

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

Lesson 4: New Reality

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So far we have addressed in prior lessons (1) the Gospel – the power of God unto salvation to all who believe. (Romans 1:16), (2) the “predicament” or nature of lost humanity apart from God, and (3) justification by grace through faith as Paul taught in Romans 3-4. Now we begin looking at **sanctification**. As a verb (to sanctify) the meaning is to set something part, to purify, or to make holy. While on the one hand, the moment we become Christians we are set apart or sanctified in Christ (see note 1), it is also true that in our Christian life we should be progressively becoming more holy. This is sometimes called **progressive sanctification**, and while that phrase is not in our Bible, the concept is. It is this transformation that will increasingly show the righteousness of God through our lives. In this first lesson on sanctification, as our STEP ONE, we need to understand the **new reality** that replaces the **old predicament**. This new reality involves the life of Christ in us by the grace of God so that we are no longer slaves to sin, but to righteousness.

1. **Positional Sanctification**: Sometimes there is confusion because some verses indicate that Christians are already sanctified, while others suggest an ongoing process. As Christians, we are in union with Christ (in him or in Christ) and by virtue of this position enjoy all spiritual blessings. (Eph. 1:3) In this positional sense we are already resurrected and seated at the right hand of the Father. (Eph. 2:6) Similarly, in Christ we are already sanctified. (1 Cor. 1:2, 6:11) Yet at the same time it is a process (John 17:17; 1 Thess. 5:23) The writer of Hebrews uses both senses in the same passage. (Hebrews 10:10-14)
2. **Substitutionary Death / Substitutionary Life (Rom. 5:6-10; Gal. 2:20)**: Most Christians understand that Jesus died for our sins as our substitute (he died for us), but we need to also understand that we are also “saved” by his life. It is this provision of life that is key to sanctification / transformation.
3. **Deliverance to Righteousness (Rom. 5:12-21)**: Remember that our sin condition (the predicament) led the death reigning. The reversal is the righteousness of God leading to reigning in life.
 - the universal condition of sin and death (5:12-14)
 - the free gift is in contrast to the offense (5:15)
 - the judgment (death) led to the sentence of servitude to sin, but in contrast the free gift leads to righteousness (5:16)
 - GAME CHANGER (5:17) we are to reign in life as Christ’s righteousness overcomes the power of sin; God’s daily provision of grace is available to sustain reigning in life
4. **How We Think Matters (Rom. 6)**: Our lives conform to what we believe reality is. Paul exhorts his readers about deliverance from bondage to sin to freedom in Christ: (1) know (6:6), (2) believe (6:8), (3) reckon (6:11), (4) present (6:13), and (5) obey (6:16).
 - old man is crucified so we don’t have to serve sin (6:6)
 - we now live (6:8) and need to recognize the new reality that we are dead to sin and live unto God (6:11)
 - we are free now to yield / present our bodies to God for righteousness (6:13; compare 12:1)
 - we are servants of the one we obey, either of sin that leads to death or righteousness that leads to life (6:16)
 - we are free from bondage to sin that yields death (6:22) and now servants to God that yields life (6:22-23)