

# BECOMING LIKE JESUS CHRIST

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## Introduction:

### A. One of the main goals for every Christian is to be like Christ – But this can truly be a very daunting task!

1. It is for this purpose that we were created & that God worked to save us from sin! (**Rom 8:28-30**)
2. The Lord's design for us is to be like Him... This is a very high standard! (**1 John 3:1-3; Col 1:27-29**)
  - a. Isn't this an amazing thought! God's purpose for us is that one day, when Jesus appears again, we are going to be made like Him... We will be just as He is! INCREDIBLE!
  - b. If we want to be like Jesus then, we've got to become like Him now! Now our excitement wanes just a bit doesn't it? We want that state but the standard is out of reach!
  - c. Christ in us, our hope of GLORY! - An amazing hope! But if Christ isn't in us... no hope!
3. It doesn't take doctorate degree in theology to realize that in striving to be like Christ we are striving toward a standard of perfection! (**1 John 2:1**)
  - a. This can be very scary because we realize that no person can attain to the level of perfection Jesus Christ lived up to or the perfect state He is in!
  - b. When the Bible calls us to be like Christ it is calling us to a perfect standard! We must never minimize the absolutely perfect standard God has called us to live up to!
  - c. We will all one day enter into a perfect city, in the presence of a perfect King, and live in perfect surroundings... If I am not perfected as well, Heaven would be flawed!

### B. If we look at the concept of being Christ-like the wrong way, we'd walk away so discouraged & without hope that we would just give up! An unbalanced view may even keep some from becoming Christians!

1. First of all – Our calling is to become like Jesus, not in His deity, but in His holiness and perfection
2. Still out of reach? We sin too much & fall short of that standard don't we? His blood cleanses us!
3. But beyond that we have to realize that being like Christ is a process... Not a one time event!
  - a. It is a process in which God plays the major role; but, there's still some things we must do
  - b. As a process, we don't decide one day, "I'm going to be just like Christ!" & we accomplish that → It's a continual process in which we submit our lives to God & He changes us!
  - c. Notice again Romans 8:28-30 → There's a justification, a conforming, then a glorification!

## I. THE PHASES OF BECOMING LIKE CHRIST:

### A. The first phase is our justification:

1. We can only become like Christ because God provided justification by His death (**Rom 3:21-26**)
2. Through the cross we are all justified; however, that justification does not take place immediately and universally... All men must respond in faith to that sacrifice! (**Revelation 1:5; Acts 22:16**)
  - a. It is the sinlessly perfect shed blood of Jesus that provides our justification; but justification did not take place immediately for all men of all time when Jesus died... If it did, ALL MEN were saved right at that point – God expects us to respond to the cross in faith!
  - b. We know the blood of Jesus justifies us... but WHEN? It is at the point of our baptism that we are washed by the blood of Jesus and counted as innocent in God's sight!
  - c. This justification isn't by works, but it is a justification of faith! Faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, faith in the power of God, and faith in what he's doing at our baptism
3. When we come to the death of Jesus, we come to the blood He shed! (**Rom 6:3-4**)
  - a. Notice the terms: Our baptism is about becoming LIKE Jesus and being united WITH Jesus!

- b. **Illust:** Talking to a Baptist missionary about the necessity of baptism and he kept saying, “I just don’t see Jesus in it!” → Jesus is all over baptism! Baptism is all about Jesus!
  - c. At what point are we more like Jesus than when we are being crucified with Him, dying with Him, being buried with Him, and then being resurrected with Him?
  - d. All of this is done to remove our sins and place us in Jesus Christ! It’s at this point that the process of being made like Jesus begins! Now we are holy, pure, and in Jesus Christ!
4. It’d be great if we all could remain sinless after this, but we know the reality is that we still sin!
- a. God still says, “There’s no condemnation” → How can God still say this? (**Romans 8:1**)
  - b. It’s because as we are walking in the light, enjoying fellowship with God, we are still in contact with the blood of Christ which cleanses us from our sins! (**1 John 1:7-9**)

