



## Sanctification

Spiritual Growth

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# Introduction

## Definition

To begin our study of the doctrine of sanctification, we must first define some key terminology that is central to this doctrine. The root word that we base this doctrine on is the word sanctification, or in Greek, hagiasmos. Simply translated, this word means “to set apart”. It is a very common word, not exclusive to the spiritual context, that has both general and figurative meaning. In the general sense, we find the word used throughout Greek literature in contexts that require a description of separation. From separating flocks of animals, separating land, and birthright designations are all contexts where we see the word used. We also see it used in the Biblical context to speak most frequently of believers and their personal, spiritual transformation into the life and lifestyle of Jesus.

Other variations of this word that we find in the New Testament are saint, holy, holiness. These words all come from the same root word, they just appear in different grammatical contexts and have slightly different emphases. For example, the word “saint” is a noun that speaks to the position of a believer as one who has been set apart by God as his child. In contrast to this, the word “holy” speaks to the the action of one’s life that are progressively set apart from the world’s standard of thinking and living.

With this in mind and as our backdrop, it is important for us to establish a functional, doctrinal definition of the concept of sanctification. As we look more closely into the various aspects of sanctification, we will see this definition become more fully realized. Our working definition of sanctification is:

Sanctification is the state of being set apart for God that initially begins with a restored <sup>1</sup>relationship to God, and progressively continues with a manner of living that pursues a <sup>2</sup>deeper personal friendship with God

## Focus

This course will seek to address both the relational and lifestyle realities of sanctification, but it will not do so in a completely balanced fashion. Although we will address the relational components of sanctification, the vast majority of our emphasis will be on the lifestyle realities of sanctification.

This emphasis of the course is not based on our own personal opinions, but instead on our desire to reflect the reality of what the bible itself chooses to emphasize. When we study the Bible, we find that in the overwhelming number of contexts, the emphasis of the doctrine of sanctification is on the lifestyle component. This of course does not mean that the relational component is less significant, but rather it demonstrates that vastly more teaching is necessary for a believer to embrace a sanctified lifestyle than it is for him/her to understand the relational sanctification that is theirs in Christ. With this understanding as our starting point, we will follow suit and spend the majority of our time on the issues pertaining to believers embracing a sanctified lifestyle.

## Three Aspects

As we have already noted, sanctification has a number of aspects to it, from the initial relational component of restored familial oneness with God as His children, to the lifestyle component that is focused on life transformation. We also must acknowledge that there is a third reality to sanctification as well which is the ultimate and complete sanctification of all believers for all eternity.

### Restored Relationship

1 Corinthians 1:30, 2 Thessalonians 2:13

The first aspect of sanctification is the relational component. As has been stated, this relationship focus of sanctification is not as commonly discussed in the New Testament as the lifestyle component, however it is very importance nonetheless.

One of the passages in the New Testament that addresses the idea of sanctification in a positional/relational sense is found in 1 Corinthians 1:30. In this context, Paul assists the Corinthian believers in recalling their salvation. He is wanting them to focus specifically on the prominence of God in their salvation, how important it was for them to recall his great work in saving them unto himself. In this discussion regarding their salvation, he focuses his words on their identification with Jesus in salvation, saying, “you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption.” The sanctification mentioned here does not refer to a lifestyle transformation nor to a reality in eternity, but rather it speaks to a restored relationship with God that is unique and set apart from a past life of separation from God.

We also note in 2 Thessalonians 2:13, where Paul again sheds light on the salvation of the Thessalonian believers. Here he also notes that “God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit.” In this sense, Paul is referring to the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit as the evidence of the fact that the believers have been set apart and belong to God in relationship with him. As in the previous context, Paul is also affirming the sanctification of the believer in terms of a set apart and unique relationship with God whereas in the past, that relationship was severed.

This is important to note, in studying the doctrine of sanctification, that there is indeed a relationship component to it. Although this will be expanded on much further here, it is still an important reality that is connected to our salvation. Not only in this sense, but it is also important that we understand that this relationship sanctification is linked directly to the eternal sense of sanctification as well. IN other words, our sanctified relationship with God does not directly change our lifestyle of sanctification (although it certainly opens the door to it), but it is the “already but not yet” experience of sanctification. At the point of salvation, every believer is set apart from both their past life of separation from God and also their position with other unbelievers as enemies of God. This new reality will come to its full fruition in eternity.

## **Manner Of Living**

Romans 6:19-22, 1 Thessalonians 4:3, 1 Peter 1:2

Another important aspect of sanctification is the impact on our manner of living. This reality is the most significantly addressed aspect of sanctification in the New Testament and will be primary focus of the rest of this work. The next sections of this course will expand on this sanctification of life by considering first the context for this sanctification which is discipleship, and it will also then expand on this by detailing the roles of God and believers in the sanctification process.

There are a number of things that must be present for the manner of life of a believer to be set apart for God. For the purposes of a general overview here (but will be expanded on in the next sections), we will look at three passages that explicitly use the word sanctification as they outline these key components.

Romans 6:19-22 presents a picture of sanctification that requires a thought process for the believer with regard to new truths about his/her identity in Christ and his/her new relationship to sin. These new realities of the believer are not meant to be propositions to know, but rather new spiritual realities that need to be embraced as a person perceives his/her self in life and function.

1 Thessalonians 4:3 layers more information on the shift in a believer's manner of living as consisting of choices to abstain from certain lifestyle choices that are inconsistent with the believer's new identity. In principle, it addresses the need for the believer to choose not to give in to one's passions that arise from the flesh. These lifestyle choices are indeed a necessary component in the sanctification process. They do not constitute the entirety of sanctification, but they certainly are essential to the pursuit of a deeper relational life with God.

1 Peter 1:2 also speaks about sanctification, but it introduces the vital reality of the Holy Spirit's work in this process. This is a vital component of both understanding and relational living. To pursue a sanctified life without a realization of and engagement with the Holy Spirit is to fundamentally disengage with the sanctification process. In the general sense, this passage highlights for us, the idea that God is at the center of the process of a person's transformed life. For a believer then to be sanctified, he must know and pursue God in the various roles that God has in sanctifying them. As has been stated, these various roles of God in sanctification will be addressed in detail in the following sections of this course.

