

discipleship essentials

Essentials for Christian Living
Study Guide

UNDERSTANDING SALVATION

LESSON 9: SANCTIFICATION

INTRODUCTION

This Study Guide is part of a Discipleship Essentials module titled *Understanding Salvation*. This series of lessons examines the very foundational idea of salvation, and what occurs in the life of a person who becomes a Christian. These lessons are critical for every believer to understand before they can effectively share the Gospel with others. Each lesson examines a concept from a Biblical perspective, and includes time for discussing these principles as well as how to effectively apply them to your life. This module is ideal to use when discipling new believers to ensure they fully understand these concepts.

The Study Guide is intended for an individual to look deeper into a specific lesson on their own. The lessons can be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials, such as the video and audio productions found on www.discipleshipessentials.org.

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UNDERSTANDING SALVATION

LESSON 9: SANCTIFICATION

WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

The purpose of this lesson is to gain an understanding of the term sanctification. Christians in the Bible, and in some traditions today, are referred to as 'saints' – which means those who are sanctified, holy and set apart. How can an ordinary, sinful person become sanctified? When does sanctification occur – and is it a onetime thing like justification, or ongoing? This lesson will help you figure it all out!

JUST SO YOU KNOW...

This lesson focuses on the processes that turn selfish, sinful people into people who are more and more like Christ every day. This is the changing of our desires and our nature. Sometimes Christians look for extraordinary ways to bring about holy living. This may include extreme self-denial, rituals, and searching for spiritual experiences. This is problematic because while God does work in our lives in supernatural ways, we are given grace to bring about sanctification. Becoming more like Jesus Christ is the goal of every Christian, and it takes time and effort – which includes regular Bible reading, service to others, prayer and spiritual disciplines. Through these ordinary experiences, God brings about extraordinary supernatural change in our lives, and allows us to accomplish the purpose we were intended for.

GETTING STARTED

1. How do you set apart time for God? Has becoming a Christian changed how you use your time and /or your money?

2. Around your community (or the community you are preaching the Gospel to), you can see the consequences of sin in people's lives every day. What are some of these problems, and how are they the direct results of sin?



STUDY

WHAT IS SANCTIFICATION? : The work that begins in a new Christian with regeneration and justification is continued through the process of sanctification. The word “sanctify” means set apart or purified from sin. The Bible tells us that a person is sanctified by faith in Jesus (Acts 26:8). There are two different ways the word ‘sanctification’ is used in the Bible and we will look at both of them.

❖ **POSITIONAL SANCTIFICATION:** This term refers to our place or position with God. Being sanctified by God means we have been set apart for His purpose. We are ‘saints’ – we have a special job in His Kingdom.

➤ What does the Bible say about our positional sanctification?

Acts 20:32	
1 Corinthians 6:10-11	
Jude 1:17-22	
1 Corinthians 1:2	

According to these verses, we are set apart and built up for an inheritance and a place in the Kingdom of God. We no longer live for our own pleasures, desires and plans, but rather for the good of the Kingdom of God. We are called ‘saints’, and we now live our lives for God’s purposes.

❖ **PRACTICAL SANCTIFICATION:** Another use of the word sanctification refers to the ongoing process in a believer’s life of becoming more like Christ. This will not be attained completely in our lifetime and requires ongoing effort on the part of the believer. It is important to note that although we continue to struggle with temptation and sin, we can have victory in increasing measure as we choose the way of Jesus over sin. We are set apart in Christ Jesus. God does this work in us to the degree that we obey Him and are faithful to what He asks us to do. Sanctification doesn’t mean we are perfect – it means we have a purpose to be more like Christ!

❖ **THE MEANS OF PRACTICAL SANCTIFICATION:** God provides the means, or tools, for our continued transformation into the image of His Son. These are not radical self-denial, or mystical experiences that transform us, but rather daily habits of ongoing communion with God.

➤ **THE BIBLE:** God’s Word can be considered a roadmap for the Christian life. Psalm 119:105 refers to the Word of God as “a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” What do the following verses say about how the Bible can be in our journey of sanctification?



2 Timothy 3:16	
Psalms 32:8	
Proverbs 3:5-6	
James 1:5-6	

- **THE CHURCH:** A church is a group of people who have a common belief in Jesus. In Proverbs 11:14 we learn that “Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.” Worshipping God and growing in Christ is personal, but is not meant to be only private. A church can be large or small, in a building or in a house. Either way, it can provide a great source of strength for Christians who are in a constant state of battle against the sinful desires of the flesh. What do the following verses tell us about how people in a Church should help and support one another?

1 Corinthians 12:14-27	
1 Thessalonians 5:11	
Matthew 16:18	
James 5:14	

- **THE HOLY SPIRIT:** The Holy Spirit is sometimes referred to as a helper. John 14:26 says “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.” The Holy Spirit is God’s gift to guide, convict, and lead us closer to Christ. What do the following verses tell you about the Holy Spirit?



Acts 2: 38	
Galatians 5:22-23	
John 14:15-17	
1 Corinthians 2:13	

- **JESUS CHRIST:** The Bible makes it clear that we have a helper in Jesus. He understands our weaknesses because He Himself was tempted (although He did not sin). Hebrews 4:16 says “Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” Jesus understands us and sometimes when things seem most difficult, a friend who understands is all we need. We can always talk to Jesus in prayer. How did Jesus deal with temptation?

Matthew 4:1-11	
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- **PRAYER:** The way that we approach Jesus is through prayer. If we want to be close to a friend we need to talk with them, and in the same way, if we want to be close to Jesus, we need to talk to Him. Jesus is there for our praise, to comfort us, to provide guidance through God’s Word, and also to hear our requests. What do the following verses tell us about how prayer helps us become more like Christ?

Philippians 4:6	
1 Thessalonians 5:17	
Jeremiah 33:3	
James 5:16	



- ❖ **GROWING IN SANCTIFICATION:** We know that we are not perfect, or holy – but we are not what we once were! God is building us into His perfect people, but the process will take our whole lifetimes. Philippians 1:6 says “And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.” All the events of our lives and the daily practice of trusting and obeying God in small and big things accomplish this sanctification. We must not think we will do better on our own, but rather we should help one another in the context of our Christian community which is Church. Rejoice that God has great plans for you, and does not leave you in your imperfect state! If you belong to God, He is at work in you!

IN SUMMARY

- ❖ The work that begins in a Christian with regeneration and justification is continued through the process of sanctification. The word “sanctify” means set apart or purified from sin.
- ❖ Being sanctified by God means we have been set apart for His purpose.
- ❖ Sanctification doesn’t mean we are perfect – it means we are a work in progress!
- ❖ God has provided means for us to grow in sanctification: the Bible, the Church, the Holy Spirit, relationship with Jesus Christ, and prayer.
- ❖ If you belong to God, He is at work in you!

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What does the word ‘holy’ mean? Knowing that God set you apart to be holy, what changes do you need to make in your life today?

2. How have you seen believers around you become more like Christ as they grow in their relationship with Him? What can you do to grow in Christ-likeness this week?