## **B. The second phase is our sanctification:**

1. Like justification, the term sanctification seems complex, but it is actually a very simple idea:
  - a. Sanctify is from the Greek “Hagaizo” – To make holy, purify, consecrate. It involves being set apart for God’s use, devoted to God, or made pure (things, places, or people)
  - b. Often in the OT it is used of groups of people or objects placed into the place of worship
  - c. The NT often uses it in more a personal way of our lives – Set apart to God, holy, & pure
  - d. This is the part from Romans 8:28-30 where Paul says that God has chosen for us to be conformed to the image of His Son – It’s about becoming more and more like Christ!
2. God is at work to shaping us into the image Christ – It’s not all up to our strength & wisdom!
  - a. While it’s difficult to see at the time, God uses trials to help transform our lives (**1 Pt 1:6-9**)
  - b. God chastens us so we can share in His holiness & produce fruits of righteousness! See how the Hebrew writer describes this process: It’s TRAINING! (**Heb 12:5ff, 10-11**)
  - c. I don’t think we should limit God to these – In how many more ways could God be working out our sanctification in our daily lives? God is helping to transform us! (**Phil 1:6**)
3. God doesn’t sanctify us without our compliance and without effort on our part – Sanctification is something we’ve got to work at and pursue with passion! (**2 Tim 2:21; 1 Thess 4:3, 7**)
  - a. When we realize that all the “don’ts” and “thou shalt nots” in the Bible are there for this purpose... To make us more like the Lord... it changes how we look at His commands!
  - b. Sanctification is not just some theological idea that we discuss or this pretty plateau that we look at & dream of reaching... Sanctification is way of living! It motivates our life!
  - c. We study God’s word and learn how Jesus responded to the circumstances He faced in life, how He resisted sin, and how He treated others & strive to emulate that (WWJD?)
  - d. Becoming more and more like Jesus was what drove Paul! How passionately do we pursue our knowledge of Christ and the transforming ourselves into His image? (**Phil 3:8-14**)
4. Spirit Flesh Battle in relation to sanctification and specific application (**Romans 8**)
5. As we’ve mentioned before, this sanctification is a process that takes place over time! (**2 Cor 3:18**)
  - a. Picture it – Every day we are looking into a wondrous painting of the glorious character & mindset of Jesus... We see the great life He lived, way He served, and love He shared
  - b. But it’s more than a painting... this is a mirror! (the Greek emphasizes “reflect”) – Each day we’re also being transformed more & more into that glorious image we’re beholding
  - c. This is a day by day process where God is moving me from one stage of glory into the next
  - d. This means we never actually attain to a perfect sanctification – But that’s doesn’t mean we aren’t already Christlike & reflecting His image... Just know greater glory awaits!

### **C. The third phase is our glorification:**

1. It helps us keep life in perspective when we realize that the things that happen to us here are being used by God for our glorification! **(Romans 8:18; I Peter 5:10)**
  - a. We face things in this life that are very discouraging, painful, & difficult to endure → And sometimes we wonder, “Is it really worth it?” or “Why do I have to go through this?”
  - b. Focus on what God is working in us and for us! No amount of struggles we face can compare with the glory God has in store for us! Put things in an eternal perspective!
  - c. Both the difficult times and the good times are tools in the hands of God glorify us in the image of His Son now and to help us be ready for the great glory that yet awaits us!
2. We certainly are being glorified now, as God is transforming our lives, but our ultimate transformation will be when Jesus returns and we are made like Jesus! **(I John 3:2; Phil 3:21)**
  - a. We don't know exactly what God is going to do with us when Jesus returns for our ultimate salvation – all we know is all we need to know... That we will be like Him!
  - b. It's interesting that even those who wrote under inspiration of the Holy Spirit admitted freely that they had no clue what it was going to be like – But that's not the point!
  - c. What we know is that Jesus is in a wonderfully glorified state and that if we have been justified, and sanctified, that God will glorify us with Him & bring us home to Heaven!
3. This glorification means a new spiritual body prepared for entrance into Heaven! **(I Cor 15:48-57)**
  - a. Since time began man has borne the image of Adam, with all the frailties of life and imperfections & limitations, but when Jesus returns we will bear the image of Jesus!
  - b. The kingdom of God cannot be inherited by flesh and blood – Our physical bodies are incapable of life in Heaven or eternal life → We will have a spiritual body fit for both!
  - c. Being made like Jesus, our bodies will not be susceptible to corruption with all the wear & tear & pains we exhibit on earth, but will be eternal, spiritual, and perfectly glorious!
4. For now we can only dream of the glory God has in store for us ... Until then we must remember: If we want to be made like Jesus then, we've got to become like Jesus now! **(Col 1:27)**

**CONCLUSION:** There is no greater joy that can be brought into your life than knowing Christ & becoming like Him! Be justified now, then you and God will work together on your sanctification, so one day you will be glorified with Jesus!