## **Eternal Reality**

Revelation 21:3-8, 22-27

We have already mentioned that sanctification has aspects of it that impact the restored relationship to God and the manner in which we live with God. We also want to emphasize that sanctification also carries with it the promise of a future realization of this set apart life that will be final and complete. We have mentioned before, in various of the Institute courses, that there exists an important doctrinal tension that we must hold, which is referred to as the "already but not yet". This tension applies also to our understanding of sanctification. Although we have a restored relationship to God, we are "in process" in terms of our manner of living with him. And yet this truth remains, that we are destined for an eternal state with God that is completely restored and perfect in terms of our set apart life.

Revelation 21:7-8 and 21:27 speak of this eternal reality in the New Jerusalem, where there will only be those who are without the curse of sin and its daily presence. This is vitally important in our view of sanctification. It motivates our days as we struggle through the daily grind of being shaped into his image. It gives us perspective as we persist in following him, because we know that a full and final reality of a set apart life with God awaits us in eternity.

# The Discipleship Context

It is vital to note, as we begin to unpack the doctrine and practice of sanctification, that God is supremely concerned with where sanctification happens. This context for sanctification is vital for us to understand, because this context for sanctification reflects something of God as we embrace it. The context for sanctification is discipleship.

In the Trinitarian Economy, relationship in community, expressed in truth through sacrificial love, is the essential culture. In this regard, God always desires that whatever is done for his Name, reflect his character. God is perfectly relational, unified in love, giving the best for others. That is who he is. So, in like fashion, if we are to be set apart for Him, we must engage that process in a way that reflects him (image bearing). This is the very heartbeat of discipleship. Simply put, discipleship is the process by which we, in community with others, pursue an ever increasing relational oneness with God into the life that God desires for us. This pursuit is realized as we grow together in our new identity with Jesus and go together toward those who have yet to be redeemed to him.

This being said, we understand then that the pursuit of a discipleship lifestyle does not only accommodate sanctification, but it is the essential context for it to take place. Any other self-driven or individualistic approach will certainly fall short. With this conviction we will look then at three ways in which the call to be and make disciples provides the context for sanctification in the life of a believer.

## Sanctified By Following Jesus

John 15

John 15 provides a wonderful and succinct passage where Jesus addresses the idea of sanctification in the context of a pursuit of personal/relational intimacy with Him. It is here that Jesus boldly proclaims that being his disciple is the framework for being sanctified. For our purposes of fully grasping the imagery and application of this word picture, we will break down some of the essential references and explain their meaning and application in terms of sanctification.

### “I am the true vine, you are the branches”

Jesus begins this word picture by referring to himself as the true vine. This is such an important starting point because it establishes the importance of the restored relationship to Jesus as the necessary first step of sanctification. We often look to external behaviors as our indicator of a set apart life, but in this context, Jesus makes clear that HE is the starting point, and that relationship restoration is non-negotiable. We must be careful in

discipleship to not be confused with ourselves or others, that outward actions should be the focus. We, and others, need a relationship with Jesus before any change will ever take place.

We also note that this statement by Jesus emphasizes the supremacy and authority of Jesus in sanctification. Not only do we need a restored relationship with him, we are hopeless without his life in us. We must be restored to him (relationship), but we cannot live (manner of life) without his empowering presence and life in us as we walk through life. Jesus' claim, in the word picture, is that he is the very source of life for believers. He did not simply procure eternal life for us, he is the exclusive provider of spiritual vitality, energy, perspective, and motivation that we need to be sanctified.

### **“Every branch that does not bear fruit He lifts up”**

According to this preferred translation of this phrase, Jesus instructs us that as the provider of spiritual life to believers, he is the first actor in the sanctification process. Simply put, God does what is necessary to lift up those immature or failing believers to a position of being able to respond to him and his life. This “lifting up” comes in various forms. Consider these various ways that God lifts us up into the life of Jesus:

- Conviction. Through the experiential work of the Holy Spirit and the factual work of Biblical truth, God shows us how our lives are living inconsistent with his desires.
- Truth. God provides the Bible and the input of other believers to shed light in the dark parts of our minds in order that we might know what he desires and how to live it out.
- Friendship. God seeks to communicate with our spirits through the two previous means listed above.
- Community. God prompts and empowers other believers to speak into our lives, on issues that we need to hear about, at the time when we need to hear it.
- Discipline. If necessary, God brings difficulty into our lives that we might recognize our need for him and return to a life of dependence on him.

### **“Every branch that bears fruit He prunes”**

God also does this amazing work of pruning a believer into his image. To properly understand the meaning of this, we must stick closely to the word picture. In horticulture, pruning is a necessary component of growth where the vintner makes small cuts to the parts of the branches that are dying or not producing fruit. In so doing, the vintner removes the dying parts, which actually redirects the resources of the vine to the branches which are producing fruit.

In principle then, we understand this picture as God being the vintner of our lives, Jesus being the life-giving vine, and our lives are the branches which at times produce fruit and at other times do not. Much in the same way, God prunes our lives by addressing the things that are prohibiting us from bearing fruit. The difference with pruning is that, unlike a branch that needs lifting up because it lacks fruit production, a believer that needs pruned IS showing signs of fruit and growing. In this scenario, God uses less impactful measures to help the fruitful believer see some areas of his/her life that still need to be addressed if they are to continue to grow. It is a scenario of a fruitful believer, being empowered by God to continue to grow and bear even more fruit.

It is also important to notice that God is the one doing the pruning, not other believers. That does not mean that we cannot recognize God's pruning work in another believer's life and work with him for their good, but we must not assume his role of relating to another believer in any way that might be construed as a pruning work in their lives. In other words, we allow God to prune, we simply come along and encourage and assist our fellow believer in responding properly to God's pruning.

**“Abide in me and I in you, and you will bear much fruit”**

Now the word picture of Jesus shifts from describing God's role in this process to then charging us as believers with our role in it. Jesus couldn't have been more simple in terms of his description of our role.

Jesus presents a challenge and a spiritual aim for our lives. He is speaking of a spiritual/mental perspective that must guide us as we walk through the moment-by-moment realities of our lives. This perspective is one of intentional dependency. It boldly addresses the fundamental sin of all humanity, which is the belief that, in and of ourselves, we can accomplish what we need to accomplish. And this prideful belief in our ability to accomplish our goals certainly affects our spiritual goals as much as any other area of life. Jesus declares that the only path to a sanctified life of bearing fruit for God is through an ever-increasing, humility driven, conviction that Jesus alone can provide what I need. It is the conviction that he alone is in person, and provides in relationship, all that I need to accomplish<sup>1</sup> the sanctification goal.

