

Soteriology 101

Week 8 – Internal Call and Regeneration



Internal call: God's sovereign summons to the elect, drawing them to faith in Christ.

(1 Peter 2:9, 1 Corinthians 1:9)



Regeneration: God's impartation of eternal spiritual life into spiritually dead sinners. (Ephesians 2:4-5)

“God’s call, since it is effectual, carries with it the operative grace whereby the person called is enabled to answer the call and to embrace Jesus Christ as he is freely offered in the gospel. God’s grace reaches down to the lowest depths of our need and meets all the exigencies of the moral and spiritual impossibility which inheres in our depravity and inability. And that grace is the grace of regeneration.” – John Murray

1. Author of regeneration:

- a) God is the sole active agent in regeneration. (James 1:18)

“The titles given to regeneration [are] evidence [for] it. It is a creation; what creature can give itself a being? It is a putting in a law and a new heart; what matter can infuse a soul into itself? It is a new birth; what man did ever beget himself? It is an opening the heart; what man can do this who neither hath the key, nor is acquainted with the wards? Not a man knows the heart, it is deceitful above all things, who can know it?” – Stephen Charnock

- b) Regeneration is monergistic. (Romans 9:16; John 3:1-8, 1:13; 1 Peter 1:3; Ezekiel 36:25-27)

“Sin has so infected and corrupted mankind that nothing less than the wholesale renovation of the soul is required for salvation. Rearranging your life, modifying your behavior, or multiplying religious performances will not suffice. Something is so drastically and irreversibly wrong with mankind that we must be born all over again.” – MacArthur and Mayhue

- c) God the Father is the ultimate agent of regeneration; God the Holy Spirit is the efficient cause. (John 6:63, Titus 3:5)

2. Nature of regeneration:

- a) Cleansing from sin and creation of spiritual life. (Titus 3:5)

- b) God speaks life into the sinner's soul. (Ezekiel 37:1-11, John 11:43, 2 Corinthians 4:6)

“In regeneration, God unites the external call of gospel preaching with His sovereign, effectual call unto new life. Into darkened and dead hearts He speaks the command, ‘Let there be light’, and instantaneously births in us the light of eternal spiritual life where it had not existed.” – MacArthur and Mayhue

c) Regeneration affects the **whole** person. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

“God so operates upon us in the Holy Spirit that this fundamental disposition of ours is changed. He put a holy principle, a seed of new spiritual life, into this disposition that determines what I am and how I behave and how I use and employ my faculties.” – Martyn Lloyd-Jones

d) Regeneration cures spiritual **blindness**. (2 Corinthians 4:4, Romans 8:5)

3. Means of regeneration: The **gospel** message. (1 Peter 1:23, 2 Thess. 2:14, Romans 10:17, Ephesians 5:26)

*“Water baptism under the aegis of a church or birth into a Christian family cannot produce a new creation, quicken a dead soul, circumcise a proud heart, or cleanse deeply ingrained sin. This is to say that water baptism is not the indispensable condition by which God regenerates sinful souls. External ceremonies, however rich in religious symbolism, are impotent to bring new spiritual life to depraved hearts.”
– Bruce Demarest*

4. Relationship of regeneration to faith: Regeneration is the **cause** of saving faith. (John 6:44, 6:65)

5. Results of regeneration:

a) Personal **righteousness**. (1 John 2:29, 3:9; Ephesians 4:22-24; Galatians 5:22-23)

b) Overcoming **evil** influences. (1 John 5:4)

c) Willing and delightful **obedience** to God. (1 John 5:3, Psalm 119:97, 40:8)

“By God’s grace, [delightful obedience to God] is the birthright of every true child of God. The regenerated believer is not enslaved to do the duty he hates; rather, by virtue of the Spirit’s work, his heart is liberated to love the law he is commanded to follow.” – MacArthur and Mayhue

d) Love for fellow **believers**. (John 15:12; Galatians 6:10, 1 John 4:7, 3:18, 5:1)

“Regeneration is at the basis of all change in heart and life. It is a stupendous change because it is God’s recreative act. A cheap and tawdry evangelism has tended to rob the gospel which it proclaims of that invincible power which is the glory of the gospel of sovereign grace. May the church come to think and live again in terms of the gospel which is the power of God unto salvation.” – John Murray

Takeaways

1. If you are not a believer, the external call of the gospel to you remains.
2. If you are a believer, take comfort in knowing that your salvation is accomplished by God alone.
3. Rely on the Holy Spirit to save sinners.