

LESSON ESSENTIALS

UNDERSTANDING SALVATION

LESSON 9: SANCTIFICATION

God is constantly working on our behalf to transform us into Christ's likeness. This lesson will help you learn about how God sets you apart for His Holy purpose.

We are becoming more like Jesus – from the moment we accept salvation and continuing into eternity. Read on to learn more about how you can be more receptive to the amazing work God is doing in you!

God not only regenerates and justifies us, He also sanctifies us – that is, He sets us apart for His holy purpose and works in us to become more like His Son Jesus. Read on to know how this happens!

REFLECT

Romans 6:22 says, “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.” How exciting to know that the Holy Spirit is making us more like God every day, until the day He makes us perfect in Heaven!

Many religions teach that if people are good enough, or religious enough, their god (or the gods) will accept them. Often these people are unsure of whether or not they have done ‘enough’, and they might live in fear that they may be rejected after they die. Christianity is different. We know that God accepts us *just as we are* once we have believed in His Son, Jesus Christ. Through His sacrifice, we can be righteous before God. This is justification.

But do you still feel that you’re not worthy of God’s care? That even though God helped you when you were first a Christian, He doesn’t seem to be working in you now? Or that you are afraid that if you stop going to church or if you stop helping other people, God won’t bless you anymore? That somehow it is up to us to become holy enough to reach God?

When we were saved, God justified us. It was one-time, and it was permanent. We were righteous when we chose to believe, and we are righteous now. But more than that, God chose to make us holy, in a process we call ‘sanctification’. When we become Christians, we are sanctified in him. Some people call this ‘positional’ sanctification: we are declared holy as children of God the moment we accept His gift of salvation. We have a new position – we have been moved from the category of sinful people to being a holy person.

On a daily basis, we are also experiencing what some call ‘practical’ sanctification, the process of becoming more like Jesus. The Holy Spirit is now living within us, enabling us to become more perfect. He puts His love, joy, peace, patience, Godliness, and many other qualities into us that are unnatural for us to possess on our own. We begin to reflect God’s glory and His likeness, even though we are still His creation.

Practical sanctification is a process; every day we are more like Christ. It starts when we become Christians and does not end until we are in Heaven. As Romans 6:22 tells us we are set free from being slaves to sin, we can be free to serve God and gain eternal life! How exciting to know that the Holy Spirit is making us more like God every day, until the day He makes us perfect in Heaven!

Other religions teach that it is our job to make ourselves more like God. They say that we will be more like God if we do certain deeds or if we deny ourselves specific things. But Christians know that God is the one who is perfecting us. This task is impossible for us to do on our own. 1 Corinthians 6:11 tells us this change that occurs

happens by God's hand. This is a gift from our Creator. However, as His children, we need to be willing and obedient to the changes He wants to make in our lives. If we fill our minds and hearts with sin, how can we expect God to make us holy? He is not going to force holiness on us if we are not interested! Romans 6:19 says, "...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." This involves our actions to accept the changes God wants to make in our lives.

God uses many things to make us more like Him – but are we aware of these things? Are we open to them? Here are some ways often God uses to set us apart as Holy and form us in His image. Perhaps by understanding them better, we will be more open to the changes that God is prompting in us.

- **The Bible:** The Scriptures encourages us to be pure and holy by living by the Word of the Lord (Psalm 119:9-10). Everything we do and think about should be evaluated according to God's Word. His Word is Truth, and this truth sets us free.
- **Prayer:** By spending time daily in prayer, God changes our will and hearts to follow His. It makes sense – we want to be like Jesus, so we need to spend time with Him. Jesus is there for our praise, to comfort us, to provide guidance through God's Word, and also to hear our requests. Through all of these, He makes us more like Him.
- **The Holy Spirit:** The Holy Spirit is God's gift to us and is meant to help, convict, and lead us closer to Christ (John 14:26). Sometimes the Holy Spirit teaches us through the Bible or a teacher, but sometimes it happens in our everyday lives, in our thoughts or through situations, often when we are not expecting it.
- **The Church:** A church is a group of people who have a common belief in Jesus. In Proverbs 11:14 we learn that the wise advice of many people can build us up. Regardless of whether a church is be large or small, in a building or in a house, it can help Christians become more like Christ.
- **Jesus Christ:** The Bible makes it clear that we have a helper in Jesus. He understands our weaknesses because He

REFLECT

As God's children, we need to be willing and obedient to the changes He wants to make in our lives. If we fill our minds and hearts with sin, how can we expect God to make us holy?

LOOKING DEEPER

Read Romans 6 for more understanding of sanctification.

THINK ABOUT IT

Let us accept God's gift of sanctification by allowing His work in us, choosing His will and His way, being made more holy and more like Him beginning when we are born again in Him and continuing into eternity.

Himself was tempted (although He did not sin). Jesus understands us and sometimes when things seem most difficult, he is a friend who understands is all we need (Hebrews 4:16).

Now then, let us accept God's gift of sanctification by allowing His work in us, choosing His will and His way, being made more holy and more like Him beginning when we are born again in Him and continuing into eternity. "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" (1 Thessalonians 5:23)

IN REVIEW

- Sanctification simply means to be set apart, to be made Holy in Christ's image.
- Ever since we were saved, God sanctifies us according to His plan for each of us.
- Sanctification has two parts: God's continual work in us, and our obedience to allow Him to make us who he wants us to be. Although we cannot sanctify ourselves, or become more Holy based on our own effort, we can to be obedient, which allows us to be more open and willing to receive His sanctification.