With this all being true, Jesus challenges us to pursue a mental disposition of, and exercise of our faith and will toward, growth in relational friendship with Jesus as the focus of our lives. I would suggest that this is a rather simple process in principle, yet it is at times quite difficult in practice. The

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<sup>1</sup> It is important to note here that the word “accomplish” is not meant in the sense of mere tasks, behaviors, and actions, but it refers to the all encompassing aim of sanctification of accomplishing, or arriving at, the “set apart life”



reason for the difficulty, as has already been noted, is that it directly contradicts the fundamental tendencies of our fallen worldview and our fallen condition in the flesh. We must acknowledge however, the simple process by which we abide in Christ:

- Conviction. Continually reflect on and consider the truthfulness of our conviction that Jesus alone provides all that we need for sanctification.
- Truth. There is no way to know and continually conform our thinking to Jesus' life and perspective if we do not faithfully study, learn, and apply the Bible. According to John 1, Jesus is the Word, therefore we must pursue it, not for knowledge sake, but for sanctification through relationship.
- Relationship. We must also conclude that sanctification through discipleship is a relational process. This being the case, we must pursue all avenues that reflect this truth: a faithful prayer life with God, and a faithful life in spiritual community (around the word, prayer, and mission). These are all necessary contexts for abiding to grow in our lives.
- Obedience. Finally we must acknowledge, in the most simple and non-legalistic way, that abiding in Jesus will require obedience to that which he commands us to do. It is fundamentally inconsistent to say that we are abiding in him, and yet blatantly disobey the things that he is teaching us about our lives that need to change or need to grow.

### **“When you bear fruit, you prove to be my disciples”**

Lastly but certainly not least, a crucial conclusion to sanctification in the context of discipleship is that our ever increasing growth into the image of Jesus actually increases our potential to bear that image to the watching world. This is the essence of sanctification ; that our “set apart-ness” is simply being more like Jesus, the obvious outcome being an expression of selfless love toward those who need salvation.

This conclusion, that sanctification is designed to bring relational restoration for all people, should be a motivating factor our lives and our pursuit of discipleship. What an amazing reality, that we can pursue an ever-increasing friendship relationship with God, and through that relationship, have a profound impact on other believers and those who are yet to believe in the marvelous grace of Jesus!

### **Sanctified By Community**

John 15, Ephesians 4:1-16, I Corinthians 10:31-11:1

When we discuss the topic of sanctification, we often keep it in the realm of the individual. As western christians, we are profoundly impacted by our

worldview upbringing which is fiercely selfish and socially insecure. These tendencies can provide a dangerous default for sanctification and discipleship. In the biblical economy, God is most definitely concerned with personal growth, but he is equally concerned that a person's growth take place in and through community. We must consider this, expand this, and embrace a view of discipleship, and thereby sanctification, that is a robust "me in the context of we" reality.

In order to do this well, we must first return to our passage in John 15 and note a very important detail. In the entire chapter of John 15, which is the most personal reflection of Jesus on our discipleship lifestyle in being set apart for him, we are confronted with an important grammatical detail. John 15 uses the English pronoun "you" exactly 46 times, all of which are plural in the original Greek language. This distinction is important because it expresses the true intent of the words of Jesus in terms of his desired audience and the application of his words. For Jesus to intentionally use the plural pronoun, he was insuring that we understand that the spiritual realities of discipleship are for every individual believer, yet they are learned and expressed in and through the Body of Christ. So in this way, we must return to the previous section and conclude that all of those base discipleship principles of a person being changed through following Jesus are to be understood as the very principles that we must pursue together with others. Practically speaking then, we must invite people, in community, to pursue Jesus with us. And we also conclude then, that as we do this, we are an intricate part of their sanctification. We work with God as he changes their lives, little by little. Here are a few corporate conclusions from the John 15 passage:

- If we are to be set apart for God, as his image bearers, then we must individually commit to pursue a lifestyle commitment to the Body of Christ, as it is connected to Jesus the vine. If these truths are corporate as well as personal, then I must be committed to helping others experience this too, and I must realize that if I do not pursue the vine with others, then I am selling myself and my brothers and sisters short.
- If there are those in our spiritual families who are not bearing fruit for God, and we know that they are indeed "in the vine", then we must be committed to work with God in "lifting them up" out of their frustrated existence and into the life that God desires for them. This can be quite hard and extremely emotionally sacrificial, yet it is the only self-giving way to relate to each other.
- In our spiritual families, we must be committed to allowing other believers to encourage us as we are being pruned by God and encouraging them to also respond properly to God's pruning work in their lives.
- We must relentlessly pursue a shared culture together of following Jesus in the practical lifestyle of abiding. We cannot allow ourselves

to slip into any other lifestyle motivation for the Christian life than this. It must be our pursuit both in thinking and in practice with each other; meaning that we must constantly strive to evaluate our own life and the way that we live with each other, in order to insure that we are truly living out of the “abiding with” life and not the “performing for God” life.

- We must pursue the abiding life in community with others. This means that we must pursue it ourselves in community, because of our personal need for it and as an example to others. We must also then be instrumental in leading others into the abiding life through encouragement, exhortation, and even confrontation when necessary.
- We must constantly remind ourselves of the eternal ramifications of our pursuit of discipleship with others. Not only does our growth impact us, but we must maintain the perspective that our growth is always designed to help others as well.

We also find other passages that support this conclusion. Consider Ephesians 4:1-16, where Paul outlines a community-reality in the Body of Christ where each believer uses their unique spiritual gifts to demonstrate love and service to each other. He speaks of a higher ideal of unity and purpose together as the primary aim for all believers in the Body of Christ. Paul also culminates this by referring specifically to the role of elders in equipping this “body life” ideal in verse 13. Paul says, “until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”. This is end game of discipleship in community, that we all attain to maturity in the person of Jesus. There is no greater definition of the sanctified like than this! We also see Paul end this section in verse 16 with these words, “...the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.”

Another key passage is found in I Corinthians 10:31-11:1, where Paul simply offers a discipleship challenge to the believers, that they might see his example in following Jesus and seek to follow him as he follows Jesus in discipleship. This is another fundamental reality of discipleship, that we not look only to our own growth, but that we seek to invest in those who are behind us, sacrificially serving them to build them up in Christ and into the sanctified life.

## **Sanctified By Hope**

1 Corinthians 3:1-4:5, Colossians 1:3-5

Discipleship is a present tense reality for all believers, specifically with consideration to the normal, everyday manner of living that a believer invests in. It is a daily choice, a regular commitment to pursue Jesus, in the present circumstance of one's life. We must also acknowledge that discipleship, and sanctification by extension, has a future reality that will be realized. Although we presently live in the progressive sanctification reality, day by day we move closer to the eternal state in which this sanctification is fully and finally realized.

Colossians 1:3-5 clearly connects this general concept of sanctification with hope when Paul says, "we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven". In this way Paul clearly communicates a sanctification reality of selfless love demonstrated in the lives of the Colossians because they were motivated by the hope of eternal life and reward.

We must briefly consider then, the important role that eternal rewards plays in the discipleship of a believer. 1 Corinthians 3, Paul describes the discipleship context in the local church like the building of a house. In this picture, the local church is the house, and each individual builds his part of it by using the spiritual gifts he/she has been given to invest in people's lives. This is, as we understand it, the sanctifying of the church, as it is collectively shaped into the image of Jesus. In this paradigm of thinking and living, sanctification is mutually shared and invested in, but it is also informed and motivated by eternal rewards. Verses 12-15 clearly state this reality, and affirms not only the existence of rewards, but also the place that they hold in motivating our shared commitment to sanctification together.

## The Role Of The Trinity

Of first importance to our discussion on the topic of our personal sanctification is to properly orient ourselves to the Trinity. Beginning in Genesis and ending in Revelation, we find that the Larger Story of God is truly a relational story of God inviting mankind into life with the Trinity. This invitation into the Trinitarian life is the heart of sanctification. Due to this, we will look specifically at each Person of the Trinity and their individual roles in our sanctification.

### The Father

John 17, Romans 1:7, 1 Corinthians 1:3, Ephesians 1:2

The starting point for a biblical doctrine of sanctification is the understanding that sanctification is a relational pursuit. Although much of church history has galvanized the religious and ritualistic desire for personal

behavioral change, true sanctification is really the heart's pursuit of relational oneness with God that fosters a fundamental change of one's whole life, including but not exclusively addressing behavior. With this simple framework as a starting point, we will first look at this relational pursuit from the perspective of the Trinity. We will begin our study with a consideration of the role of the Father in sanctification.

## Peace

A very interesting observation is made when you look closely at the opening of each of the New Testament epistles. The common theme in all of these introductions is the reminder that the Father is the source and distributor of peace to his children. This is a very simple yet profound idea that informs sanctification. It would appear that God desires us to understand that the Father desires to bring peace to our lives through the sanctification process. This peace from the Father to us is a profoundly relational act toward us, one that is best understood as the emotional intent of a father to his children. A good father understands that he cannot withhold all difficult circumstances from his children, but he can provide what is necessary to bring peace to his children in the midst of those circumstances. This is precisely our heavenly Father's intent for us.

## Ministry To Jesus

As we look more closely at Jesus' prayer in John 17, we find that there are a number of important things that he prays, specifically with regard to the Father. The first of which being the unique ministry that the Father has to Jesus himself. Consider this list of thanksgivings and requests that Jesus made to the Father:

- Vs. 1 - glorified Jesus
- Vs. 2 - gave Jesus authority
- Vs. 3 - sent Jesus
- Vs. 6 - gave people to Jesus
- Vs. 8 - gave words/truth to Jesus
- Vs. 12 - gave a name to Jesus
- Vs. 18 - sent Jesus into the world
- Vs. 21 - is "in" Jesus
- Vs. 23 - loves Jesus
- Vs. 25 - knows Jesus

This list shows us the importance of the relationship between the Father and Jesus. In an indirect way, we are the beneficiaries of this ministry of the Father to the Son. Consider the fact that all of these truths were manifested in Jesus' earthly ministry, a ministry to us and for us. In this indirect way, the Father is actively engaging in our sanctification, through the Person and work of Jesus.

## The Son

John 15, Romans 3:21-22, Romans 5:1-2, Ephesians 1:3-14

We could spend a lot of time going into great detail about the ministry of Jesus to us, but we will acknowledge that we will never fully represent Him and His work in a course like this. We will attempt to focus on some of the most significant aspects of Jesus ministry to us that undergird our sanctification.

## Spiritual Fruit

John 15 provides for us a powerful description of the kind of life that is available to us because of Jesus and our spiritual union with him. In this passage, Jesus outlines a mental posture that we must embrace if we are to live in such a way that reflects who we are in our newly restored position as children of God.

- Vs. 1 - provides spiritual life through His relationship to the Father
- Vs. 2 - provides spiritual positioning to bear fruit
- Vs. 3 - provides spiritual holiness through his word
- Vs. 4 - through abiding, he provides a way to bear fruit
- Vs. 5 - exclusively provides a way to bear fruit
- Vs. 7 - answers spiritually motivated requests
- Vs. 8 - demonstrates spiritual sonship to the watching world
- Vs. 9 - provides a loving context to live in
- Vs. 11 - provides joy
- Vs. 15 - provides friendship
- Vs. 16 - he chooses and appoints us to bear fruit for the Father

## Righteousness

Romans 3:21-22 tells us that the work of Jesus, and our subsequent identity in him through faith, provides to us the very righteousness of God to our account. We understand that this righteousness is certainly a positional reality with regard to our eternal salvation, but when we move into discussing our sanctification, we find that this righteousness becomes the experiential righteousness that our lives demonstrate as we live in the life of Christ.

## Peace

Romans 5:1-2 tells us that the work of Jesus, and our subsequent identity through faith, also brings us peace with God. This peace is certainly a positional reality that is our's through eternal salvation, but in terms of our sanctification, we understand that this is also a relational peace between us and the Father that is experienced through a growing relational intimacy with Jesus. In other words, the peace that is his, due to his perfect relationship with the Father, is also our's as we grow in our position in Him.

## Spiritual Blessings

With this new position as co-children of God because of union with Jesus, we are also brought into the realm of blessing that Jesus lives in. Consider this list in Ephesians 1:3-14, that describe for us these realities that belong to us because of Jesus and his substitutionary work on our behalf.

- Vs. 4 - chose us to be in Christ
- Vs. 4 - holy, blameless, in love
- Vs. 5 - predestined for adoption
- Vs. 7 - redemption, forgiveness, and grace
- vs. 9-10 - informs us of his will (Larger Story plans)

## The Holy Spirit

John 15:26-16:15, Romans 5:5, Acts 1:5, 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, Galatians 5:22, Ephesians 4:11-16

To truly understand the sanctified life in the Trinity, we must consider the role of the Holy Spirit. As is the case with all the Persons of the Trinity, we will delve more into the details of how we engage with Holy Spirit in later sections of this course. Our purpose here is to merely summarize some of the essential roles that the Holy Spirit fills in our sanctification process.

