



## SANCTIFICATION

Sanctification means to be set apart unto God for God's use; to be set apart from sin unto holiness. It is an act of God where He consecrates the believer unto Himself.

The topic of sanctification (or holiness) is found over *one thousand times* in the scriptures. It is a doctrine the Holy Spirit wants believers to especially understand.

There are three distinct tenses of sanctification concerning New Testament salvation:

- a. *Positional*, which refers to the initial act.
- b. *Progressive*, which refers to the believer's present life.
- c. *Final*, which refers to the completion of its work.

### A. Positional Sanctification

1. This is the *instantaneous* sanctification the believer receives the moment he trusts Christ. At that time, Christ sets his soul apart from sin and imparts unto him His own holiness and righteousness. God's law, a reflection of His nature, demands that man be perfect and holy. This, however, is impossible for the natural man because he is by nature sinful and unholy (Romans 8:8; Ephesians 2:1-4).
2. God's work of sanctification supplies every moral virtue He requires man to have. When a person receives Christ, he gets all of Christ's moral virtues with Him—he meets all the law's requirements in Him (Romans 10:1-4).
3. When God looks at the *position* of a Christian, He sees the *separated, sanctified, righteous, and perfect* life of His son Jesus Christ. The saint need never fear of losing this standing before God because it is his union with Christ that brought it about. This union can never be broken (see *Regeneration; Justification*; Romans 15:16; 1 Corinthians 1:2, 30, 6:11; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 1:3-4; Hebrews 2:11, 10:10,14, 13:12,21; 1 Peter 1:2).

## B. Progressive Sanctification

1. This tense speaks of how the Christian's present life is to become holier and more Christ-like day by day. Since the believer's soul is sanctified in Christ, God expects this holiness to affect his behavior and be manifested in his daily walk. (Romans 12:1-4; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Galatians 5:22-25; 1 Thessalonians 2:12, 4:1-7).
2. Before a person is saved it is impossible for him to live a holy life. However, after salvation he can; he has the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit to assist him. The Spirit prompts him to live "**...not conformed to this world...**", but after Christ. "**As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him**" (Colossians 2:6). See also: Romans 12:1-4, 16:19; 1 Corinthians 6:12-13, 19-20, 7:23).

### How to Resist Temptation and Live Above Sin

1. Every Christian knows what it means to be tempted. However, being tempted to sin is *not* a sin in itself. The Lord was tempted in all the areas we are, yet He did not sin (Hebrews 2:17-18). God will allow His people to be tempted for several reasons. Some of them are: to try their faith (1 Peter 1:7), to keep them humble and dependent on Him (1 Peter 5:6), to cause them to know the victory that is in Christ (Hebrews 2:18), and to enable them to win the crown of life (James 1:2-4, 12).
2. The Bible gives the believer some guidelines to follow concerning temptation.
  - a. He is to *watch and pray* that he enters not into it (Matthew 26:41).
  - b. He is to *stay away* from anything or situation that may lead him into it (Romans 16:19)
  - c. And he is to be *transformed* from worldly thinking to godly thinking by the renewing of his mind (Romans 12:1-4).

## C. Final Sanctification

This tense refers to a future event where God sanctifies the believer completely—body, soul, and spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:23). This will occur when Christ comes back for His people at the rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

## Lessons

- ✓ Cooperate with God's program of sanctification
- ✓ Remain encouraged because of our position before God
- ✓ Long for and lean toward the final status of our holiness