

# Theological Equipping Class - Sanctification

## What is Sanctification?

- *Titus 2:14 – [Jesus] gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.*
- Past (positional), Present (progressive), Future (perfected)
  - *Hebrews 10:10, 14 – And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all...[14] For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.*
  - *Philippians 1:6 – And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.*
- What Progressive Sanctification Is
  - “A progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and like Christ in our actual lives” –Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*
  - Sanctification is not a way to earn your salvation
  - Justification
    - Legal standing
    - Initial one-time declaration
    - Entirely God’s work
    - Perfect in this life
    - Same in all Christians
  - Sanctification
    - Internal condition
    - Continuous throughout this life
    - We cooperate
    - Never attained
    - Greater in some than in others
  - Sanctification is becoming in reality what we have already been declared to be
  - Sanctification is the natural result of being united with Christ
    - *2 Corinthians 3:18 – And we all, with unveiled faces, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.*

Sanctification: The process by which the Spirit progressively conforms who you are and how you live to the image of Christ, which has already been presented to God on our behalf for our justification, in order that we might better display who Christ is, do His works, and enjoy Him

## Whose work is Sanctification?

- Short answer: God
  - *1 Thessalonians 5:23 – Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*
  - *Romans 7:18 – For I know that nothing good dwells in...my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.*
- Long answer: God, but He empowers us to cooperate
  - *Galatians 5:25 – If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.*
  - *1 Corinthians 15:10 – But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.*
  - “Trying to kill sin and behave morally through personal strength and efforts using personal tools and techniques is the foundation of all the false religion in the world.” -John Owen, *The Mortification of Sin*

## Why Pursue Holiness if I am Already Saved?

1. Because what you were before is dead
  - *Romans 6:1-4 – What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? [2] By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? [3] Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? [4] [This was done] in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.*
  - *Galatians 2:20a – I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.*
  - Sin will never be gone completely, but we are fighting against the pattern of sin, or rebellious sin.
    - *Hebrews 10:26 – For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins...*
    - *1 John 3:9 – No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God.*
2. Because you were not saved into a new free status, but unto a new master who desires to work through you
  - *Romans 6:15-16, 22 – What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! [16] Do you not know that...you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? ...[22] But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.*
  - "...you're going to be a slave to someone. Being a slave to Jesus Christ is beyond any kind of slavery that anybody ever knew because this master makes us sons and gives us all the rights of His own sons. He adopts us into His family, calls us joint heirs with Christ, takes us to heaven where we rule and reign from His own throne, and pours out all the lavish riches in His possession, forever and ever and ever, for our own unmitigated joy and His own glory. Who wouldn't want to be a slave under that master? What a joy to be a slave of Christ." –John MacArthur, *Slaves for Christ*
  - Our master has given us a command
    - *1 Peter 1:14-15 – As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, [15] but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct[.]*
    - *1 Corinthians 6:20 – ...you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.*
    - *Romans 12:1 – ...present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.*
3. Because you were saved for a new purpose
  - To do the work of the Lord
    - *Romans 7:4 – Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God.*
    - *Ephesians 2:10 – For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*
  - To maintain and enjoy your newfound relationship with God as your Father
    - *1 Corinthians 1:9 – God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*

4. Because you are free from the power of sin, but not the presence of sin
  - *Ecclesiastes 7:20 – Surely there is not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sins.*
  - Sin is your active enemy
    - *1 Peter 2:11 – ...I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.*
    - “Be killing sin or it will be killing you.” - John Owen
  - Sin is God’s active enemy
    - *Galatians 5:17 – For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.*
    - *1 John 2:15b – If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*
  - *Romans 12:2 – Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind[.]*

### **Mortification: Putting Your Old Ways to Death**

- *Galatians 5:24-25 – And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*
  - *Colossians 3:5a Put to death therefore what is earthly in you...*
1. Remember that you are not called to merely fight sin, but to put it to death.
    - *Matthew 5:29 – If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell.*
  2. Remember that mortification is the work of God
    - *Romans 8:13 – For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*
    - “A man may easier see without eyes, speak without a tongue, than truly mortify one sin without the Spirit.” - John Owen
  3. Remember not to make sin your primary focus
    - “What people revere, they resemble, either for ruin or for restoration.” –Greg Beale, *We Become What We Worship*
    - *Romans 8:5-6 – For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. [6] For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.*
    - *Colossians 3:1 – seek the things that are above, where Christ is...*

### **Vivification: Embracing a New Life**

“I began to search for a means of gaining the strength I needed to enjoy you, but I could not find this means until I embraced the mediator between God and men, Jesus Christ.” –Augustine

1. Vivification comes from pursuing Christ, not pursuing sanctification
  - *Hebrews 11:24-26 – By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, [25] choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. [26] He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.*
  - “Learn much of the Lord Jesus. For every look at yourself, take ten looks at Christ...Let the Holy Spirit fill every chamber of your heart; and so there will be no room for folly, or the world, or Satan, or the flesh.” - Robert Murray M'Cheyne

2. Vivification comes from replacing your affections
  - “We know of no other way by which to keep the love of the world out of our heart, than to keep in our hearts the love of God-and no other way by which to keep our hearts for the love of God, than building ourselves up on our most holy faith.” –Thomas Chalmers, *The Expulsive Power of a New Affection*
  - “How sweet all at once it was for me to be rid of those fruitless joys which I had once feared to lose!” –Augustine
3. Vivification comes from joy, not duty
  - *Matthew 13:44* – “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has [**mortification**] and buys that field.” [**vivification**]
  - *Ecclesiastes 5:20* – For he will not much remember the days of his life because God keeps him occupied with joy in his heart.

## **Practical Tips**

1. Fight sin before it happens (vivification)
  - Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*:
 

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Bible Intake</li> <li>■ Prayer</li> <li>■ Worship</li> <li>■ Evangelism</li> <li>■ Serving</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Stewardship</li> <li>■ Fasting</li> <li>■ Silence and Solitude</li> <li>■ Journaling</li> <li>■ Learning</li> <li>■ Perseverance in the Disciplines</li> </ul>
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  - Don't walk alone: pursue Community and Discipleship (yours and others')
2. Fight sin as it happens
  - John Piper: ANTHEM strategy
    - Avoid
    - say **No** within 5 seconds
    - Turn to something magnificent
    - Hold the pure thing in mind until the dirty thing is gone
    - Enjoy the greater pleasure of God's promises
    - Move on to meaningful Christ-exalting activity
3. Fight sin after it happens
  - Do not despair when you fail
    - *1 John 2:1* – But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.
    - Remember the “already”: you are already justified, your sin has already been conquered, your status before God is already perfect
    - *Romans 4:8* – “blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.”
  - Confess immediately; don't try to earn your way back to God's favor
  - Consider the root of your sin: what is the heart issue? Are you trying to manage it and not kill it?

“Every unmortified sin will certainly do two things:— [1] It will weaken the soul, and deprive it of its vigour. [2] It will darken the soul, and deprive it of its comfort and peace.” - John Owen

*Proverbs 3:7-8* – Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones.