

Disc 105 - **Spiritual Growth & Maturity - Phil 3:5-14**

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We have new **Grandbabies** - & we love them as Babies
But we **don't want** them to stay babies forever

& We have **all been**, or are, Spiritual **babies**

& God **loves us** as Spiritual Babies
but He **doesn't want** us to stay Spiritual **Babies** forever

& so today - We're going to look at **God's Process**
of **Spiritual Growth** & Maturity

Otherwise known as "**The Process of SANCTIFICATION**"

We often break down the Christian Life into 3 General Areas

JUSTIFICATION - The moment we get Saved

SANCTIFICATION - Spiritual Growth & Maturing

GLORIFICATION - When we leave this earth for heaven

& Our **Spiritual Growth** & Maturity falls into
that **SANCTIFICATION** Area of the Christian Life

& so **today** - we're going to **look** at a bit of
the **Apostle Paul's** Spiritual Growth & Maturity

In order to see the **FOUNDATION**, & maybe a bit of the **PROCESS**
of **OUR** Spiritual Growth & Maturity . . . **OK?**

Let's Pray

Paul's life started with a very **religious** upbringing (like some of us)

Acts 22:3 says - ESV

[Paul was] . . . ***educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers,***

& so - Paul became a strict **Pharisee**

in Acts 26:5 Paul says - ESV

. . . according to the strictest party of our religion I have lived as a Pharisee

& his **religious zeal** was displayed
in his intense **persecution** of the church

Acts 26:9-11 - ESV

9 "I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things in opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

10 And I did so in Jerusalem. I not only locked up many of the saints in prison after receiving authority from the chief priests, but when they were put to death I cast my vote against them.

11 And I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to make them blaspheme, and in raging fury against them I persecuted them even to foreign cities.

& then - Like a **Monster Truck** running into a **Block Wall**
Paul the **Persecuting Pharisee** - MET **JESUS CHRIST**

& all that misguided **Religious Zeal** was **crushed**
by a face-to-face, personal meeting, with the **Risen Lord**

The **SAME** type of meeting - that **YOU** can have today

The story is in **ACTS CH 9**

Paul (whose name was **SAUL**)

was on his way to **Persecute** more Christians

& in Acts 9:3-5 we read - ESV

3 Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him.

4 And falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?"

5 And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.

& **THAT** - was the beginning of

a Radically **Transformed Life** for the Apostle Paul

& guys - we **EACH** need

a **Damascus Rd Meeting** with Jesus Christ

& we need to Pray - that that would **be the Beginning**
of a **Radical Transformation** in our lives

Paul went on to become the **Greatest Apostle**,

Missionary, Church Planter, & **Divine Scripture** writer

he started more **CHURCHES** than we can count

he wrote basically **HALF** the books in the NT

he became God's **#1 TOOL** to spur the miraculous growth
of the 1st century church

& **God wants** to do something **similar** in each of us

maybe **not QUITE** as Dramatic as the Apostle Paul

But God wants to take us

from **PRIDE** to **HUMILITY**

from **DARK** to **LIGHT**

from **DEATH** to **LIFE** . . . *Just like He took the Apostle Paul*

Eph 2:10 says - ESV

10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

If you have received Christ today, God's plan for you

is an ever-deepening relationship **WITH** Him,
and a supernaturally transformed life **IN** Him

& the **PROCESS** of that ever-deepening relationship,
& that transformation . . . is called **SANCTIFICATION**

Sanctification is the Biblical term that describes
the **Spiritual Growth & Maturing Process** of a Disciple

DEF - Sanctification = (Easton's) ***Sanctification is the carrying on to perfection the work begun in regeneration, and it extends to the whole man.***

LIT = ***Separated unto God. Set apart, or devoted, to God***

Remember earlier we talked about
the **THREE** General **Areas** of the Christian Life

JUSTIFICATION - The moment we get Saved

SANCTIFICATION - Spiritual growth & Maturing

GLORIFICATION - When we leave this earth for heaven

The area we're talking about today is **Sanctification**
The PROCESS of our Spiritual Growth & Maturity

& this is the **exact area** of the Christian Life
where so many believers get **STALLED** in

They've **Received** Christ, & been **Born Again**,
but they **never** grow out of their **diapers**
*which is **sad** for them, and sad for the church*

do you **want know why** I believe so many believers
get **STALLED** in the Sanctification Process?