### Love

Romans 5:5 gives us the first information about the Holy Spirit's role in our sanctified lives as new believers. Paul tells us that the practical experience of the love of the Father is realized through the indwelling Holy Spirit. It is through his presence within us that we know of and personally connect with the love of our Heavenly Father.

### Help

Acts 1:5 tells us that indwelling Holy Spirit would be a helper to us. This is a very broad and general term, and it is purposely presented as such. There are countless ways that the Holy Spirit helps us, most significantly though with all areas of our sanctification. The Bible tells us that he helps us understand the truth (John 16:13), helps us connect with the Father (Ephesians 2:18), helps us battle the flesh (Romans 8:13), and helps us to pray (Romans 8:26-27).

### Gifts And Fruit

1 Corinthians 12:7-11 speaks of the spiritual gifts that Holy Spirit supernaturally gives and empowers believers. These are individual gifts, for individual believers, to be demonstrated in, and for the benefit of, the entire Body of Christ.

- The Word of Knowledge

- The Word of Wisdom
- The Gift of Prophecy
- The Gift of Faith
- The Gifts of Healings
- The Working of Miracles
- The Discerning of Spirits
- Different Kinds of Tongues
- The Interpretation of Tongues

Galatians 5:22 tells us of other general outworking of character and lifestyle that the Holy Spirit leads all believers into. These also are given to be used and expressed in, and for the benefit of, the entire Body of Christ.

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Longsuffering
- Kindness
- Goodness
- Faithfulness
- Gentleness
- Self-control

Lastly, Ephesians 4:11-16 outlines a shorter list of gifted people that the Holy Spirit gives to the church. These gifted people are to fulfill their unique ministry, for the purpose of equipping the individuals in the local church for the daily work of ministry that is consistent with the Larger Story of God.

- Apostle
- Prophet
- Evangelist
- Shepherd
- Teacher

## The Role Of The Believer

The sanctification process, as has already been stated, is a relational process. Rather than a pursuit of a moral standard, it is a pursuit of a relational intimacy with the Trinity. In the previous section we discussed the role of the Trinity in the two-sided process. Now we will consider, in more detail, the role that we play as believers in pursuing this relational intimacy with God. For the sake of simplifying our understanding, we will summarize our role into two primary areas: the series of convictions that form our posture in sanctification, and then the specific processes that inform how we pursue sanctification.



## **Posture**

### **In The Larger Story**

As we noted earlier in this course, sanctification is to be understood in the context of the Larger Story of God. What we mean by this is that sanctification is the means by which we live in the Larger Story of God. Rather than choosing to live in the Counterfeit Story of Satan and the world system comprising primarily of a pleasure seeking present tense reality, we choose to pursue a life that is invested in the narrative of God, which has both past, present, and future realities. We need to understand the importance of the believer thinking through this choice, and making the right choice of pursuing life in the Larger Story. Clearly this is not a “one and done” kind of choice, nevertheless every believer must be presented with this choice, understand the ramifications of this choice, and daily choose to pursue it. This should be a regular conversation, a regular thought process, and a regular prayer for our lives and for the lives of every believer in our church.

### **In The Trinitarian Life**

Along with a regular and consistent framing of one’s mind around the Larger Story of God, every believer must increasingly understand the specific individual posture of relationship and life within the Trinity. This is extremely important, as has already been noted, due to the incompatibility of sanctification without the relationship to the Trinity. Not only this, but we must discuss it here, as an issue of posture, because relating to the Trinity is a spiritual reality, not a physical one, therefore it requires an active pursuit on our part. It is not natural, not a default life experience, and so then we must actively and daily re-set our minds and postures toward this new life that we have in the Trinity. In the sense that we are speaking of here, we do not mean the specifics of the doctrines and truths that we need to know, count as true, and present ourselves to. Here we are stressing the importance of a general posture toward the Trinity; a daily recommitment of mind and heart to the relationship that is our’s in position but must be our’s in practice and pursuit.

### **In The Discipleship Context**

Lastly, we must also have a daily discussion, consideration, and decision to pursue the practical context in which a believer will be sanctified. What we mean by this is that every believer must understand that the context of sanctification, which is discipleship in the local church, is a daily conviction and daily choice to posture oneself in the “place” where sanctification happens. This might seem obvious, but as soon as one decides to pursue sanctification in the discipleship context, one finds that this context is oftentimes not favorable. Personal relationships can stifle and stretch us.

Immaturity on the part of others can derail us. Our own insecurities and struggles lived out before others can anchor us in fear. The challenges that we face in committing to the discipleship context are great and numerous, but if we are to be sanctified and used of God, we have no other alternative. We must choose the posture of discipleship in community with others, on a daily basis, if we are to be formed into the image of Jesus and be used of him for his mission.

## Pursuit

Having relational intimacy with Trinity through discipleship in the Body of Christ as our foundational commitment in sanctification, we must turn our eyes now toward the how of this commitment. It is important, as we concluded briefly in the last section, to regularly “take up our cross” in considering and remembering the foundational commitments of our sanctification. This is a very practical and necessary component of our sanctification. We do realize however, that there are regular pursuits of our thoughts and actions, that form the ebb and flow of our sanctification.

In this section, we will provide a summary of some of the important biblical concepts that need to be understood and pursued in the sanctification of a believer. This summary is not comprehensive, but is a reminder of the regularly occurring concepts in the Bible that must be continually taught and applied in the life of a believer. The good disciplinemaker is aware of these concepts and looks to highlight, exhort, and encourage their disciple into them.

### The Know-Consider-Present Paradigm

To provide a framework for considering these pursuits in more detail, we will use some key principles from Romans 6:1-14 as our guide. In this particular passage, Paul provides a principled approach to pursuing sanctification, centered around three key words: know, count, and present. Paul tells us that these three pursuits are necessary if sanctification is to take place in a believer’s life. We believe that this simple framework gives practical direction to a lifestyle of walking with the Spirit, or a walk of sanctification

Firstly, as Paul mentions in verses 3, 6, and 9, that every believer must be committed to **knowing** the truths about life from God’s perspective. This knowing is not a once in time event, but a lifelong process of learning truth. This learning will take various forms over time and with regard to each individual’s maturity. Early on, this learning will be foundational, conceptual, and big picture. As a believer matures, this learning will grow deeper as the believer learns more truth. Paul explains this with the illustration of a child who moves from drinking milk to eating meat. Every

believer, if they are to be sanctified, must pursue the endless resources of truth in the Bible.

