



Sanctification

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Facilitator Notes

Note: Some of the answers in these Facilitator notes are taken from the study guide "Great Truths of the Bible" by Alan B. Stringfellow. Scripture references are the New International Version unless otherwise noted.

What does it mean to be sanctified?

A "sanctified" person is one who is "holy" or "set apart" for a specific purpose. As God is holy and set apart from sinful man, men may be sanctified for use by God to serve His purpose. Sanctification implies a cleansing of sin in your life to make you more useful for God. As we shall see, it is a process.

When does the process of sanctification begin in the life of a Christian?

Sanctification begins with the experience of the new birth, continues with a process of growth and development, and is consummated in a glorious transformation of soul and body into the image of the Son of God...

1 John 3:2 - Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

What is wrong with the teaching that since the Christian has been forgiven, they may live as they please?

While the Christian does not have to pay the ultimate penalty for sin, there are still consequences for the sins in their life. Even if sins do not have consequences in the here and now, there will be consequences in eternity in the loss of reward.

Romans 6:1-2 - What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?

Is it possible for the Christian to become sin free in their life?

There is no scriptural support for the idea that believers may reach the point where they can be without sin while we are in our mortal bodies.

1 John 1:8 - If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

No one can say that they have arrived, there is always something the Holy Spirit is working on them to improve.

Romans 7:18-19 - I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is

not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do--this I keep on doing.

Dr. A. J. Gordon once said, "If the doctrine of sinless perfection is a heresy, the doctrine of contentment with sinful imperfection is a greater heresy. It is not edifying to see a worldly Christian throw stones at a Christian perfectionist." Either extreme is dangerous and not Scriptural.

The Three Steps in Sanctification

What stage of sanctification is described in 1 Cor 6: 11?

1 Corinthians 6:11 - And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

This refers to the believer's past experience. We are sanctified the moment we believe. This passage declares that we are sanctified at the same time we are justified, ruling out a subsequent work of grace by God on our behalf.

Hebrews 2:11 - Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers.

How are we sanctified when we become Christians?

2 Thessalonians. 2:13 - from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth.

The Holy Spirit breathes life into our human spirit, He gives us a sin-free spirit. This is the part of us that has been sanctified. God sees us as sanctified because He sees us in our completed state where our bodies and souls will also be sanctified.

What is the difference between being set apart by God for His purpose and our setting ourselves apart?

If we are the ones to set ourselves apart, even for the service of God, we will tend to have a smug, self-righteous attitude – and this will cause us to fail in God's eyes. Our sanctification is the work of God...

John 17:19 - For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

What stage of sanctification is described in 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4?

1 Thessalonians 4:3-4 - It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality;

that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable,

The refers to the believer's present state of growth. This aspect of sanctification is what God is doing in us now. Sanctification is "being set apart" each day for Christ.

What does Philippians 1:6 tell us about the process of sanctification?

Philippians 1:6 - being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

It is God who initiates the sanctification process in us and it is God who will complete it when we are resurrected. Sanctification is a continual process throughout our life.

What is our role in the process of sanctification?

Colossians 1:10 - And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God

Sanctification in the here and now is a growth process of Bible study, prayer, obedience, purging sin from your life, taking steps of faith, and seeking to become more like Christ. This growth continues throughout life.

What stage of sanctification is described in Ephesians 5:27?

Ephesians 5:27 - and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

This refers to the ultimate sanctification of believers in the future. When our bodies and souls are resurrected, we will be without sin, completely perfected in Christ. This is the goal of our salvation-the ultimate purpose of our redemption.

1 John 3:2 - Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

When we meet the Lord at our resurrection, we shall be like Him, sinless. Paul speaks of the body of saved people when he says God will, "*present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless*" (Ephesians 5:27).

What will God sanctify in us per 1 Thess 5:23-24?

1 Thessalonians 5:22-23 - Avoid every kind of evil. May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Sanctification has to do not only with our human spirits but also with our souls and bodies. Since our souls and bodies will not become completely, fully and actually redeemed until Jesus comes, our sanctification cannot be complete until He returns for us.

