



The Foundations of our Faith –

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Module 1- Week 3 : *Sanctification – growing in grace & more like Jesus*

KEY VERSE: *“But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because God chose you as firstfruits to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit and through belief in the truth.”*

1 Thessalonians 2:13

In last week’s study we looked at how we are declared righteous (justified) before God and how a correct understanding of this doctrine removes feelings of guilt in our lives.

This week we look at the doctrine of Sanctification.

Introduction:

Differences between Justification and Sanctification:

Justification:

*Legal Standing
Once for all time
Entirely God’s work
Perfect in this life
The same in all Christians*

Sanctification:

*Internal condition
Continuous
We co-operate
Not perfect in this life
Greater in some than in others*

We will cover 3 main headings this week:-

- 1. What does ‘sanctification’ mean?**
 - 1.1 In the Old Testament
 - 1.2 In the New Testament
 - 1.3 In the Early Church

- 2. What are the processes involved in sanctification ?**
 - 2.1 Positional (immediate)
 - 2.2 Progressive (continuing)
 - 2.3 Perfecting (concluding)

3. How do we achieve continuing/ongoing sanctification?

- 3.1 By the Word of God
 - 3.2 By the Purpose of God
 - 3.3 By a Renewed mind
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1.0 What does Sanctification mean?

1.1 In the Old Testament

The Hebrew term that forms the basis of our English word "sanctify" is "**qâdash**" (pronounced kaw-DAYSH]. Strong's #6942)

and it means "to consecrate, be holy, be separate or be hallowed".

Essentially, it means the state of being clean or holy. The opposite of this of course is a state of being unclean or defiled, and that is the context of the Old Testament meaning of this word.

In the Old Testament, "defile" was used to describe something unclean or polluted, or an action that could demean and pollute oneself and/or others. It was applied without distinction to either ethics or religious practice; both moral and spiritual transgressions were understood to be violations of God's will. Disregarding God's law was seen as a source of defilement.

Similar in meaning to "defile" is the term "profane" which God uses frequently to contrast with what was holy; God wanted to prohibit people from treating something He deemed holy with irreverence-

Leviticus 22:2 & 15.....

(e.g The example of Nadab & Abihu- see Leviticus 10:1-11)

The word "qâdash" is used frequently in the Old Testament in various ways-

Exodus 15:11.....

Here **qâdash** is translated "holiness"

As Moses and the Israelites sang to God, they recognised that God's moral perfection or freedom from moral evil sets Him apart from other gods and is majestic in its uniqueness

1 Samuel 2:2.....

Revelation 15:4.....

Isaiah observes that this aspect of God is emphasised even among the angels-

Isaiah 6:3.....

"**Qâdash**" places a focus on God and the realm that He exists in. As God is holy (*Ps 99:9*), His name is Holy (*Ps 99:3; 111:9*) and all that comes to His realm must be holy. It is here, where all that belongs to God's realm, that the "qâdash" word group is used most frequently; it is all of those things that God separates and devotes to Himself that become holy: time, space, objects and people.

On occasions, God sanctified a physical area which came into contact with His presence and glory

e.g Moses and the burning bush-

Exodus 3:5.....

e.g At Mount Sinai-

Exodus 19:23.....

e.g the OT priesthood-

Exodus 29:43-46.....

Certain times are sanctified and set apart for the Lord such as the Sabbath (*Gen 2:3; Ex 20:8-12; 31:13*), various festivals (*Lev 23:4-44*) and the Year of Jubilee (*Lev 25:12*).

The Tabernacle and all of its objects (*Ex 28:4-43; 29:36-44; 40:9-10; Lev 8:1-36*) were sanctified, and later, the Temple (*1 Kings 8:64-9:9; 2 Chron 7:1-22*) and the land of Canaan (*Ex 15:13*) also.

The Levitical system of priests who serve in the Tabernacle were set apart for the service of God (*Ex 19:14-23; 28:41; 29:1; 30:30-32; 40:12-15*) and their food as well (*Ex 29:31-34; Lev 2:9-16; 7:33-35; 18:8*).

The objects that serve in worship are sanctified such as first born males of animals and human beings (*Ex 13:2, 11-13; Lev 27:26; Num 3:13; 8:17*) and the sacrifices of crops and animals (*Ex 29:10-30; Lev 27:30-33; Deut 26:13*).

So sanctification has its roots in being separated and holy and special to God

1.2 In the New Testament

The NT writers repeatedly spoke about believers in Christ being "sanctified"

1 Corinthians 6:11.....

Acts 20:32.....