Secondly, verse 11 introduces the idea of **considering**. Considering is a very important word that moves our pursuit away from the simple understanding of the truth to a considering the veracity of said truth. It is not enough that we know the truth, we must take the next step of considering it to be personally true for our own individual convictions. This idea of considering has a host of other synonyms that help to convey its meaning: engage, embrace, adopt, welcome, accept, or take up. These summarize the essential point that Paul is making. Every believer, if they are to be sanctified, must wrestle with truth to the point of embracing it personally.

Lastly, verse 13 tells us that the next principle of sanctification is **presenting** ourselves to the truths that we know and consider. This principle speaks to the necessity of believers moving from mere knowledge and into a place of having a mind and action transformation. With every Biblical concept that we learn and consider true, God presses us to move into a lifestyle that is consistent with that concept. Sometimes that lifestyle change is in character and thoughts, while other times that lifestyle change is in a simple action that is required. Either way, every believer, if they are to be sanctified, must pursue a lifestyle that is consistent with the truth of the Bible.

## **Know**

We want to expand this particular principle of knowing the truth by touching on a few concepts that appear regularly within the parts of the Bible that speak to sanctification. When we look at the Bible as a whole, we find that these areas are most often explained, exhorted, and encouraged in believers, therefore we can conclude that they form a good general foundation for what believers need to know.

The first concept that is central to the sanctification of the believer is **knowing God**. Some would say that this goes without saying, but it is indeed the most central doctrine, theology, or “the study of God himself”. The Psalmist writes of this personal growing in the knowledge of God as he expounds in chapter 139:6,17 that the knowledge of God is vast, unsearchable, and endless. And yet in Jeremiah 9:24, we read that “but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me...”. Paul also personally declares this idea in Philippians 3:10 when he writes, “that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death.” Believers must be committed to the endless relational pursuit of God through the Bible. Of course, this pursuit of knowing God introduces them to the deeper truths of God like his grace, mercy, love, and power. This is, in actuality, the most significant

motivator for the knowing of the truth; that believers pursue it for the purpose of knowing God personally.

The second concept that the Bible stresses is the importance of **knowing one's place in God's Larger Story**. What we mean by this is that a believer who desires to be sanctified must have a growing understanding of the past, present, and future plan of God (His Larger Story), and also a deepening awareness to his/her role in it. This begins in Genesis 1:26-31, where God gives a clear introduction to his plan, his Story if you will, of how he planned to create a world of relational oneness with his image bearers who would rule and reign with him on the earth. Due to sin and the fall, this plan was affected but never eradicated. Through faith in the Person and work of Jesus, God made a way to redeem people to himself and restore them to their original intended purpose. Matthew 28:18-20 tells us that Jesus not only saves believers by faith, but he welcomes them back into life in this Larger Story. Much of the believers relational growth and lifestyle changes are to be understood in this newly restored place in the Larger Story. Revelation 21-22 give us a vivid picture of God's final chapter in the Story where he fully and finally restores the entire creation to his original design. Every part of the Bible then informs us of this plan of God to write his image bearers back into the Larger Story that he intended for them to participate in.

A central component to this "life in the Larger Story" is the issue of a believer's **knowing their identity in Christ**. Identity is a profoundly important part of a believer's ability to know and live in the redeemed position that they have been given in Christ. This is clear beginning in the creation account, where God's first description of mankind was of their identity as "image bearers of God". In the New Testament, believers are given a new identity in Christ by faith in substitutionary death of Jesus. This truth is so significant that God uses nearly every epistle to either introduce, encourage, or exhort believers in an aspect of their new identity in the person of Christ. In Romans 6:1-14, Paul explains in detail the correlation between the believer's union with Jesus and their pursuit of the sanctified life. Specifically, the believer must understand that through their union with Jesus in his death and resurrection, they have a changed relationship to their flesh/source of sin within them. No longer are they slaves to sin, but through this new identity with and in Jesus, they are free to choose a new manner of life apart from sin and alive to God. This new identity with Jesus opens the door to a radical new life of freedom to ruling power of sin that is non-negotiable if a believer is to experience the sanctified life.

It is also impossible to speak of identity in Christ without discussing the related **identity in the indwelling Holy Spirit**. These relationships go hand in hand. Ephesians 1:13-14 tells us that our position in Christ ushered in the presence of the Holy Spirit into our lives. They, as co-members of the

Trinity, are inextricably linked. So to be in Christ, is to be alive to the indwelling Holy Spirit. And it therefore concludes that to pursue a sanctified life in Christ, is synonymous with a relational walk with the Holy Spirit. Less steps to follow, sanctification principles are relational patterns of growth.

Along with this growing understanding of and experience in their new identity in Christ, believers must also know of their new **identity in the Family of God**. This aspect of their identity is important because it helps the believer to understand and embrace two important realities:

- They can more fully grasp their own true identity as a member of the Body of Christ and not a disconnected individual believer. For example, Ephesians 1-2 speaks exclusively in plural terms when it refers to the recipients of the spiritual blessings of a new identity in Christ. What this means is that we should understand the passage to speaking of corporate truths, not exclusively individual truths.
- They can become a more meaningful representative to the world of Jesus through the expression of mutual love in the Body of Christ. In John 17, Jesus prays for his disciples to embrace a new reality of mutual, sacrificial love as the means for proving to the watching world that he is the authentic son of God. So accordingly, believers must grow in understanding of their shared identity in the Body of Christ if they are to grow in their personal sanctification.

Lastly, another key component of the understanding for the believer's sanctification is the doctrine of **rewards**. In countless passages from the gospels and the epistles, God informs believers of the reality of eternal rewards and how they impact the daily life choices of the believer. 1 Corinthians 3 provides the most succinct explanation of the reality of, and motivation by eternal rewards. The essential truth that Paul presents is that every believer must know that their decision(s) to follow Jesus as His disciple, does indeed have eternal consequences. We must know that our present tense choice to embrace the Larger Story of God has impact in the future tense because it is, in reality, it is the same story - only different chapters. Again, this is stated here as summary, but will be addressed more comprehensively in future courses<sup>2</sup>.

### Consider

The next principle that we are introduced to in Romans 6 is found in verse 11 where Paul writes that the believer must "present" him/herself to the truth that they now know and understand. Paul is describing a process of **applying faith** to the truth of the Bible.

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<sup>2</sup> HCC Institute: Rewards (REW 401)

When we talk about considering the truth, we are speaking about a kind of engagement with the truth where the believer begins to deeply consider the personal implications of the truths of the Bible. It is not about applying the truth per se, but about personally meditating on the personal implications of a particular biblical truth.