Philippians 3:20 - But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ

What are the three stages of sanctification?

Sanctification is presented in three tenses. The past, present and future. Every born again believer *has already been* sanctified (set apart, dedicated, consecrated, separated), and that sanctification is once and for all. We are *now being* sanctified through the Spirit and the Word. We *shall be* ultimately, wholly, completely sanctified when we meet the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Source of Sanctification

Does being sanctified mean "sinless perfection"?

It depends on the context. The human spirit of believers has been perfected and after our resurrection, our bodies and souls will be perfected but until then we have a sin nature that despoils us because our spirit, soul and body is an integrated whole. Jesus was sanctified-yet sinless (John 10:36)-*the only one*:

Hebrews 4:15 - For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin.

Carnal Christians are sanctified-but this does not do away with the sinful nature...

1 Corinthians 3:1-3 - Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly--mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men?

From where does our sanctification come from?

Hebrews 10:10 - And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Sanctification is of God. It is God who sets us apart for Himself. Jesus died for our sanctification.

What made it possible for God to sanctify us?

Hebrews 10:14 - because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

It was the God-Man's work on the cross that made it possible for God to sanctify us. And since the work of God is perfect, our sanctification lasts forever.

What do we sanctify?

1 Peter 3:15 - But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. We are to sanctify the Lord God in our hearts. This means we are to regard Christ as who He is – holy and the premiere authority in our lives.

Who else is instrumental in our sanctification?

1 Corinthians 6:11 - But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

The Holy Spirit convicts us of our need for Christ in our lives and is active *in* us to convict us of what we need to change to be more like Christ.

2 Thessalonians 2:13 - from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth.

What tool does the Holy Spirit use to sanctify us?

John 17:17 - Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.

The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God to sanctify us by convicting us of things we need to change in our lives to be more like Christ.

Ephesians 5:25-26 - Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,

The Evidence of Sanctification

What evidence is there of our sanctification?

John 17:18-19 - As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

Since Christians are saved to serve, those who do serve are demonstrating their sanctification.

How did Jesus demonstrate His sanctification?

Jesus demonstrated His sanctification by acting in obedience to the Father and following through in serving mankind by paying the penalty for our sin condition.

What did Jesus mean by, "I sanctify myself"?

Jesus was perfect, holy, sinless and set-apart from mankind for a mission – to sanctify a people for Himself.

What other evidence is there of our sanctification?

Galatians 5:22-23 - But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Those who have been/are being sanctified manifest the fruit of the Spirit in their lives. They demonstrate love to the unlovable, have joy in the midst of joyless circumstances, have peace that surpasses all understanding, etc...

Why is the "fruit" in the singular here?

Why isn't it the "fruits of the Spirit"?

This is a one-time gift of the Spirit. There may be multiple opportunities to demonstrate this gift but it does not require multiple infusions of God's grace.

What evidence of sanctification is addressed in Hebrews 13:21?

Hebrews 13:20-21 - May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him...

Sanctified Christians follow through on doing the will of God and they are successful because it is God who has equipped them to accomplish what He wills them to do.

What evidence of sanctification is addressed in James 4:8?

James 4:8 - Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Sanctified Christians grow closer to God when they respond to His convicting us of our sin. Those who do not have a relationship with God do not have the capacity to grow close to God because they are double-minded...

Matthew 6:24 - No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.

What is our should be our motivation for responding to Holy Spirit to correct the sin in our lives?

1 Peter 1:15-16 - But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."

We should follow through in correcting the sin in our lives because this is what God desires for us. We are being tested in this life to see to what extent we are willing to take the necessary action to be close to God. There will be rewards in eternity for those who demonstrated a desire to be close to God.

How may we correct sin in our lives?

We may need to make changes to remove things or people from our routine that tempt us to sin. We may need to develop new habits to replace things that do not please God. We should confess our sin and seek God's help...

1 John 1:9 - If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.