1.3 In the Early Church

Acts 2:42 "They devoted themselves (NIV). "They continued steadfastly" (KJV)

But what did they continue in ?

"the Apostles' teaching...fellowship....breaking of bread....and prayer.

Those 4 elements are absolutely vital to our spiritual growth and development.

They are vital components to our Church corporate life too.

I cannot stress this enough.

2.0 What are the processes involved Sanctification?

2.1 Positional

Positional sanctification is a state of holiness that we are placed in at the very moment we commit our to Christ. We are sanctified 'positionally'. We are sanctified the moment we believe on Christ.

Thus the Corinthian believers could be called "saints" even though they were in a carnal state-

1 Corinthians 1:2.....

It denotes not so much one's spiritual condition but rather the believer's spiritual position. When we come to Christ and are born again by the Holy Spirit and regeneration takes place in our lives, God sanctifies us.

Just as people and things relating to God's service in the OT were sanctified and set apart and made special- so we are also in Christ-

1 Peter 1:1-2.....

1 Peter 2:9.....

(KJV "a peculiar people") **Gk: peripoiesis** = acquired; purchased; possessed; obtained.

When we come to Christ there should be a definite moral change which takes place in our lives at the point of regeneration.

2 Corinthians 5:17.....

When a person comes to Christ, they are cleansed and washed, by an act of God the righteousness of Christ is imputed to them (last week's study).

Paul speaks of the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit

Titus 3:5.....

So when Paul writes the initial greetings in his letters to various churches in the NT, he addresses them as "saints"

1 Corinthians 1:2.....
2 Corinthians 1:1.....
Ephesians 1:1.....
Colossians 1:2.....

The word “saints” in these verses is Gk ‘hagios’ meaning ‘holy, sacred, set apart, consecrated’

Thus, whatever anyone’s background, history, past life, condition, when they come to Christ they are made holy the blood of the Lamb!

1 Corinthians 6:11.....

In coming to know Christ they have been placed in a POSITION of set apartness and separation from their past life and the world. We are indeed “new creatures in Christ Jesus who have been “made holy” (NIV); or “sanctified” (KJV) through the sacrifice of Christ’s death on the Cross.

Hebrews 10:10.....

2.2 Progressive

Whilst we are *positionally* holy (“set free from every sin”) we know that we still sin, we still trip up, we still make mistakes

1 John 1:10.....

That’s why the Bible also refers to sanctification as a practical experience of our separation unto God. “Progressive” or “experiential” sanctification, as it is sometimes called, is the effect of obedience to the Word of God in one’s life. It is the same as growing in the Lord.

2 Peter 3:18.....

Sanctification differs from justification in several ways. Justification is a one-time work of God, resulting in a declaration of “not guilty” before Him because of the work of Christ on the cross. Sanctification is a **process**, beginning with justification and continuing throughout life. Justification is the starting point of the line that represents one’s Christian life; sanctification is the ongoing/continuing line itself.

2.3 Perfecting

There is a sense in which we may speak of believers as those whom God has perfected. In Hebrews 10 the writer speaks first, of how the OT system of repeated sacrifice could never make perfect those who draw near

Hebrews 10:1.....

But then we are told in a later verse that this was indeed accomplished by the single sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross-

Hebrews 10:14.....

Again, "made holy" (NIV) is "sanctified" (KJV) Gk "Hagiazo".

Note: same word as "saints" (see 2.1 above)

This verse underscores the close connection between perfecting and sanctifying. It is referring to an earlier verse about conscience:-

Hebrews 9:14.....

The 'acts that lead to death' (NIV) are not sins

('dead works' ESV; 'useless rituals' GNT; 'lifeless works' Weymouth)

they are religious rituals that make no impact on our spiritual lives to enable us to grow. Under the Old Covenant they had to take place again and again but were still not able to cleanse the worshipper inwardly (conscience)

Hebrews 9:9.....

Their sanctification was only external-

Hebrews 9:13.....

E.G. It's like a man who goes and buys a new suit every time he needs a bath. His solution never touches the real problem, but keeps covering it over. Eventually that kind of a person becomes very difficult to live with, as are also those who place value on ordinances & rituals.

This is further underlined in vvvs 25-26

Hebrews 9:25,26.....

Since Christ's death on the Cross was a "once for all time" sacrifice, we have no need to offer sacrifices again and again

Hebrew 9:28.....

So, not only is sanctification a primary reality for the believer, it is also a continuing experience.

The reason for this is that in this life we can never achieve sinless perfection (there are some who hold this view, but it is erroneous).

Note:-

1 Corinthians 6.11.....

But later on in the same chapter Paul would go on to say-

1 Corinthians 6:18,20.....

Paul is clearly addressing Christians. But notice that he is primarily addressing works of the flesh (v20)

In his second letter to the Corinthians Paul speaks about the OT call to holiness-

2 Corinthians 6:17.....
(quoting from Isaiah 52:11)

Later he says-

2 Corinthians 7:1.....

We are to perfect (Gk. 'epiteleo' = 'to fulfil further or completely)

Hence, although they have already been sanctified, there is a call to continuing sanctification.

3.0 How do we achieve continuing/ongoing sanctification?

Finally, sanctification is the goal of the Christian life- to be more like Christ. God would have His people constantly move towards holiness.

1 Thessalonians 5:23.....

The rendering in the NIV "through and through" is a double emphasis- it means "complete to the end...."

The goal is clear, God will complete this work at the Coming of Christ (Parousia)

Philippians 1:6.....

and again in-

Philippians 1:9-11.....

3.1 By the word of God

John 17:17.....

Paul speaks to us of the "washing by the Word...."

Ephesians 5:26.....

2 Greek words translated "word" Logos = God's constant word; & Rhema = God's instant word as in Ephesians 5:26.

John 15:3.....

We are sanctified in the truth-

John 17:9.....

3.2 By the Purpose of God (His will & plan for us)

John 17:18 & 19.....

Sanctified and sent- has in view the setting apart of believers for the purpose for which they are sent into the world.

That Jesus set Himself apart for God's purpose is both the basis and the condition of our being set apart-

John 10:36.....

We are sanctified and sent because Jesus was. Our Lord's sanctification is the pattern of and power for our own. The sending and the sanctifying are inseparable. We are "set apart" for a purpose.

We learn God's purpose for our lives by walking in communion/fellowship with him- how do we accomplish that? By prayer and being alone with God. The devotional aspect of our daily spiritual life which is so vital to our spiritual growth and development.

We can see this clearly in the prayer-life of Jesus:-

God's Word abounds with commands, examples, and promises which are encouragements to pray. If we do not learn to pray, it will not be for want of instruction and example! Studying the place of prayer in the short life-span of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself will reveal that it had top priority in His busy schedule.

Christ withdrew into the wilderness to pray-

Luke 5:16.....

He arose early to pray

Mark 1:35.....

Sometimes He prayed all night

Luke 6:12

In a very dramatic moment, He sent away thousands so He could go and pray to the Father

Matthew 14:23

It is extremely significant that 10% of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5,6,7) is devoted to prayer. Included is the model prayer (6:9-15) which reveals various elements of praying, such as worship, confession, and petition.

Much insight also can be gained regarding prayer from His parables. An example is found in Luke 11:5-8, which teaches (1) knocking; (2) specific asking; and (3) tenacious persistence.

*Christ's present ministry: The Lord Jesus is now in the **Throne Room in Heaven***

Revelation 4:1,2.....

at the right hand of the Father, appearing in the presence of God for us in intercession

Romans 8:34.....

Hebrews 7:25.....

Hebrews 9:24.....

1 John 2:1.....

Paul says “if you do these things you will never stumble....”

2 Peter 1:10.....

“add to your faith.....” v5

3.3 By a renewed mind

Romans 12:2.....

A renewed mind here is Gk: **ANAKEENOSIS** = “renovated, restored, made new”

I remember J John telling me that when he first got saved his Mother told him he'd been brainwashed. Well, some of us need our brains washing !

A renewed mind is a cleansed mind. So many battles start in the mind don't they?

Proverbs 23:7 (Amplified) “For as a man thinks in his heart, so is he.”

We see that sanctification affects our intellect and our knowledge when Paul says that we have **put on** the new nature

Colossians 3:9 & 10.....

Philippians 4:8.....

See v9 also ! “Put it into practice....”

1 Thessalonians 5:23

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.

Questions for Personal Application:-

1. *Can you recall in your own experience the definite beginning of sanctification? What were the circumstances involved?*

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2. *As you look back over the last few years of your Christian life, can you see a definite pattern of spiritual growth and sanctification? What are some of the things that you used to have no interest in that now hold great interest for you?*

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3. *As you have grown in greater maturity in the Christian life, what factors have caused or contributed to this?*

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4. *In living the Christian life, have you been able to maintain a balance between your passive role and your active role in sanctification? Or is your experience that one aspect has been more dominant over the other?*

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5. *What areas do you think that you still need to develop in your life in which sanctification might have a role to play? Is God challenging you about something at this very time?*

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