

The Work of the Holy Spirit in Sanctification

How did you change when you became a Christian?

How have you continued to change as you have grown as a Christian?

Do you find it difficult to change?

Do you think that it is possible for a Christian to live a perfectly holy and sinless life?

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A PERSON BECOMES A CHRISTIAN?

In Session 3 (The Work of the Spirit in Salvation) we saw that people only become Christians because they are *regenerated* (or born again) by the Holy Spirit. The following changes take place at the moment a person becomes a Christian:

Forgiveness of sins

When a person becomes a Christian his or her sins, past present and future, are forgiven (Colossians 1v14; 1 John 1v8-2v2)

Justification

When a person becomes a Christian he or she is declared to be righteous by God because he or she has received the perfect righteousness of Christ (Romans 3v24; Galatians 2v16; 2 Corinthians 5v21)

Reconciliation

When a person becomes a Christian he or she enters into a restored relationship with God. He or she is no longer an enemy of God but a child of God (Colossians 1v21-22; Romans 5v10)

Receipt of the Spirit

When a person becomes a Christian he or she receives the Holy Spirit and becomes a Temple indwelt by God. We saw this in Session 2 (Romans 8v9, 1 Corinthians 6v19; 12v13)

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE?

When a person becomes a Christian his or her life may change dramatically as a consequence of repentance from sin (eg Zaccheus - Luke 19v1-10; 1 Thessalonians 1v9). The New Testament expects that a person who has become a Christian will be changed in character, outlook and behaviour.

Read: Colossians 3v1-14

Why should a person live differently if he or she becomes a Christian?

How should a person live differently if he or she becomes a Christian?

What, according to Paul in v10, is happening to a person who has become a Christian?

Do you think that the process of being transformed into the likeness of Jesus (cf, Colossians 1v16 - which teaches that Jesus is the creator of all things) is ever completed in this life?

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS A BATTLE

Whilst a person who becomes a Christian is forgiven, justified, reconciled to God and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, he or she will not find it easy to become like Jesus. The New Testament pictures the Christian life as an ongoing struggle, or battle, against sin.

Read: Galatians 5v16-26

Why, according to these verses, is the Christian life a constant battle?

What is a Christian battling against?

How should a Christian go about fighting this battle?

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Every Christian has received the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit it would be impossible to even begin to become like Jesus. The Holy Spirit empowers Christians to resist sinful desires and to develop Godly character.

Foundations of Christian living

When a person becomes a Christian he or she is made a 'new creation' (2 Corinthians 5v17). He or she is also liberated from the ruling power of sin (Romans 6v6-7; 11-14; 18; 22). This does not mean that he or she will no longer sin, but rather that sin is no longer a master who cannot be resisted. To put it simply, a 'sinful orientation' is replaced by a 'righteous orientation'.

Under the New Covenant inaugurated by Jesus (Luke 22v20) the Holy Spirit writes God's law onto the hearts of Christians (Jeremiah 31v33; Ezekiel 36v26-27). This produces a new desire to obey God. Christians are not meant to live by attempting outwards obedience to an external code (the law) but by being transformed from the inside by the work of the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 3v17-18).

God's ultimate purpose for Christians is that they will be glorified (Romans 8v30). Christians live with tension because they have been saved, but not yet glorified. They no longer belong to this age, but they continue to live in it. Christians have been delivered from the *penalty* of sin (i.e. judgment) and the *power* of sin (i.e. it is no longer their master), but not yet from the *presence* of sin (whether in the world or in their own lives).

The Holy Spirit Empowers Christians to Resist Sinful Desires

Read: Romans 8v5-13

What two different ways of living does Paul identify in these verses?

What are the differences between these two ways of living?

How should Christians live? (See especially: v6-8)

How should Christians tackle their sinful desires? (See especially v13)

What do you think it means to be 'led by the spirit'?

The Holy Spirit Produces Christian Character

Read: Galatians 5v22-25

What does Paul mean by the 'fruit of the spirit'?

Do you think that Christians should expect this fruit to be produced in their lives immediately?

What prevents Christians developing the fruit of the spirit in their lives?

What do you think it means to 'keep in step with the spirit'?

For Further reading:

Bruce Milne, *Know the Truth*, IVP, pp 199-200

D A Carson, *Showing the Spirit*,

Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, IVP, pp 746-762

J I Packer, *Keep in Step With the Spirit*, IVP, pp 121-199

Sinclair Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, IVP, pp 139-173