Psalms 136 and 138 give a great example of this kind of personal considering of the truth of the Bible. In chapter 136, David extolls the goodness of God's love in various ways. It is a broad statement about the character of God toward his people. However when we look more closely into chapter 138, we find that David takes a more personal view toward those truths. Verses 1,2,3,7, and 8 all speak to a personal thankfulness that David expresses. He has considered the truths of chapter 136 for himself and is personally convinced that God has shown His love to David and is thankful for it.

This process of personally considering the truth is essential for the believer who desires to be sanctified. It is not merely about knowing what the Bible says and even what it means. The believer must move deeper, into their soul, their will, their deepest convictions, and deal with the truth of the Bible in the most personal of ways. The question is not, 'Is this true?' The sanctification question is, "Is this true for me?" and "Will I build the deepest convictions of my life upon it?"

## Present

The last principle that we uncover in Romans 6 is the final process of sanctification where the believer "presents himself/herself" to the biblical concepts that have been learned and personally considered as true. In following the order presented in Romans 6, "presenting oneself to the truth" is the final stage of the sanctification process. In this subsection, we will look at some of the practical ways that we "present ourselves" to the truth of the Bible.

A first priority in the process of a believer's sanctification is the necessity to **take up his/her cross daily**. We have spoken previously about this as an issue of the believer's posture, but it certainly is a thought process and conviction choice that a believer needs to embrace. In Luke 9:23, Jesus clearly states that the one who would follow him, must "take up his cross daily". This means that a daily thought process and recommitment is necessary for believers who desire to be sanctified. Specifically, the thought process and recommitment is the fundamental posture of sacrificial and selfless love for the betterment of others, in the pattern of Jesus himself.

Secondly, to embrace the "take up your cross" lifestyle of Jesus, the New Testament describes an appropriate expectation for the believer as he/she

moves forward. The expectation is set by using a specific illustration that better communicates the reality of the process, and that illustration is one of **waging spiritual warfare**. Ephesians 6:10-20 outline a mentality of warfare that is necessary in the process of “considering the truth”.

- Vs. 14 - the “belt of truth” holds together all the armor, meaning that the Bible is the glue which equips us for battle.
- Vs. 14 - the “breastplate of righteousness” protects the torso from lethal strikes, meaning that the righteousness gained from Christ and lived out through Christ protects from spiritual attacks.
- Vs. 15 - the “shoes of the gospel” protect and lead our steps into the purpose of our lives. Going and growing in the gospel is our pathway.
- Vs. 16 - the “shield of faith” is a picture of the importance of considering the truth and applying the truth in the spiritual challenges that we face.
- Vs. 17 - the “helmet of salvation” is the power of knowing, considering, and depending on one’s salvation as the primary defense against the mental challenges that we face in pursuing sanctification.
- Vs. 17 - the “sword of the Spirit/Bible” pictures the Bible as weapon to be wielded in battle. Knowing, counting, and ultimately presenting our lives as willing sacrifices for His Larger Story is done through the Bible.

All we look at this list, notice how each element of warfare refers to a biblical truth. Another vital observation is how each element must be “put on” or considered to be true and personally applied. This is the essence of “presenting ourselves” that Paul talks about in Romans 6. It is a battle to moment by moment give our lives over to the truths that we know and consider as our own. It is a battle that every believer must know and engage in if they are to be sanctified.

Another simple yet profound principle of presenting ourselves to the truth is the practice of **obedience and application**. 1 Samuel 15:22 recounts a story where Saul was commanded by God to destroy the Amalekites completely, leaving nothing behind. Yet in his own thinking, Saul decided to keep some of the spoils of war rather than listen to God’s instruction, rationalizing it with stating that some of the Amalekite animals that he did not kill were to be used for sacrifices to God. In turn God sent Samuel to deliver this profound verdict to Saul, “Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice.” As a consequence to this choice, Samuel informed Saul that he would no longer be honored as king. His choice not to present himself to the truth and live in Satan’s Counterfeit Story brought negative consequences on himself.

Simply put, it is impossible to say that we are presenting ourselves to the truth of the Bible, when we are unwilling to obey its simple directives. Is God merciful as we stumble along in disobedience? Yes, however we cannot assume that we are actively pursuing a sanctified life when we openly disregard his commands. We know that our disobedience doesn't bring a loss of salvation, but it does bring consequences, namely a loss of reward and greater opportunities in the Larger Story of God.

James 1:22-25 encourages the believer to not simply be a hearer of the word but also a doer. In simple terms, James challenges the believer to present his/her life to act out the truths that the Bible is urging. He says that the "doer who acts...will be blessed in his/her doing". Again, the blessed, sanctified life is only available to those who will move from learning about the truth and into living in the truth.

Another practical way that we present ourselves to the truth of the Bible is through **giving and receiving exhortation**. Simply put, exhortation is to "call to one's side, urge strongly, appeal, or entreat"<sup>3</sup> someone to the truth. Exhortation can be quite wide in its meaning, incorporating both negative (confronting) means, and positive (vision casting) means. Exhortation is always challenging in nature. It calls believers to a higher commitment, motivating them to a deeper lifestyle of self sacrifice in the life of Jesus. This must be a discipleship priority in the church.

Romans 12:8, in a broader context of teaching on spiritual gifts expressed throughout the Body of Christ, Paul urges those who have a gift of exhortation, to use it well and with passion. This clearly implies that exhortation is to be a regular component of Body life, and is a necessary aspect of sanctification for the life of every believer. This also clearly implies that there is always to be the giving and receiving of exhortations in the church.

Hebrews 3:3 says to, "exhort one another every day, as long as it is called 'today,' that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." The author challenges, in this particular context a general lifestyle of exhortation in the church. Not relegated only to the gifted ones, but here the author of Hebrews suggests that we all commit to a lifestyle of giving and receiving exhortation.

Another practical way that we present ourselves to the truth of the Bible is through **giving and receiving encouragement**. We define encouragement as, "an act of emboldening another in belief or action, lifting another's

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<sup>3</sup> Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*



spirit's, providing comfort"<sup>4</sup>. In the Bible, encouragement is a central component of life in the family of God. Its primary usage is in contexts where believers need to be comforted and built up in their struggle of following God. This selfless back and forth lifestyle is a necessity if the believer is experience the sanctified life.

