

SANCTIFICATION

INTRODUCTION

- Definition: To be set apart from sin and to be made holy not only in position but in practice

What does the Bible mean when it speaks of a “sanctified” man? Sanctification is that inward spiritual work which the Lord Jesus Christ works in a man by the Holy Ghost, when He calls him to be a true believer. He not only washes him from his sins in His own blood, but He also separates him from his natural love of sin and the world, puts a new principle in his heart, and makes him practically godly in life

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- Old Testament usage of the term:

Genesis 2:3 ~ Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

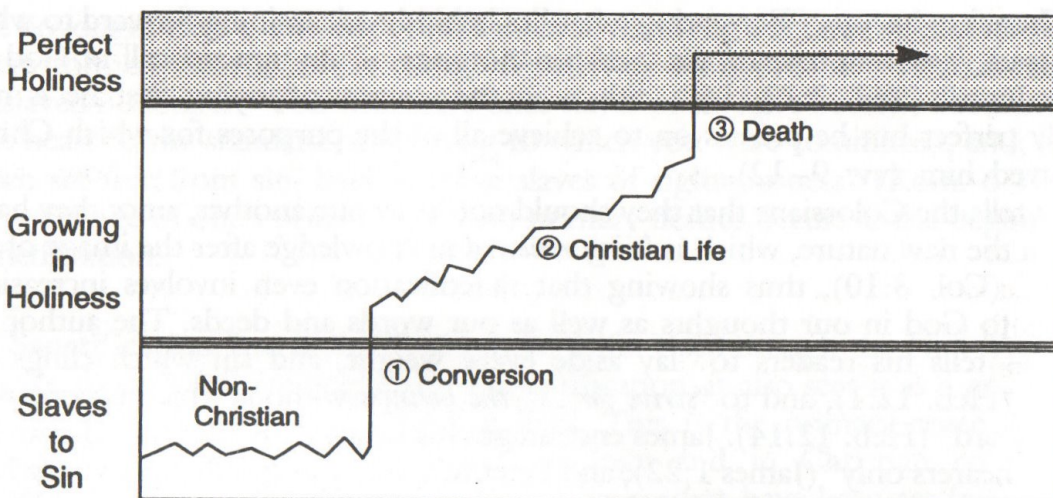
Leviticus 22:32 ~ You shall not profane My holy name, but I will be sanctified among the sons of Israel; I am the Lord who sanctifies you,

Numbers 3:13 ~ For all the firstborn are Mine; on the day that I struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I sanctified to Myself all the firstborn in Israel, from man to beast. They shall be Mine; I am the Lord.”

2 Chronicles 36:14 ~ Furthermore, all the officials of the priests and the people were very unfaithful following all the abominations of the nations; and they defiled the house of the Lord which He had sanctified in Jerusalem.

Joel 2:16 ~ Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, Assemble the elders, Gather the children and the nursing infants. Let the bridegroom come out of his room And the bride out of her bridal chamber.

- In the New Testament, the terms are used to refer to those whom God sets apart from sin to holiness



THE PROCESS OF SANCTIFICATION

Figure 38.1

- 3 aspects of sanctification: Positional (similar to regeneration/justification), Progressive, Perfect (similar to glorification) - see McLain's chart
- There are differences between justification and sanctification (Grudem):

JUSTIFICATION	SANCTIFICATION
Legal standing	Internal condition
Once for all time	Continuous throughout life
Entirely God's work	We cooperate
Perfect in this life	Not perfect in this life
Same in all Christians	Greater in some than in others

POSITIONAL SANCTIFICATION

- Positional sanctification describes what God did to us when He saved us, at the time of our conversion
- At the point of salvation (once and for all time), God causes true believers to experience a relational change, a completely new position which they enjoy with Jesus
- At the new birth, the true believer is permanently separated from sin and set apart for God Himself
- The Westminster Shorter Catechism: 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
- In this sense, believers are dead to the ruling power of sin – the penalty and power of sin are removed with a promise that the presence of sin will also once day be removed

Acts 20:32 ~ And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

1 Corinthians 1:2 ~ To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours:

- Notice a few unique terms:
 - Have been sanctified = perfect (past action with present results) passive (had no role in it)
 - Saints = holy ones
- Even the carnal Corinthians were considered "saints"

1 Corinthians 6:11 ~ Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

2 Corinthians 1:1 ~ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the church of God which is at Corinth with all the saints who are throughout Achaia:

Ephesians 1:1 ~ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Christ Jesus:

Philippians 1:1 ~ Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons:

Colossians 1:2 ~ To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

Hebrews 10:14 ~ For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

- "has perfected" = perfect tense indicates a one time event with continuing results.

Romans 6 (esp. vs. 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18)

- When a person becomes a Christian, they are put on the other side of a gulf that separates them from God, no longer on the side of sin, but now on God's side, the side of holiness
- He actually considers believers holy and perfect
- But God even went beyond that...not only are believers set apart from sin to God, God implants in believers desires that were not there before: A desire for God, for holiness, for prayer, worship, love, service, purity and to please God in all things.
- Believers possess a new heart that wants to live separate from sin, to stay away from sin, gain control over sin and get rid of sin.
- This is the reason God saved us!

Ephesians 1:4 ~ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.

