

SANCTIFICATION

DEFINITIONS:

Sanctification means “to set apart.”

Westminster Shorter Catechism

Q. 35. What is sanctification?

A. Sanctification is 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.

London Baptist Confession, Chapter 13, Of Sanctification

They who are united to Christ, effectually called, and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, are also farther sanctified, really and personally,¹ through the same virtue, by his Word and Spirit dwelling in them;² the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed,³ and the several lusts of it are more and more weakened and mortified,⁴ and they more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces,⁵ to the practice of all true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.⁶

1 Acts 20:32; Romans 6:5-6 2 John 17:17; Ephesians 3:16-19; 1 Thessalonians 5:21-23 3 Romans 6:14 4 Galatians 5:24 5 Colossians 1:11 6 2 Corinthians 7:1; Hebrews 12:14

This sanctification is throughout the whole man,⁷ yet imperfect in this life; there abides still some remnants of corruption in every part,⁸ wherefrom arises a continual and irreconcilable war; the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.⁹

7 1 Thessalonians 5:23 8 Romans 7:18,23 9 Galatians 5:17; 1 Peter 2:11

Footnote: (Any sense of perfection in the Christian - whether absolute or relative - is foreign to the Reformed faith. There is within the regenerate a “continual and irreconcilable war” which lasts the duration of their mortal life. A battle against the corruption of sin is the normative experience for the redeemed.)

In which war, although the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail,¹⁰ yet, through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part does overcome;¹¹ and so the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God, pressing after an heavenly life, in evangelical obedience to all the commands which Christ as Head and King, in his Word has prescribed to them.¹²

10 Romans 7:23 11 Romans 6:14 12 Ephesians 4:15-16; 2 Corinthians 3:18,
7:1

SANCTIFICATION: THREE PARTS

(Positional, Progressive & Perfect Sanctification)

1) POSITIONAL (DEFINITIVE) SANCTIFICATION

- When we are regenerated by the work of the Spirit, we are declared _____.
- This only comes to us by grace through faith.
- God sees us as sanctified (holy, set apart) not because of our works, but because of Christ's works _____.
- Justification and sanctification are gifted to us by grace through faith ALONE.

Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology For Pilgrims On The Way*:

"In his message to the Ephesian elders, Paul said, "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" (Ac 20: 32). He addresses his letters to the churches as those "who are ... called to be saints [hagiois]" (Ro 1: 7), "to those sanctified [hegiasmenois] in Christ Jesus" (1Co 1: 2; cf. 2Co 1: 1; Eph 1: 1; Php 1: 1; Col 1: 2)."

1Cor. 1:28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are,

1Cor. 1:29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

1Cor. 1:30 And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, [past tense]

1Cor. 1:31 so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

Other Common Bible Verses

- Eph. 1:4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.
- 1Cor. 6:11 And such were some of you. 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.
- 1Pet. 2:9 ¶ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.
- 1Pet. 2:10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Question:

Why is positional sanctification foreign to the modern Christian mind?

2) PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION

Questions:

What is our first thoughts when we think of progressive sanctification?
How is it accomplished?

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1689 LBC: In which war, although the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail,¹⁰ yet, through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part does overcome;¹¹ and so the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God, pressing after an heavenly life, in evangelical obedience to all the commands which Christ as Head and King, in his Word has prescribed to them.¹²

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G.C. Berkouwer, *Studies In Dogmatics: Faith and Sanctification*, 104

"Sanctification is not a "process," certainly not a moral process, but it is being holy in Christ and having part, through faith, in His righteousness."

Question: Do we need God in order to be morally good people?

HOW ARE WE TO PROGRESS IN SANCTIFICATION?

Self-discipline or by faith?

G.C. Berkouwer, *Studies In Dogmatics: Faith and Sanctification*, 33:

"The Sola-fide is at the heart of justification but no less at that of sanctification."

Gal. 3:1 ¶ O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified.

Gal. 3:2 Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?

Gal. 3:3 Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?

Phil. 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.

