

## Sanctification

*"It is God's will that you should be sanctified". 1 Thess. 4:3*

When we repent of our sins and put our trust in Jesus, we are said to be justified. That is, our sins are totally forgiven and we are righteous in God's eyes. A good definition of justified is "just-as-if-I'd-never-done-it". We are declared innocent.

When we first get saved, big and sudden changes can occur in our life. God may instantly deliver us from this sin or that but our sinful nature (the flesh or old man) remains with us and we still need sanctifying in one way or another. