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*How much can hard work really accomplish?*

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# CORE VERSES

*Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.*

*Philippians 2:12-13*

Paul loved these people. He didn't want their faith to be only when he was present. He wanted it to be all the time.

Let's not make our faith only about times when we are at church or with other Christians. It must be an all-the-time faith!

## READ PHILIPPIANS 2:1-16.

So if Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross paid for my sins once and for all, there is really nothing left to do but wait for Him to come back, right? Not quite. Two things happen when we place our faith and trust in Jesus. First, we are justified (Romans 3:21-26). Justification refers to the one-time act of God in which He forgives our sins and restores us to a right relationship with Him based on the finished work of Christ.

However, while we are forgiven, we still are not yet perfect (Romans 6:10-19). We still struggle and fail. We still wrestle with sin (Romans 7:14-25). But God desires for us to be whole and sinless as He originally created Adam and Eve (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24). So the second aspect of rescuing us from our sin is the process called *sanctification*.

Sanctification refers to the continuing work of God with humans to restore us to our originally intended state. The goal of this process is for us to be free and whole. In other words, the goal is to be just like Jesus (Hebrews 12:2).

**But Jesus was perfect! How in the world are we ever going to be like Him? The answer is both simple and complex at the same time: Trust and obey.**

As we become more and more like Jesus, it's important that we begin with trust. Without trust, we presume that this transformation is all on us, which can lead to pride, despair, and

failure. We were never intended to do this alone and in our own power (2 Corinthians 3:17-18). God is working in our lives by the power of His Holy Spirit to transform our hearts, even when we don't notice it (Philippians 2:13). We must learn to trust Him more and more every day. But that doesn't get us off the hook.

We must participate in this process as well by obeying God (2 Peter 1:5-7). Without obedience, we will assume it's all on God, which can lead us to be lazy, foolish, and apathetic. We must actively choose to obey Him. That is how we work out our salvation (Philippians 2:12). And we do this *with fear and trembling*, demonstrating a healthy respect for the God we are in a relationship with. As we submit to God and obey Him, He gives us the power and strength to change to become more like Him, accomplishing what He began in us when we believed.

As we continue this process of sanctification, our lives begin to look more and more like Jesus. In fact, that is exactly what Paul is encouraging in today's passage. He wanted them to take on the humility, love, and servant's heart of Jesus (vv. 1-5). In describing Jesus' example, Paul lays out one of the deepest and most powerful theological passages in the entire Bible (vv. 5-11). In essence, Paul is saying to them, "Here's the model to live up to ... go and live accordingly!"

**Only through trust and obedience can we ever hope to live up to Jesus' example and experience the freedom and joy found in Him.**

## CORE CONCEPTS

The transformation to become like Jesus Christ is a process.

### METAMORPHOSIS:

A change of the form or nature of a thing or person into a completely different one

## QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE OVER THE NEXT TWO DAYS

- » HOW IS THE PROCESS OF SANCTIFICATION SIMILAR TO AND/OR DIFFERENT FROM THE METAMORPHOSIS OF A CATERPILLAR TO A BUTTERFLY?
- » HOW DOES THE TEACHING OF JESUS IN JOHN 15 HELP YOU UNDERSTAND THE PROCESS OF SANCTIFICATION?
- » HOW DO WE PARTICIPATE TOGETHER AS A COMMUNITY IN THE PROCESS OF SANCTIFICATION (SEE HEBREWS 10:23-25)?
- » WRITE YOUR OWN QUESTION:

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