Because **MORE** than the *other two areas* of the Christian Life

Sanctification requires us to do **OUR PART**
& it's in the **OUR PART** that we get so easily **STALLED**

Our Part in our Spiritual Growth & Maturity is to:

Actively Abide in Christ

Purposely Grow in His Grace &

Pursue an ever deepening Relationship with Him

As we **humbly** yield to Him as our Lord

As we **purposely** set our minds on things above

As we **actively** walk in the Spirit . . .

THEN - we "progress" in our **Sanctification** (spiritual growth)

& **THAT** is why (because it is AS WE)
that we get so **easily STALLED**

& here's an interesting note - Do you know
the **RESULTS** most people are looking for, when they receive Christ

Are actually found in **SANCTIFICATION**
Not IN the initial **JUSTIFICATION**

Often a person comes to Christ looking for
Peace, Love, Joy, & Happiness

& they think that will **automatically come** to them in their Salvation

But **truthfully** - it is the Process of **SANCTIFICATION**
that brings the **Fruit of The Spirit** into our lives, *right?*

So again - in a way I can't dive too much into today,

SANCTIFICATION requires more of an **OUR PART** commitment
than either **JUSTIFICATION** or **GLORIFICATION**

we have **more of a ROLE** in our **SANCTIFICATION** -
because if we **REFUSE** to Abide in Christ & Grow in Him

Our Transformation will be stalled

But **if** we will **Join God** in the work He is has begun in us

I Promise you - He **WILL BE** OUR **Power** to be **Transformed**
& He will **complete** our **Transformation**

So let's look at what it takes
for us to be ready to do OUR PART

What is the Foundational Commitment in our lives
that INSURES that God's work of TRANSFORMATION

Oh, that's a good question, isn't it?

Let's look at how it worked out in the Apostle Paul's Life

Possibly the greatest picture in the Bible
of the process of SANCTIFICATION
is found in Phil Ch 3 (*my life's Vs, & this church's Vs*)

This CH builds with so much momentum, & emotion
I see it kinda like an Opera (a Rock Opera)
being played out to the crescendo of a full orchestra

Phil Ch 3 is Paul's personal testimony

& as a call to live for Christ,
it may be unmatched in the Bible - *I LOVE THIS CH*

But it's more than just Paul's Testimony

Phil Ch 3 lays out the desire, & the commitment,
we must have in the Sanctification process

it lays out the "Foundation" of the OUR PART
for our Spiritual Growth & Maturity

in Phil 3:5 - Paul starts by recounting his position before Christ
& his religious Pride

Reading from the NLT

Phil 3:5-7 - NLT

5 I was circumcised when I was eight days old. I am a pure-blooded citizen of Israel and a member of the tribe of Benjamin—a real Hebrew if there ever was one! I was a member of the Pharisees, who demand the strictest obedience to the Jewish law.

6 I was so zealous that I harshly persecuted the church. And as for righteousness, I obeyed the law without fault.

7 I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done.

Then - in V.8 Paul begins to share - the **FOUNDATIONAL MINDSET** that brings true *Spiritual Growth & Maturity*

Phil 3:8-9(a) - NLT

8 Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ

9 and become one with him . . .

