

Question about Sanctification

I want to begin with a reminder. We are all growing in our relationship with Christ together. All of us are striving towards Christ through confession, discipline, community and new learning. And how marvelous it is that we can do this together. One of ILF's leaders in Africa asked an important question this week, and it serves as a good reminder for all us that we can lean on each other to grow in our faith. Please ask questions. Write us a private note or in the chat, so we can continue to grow together.

This week, I thought it would be beneficial to address the question asked, as it is an important topic for us all.

The question was: "what is sanctification in following Jesus"

Lets jump into it.

Sanctification is a word that describes the process by which believers are made holy and conformed to the image of Christ. It is a journey of spiritual growth and maturity that begins at salvation and continues throughout a believer's life. Understanding sanctification is essential for Christians, especially for leaders such as yourselves, who serve as examples and teachers in your communities.

Look at it like this, imagine the process of refining gold. When gold is first extracted from the earth, it is often mixed with impurities. To purify it, the goldsmith puts the gold into a crucible and heats it until it melts. The intense heat causes the impurities to rise to the surface, where they can be skimmed off. The goldsmith repeats this process multiple times, each time removing more impurities until the gold is pure and radiant.

In a similar way, sanctification is the process by which God purifies us. Just as the goldsmith uses heat to refine gold, God uses various circumstances, trials, and spiritual disciplines to refine our character. The Holy Spirit works within us to bring our impurities—our sinful habits, thoughts, and attitudes—to the surface. As we cooperate with the Holy Spirit, these impurities are removed, and we become more like Christ, reflecting His image more clearly.

Sanctification It involves both God's action and human response. God initiates and sustains sanctification through His Spirit, while believers are called to actively pursue holiness.

I want to talk about 3 phases of sanctification that we are in the process of, all of us.

Positional Sanctification: This occurs at the moment of salvation. When a person places their faith in Jesus Christ, they are positionally sanctified, set apart as God's possession. This is a definitive act where believers are declared holy in God's sight.

Progressive Sanctification: This is the ongoing process of becoming more like Christ. It involves daily growth, spiritual disciplines, and the work of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life.

Ultimate Sanctification: This will be completed when believers are glorified at Christ's return. At this point, they will be completely free from sin and perfectly conformed to the image of Christ. Ultimate sanctification is the final transformation where believers attain perfect holiness.

As a resource, I'm writing 3 key scriptures here concerning sanctification:

1 Thessalonians 4:3-4: "For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor."

Hebrews 10:10: "And by His will, we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

2 Corinthians 3:18: "And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."

These verses highlight that sanctification is both God's will and work, achieved through the sacrifice of Jesus and the ongoing transformation by the Holy Spirit.

Alright, practically, how do we use knowledge of this process in our daily lives AND as we are called to lead others in this process?

Personal Holiness: As leaders, we must prioritize our own spiritual growth. This means maintaining a disciplined life of prayer, Bible study, and accountability. As we grow in holiness, we become more effective witnesses of Christ's transforming power. Personal holiness provides the moral authority and credibility needed to minister effectively.

Modeling Christlikeness: ILF hopes to be a beacon of light in a dark world. You are often the primary example of Christian living in your communities. By living out the principles of sanctification, you will demonstrate what it means to follow Christ. Your actions, attitudes, and relationships should reflect the character of Jesus. This includes showing love, humility, patience, and integrity in everything we do!

Teaching and Discipleship: We all have the responsibility to teach others about sanctification. This includes instructing new believers on how to grow in their faith and helping them understand the importance of spiritual disciplines.

Dependence on the Holy Spirit: We must rely on the Holy Spirit for strength and guidance. Recognizing that sanctification is a divine work, we should regularly seek the Spirit's help in our efforts. We must pray for and cultivate a deep dependence on the Holy Spirit, acknowledging that without Him, their efforts would be in vain.

This is such an important topic and a great question. Remember, sanctification is a lifelong journey of becoming more like Christ. While we will stumble along the way at times, we can continue to grow in holiness and lead others on the path of sanctification. This is how God is showcasing the transformative power of the gospel in every aspect of life.

Have a great week and we will continue to pray for you daily.