

# Changing Life: Sanctification without Shame

## Week 1: The Image of God, the Image of Christ

### Schedule:

March 22: The Image of God, the Image of Christ

March 29: The Dynamics of Sin

April 5: *no class* (Easter)

April 12: Freedom & Obedience

April 19: Temptation, Trials, & Perseverance

April 26: Ordinary Means of Extraordinary Grace

### **Central Thesis: Romans 12:1-2**

*Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.*

*Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.*

❖ Westminster Shorter Catechism, Question 1

❖ Westminster Shorter Catechism, Question 35

### **Against Modern American Happiness**

1. Blaming religion?
2. Mustering economic & psychological forces to get happier
3. Focused on actions, rather than questioning identity or shaping desires

### **The Image of God: What Are People For? (Genesis 1 & 2)**

1. Knowing good & evil
2. The presence of God
3. Earth becoming heaven

### **The Image Restored (Colossians 1:9-20; 3:1-4)**

*No one will ever become like Christ simply by imitating his actions. Only an experience of Christ's glory has the power to make a believer Christlike.*

❖ John Owen, *The Glory of Christ*

1. Creator, Redeemer, Consummator
2. Being "hidden with Christ in God"

*I used to think sanctification was a bit like pushing a boulder up a hill. It was hard, slow work, and if you lost concentration you might find yourself back at the bottom. But it's more like a boulder rolling down a hill. There's something inevitable about it, because it's God's work, and God always succeeds. The sad thing is that often I try to push the boulder back up the hill. I say in effect, "Don't change me yet – I like doing that sin."*

❖ Tim Chester, *You Can Change*

## Dying to Myself, Alive to Christ (*Romans 6:1-14*)

1. United with Christ
2. Living into our new identity – old self, new self
3. Presenting ourselves

*Holiness is not a merit by which we can attain communion with God, but a gift of Christ, which enables us to cling to him, and to follow him.*

❖ John Calvin, *Golden Booklet of the True Christian Life*

## Now What? (2 Peter 1:3-11)

1. Well-placed confidence
2. Growing confidence
3. Imagination again...

*Most of our spiritual weakness and unfruitfulness is caused by letting other things occupy our mind too easily. When we have our minds filled with Christ and his glory, and our hearts burn with great love to him, we shall have no room for any other things (see Colossians 3:1-5). It is only a continual view of Christ and his glory that will stir us up and encourage us to watch and fight continually against the deceitful workings of sin.*

❖ John Owen, *The Glory of Christ*

## Practical Assignments:

1. Memorize Romans 12:1-2.
2. What are you putting off? What are you putting on?
3. What place does the goodness, beauty, and truth of God occupy in your imagination?

*We are not our own: let not our reason nor our will, therefore, sway our plans and deeds. We are not our own: let us therefore not set it as our goal to seek what is expedient for us according to the flesh. We are not our own: in so far as we can, let us therefore forget ourselves and all that is ours.*

*Conversely, we are God's: let us therefore live for him and die for him. We are God's: let his wisdom and will therefore rule all our actions. We are God's: let all the parts of our life accordingly strive toward him as our only lawful goal [Rom. 14:8; cf. I Cor. 6:19]. O, how much has that man profited who, having been taught that he is not his own, has taken away dominion and rule from his own reason that he may yield it to God!*

❖ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* III.vii.1

## Recommended Resources:

Jerry Bridges, *Transforming Grace: Living Confidently in God's Unfailing Love* (NavPress, 2008)

John Calvin, *The Golden Booklet of the Christian Life* (1550; repr. Baker, 2004)

Tim Chester, *You Can Change: God's Transforming Power for Our Sinful Behavior and Negative Emotions* (Crossway, 2010)

Walter Marshall, *The Gospel Mystery of Sanctification: Growing in Holiness by Living in Union with Christ*, ed. Bruce H. McRae (1692; repr. Wipf & Stock, 2005)