THIS is the mindset - that is the Foundation for all *Radical Transformation* in the Christian's life

THIS is the Mind-Set from which ALL *True Spiritual Growth* really begins

When we embrace the fact that 'by comparison' **NOTHING** equals ***the infinite value of KNOWING Christ***

AND - when we count **EVERYTHING ELSE** as **GARBAGE** in order to **Gain Christ**

Those are **Radical Statements**
& that's **not** what our **culture** wants to hear

We want to hear that we can **have everything** else our flesh desires
& then we can **ADD Christ** to that too

But guys - we've **all seen**
SO MANY Christians **trying** to live like that

loving the **pleasures** of this world
& **trying to add** Christ as a **FIRE INSURANCE** policy

But **let's be honest** - the Christians who live that way
VERY SELDOM display any **Radical Transformation** in their lives

But **THIS** Mindset, in **Phil 3:8** - THIS Mindset
is **the beginning** of **Radical Transformation** in a person's life

This is the beginning of **SANCTIFICATION**

& then, in **Phil 3:9(b)** - Paul **comments** on his Former Religious Pride

Phil 3:9(b) - NLT

9 . . . I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God's way of making us right with himself depends on faith.

That is **the revelation** that **caused** Paul to throw away
all his **Religious Efforts** & **Religious Pride**

The revelation that righteousness comes
thru **FAITH** in Christ **ALONE**

& now - in **Phil 3:10** - comes my life's vs
& this church's foundation vs

AND - if we'll just **dig a little bit** into the original language

We'll **see** the very Foundation of the **OUR PART**
of the **SANCTIFICATION** Process

I promise you - if **THIS verse** becomes the true prayer of your life
the rest of the **Sanctification Process** - WILL follow

Now - **in order** to convey the **intent** of the Original **GREEK**
without having to teach all the "**WHYS**" of it

I'd like to read **Vs 10** out of the **Amplified Bible**

The **Amplified Bible** attempts to **EXPAND** the English language
to convey the more colorful & **exact Greek** Language

& so - **the words** you see in the **[BRACKETS]** are the "**expanding**" or
"defining" to convey the sense of the original language

& the **Amplified Bible** does an incredible job of writing
what I have been teaching about this verse

since **MY VERY FIRST** Sunday Morning **Sermon** (*on this vs*)

I promise you - if you will make this verse
your **Daily Prayer** & **Commitment**

You **will soon be** on the road
to **Radical Transformation** in your life

Phil 3:10 - AMP → →

Phil 3:10 - AMP

10 [For my determined purpose is] that I may know Him [that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, perceiving and recognizing and understanding the wonders of His Person more strongly and more clearly], and that I may in that same way come to know the power outflowing from His resurrection [which it exerts over believers], and that I may so share His sufferings as to be continually transformed [in spirit into His likeness even] to His death, . . .

This Vs conveys - The foundation for the beginning of true Spiritual Growth in your life

That Foundation is a Passionate Commitment to KNOW CHRIST

Paul says - ***For my determined purpose*** (passionate commitment) ***is that I may know Him*** (my life's verse)

But what do those 5 words mean, in the Original Language?
- the AMP Bible does a great job expanding the meaning

[that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, perceiving and recognizing and understanding the wonders of His Person more strongly and more clearly]

THAT is what it means to KNOW Christ
in the sense of the GK word Paul uses here - GINOSKO

& then - Paul continues

and that I may - in that same way (progressively & more intimately) come to know the power outflowing from His resurrection [which it exerts over believers], - and that I may so share His sufferings -

as to be continually transformed [in spirit into His likeness even] to His death, . . .

May I progressively & more intimately - KNOW JESUS

AND - the **Power** of His **Resurrection** (in that same way)

AND - the **Fellowship** of His **Suffering** (in that same way)

SO - I will be **Continually Transformed** in spirit, into His Likeness

This is at the HEART of our Spiritual Growth & Maturity

A Supreme desire to **KNOW Christ** more & more,
until we are **Transformed** - into His Likeness (spiritually)

& then - **Phil 3:11** understood in a "**MY LIFE TODAY**" sense
is an Absolute Bombshell

The NLT translates Phil 3:11

11 so that one way or another (by any means) I will experience the resurrection from the dead!

