage of sanctification (1 Corinthians 6:11; Acts 20:32).
- iii. The believer is no longer ruled or dominated by sin and no longer loves to sin (Romans 6:11-14, 18; 1 John 3:9).
- iv. Two things will be true:
 1. We will never be able to say, "I am completely free from sin."
 2. A Christian should never say, "This sin has defeated me. I give up."

b. Sanctification increases through life

- i. 2 Corinthians 3:18
- ii. Philippians 3:13-14
- iii. See also Romans 6:11-18; Colossians 3:10; Hebrews 12:1, 14

c. Sanctification is completed at death (for our souls) and when the Lord returns (for our bodies) (Hebrews 12:23; Revelation 21:27; Philippians 3:20-21).



d. Sanctification is never completed in this life

- i. "Perfectionism" is the view that Christians can attain sinless perfection in this life (Matthew 5:48; 2 Corinthians 7:1)
- ii. Yet, this view fails on inspection:
 1. It is not taught in Scripture that when God gives a command, he gives the ability to obey it in every case.
 2. Jesus' command to pray daily for forgiveness of sins indicates that we will continue to sin (Matthew 6:11-12).
 3. Many passages indicate that we still sin (James 3:2; 1 John 1:8; Ecclesiastes 7:20).

7. God and man cooperate in sanctification

a. God's role in sanctification

- i. God disciplines us as children (Hebrews 12:5-11).
- ii. God gives us a desire to do his will and power to do it (Philippians 2:13).
- iii. Christ earned our sanctification for us (1 Corinthians 1:30).

WEEK 9 / Dr. Jongpil Ko

March 30

Summary Quiz #8 (Chapter 36 Justification)

Last Name:

First Name:

1. Forgiveness from sins would not earn us favor with God (True / False).
2. Adam was created with a position of positive righteousness before God (True / False).
3. The issue of whether God declares us to be actually righteous was at the heart of the difference between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism (True / False).
4. The Roman Catholic church teaches that we are justified by God's grace plus some merit of our own (True / False).
5. The Roman Catholic view is that justification is something that God _____.
 - a. Reckons to us
 - b. Does within us
 - c. Gives to us
 - d. None of the above
6. God chose _____ to be the attitude of the hearty by which we would obtain justification.
 - a. Righteousness
 - b. Faith
 - c. Grace
 - d. Holiness

(Chapter 37 Adoption)

1. Adoption is an act of God whereby he makes us members of his _____.
2. Adoption and regeneration (“being made spiritually alive”) are two words to describe the same privilege of salvation (True / False).
3. Which of the following does the text state that we know because God relates to us as a Father?
 - a. He understands us
 - b. He takes care of our needs
 - c. He gives us many good gifts
 - d. All of the above
4. Which of the following does the text state is a privilege of adoption?
 - a. God relates to us as a Father
 - b. We are led by the Holy Spirit
 - c. God disciplines us
 - d. All of the above
5. The text points to Ephesians 5:1 to argue that “we, as God’s children, are to _____ our Father in heaven in all our conduct.”
 - a. Imitate
 - b. Honor
 - c. Glorify
 - d. All of the above
6. First John 3:10 says, “By this it may be seen who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not do right is not of God, nor he who does not _____.”
 - a. Trust in Christ
 - b. Love his brother
 - c. Walk in the light
 - d. None of the above

(Chapter 38 Sanctification)

1. Sanctification is a _____ work of God and man that makes us more like Christ in our lives.
2. Sanctification _____ throughout life.
3. Sanctification affects our intellect (True / False).
4. The Bible states that we should be motivated to be obedient to God by a desire for blessings from God in our daily, physical lives (True / False).
5. "Sanctification is completed at _____ (for our souls) and _____ (for our bodies).
 - a. Salvation / the rapture
 - b. Justification / death
 - c. Death / when the Lord returns
 - d. None of the above
6. Which of the following does the lecture state is a part of our passive role in sanctification?
 - a. Trusting God
 - b. Abstaining from immorality
 - c. Working out our salvation
 - d. None of the above

For MA students

1. Identify four motives for obedience to God in your life. Please describe them in your own words (5-6 sentences).