

Introduction:

- Have you ever found some things in life hard to do? For example:
 - Why is it harder to get up for school than it is to get up on the weekend?
 - Why is it harder to get up to go to work than it is to get up and go fishing? Shopping? (for the ladies.)
 - I think the dividing line is the difference between “have to” and “want to”. If I have to do it, it loses its joy, fun, excitement. I.e. When kids are little they want to wash dishes, push the vacuum etc. When they get older, they don’t want to. You can’t wait to get out of high school so you can go to work and make money. Then you can’t wait to retire.
- I want to talk to us about the subject of sanctification this morning. When I say sanctification, I am talking about holiness or moral purity. I am also talking about how to see, think and act from God’s perspective concerning the different facets of life we find ourselves in.
 - If you get that “Oh no!” feeling when someone says holiness, sanctification, purity, you are not seeing, thinking or preparing to act from God’s perspective.
 - If your mind instantly goes to “Oh, no not this legalistic stuff,” then you may just possibly be listening to a religious spirit.
 - Sanctification is not about what I ‘can’t do’ it is about what I get to do in Christ that leads me deeper into the “Christ life” that He calls rich and satisfying in Jn 10:10.
- 1 Thes 3:11-4:8 vs 3 “*God’s will is for you to be holy.*”

I. What Does It Mean to Be Holy?**A. Sanctification/holiness refers to separation or apartness.**

1. In the OT Israel was called a holy people because of their separation to God from all the other nations. “*For you are a holy people, who belong to the Lord your God. Of all the people on earth, the Lord your God has chosen you to be his own special treasure.*” (Deuteronomy 7:6, NLT)
2. They were holy not because of who they were. They were holy because God set them apart from other nation for himself. When you get saved you are not holy because of who you are you are holy because in salvation God sets you apart to himself.
3. The Hebrew word for holy is ‘qodes’ meaning apartness or separation. It may very well come from the root word ‘qod’ meaning to cut. Thus, making the idea of separation the original idea.
4. ““*Who is like you among the gods, O Lord— glorious in holiness, awesome in splendor, performing great wonders?*” (Exodus 15:11, NLT) Who God is separates Him from all other Gods. When we become believers in Christ, we take on the nature of God that makes us separate from all other people without God.
5. This idea of a holy people carries over into the NT as well. “*But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God’s very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.*” (1 Peter 2:9, NLT) The words: Chosen, holy, God’s own people communicate this idea of separateness. God’s people are holy by virtue of belonging uniquely to Him.

B. Sanctification/Holiness refers to purity and cleanness.

1. Holiness refers not only removal from one sphere of existence to another, like Israel from among the nations, but it also means separation from all that is impure and evil. “*But you are pure and cannot stand the sight of evil. Will you wink at their treachery? Should you be silent while the wicked swallow up people more righteous than they?*” (Habakkuk 1:13, NLT) God

saves you to himself and separates us in the moment of salvation from all other people. But now he must get “Egypt” out of us.

2. In the OT this is seen early on as God begins discipling the nation of Israel. He says to Moses *“Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow and let them wash their garments for on the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people.”*
 3. *“For I am the Lord your God. You must consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy. So do not defile yourselves with any of these small animals that scurry along the ground.”* (Leviticus 11:44, NLT) This consecration deals with many externals. But something begins to happen in the OT as you read it from Exodus to Malachi.
 4. The more this is spoken of in the OT the more it becomes an internal issue of the heart and not an external ceremony. *“Who may climb the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? Only those whose hands and hearts are pure, who do not worship idols and never tell lies.”* (Psalm 24:3–4, NLT)
 5. In the NT the ritual idea of holiness is almost non-existent. In fact Jesus spoke against those who cleansed the outside of the cup and not the inside. MT 23:25
 6. In Mark, he really “breaks the cup” *““Don’t you understand either?” he asked. “Can’t you see that the food you put into your body cannot defile you? Food doesn’t go into your heart, but only passes through the stomach and then goes into the sewer.” (By saying this, he declared that every kind of food is acceptable in God’s eyes.)”* (Mark 7:18–19, NLT)
 7. Purity in the heart not outward purity is the way to the Highest! *“He gave his life to free us from every kind of sin, to cleanse us, and to make us his very own people, totally committed to doing good deeds.”* (Titus 2:14, NLT)
- C. Sanctification/Holiness refers to moral perfection.
1. In the OT God is declared perfect. 2 Sam 22:31; Ps 18:30. This is a positive affirmation about God’s character. *“His way is perfect...”* The affirmation or good news is that not only is God holy but what He does is holy. His ways are right, loving and filled with truth.
 2. This perfection was demanded of the animals that were sacrificed. This perfection of animals had to do with an external perfection. Because, God was perfect. It was a picture of the Lamb of God to come. Not only externally perfect but perfect in every way. It is why the Son of God, Jesus was our sacrifice - He was without sin.
 3. In Mt 5:8 Jesus declares this internal perfection when He says, *“Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”* Prior to that, he lays out several sayings, “You say...but I say.” “Love your enemies.” These all become a matter of internal moral code to be written on the heart.
 4. The ultimate of this perfection is love. It brings us to a place of self-sacrificing love. *“If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.”* (1 John 4:12, NKJV)
 5. The Holy God we serve is perfect in all His ways and He calls us, His people to perfection!