& we assume this phrase "***Resurrection from the dead***"
refers to the **Physical Resurrection** - when we leave this life

But listen to how the **AMP Bible** translates the **same Vs**

Phil 3:11 - AMP

11 That if possible I may attain to the [spiritual and moral] resurrection [that lifts me] out from among the dead [even while in the body].

Now **THAT** really makes this Vs apply
to our **Spiritual Growth** & **Maturity** - Our **SACTIFICATION**

Listen to what the GK Scholar **Kenneth Wuest** says about **the word** used here for "**Resurrection**"

Kenneth Wuest

The Greek word used here translated "resurrection" is only found here in the New Testament. It is literally, "out-resurrection." Paul is not speaking here of the future resurrection of the physical body of the saint . . . He has in mind the spiritual resurrection of the believing sinner . . . a resurrection out from a state in which he is dead in trespasses and sins to one in which he is alive with the divine life of God . . . This is the goal to which he is striving and the goal to which he has not yet attained.

Now - there are a **couple interpretations** as to whether this word refers to our "Life after Death" resurrection - or our resurrection from **living DEAD in sin** to **living ALIVE in Christ**

Both **Eph 2 & Rom 6** refer to this "**Spiritual Resurrection**" where we go from **living DEAD** in our sins to **living ALIVE** in Christ

& **THAT** is the **GOAL** of our Spiritual Growth
& **THAT** - is our **SANCTIFICATION Process**

& **THAT** was a **VERY COOL** *study* & *discovery* for me !

Continuing on in **Phil Ch 3**

where Paul is describing His own **SANCTIFICATION**

Let's **go back** to reading the **NLT**

Phil 3:12 - NLT

12 I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things (living the resurrection life) or that I have already reached perfection (Maturity). But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me.

Paul says - I may not be walking perfectly
in that **New Resurrection Life**

But **I PRESS ON** to lay hold
of that **New Resurrection Life**

because **THAT** is what Christ Jesus has **laid hold** of me **for**

& finally - in **Vs's 13 & 14** - is the **GRAND CRESENDO**
the final piece in this great **Rock Opera Testimony**

Phil 3:13-14 - NLT → →

Phil 3:13-14 - NLT

13 No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead,

14 I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.

THAT is the Crescendo
of Paul's **TRANSFORMATION** commitment

He says

I **FOCUS** on **ONE** thing

Forgetting the Past, & **Looking Forward** to what lies ahead

I **PRESS ON** - to reach the **GOAL**, the *upward call of God* in Christ

Guys - Paul is **talking about** the **TRANSFORMATION** of his **LIFE**
It's the **TOTAL Transformation Process**
shown in those **THREE General Areas** we've been referring to

JUSTIFICATION - Our Initial Salvation

SANCTIFICATION - Spiritual Growth & Maturing

GLORIFICATION - Which is the HEAVENLY PRIZE

& guys - If we want experience **True Spiritual Growth**
If we want **True Transformation** in our lives

Then **THIS** is the commitment that **WE MUST HAVE**

(v.8) - We must count ***everything else as worthless, when compared to the infinite value of knowing Jesus as our Lord***

(v.10) - Our determined Purpose must be to ***know Him in a progressively deeper & more intimate way***

(v.11) So that, ***whatever it takes***, we can ***LIVE*** in ***The Resurrection Life***

(v.12) We must ***Lay Hold of*** that ***Resurrection Life*** that ***Jesus Christ has Laid Hold of us for***

(v.13) ***Forgetting the Past, & focusing on what lies ahead***

(v.14) We've got to ***Press On to the end of the race to receive the Heavenly Prize for which God is calling us***

Guys - **THAT** is the **MINDSET** - that forms the Foundation of the **OUR PART** - of the **Sanctification Process**

& **when we** fully immerse ourselves into **THAT** Mindset - **LOOK OUT !!**

Because **God** has got some **Radical Transformation** **Coming our way**

Let's Pray