

CatClub: Question 32



1. Recap. Last week we looked at the Apostles' Creed, a statement of faith dating back to the early church, over 1600 years ago, which summarises the teachings of Jesus and his chosen missionary followers (apostles).

Q32 now asks: What do justification and sanctification mean? Answer: **Justification means being declared righteous before God, made possible by Christ's death and resurrection for us. Sanctification means our gradual, growing righteousness, made possible by the Holy Spirit's work in us.**

Explanation: God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - is 100% righteous, meaning morally perfect and completely free from sin. However, we aren't like this because of sin: in fact, we continually break God's laws in what we think, say and do. This means that there is a gulf between God (who is sinless) and us (who are sinful). Nevertheless, God hasn't abandoned us. According to John chapter 3, verse 16, he took the initiative: **for God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.** The key word here is 'believe', which doesn't just mean believing certain facts about Jesus, but believing **in** him, i.e. trusting him to save us from our sins.

2. Investigation: please look up:

(a) (In the New Testament) Romans chapter 5, verse 1. This is a very important verse. It tells us that we are **justified by faith** (alone), which means that **God declares us righteous when we believe in (=put our faith in) Jesus**. Although we are in fact still sinful, when we trust Jesus to save us from our sins God doesn't see us as sinful anymore, **but as clothed in Jesus' righteousness**.

(b) (In the New Testament) 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, verse 13 and 1 Peter chapter 1, verses 1-2. You will see that both these verses talk about **sanctification by or of the Spirit**, which means **being made holy (=sanctified) by the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer**. In other words, after believing in Jesus, **the Christian is given the gift of the Holy Spirit who comes to dwell within us to help us to become more and more like Jesus** and less and less tempted to give in to temptation and sin. Sanctification is a lifelong process because we can never become completely holy and sinless in this life. That will only happen after we die and is called 'glorification'.

Justification and sanctification are different, but both are necessary to be a Christian. Once God has declared us righteous when we put our faith in Jesus (**justification**), the lifelong process of living a holy and thankful life begins by the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling within us (**sanctification**).

>>>Next week's question: 'Should those who have faith in Christ seek their salvation through their own works, or anywhere else?'

This week's songs: 'Justified' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kffzlh7oLYw>
'This is a Holy Place'
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=roOG0tPPmrQ>

Romans 5:1

5 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Thessalonians 2:13

¹³ But we ought to thank God always for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.

1 Peter 1:1-2

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, ² according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood:

May grace and peace be multiplied to you.