

IGNITE INSTITUTE | HOW TO GROW

CLASS 1: INTRODUCTION

He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit.

Jeremiah 17:8

WHY GROW

Before we study *how* to grow we need to remember *why* we should grow.

1. We should grow because of what God has done.

→ **Imperatives** of Scripture always flow from the **indicatives** of Scripture.

- *Indicatives* in scripture are what God has done
- *Imperatives* of scripture are what we should do

→ Examples from Scripture:

- Ephesians chapters 1-3 has 0 imperatives. Major themes of these chapters include:
 1. The Trinity and the centrality of Christ
 2. Christ's shedding of blood, spiritual blessing, and salvation through him
 3. Our unity with Christ and his people
- Ephesians 4-6 includes over 30 imperatives. Major themes include:
 1. Walking in new life
 2. Putting off the old self

Exercise:

A great way to set your mind on what God has done is to remember the gospel. In a few sentences, summarize the gospel and repeat it to yourself daily.

2. We should grow because God is changing us through the Holy Spirit.

God grows us and makes us more like him through a process called sanctification, which literally means, “to make holy.” The goal of sanctification is **Christ-likeness**.

→ Sanctification begins at conversion. This is referred to as **definitive sanctification**.

Definitive sanctification “involves a definite break from the ruling power and love of sin, so that a believer is no longer ruled or dominated by sin and no longer loves to sin.”¹ (Capitol Hill Baptist)

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. (Romans 6:1-6)

PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION

1. Sanctification increases throughout life, a process known as progressive sanctification.

“Progressive sanctification is the practical development in our earthly lives of the definitive sanctification that God accomplished once-for-all.”² (Andrew Shanks)

We *need* to grow in godliness, which is why “we experience tension and struggle in pursuit of holiness.”³ (Capitol Hill Baptist)

Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. (Philippians 3:12-15)

2. Sanctification happens by the Spirit of God and his work through his church.⁴ (John Piper)

I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another. But on some points I have written to you very boldly by way of reminder, because of the grace given me by God to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In Christ Jesus, then, I have reason to be proud of my work for God. For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to bring the Gentiles to obedience—by word and deed, by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God—so

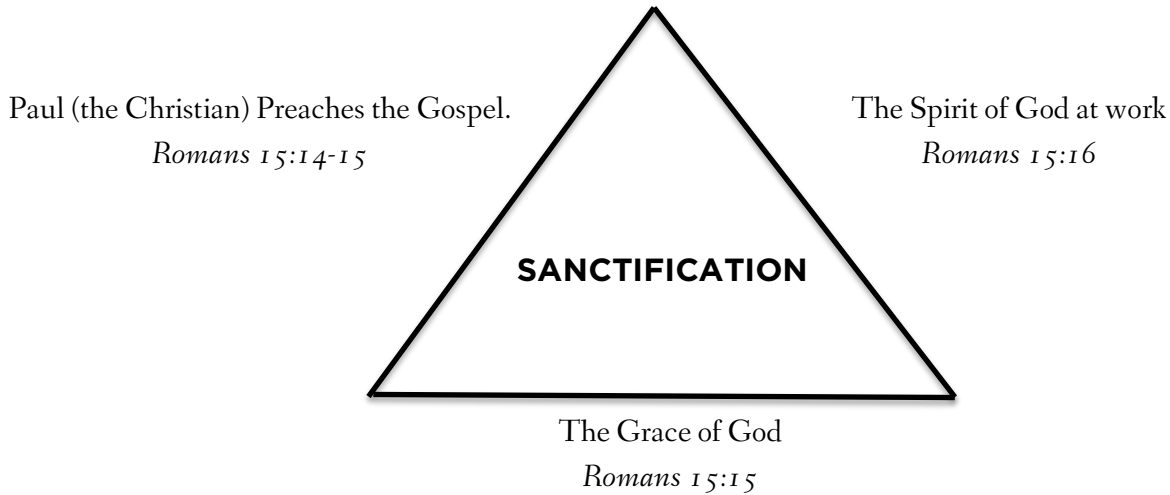
¹ Capitol Hill Baptist. “Class 1: Biblical Spirituality & Sanctification.” *Core Seminars* | Capitol Hill Baptist, www.capitolhillbaptist.org/sermon/class-1-biblical-spirituality-sanctification/.

² Shanks, Andrew (2016, April 19). *Do We Participate in Our Own Salvation?*, Retrieved from www.desiringgod.org/articles/do-we-participate-in-our-own-salvation.

³ Capitol Hill Baptist. “Class 1: Biblical Spirituality & Sanctification.” *Core Seminars* | Capitol Hill Baptist, www.capitolhillbaptist.org/sermon/class-1-biblical-spirituality-sanctification/.

⁴ Piper, John (1984, May 13). *How the Spirit Sanctifies.*, Retrieved from www.desiringgod.org/messages/how-the-spirit-sanctifies

that from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum I have fulfilled the ministry of the gospel of Christ; and thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else's foundation... (Romans 15:14-20)



3. Suffering is a primary tool used in sanctification.

Suffering is for testing and purification, for us to look more like him.

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. (James 1:2-4)

→ Jesus suffered.

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek. (Hebrews 5:7-10)

→ God uses *all* things, including suffering, to make us more Christ-like.

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son... (Romans 8:28-29)

→ With growth, we can still have joy despite the difficult seasons of life.

He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit. (Jeremiah 17:8)

4. Sanctification is complete when Christ returns.⁵ (Capitol Hill Baptist)

As long as we are living on this earth, we are still in need of growing.

Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. (1 John 3:2)

⁵ Capitol Hill Baptist. "Class 1: Biblical Spirituality & Sanctification." *Core Seminars* | Capitol Hill Baptist, www.capitolhillbaptist.org/sermon/class-1-biblical-spirituality-sanctification/.

IMPLICATIONS

The practice of spiritual disciplines (imperatives) flow from what we have learned that God has done (indicatives). The work of sanctification demands a response (spiritual disciplines).

1. Spiritual disciplines are Biblical, active practices that aid in the process of sanctification. They are a means to an end but not the end themselves.
2. Spiritual disciplines are rooted in Scripture (i.e. keeping the Sabbath, prayer, giving, solitude, etc.)
3. Spiritual disciplines are both personal (done alone) and congregational (done with other members of the body)
→ **Example:** Prayer should happen in both a personal setting as well with others.
4. Spiritual disciplines are active.

A spiritual discipline is not a character quality; rather, it is something that we actively do for a specific purpose. At the core, the focus is not on the activity itself, but the goal of growing in our Christlikeness.

HOW TO MEASURE GROWTH

1. *Intimacy with God:* A detailed knowledge and understanding of God's heart and activity that comes from pursuing Him as our greatest treasure.
2. *Fruit of the Spirit:* The acting presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church that demonstrates the character of God and distinguishes His people from an unbelieving world.
3. *Stewardship of Life:* Faithfully using everything God has entrusted to us to reflect His glory.
4. *Personal Mission:* Understanding the mission of God and discovering how he has uniquely gifted me to love and serve His church and the places where I live, work, and play.
5. *Grace Story:* Embracing the fullness of the gospel and being transformed by it in such a way that we desire to live out and share God's message with others.

CONCLUSION

Spiritual growth has its foundation in the gospel. It would be pointless to come each week and learn about disciplines without putting them into practice. However, if our outlook on growth becomes detached from God's grace and the gift he has given us in Christ Jesus, our spiritual disciplines will not only become empty, but also a frustrating task that we do simply to check off a box. We must always be careful to keep a clear view of our standing before God through Jesus, and practice the disciplines as a response to his grace.