- Thus, positional sanctification is a divinely wrought character change freeing believers from sinful habits and forming in them Christ-like affections and character
- It involves a change in the believer's standing before God AND an internal change in their heart and its desires
- Thus, as believers, we have the ability – with the help of the Holy Spirit and the presence of Christ – to overcome the temptation of sin

PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION

- Progressive sanctification refers to the outworking of the believer's positional sanctification
- In this sense, sanctification is the process of becoming holy throughout the Christian life
- It refers to an on-going transformation of becoming (holy) that which we already are (holy)
- This isn't a change in position or heart desires, but describes behavioral change
- This is the process of growth...the action of becoming separate from sin & set apart to God...the activity of gaining victory over sin and becoming more like Jesus...the pursuit of godly behavior

2 Corinthians 3:18 ~ we all ...are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

- Many of the NT instructions constitute exhortations to believers to walk in holiness, to grow in likeness to Christ, to pursue greater sanctification in their lives

Romans 6

Ephesians 4:17-6:20

Colossians 3:1-4:6

Romans 12-16

1 Peter 1:15-16 ~ but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all *your* behavior; because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."

2 Timothy 2:20-21 ~ Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these *things*, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work

- Progressive sanctification involves a turning from sin and a turning to righteousness
- Turning From:

1 Thessalonians 4:3 ~ For this is the will of God, your sanctification, that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality

- Turning To:

1 John 3:2 ~ And everyone who has this hope {the hope of His second coming} fixed on Him, purifies himself, just as He is pure.

- There is always a negative and a positive element to sanctification...that's why many of the commands in the NT contain both negative & positive sides:

Colossians 3:8, 12 ~ But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth...So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;

1 Timothy 6:11 ~ But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.

2 Timothy 2:22 ~ Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace

- Sanctification includes both the battle with sin and the pursuit of godliness...the turning from sin, to be like Christ

Progressive Sanctification Always Follows Positional Sanctification

- Where there is justification and positional sanctification, there WILL BE progressive sanctification
- Those whom God declares righteous and makes holy WILL be sanctified
- When God indwells a person through His Holy Spirit, that person will become more holy... That person will change...Their life will be different.
- There is a false belief found almost exclusively in America that states salvation in Jesus is not connected with living with and for Jesus
- Some believe you can be rescued by Jesus but not be transformed by Him in your lifestyle... That you can be saved but have no desire to live a life pleasing to Jesus
- In other words, some feel positional sanctification is separated from progressive sanctification...But...

1 Corinthians 1:30 ~ But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

- Righteousness & redemption which happens at salvation are connected to sanctification in the mind of God.

Hebrews 12:14 ~ Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord

- No sanctification means no salvation

Titus 2:11-12, 14 ~ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, 12 instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age... 14 who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.

- Notice that God's grace not only brings salvation, it also produces sanctification and godliness... salvation brings about a new nature, one in which the power of sin has been broken
- Notice also that Christ redeemed us for the purpose of purifying us

This Process is Never Complete in This Life

- Sanctification does not mean sin is totally eradicated in this life, although there are some who teach that (see chart on 4 views of sanctification)
- Do these verses teach that it is possible for believers to be perfect in this life?

Matthew 5:48 ~ Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 ~ Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 John 3:6 ~ No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him.

- Perfectionism in this life is not taught in Scripture...Especially, see Paul's own example from his life:

Romans 7

Philippians 3:12-14 ~ Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

- At the same time, the fact that we do not achieve perfection in this life should not serve as an excuse to not pursue holiness and righteousness
- The fact that God has made us holy in Christ is not a license to sin or resignation to apathy
- Instead, it is a motivation to diligently pursue holiness!

This Process Involves God's Work and Our Effort

- God is the One who brings about our sanctification:

1 Thessalonians 5:23 ~ Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Philippians 2:12-13 ~ So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

- God accomplishes this work in us through the Holy Spirit who works to change us into the likeness of Christ

1 Peter 1:2 ~ according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure

2 Thessalonians 2:13 ~ But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth

- But we also must work for it:

Philippians 2:12-13 ~ So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

- Paul is not talking about working for your salvation, but commanding us to work on our salvation

2 Corinthians 7:1 ~ Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

1 Timothy 4:7-8 ~ But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.

2 Peter 1:10 ~ Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble;

- This is where the spiritual disciplines come in (time in the Word, prayer, worship, confession, fellowship, self discipline, etc.)
- This is why there are so many commands in Scripture for believers to strive for obedience and to pursue holiness

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 ~ Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

Sanctification, again, is a thing which depends greatly on a diligent use of Scriptural means. When I speak of "means," I have in view Bible-reading, private prayer, regular attendance on public worship, regular hearing of God's Word, and regular reception of the Lord's Supper. I lay it down as a simple matter of fact that no one who is careless about such things must ever expect to make much progress in sanctification. I can find no record of any eminent saint who ever neglected them. They are the appointed channels through which the Holy Spirit conveys fresh supplies of grace to the soul, and strengthens the work which He has begun in the inward man. Let men call this legal doctrine if they please, but I will never shrink from declaring my belief that there are no "spiritual gains without pains." I should as soon expect a farmer to prosper in business who contented himself with sowing his fields and never looking at them till harvest, as expect a believer to attain much holiness who was not diligent about his Bible-reading, his prayers, and the use of his Sundays. Our God is a God who works by means, and he will never bless the soul of that man who pretends to be so high and spiritual that he can get on without them.

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- The failure to intensely pursue sanctification explains why some believers do not mature much in holiness:

1 Corinthians 3:1-3 ~ And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able *to receive it*. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, for you are still fleshly

1 Corinthians 3:15 ~ If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire

Hebrews 5:12-14 ~ For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes *only* of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

PERFECT SANCTIFICATION

- Our sanctification is complete when we die and go to be with the Lord...when the presence of sin is removed entirely

1 Corinthians 15:49 ~ Just as we have borne the image of the earthly, we will also bear the image of the heavenly.

Philippians 3:21 ~ who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

1 John 3:2 ~ Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.

- Thus, we look forward with great anticipation to the glorification that awaits us, the redemption of our bodies

Romans 8:23 ~ And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.