

## Doctrine of Sanctification

1. Sanctification is a supernatural work of God in the heart that produces holiness of life.
  - *1 Thessalonians 5:23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*
2. Just as God must save the soul He is the One who must sanctify it.
  - *John 15:4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. 5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*

There is much talk today about having better “self-esteem” through “self-help” programs. Popular psychology and the New Age movement has much to say about behavior problems and how to be a better person—and yet society grows progressively worse. Only the Potter can change the vessel and make it new.

3. Sanctification is a continuous process. Regeneration is instantaneous while sanctification takes time. How much time depends upon the individual. It is possible to grow quickly in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour. It is possible to accelerate the inner cross work and enjoy a greater degree of holiness but it does take time.
 

Many years ago a student asked the president of Oberlin Bible College whether he could not take a shorter course than the one prescribed. “Oh yes,” replied the president, “but then it depends on what you want to make of yourself. When God wants to make an oak, he takes a hundred years, but when he wants to make a squash he takes six months.”
4. God will sanctify His people. Christian, you who are struggling with secret chains of bondage, take heart.
  - *Philippians 1:6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:*
5. The process of sanctification requires the intelligent and voluntary activity of the believer in the discovery and mortification of sinful desires. While Jesus prayed in John 17:17 that the Father would sanctify believers in the sphere of truth, Paul pleaded with believers to be responsible by “*Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ*” (2 Corinthians 10:5).

6. Philippians 2:12-13 unites the Divine activity and human responsibility. *“Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. 13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”*
7. To be very practical, a large part of holiness consists in the formation of simple spiritual habits.
- Scripture reading. *2 Timothy 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*
  - Scripture meditation. *Joshua 1:8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.*
  - Scripture memorization. *Psalms 119:11 Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.*
  - Secret prayer. *Matthew 26:41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*
  - Faithfulness to Church. *Hebrews 10:25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*
  - Soul winning efforts. *Luke 14:23 And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.*
  - Acts of charity. *James 1:27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.*
8. In all of these activities there is a voluntary and intellectual assent. In the process of sanctifying His people the Agent whom God uses is the Holy Spirit.
- *John 14:17-18 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. 18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.*
9. The sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit can be arrested by sins committed against Him.
- The Spirit can be grieved. *Ephesians 4:30 And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*
  - The Spirit can be quenched. *1 Thessalonians 5:19 Quench not the Spirit.*

- The Spirit can be resisted. *Acts 7:51 Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.*
- The Spirit can be lied to. *Acts 5:3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?*
- The Spirit can be blasphemed. *Mark 3:29 But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation:*

10. It is the will of the Lord that the Spirit be not sinned against but released in the life.
11. The Spirit is released when we confess our utter helplessness before the Lord and our failure to be good in His sight.
12. The Spirit is released by faith that Christ will indeed come to us as He has promised. The object of saving faith is Christ and the object of sanctifying faith is Christ. Sanctification does not begin with self but with the Saviour. *2 Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

Is this not true?

In the moment of potential temptation when the lusts of the flesh are strong, and sin seems to come in like a flood, there is the tendency to suppress the truth and violate the conscience.

A Scripture passage comes to mind, or a spiritual thought of prohibition, but all that is dismissed so that inappropriate behavior can take place. *“Sin makes a person become self-justifying” (John MacArthur).*

It is true. The antidote for such behavior is a fresh look at the Crucified One, not only for salvation but also for sanctification. Keep the Cross before your heart.

“Turn your eyes upon Jesus,  
Look full in His marvelous face.  
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim  
In the light of His glory and grace.”