

## The Process of Salvation

Three components of salvation:

- **Regeneration** (new birth)
- **Justification** (to put into a right relationship with God)
- **Sanctification** (growth in holiness)

For the most part, Roman Theology and Reformed Theology agree on these three components. We agree with what they *are* and what they *mean*. But we mean *different things* and disagree with the *method*. We agree with the what, but we disagree with the how. We agree with the end, but we disagree with the means to that end.

### Regeneration — Born Again

Roman Catholic View:

- Regeneration occurs through baptism, It is considered the very moment of spiritual rebirth. (John 3:5, CCC 1213, CCC 1215)
- Baptism (regeneration) removes original sin. (Galatians 3:27, CCC 1239, CCC 978)

Reformed Response:

- Regeneration is a supernatural act of God through the Holy Spirit, not tied to ritual/work. (John 3:5–8, Titus 3:5)
- Baptism is a sign and seal of regeneration—not the cause. (Romans 4:11, Colossians 2:11–12, Acts 2:38–39)

### Justification — Right Standing Before God

Roman Catholic View:

- Begins with God's initiative (grace), but requires man's free cooperation. (Philippians 2:12–13, 2 Corinthians 6:1... CCC 1989, CCC 1993-1994)
- You can lose your justification – because you fall in and out of grace with God. (CCC 1446)
- Justification is a process, involving inner transformation over time. (CCC 1989 – CCC 1994)

Reformed Response:

- Justification is a legal declaration: God counts the sinner righteous by faith alone, on the basis of Christ's righteousness. (2 Corinthians 5:21, Romans 4:5)
- It is instant and lasting, not a process. (Romans 5:1, WCF 11.5: God continues to forgive the sins of those that are justified... yet they can never fall from the state of justification.)

## Sanctification — Growing in Grace

### Roman Catholic View:

- Sanctification is part of justification. You remain in a state of grace by cooperating with it. You remain justified by pursuing the means of sanctification (through works.)
- Ongoing charity, participation in the sacraments, and good works are essential in order to grow in holiness (or to be sanctified.)
- If you fall from grace (through mortal sin), you are no longer justified, and you must be restored through confession/penance.
- See CCC 2003, CCC 2010.

### Reformed Response:

- Sanctification follows (and flows from) justification. It is not the cause of being saved, but the result.
- Good works and spiritual growth flow from the Holy Spirit—not from fear of losing grace.
- Good works are a sign and proof of our growth in grace, not the means to obtain grace.
- See Galatians 3:3, Ephesians 2:8–10, James 2:14–26.

## The Role of the Sacraments in Salvation

### Roman Catholic View:

- Seven sacraments (Baptism, Eucharist/Communion, Confirmation, Confession, Marriage, Holy Orders/Priesthood, Anointing of the Sick).
- These sacraments infuse grace and are necessary for salvation.
- Grace is conveyed ex opere operato (meaning “by the very fact of the action’s being performed” or “by the work worked”). See CCC 1127–1128.

### Reformed View:

- (Generally) only two sacraments: Baptism and the Lord’s Supper/Communion.
- They are means of grace, not automatic channels.
- A sacrament is a work that can be used to facilitate faith, and when carried out in faith, we receive grace through. We reject the idea that sacraments work apart from faith.

## Summary of Key Comparisons/Contrasts

Element	<u>Roman Catholic</u>	<u>Reformed Protestant</u>
<i>Regeneration</i>	Through baptism	By the Spirit through the Word
<i>Justification</i>	Infused righteousness; process	Imputed righteousness; one-time act
<i>Sanctification</i>	Maintains grace through works	Flows from justification
<i>Sacraments</i>	Necessary to receive & maintain grace	Signs/seals of received grace