**SANCTIFICATION IN THE BELIEVER’S LIFE**

**Distinction between Justification and Sanctification**

**Justification defined:**

Justification and the nature of Justification

* Justification is a legal declaration by God in which He pronounces sinners righteous in His sight.
* Westminster Large Catechism: Question #70 —What is justification?

Justification is an act of God’ s free grace unto sinners, (Rom. 3:22,24–25, Rom. 4:5) in which he pardoneth all their sins, accepteth and accounteth their persons righteous in his sight; (2 Cor. 5:19,21, Rom. 3:22,24,25,27,28) not for any thing wrought in them, or done by them, (Tit. 3:5,7, Eph. 1:7) but only for the perfect obedience and full satisfaction of Christ, by God imputed to them, (Rom. 5:17–19, Rom. 4:6–8) and received by faith alone. (Acts 10:43, Gal. 2:16, Phil. 3:9).

* The gospel that saves us is entirely outside us. It is Jesus Christ, incarnate, crucified for our sins, raised for our justification, who saves us.
* Our identity is based on justification: By grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.
* The Great Exchange: (2 Cor. 5:19)
  + Jesus Christ, who knew no sin, became sin for us.
  + We, who knew no righteousness, become, in Christ, the righteousness of God.
* Justification occurs once for all time and entirely God's work, resulting in a perfect status that is the same for all Christians.

**Sanctification defined**

* To Sanctify means to make holy, to dedicate, to set apart. Used 28 times in the NT. Separation, setting apart” (from the same root as “holy” and “saint”). The gradual *process* whereby the believer is set apart more and more from sin to God is called sanctification.
* The purpose of biblical counseling is nothing other than to enable the Christian to become more like Christ.
* Sanctification is a *work* of God’s grace (WLC Question 70) contrasting Justification which is an *act* of God’s grace.
  + An act is instantaneous, a single divine intervention that is never repeated. A work, however, is an ongoing activity of God, a process. God does not continually justify us or adopt us, but he does continually work within us to sanctify us.
  + *“Scripture speaks of both a holiness we already possess in Christ before God and a holiness in which we are to grow more and more. The first is the result of the work of Christ for us; the second is the result of the work of the Holy Spirit in us.”* (Jerry Bridges, *Transforming Grace,* 102)

**Jesus as Image of God**

* The best way to understand the image of God is to look at the Lord Jesus, in whom it is perfectly revealed.
* God is at work in believers to make them more like his Son. Consequently, they increasingly evidence what the image of God is to be. Growing more like Christ in sanctification is manifesting the image of God. The image of God is not some mysterious, abstract doctrine. Jesus is the image of God in action and the model to follow.

Rom 8:28-29; Eph 1:5; Col 1:18

**Sanctification: The will of God for the believer’s life.**

* 1 Thessalonians 4:3–7— For this is the will of God, your sanctification; *that is,* that you abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, 5 not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; 6 *and* that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is *the* avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned *you.* 7 For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification.
* God is the one who sanctifies, but we must cooperate with the Spirit’s work as “our inner man is being renewed day by day” (2 Corinthians 4:16).
* The Lord prayed for our Sanctification: John 17:17  
  John 17:17–21 — “Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. “As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. “For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth. “I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, *are* in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.
  + God Word (truth) is key to our sanctification
  + We are set apart as Christ set himself apart­—to do the will of the Father.
  + Christ’s prayer extents into the future for us today.
  + It is for the purpose of intimacy with our Lord (that they may all be one, even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You).
  + This is a testimony to the world
* Sanctification is a cooperative effort (Work of God and Duty of Man).
  + We are to do those things that foster spiritual growth (the things that we can do to cooperate with the Holy Spirit’s sanctifying work in their life), don’t allow yourself or your counselees to lose sight of the goal: becoming more like Christ. Phil 2:13–14.
  + Unlike regeneration, sanctification involves active participation from believers, who are called to strive for increasing holiness using the means God has provided. See 2 Corinthians 7:1, Colossians 3:5-14, and 1 Peter 1:22.
* Sanctification is the transformative work.
  + Sanctification is the spiritual transformation of the mind and the affections that in turn redirects the will and the actions. Rom 12:1–2
  + On each side of the renewing of our mind there is a putting off and a putting on. See Ephesians 4:22-24; Col. 3:8–10; Romans 13:13–14,
  + 2 Corinthians 3:18 outlines the directly proportional relationship in progressive sanctification between beholding the glory of Christ and being transformed into the image of his glory; to the degree that we behold his glory, to that degree are we sanctified.
* Sanctification is a blessing for the believer
  + We grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord (2 Peter 3:18). – as Jesus did (Luke 2:40). A mature Moses – Hebrews 11:26.
  + It is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit that renews believers after the image of God, enabling them to increasingly die to sin and live righteously. (1 Peter 2:24, Roman 6:13)
  + Greater is He who is in us that he who is in the world (1 John 4:4, see also 8:31, 1 John 2:1; Heb 7:25).
  + Sufferings not worthy to be compared to the glory that is to be revealed to us. (Romans 8:18; see also 2 Cor 4:17; 1 Pet 4:13; 1 Peter 5:1; Col 3:4; 1 Pet 1:6).