In Romans 1:11-12, Paul writes to the church in Rome, "I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you—that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine". Here we see the idea of mutual, believer-to-believer, encouragement being lived in the church. We also see that it is a deeply relational exercise. This only makes sense when we remind ourselves that sanctification is synonymous with Living in the relational Larger Story of God.

1 Thessalonians 5:11 says, "Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing." In this context, Paul drives home this issue of encouragement again. It appears as though it is a vital component of the sanctified life in the church. Our experience affirms this conclusion, as we reflect on the realities of a life on a fallen earth yet in pursuit of the Larger Story. There are countless difficulties, personal and circumstantial, caused from within and without, that challenge the believer who is pursuing sanctification. This is the reality of where the church lives, and this is why giving and receiving encouragement is vital to sanctification.

Finally, another practical way that we present ourselves to the truth of the Bible is through **building a disciplined spiritual life**. We understand the danger of confusion in sanctification, specifically with regard to the role of works and personal discipline, but we also cannot disregard what the Bible says about these important practical ways that the believer is sanctified.

In 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9, Paul outlines the qualifications of leadership in the local church. To bring this properly to bear on the present subject, Paul is basically saying that these are the qualifications of men and women who demonstrate a faithful commitment to the sanctified life in the Larger Story. In both contexts, Paul extols the virtues of faithfulness demonstrated in regular life choices to follow Jesus and live in his Larger Story. These certainly include commitments to dedicate one's life and sacrifice other self-serving opportunities, in order to align one's life to the Larger Story. These choices and decision do not constitute spiritual maturity, but they facilitate spiritual maturity.

2 Thessalonians 3:6-15 affirms this practice in very simple terms. Paul exhorts the Thessalonian believers to not be "idle" nor to develop a pattern of camaraderie with those who are. Laziness and selfish pleasure seeking

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<sup>4</sup> Danker, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament

are cancers to spiritual growth. As believers begin to mature in their following of Jesus, often times God will lead them to reconsider various life choices in order that they might more highly prioritize his Larger Story and their part in it. This is not legalism, rather it is a life that being changed by grace and through the love of Jesus in the believer. As that life change beings to take place, the growing believer is increasingly positioned to commit to higher levels of sacrifice for Jesus. These are disciplined choices that mature, sanctified believers demonstrate.

## Opposing Views

The sanctification process is not to be understood as a difficult process, however much confusion has been promoted in the name of “good doctrine” regarding this subject. Here we will very briefly state the summary views that oppose the view of sanctification that has been presented in this course.

### Legalism

The most infamous of doctrine that opposes a biblical understanding of sanctification is legalism. The basic premise of legalism, is the false conclusion that sanctification requires a recommitment to, and daily following of, a system of laws and rules to maintain godly character and lifestyle change. In the biblical context, we see that this system of rules can be either the Old Testament legal code (promoted by the Judaizers), or additional extra-biblical codes that are designed to promote righteous actions (Talmud, Mishnah, other Greek codes - Colossians 2:16-23).

Paul speaks of this in Galatians 3:3, where he connects legalism with a sanctification through the flesh. The issue in the Galatian church was that they had been infiltrated by the Judaizers who promoted a doctrine of faith in Jesus plus a following of the Old Testament legal code, as a means of salvation and sanctification.

Today there are many variations of this false sanctification, with these variations appearing in nearly every denomination. The unifying theme of them all is the notion that following rules/laws can produce spiritual life, rather than the biblical view that inward spiritual life produces a lifestyle that humbly follows the rules.

### Reformed Theology

Reformed, Calvinistic, and Lordship Theologies all promote a subtle form of legalistic sanctification. This is more comprehensively addressed in our

Institute course on Soteriology<sup>5</sup>, yet it directly relates to sanctification as well. The concern with the reformed doctrine of sanctification is twofold:

- Their misunderstanding of the purpose of the Old Testament legal code. In summary, Reformed theology views the OT Law as applicable to believers in the church today. This is partly due to their failure in seeing a distinction between Israel and the Church, thereby falsely concluding that the Law applies to both entities instead of exclusively to Israel. They do attempt to redefine it slightly as a “moral code” to follow, but nevertheless the confusion of how it applies is too difficult to rectify.
- Their confusion of the relationship between justification and sanctification. More grievous is Reformed Theology’s improper linking of sanctification to justification. Their essential conclusion is that if a believer fails to demonstrate a sanctified life, then they prove to have not been justified in the first place. This summarily concludes then that sanctification is a necessary requirement for justification (in a “backloaded” sense). Rather than pursuing sanctification out of love and a desire to serve the eternal purposes of God, one must do so to insure that salvation is even their’s to begin with.

## **Deliverance Theology**

As we noted in the Institute course on Soteriology, Deliverance Theology is built upon a false view of the Holy Spirit and his role in sanctification. Deliverance proponents believe that the Holy Spirit does indwell the believer but provides additional and necessary power for certain situations based on certain beliefs of the individual christian. The problem then with this view is that the everyday experience of sanctification is relegated to an inward focus on one’s “merit” in attaining a second blessing of the Holy Spirit to empower oneself through the circumstance. This is in contrast to the reality of a living relationship with the Holy Spirit, trusting him to provide his power through us as he deems best.

## **One-Nature Theology**

A more obscure system of sanctification theology is One-Naturism. It is not nearly as prevalent as the other systems, yet some of the themes within it still exist among many believers who have been unknowingly influenced by it. The central doctrine of this system of theology is based on an absolute interpretation of 2 Corinthians 5:17 where Paul writes, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come”. They understand this to mean that at salvation, the flesh/sin nature is eradicated and the believer only has the new nature/Holy Spirit

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<sup>5</sup> HCC Institute: Soteriology (SOT 300)

within them. This poses a series of challenges, none the least of which being a confused understanding of Romans 6:1-11, and a dysfunctional sanctification experience in dealing with the urges and outworking of sin.

## **FURTHER STUDY**

### **Recommended Books**

1. The Moody Handbook Of Theology, Paul Enns
2. A Survey Of Bible Doctrine, Charles Ryrie
3. The Normal Christian Life, Watchman Nee
4. He That Is Spiritual, Lewis Chafer
5. The Practice Of The Presence of God, Brother Lawrence
6. Walking In Victory, Dennis McCallum
7. Delighting In The Trinity, Michael Reeves
8. Final Destiny, Joseph Dillow

### **Books From Opposing Views**

1. The Divine Conspiracy, Dallas Willard
2. The Celebration of Discipline, Richard Foster
3. The Bondage Breaker, Neil T. Anderson
4. Radical, David Platt
5. The Purpose Driven Life, Rick Warren