II. Sanctification Three Expressions begun, continued, and goal.

A. Sanctification Begun

1. In one sense, sanctification has already begun in the life of the believer and belongs to everyone who is genuinely born again. This sanctification/holiness is the floor of our existence as God’s holy people. We are sanctified because when we believe we are set apart to God and because we are cleansed from sin. 1 Peter 2:9 we are the ‘holy nation’ who has been called out of darkness into his wonderful light.’

2. Paul in 1 Cor 6:9-11 says we were...*“Some of you were once like that. But you were cleansed; you were made holy; you were made right with God by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”* (1 Corinthians 6:11, NLT) It is not only a distancing from sin but also an inner purification. There is both a separation and a cleansing in sanctification.
 3. The source of our sanctification is Jesus. *“But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—”* (1 Corinthians 1:30, NKJV) Just as our justification was at the beginning so was our sanctification! It is received by putting our faith in Him.
 4. We are called Saints. *“To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:”* (1 Corinthians 1:2, NKJV) A saint is any and every person who is a Christian. Not some person with a high degree in spirituality. In Christ we are all holy one, and therefore saints.
 5. *“For by that one offering he forever made perfect those who are being made holy.”* (Hebrews 10:14, NLT)
 6. The reality is, our reality is, that we were sanctified when our walk with God began. Sanctification belongs to all who call on the name of the Lord.
- B. Secondly, Sanctification continued**, is a process that are all called to grow in, so it is a continuing process. We have been sanctified from the beginning and called into a process of sanctification. It is the continuing life of the believer in Christ.
1. In Lev 19:2 Israel was set apart as holy, called to be holy and then was ten commands and various other ordinances that God expected them to follow as His people.
 2. The NT says the same. You were sanctified, but you must continue to be sanctified. *“But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God who chose you is holy. For the Scriptures say, “You must be holy because I am holy.””* (1 Peter 1:15–16, NLT) Being holy in everything you do is a call to total holiness.
 3. In 1 Cor 6:18 Paul says run from sexual immorality! This phrase in itself implies continuing sanctification or holiness. Later in 2 Cor he tells the church to not touch anything unclean... a call to continuing sanctification.
 4. *“Because we have these promises, dear friends, let us cleanse ourselves from everything that can defile our body or spirit. And let us work toward complete holiness because we fear God.”* (2 Corinthians 7:1, NLT) Another clear statement by Paul affirming our need to grow in sanctification. Therefore, though we are sanctified by His blood we still have sin issues that we need to deal with in ongoing sanctification.
 5. *“And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.”* (1 John 3:3, NKJV)
 6. *“Work at living in peace with everyone, and work at living a holy life, for those who are not holy will not see the Lord.”* (Hebrews 12:14, NLT) So, we can see that sanctification is not only a continuing process but a progressive transformation that takes place in a believer. Rom 12:1-2 don't be conformed to the pattern of this world is another scripture that speaks of movement towards deep sanctification.
- C. Sanctification is the goal** of the Christians life in Christ.
1. So we have seen we were sanctified in Christ (past), we are continuing to grow in sanctification, and now we will see it is the goal of the Christian life. God wants us completely holy.

2. *“Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again.”* (1 Thessalonians 5:23, NLT)
So the goal looks pretty clear in this passage. Phil 1:9-11 also repeats this goal is purity and blamelessness until the coming to Jesus Christ.
3. Complete sanctification is the goal. Let patience grow. *“So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.”* (James 1:4, NLT)
4. The question here is this: Is this achievable in this life?
 - a) There can be no question that the goal of holiness is always present. Therefore, we can never with a clear conscience abandon the goal.
 - b) But, the overall tone of scripture is that it will never be accomplished. That said, listen to Paul: I have not reached perfection but I press on to the goal. Paul declares I have not yet reached it but I press on to take hold of it. Phil 3:12-14
 - c) Heb 12:3-13, 14 strengthen the feeble arms and legs. 22-23 speaks of the place of where the spirits of righteous men are made perfect. So thought the goal is always before and we are striving for it. The completed work is done at death as we enter into glory. Purity, perfection, completeness, holiness...whatever word you choose this is the goal.
 - d) 1 Jn 3:3 again says that until he comes we purify ourselves but when He comes we will be like Him. So at death or Christ’s return with sanctifying work will be completed.
5. Therefore, it is important for us to distinguish between the goal and fulfillment of perfection.
 - a) There is serious error if we do not devote ourselves to growing continually in sanctification.
 - b) And the error is just as bad if we claim that we have reached that goal. Pride, spiritual blindness, deception are all brothers to that belief.

Conclusion:

- We are sanctified in Christ when we believe but the work is on going in the life of the believer. Sanctification is not an option it is the way of God.