**The Process of Change**

* **Position for change** — Our Union with Christ
  + Romans 6:4–5 — Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection,
  + “In Christ” speaks to our union with Christ  
    Colossians 1:28 – We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ.
  + In Christ is the basis of “being perfected”   
    Matthew 5:48 – Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.
* **Power to change** – The Holy Spirit / our motivation [conviction of the Holy Spirit].
  + We hinder the work of the Spirit through legalistic systems of sanctification.
    - A focus only on outward behavioral change to the exclusion of the inner issues of the heart.
    - A focus is usually found in the form of strict conformity to rules and regulations outside of God’s Word and His grace.
    - The more law-based sanctification you apply to your life, the more you will hinder the work of the Holy Spirit and become a spiritual hypocrite.
  + Be filled with the Holy Spirit. ­— Ephesians 5:18
    - Confession of sin, cleanses from our unrighteousness (1 John 1:9)
    - Confession comes by conviction, ministry of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8).
    - Being filled with the Spirit starves the flesh. (Rom 8:13)
    - Living the Spirit-filled life involves letting the Word of Christ richly indwell you (Colossians 3:16).
    - The Spirit-filled life is characterized by:  
      Ephesians 5:19–21 – speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.
* **The Process of change**
  + Includes confession, repentance, renewing the mind, putting of the old self and putting on the new self.
    - Confession – A routine discipline of the Christian life. When we are convicted, we are to confess our sins. Keeping short accounts of our sin is essential for our growing sanctification. (1 John 1:9, Psalm 51)
  + The Christian life involves continuous repentance.
    - True repentance goes beyond mere expression of regret or tears; it produces observable changes in behavior, as exemplified by Zacchaeus in Luke 19:8.
    - Repentance is a plan to walk in a different direction. It is choosing to walk by the Spirit Gal. 5:16ff
    - Psalm 1:1 – starts with three “do nots” contrasted with the “do” in Ps. 1:2.
  + Put off and putt on is discussed above, additionally:
    - What to “put off” and what to “put on” is a part of growing in our sanctification. The truth is what sets us free from the sin that so easily entangles us (Gal 5:1 cf. Heb 12:1–2).
    - Renewing of your mind requires the Holy Spirit and the Word of God: God has given us the Word of God so that by the Spirit of God we will transformed into the Son of God.
* **The Process of change is progressive (“Progressive Sanctification”)**
  + It is called "progressive" because it occurs gradually over time, as opposed to the instantaneous nature of definitive or positional sanctification that occurs at the moment of salvation
  + This process involves the continuous renewal of the believer's mind and heart, enabling them to increasingly resist sin and live righteously (Phil 1:6).
  + The chart below (from Grudem’s Systematic Theology) depicts our life from pre-conversion to glorification.

A diagram of a diagram of a life cycle

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We have been free from the slavery to sin but presence of sin still remains until we are glorified. We glorify God by cooperating with His Spirit to live godly lives. This is progressive and transformative.