1Cor. 1:6 even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you—
 1Cor. 1:7 so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ,
 1Cor. 1:8 who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 1Cor. 1:9 God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Famous verse used:

Phil. 2:12 ¶ Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,
 Phil. 2:13 for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

G.C. Berkouwer, *Studies In Dogmatics: Faith and Sanctification*, 112:

For progress in sanctification never meant working out one's own salvation under one's own auspices: on the contrary, it meant working out one's own salvation with a rising sense of dependence on God's grace.

Louis. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*:

Sanctification is a work of the triune God...It is particularly important in our day...to stress the fact that God, and not man, is the author of sanctification. Especially in view of the Activism that is such a characteristic feature of American religious life, and which glorifies the work of man rather than the grace of God, it is necessary to stress the fact over and over again that sanctification is the fruit of justification, that the former is simply impossible without the latter, and that both are the fruits of the grace of God in the redemption of sinners.

WHAT IS THE FOCUS OF OUR PROGRESSION?

NOTE: If we are justified and sanctified by faith alone, our focus is on faith and not faithfulness.

2Pet. 3:18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Col. 2:18 Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind,
 Col. 2:19 and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God.

1Pet. 2:2 Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—

2Cor. 3:18 And we all, with unveiled face, 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.

2Cor. 4:6 For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Michael Horton, *Pilgrim Theology*, 318:

We grow more aware of our need for Christ, not our own growth in virtue. Rather than measurable progress in virtue, we should think of sanctification as “grow[ing] in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pet 3:17-18). The biblical balance that we find in Scripture reminds us that sanctification is more a matter of going deeper into the gospel than of getting better through the law.

WHAT ABOUT GOOD WORKS?

1) Are they accepted?

- All human works are polluted with sin
- God demands perfection

John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book 3, Chapter XIX:

“Those bound by the yoke of the law are like servants assigned certain tasks for each day by their masters. These servants think they have accomplished nothing, and dare not appear before their masters unless they have fulfilled the exact measure of their tasks. But sons, who are more generously and candidly treated by their fathers, do not hesitate to offer them incomplete and half-done and even defective works, trusting that their obedience and readiness of mind will be accepted by their fathers, even though they have not quite achieved what their fathers intended. Such children ought we to be, firmly trusting that our services will be approved by our most merciful Father, however small, rude, and imperfect these may be.”

2) What do they accomplish?

Who are the commands in the NT directed towards?

Answer: _____

NOTE: Normally, good works are always focused on one’s relationship to God, “Am I being faithful enough?”

Michael Horton, *Pilgrim Theology*, 316:

Sanctification is a life not of acquiring but of receiving from the excess of divine joy that then continues to overflow in excess to our neighbor and from our neighbor to us. Ascetic, moralistic, and introspective programs of sanctification keep us in that very condition of being “curved in on ourselves” that defines sin. This individualistic concern with pacifying God or improving our own character only inflames God’s wrath and does nothing for our neighbors. It is precisely in seeing that God does not need our works and they will do nothing for us before God that we are liberated to do them simply because they are what our neighbor needs from us.

HEIDELBERG CATECHISM (1563):

86. Since then we are redeemed from our misery by grace through Christ, without any merit of ours, why should we do good works?

Because Christ, having redeemed us by His blood, also renews us by His Holy Spirit after His own image, that with our whole life we show ourselves thankful to God for His blessing, and also that He be glorified through us; then also, that we ourselves may be assured of our faith by the fruits thereof; and by our godly walk win also others to Christ.

3) What is our motivation?

G.C. Berkouwer, *Studies In Dogmatics: Faith and Sanctification*, 41:

Justifying faith does not disincline men to good works, for without it they would act only out of self-love and fear of damnation. Faith is to be the foundation of good works. And it follows from the nature of faith which clings to divine grace that it cannot possibly be unfruitful... To the performance of good works, faith is not a deterrent but a stimulus.

1John 3:2 Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.

1John 3:3 And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

CONCLUSION

MEANS OF SANCTIFICATION

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Eph. 4:15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,

Eph. 4:16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Eph. 5:26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,

Eph. 5:27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

Rom. 10:17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

Gal. 3:2 Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?

Gal. 3:3 Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?

Gal. 3:4 Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain?

Gal. 3:5 Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith—