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# Grace Fellowship Church

*Delighting in God's Sovereign Saving Grace,  
to the Glory of God!*

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## The Doctrine of Sanctification:

“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.

## The Doctrines of Justification and Sanctification Compared...

### Justification

- *Legal* change from guilt to innocence
- *Once* for all time at conversion
- *Perfect* in this life—manifested at Judgment
- *Same degree* in all Christians (fully justified)
- Has to do with our *standing*

### Sanctification

- *Moral* change of behaviour and motives
- *Continuous* from conversion
- *Progressive* in this life—perfected at Judgment
- *Differing degrees* in Christian
- Has to do with our *state*

## Where Does the Word Come From?

1. *Old Testament* – to set apart to special (usually “godly”) use; especially priests or items in temple.

They shall be holy to their God and not profane the name of their God. For they offer the LORD's food offerings, the bread of their God; therefore they shall be holy. They shall not marry a prostitute or a woman who has been defiled, neither shall they marry a woman divorced from her husband, for the priest is holy to his God. You shall sanctify him, for he offers the bread of your God. He shall be holy to you, for I, the LORD, who sanctify you, am holy.  
– Leviticus 21:6-8

2. *New Testament* – the word sanctify is the verb form of the word for “holy”; “to make holy” gives the idea. J.I. Packer says that if there was such a verb as “holify,” then we wouldn’t need “sanctify”; likewise, if “sanct” were a legitimate adjective it would approximate the same meaning as “holy.” Something that is “holy” is set apart from common use. To be sanctified is the idea of becoming like God who is holy.

And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!"  
– Revelation 4:8

## The Twin Meanings of Sanctification

The Bible speaks of sanctification in at least two ways and it is important you know which way it is being used in each passage, otherwise we can get quite confused quite quickly! The difference is largely with regard to time: it may refer to our state as “sanctified” (God has *already* set us apart for holy purposes), or to our growth in sanctification (that is, *becoming* more and more holy; conforming our actual lives to the purposes for which he has called us).

- I. *Sanctification: the Doctrine of Progression in Holiness* (1 Thess 4:1-8). Our task as Christians is “to grow more and more in sanctification, just as [we] previously grew more and more in sin” (Grudem).

I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification. ... 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. – Romans 6:19, 22

As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." – 1 Peter 1:14-16

This doctrine is everywhere present even when the word “sanctification” is absent. See, for example: Rom 12:2; 2 Cor 3:18; Eph 4.11-15; Phil 1:9-11; 3:12-21; Col 1:9-12; 1 Pet 2:1-3; 2 Pet 1:5-8.

This growth in holiness will continue throughout this life... in other words, sin remains as long as we live (Matt 6:12; Jas 3:2; 1 John 1:8). Our growth in holiness will continue until it is perfected at the consummation of all things (Eph 5:25-27; Heb 12:23; 1 Jn 3:2-3). This is necessary, since nothing even partially impure may be in God’s presence. This means that our souls *and* bodies will be sanctified in that great day (see Rev 21:27; cf. 1 Cor 15:49; Phil 3:20-21).

- II. *Sanctified: God's Declared Purpose for Us*. When God saves sinners, he declares definitively why he has done so; namely, so that we might be set aside for his holy purposes and that our lives might reflect his holiness (Matt 5:14-16, 43-48; Acts 20:32; 2 Thess 2:13; Heb 10:10).

*Sanctify* them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate (*sanctify*) myself, that they also may be *sanctified* in truth. – John 17:17-19

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 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.

– 1 Cor 6:9-11

### “How Do I Become Holy?” The Means of Sanctification in This Life

God (especially the Holy Spirit) is the one who sanctifies us (Rom 15:16; Gal 5:16; Eph 5:18; 2 Thess 2:13)

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. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

– 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

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. – Romans 8:13

What “means of grace” are available to Christians who want to be more sanctified (grow in holiness)?

1. Obedience to ethical commands (1 Thess 4:3; Rom 6:19, 22; the rest of the ethical commands in the NT!).
2. Bible reading and meditation (Ps 1:2; 19:7-13; 2 Tim 3:16-17; etc.)
3. Prayer (Ps 51:10; Eph 6:18; Jude 20)
4. Worship (Eph 5:18-20)
5. Fellowship (Prov 13:20; Heb 10:24-25)

There are no “quick-fixes” to sanctification. We need to use the tools God has given us to be sanctified.

### “Why is Sanctification Necessary?”

1. Without it, no one will see the Lord!

Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. – Hebrews 12:14

2. It is the purpose of the kingdom to have citizens who shine as lights in the darkness, so that others may see the holiness of God, and glorify him! (Phil 2:12-16)

In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. – Matt 5:16

3. It is what's best for us!

I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people. – Titus 3:8

### “That Was a Mouthful... Can You Sum It Up for Me?”

Key things to remember:

1. “Sanctified” as a state = “set aside for holy purposes”
2. “Sanctification” as a process = “becoming what God has purposed for us to be... holy!” Since we've been set aside as holy, we now must simply become what we've been saved to be.

“Sanctification is that continuous operation of the Holy Spirit, by which the holy disposition imparted in regeneration is maintained and strengthened.” – A.H. Strong's *Systematic Theology*

3. **Sanctification is NOT justification!** Justification is our legal standing—a verdict declared about us—that can never change or be changed. Sanctification is our growth in holiness over time. Our security is based on Christ's righteousness imputed to us in justification, **never** in our own righteousness in sanctification.

### What Difference Does It Make to You?

1. To think right thoughts about God and his character.
2. To promote his gospel.
3. To aid in our worship.
4. To encourage our own souls.
5. To have something to say to our accuser!
6. To prepare us for heaven.
7. To encourage each other.
8. To strengthen our cross-centred authenticity.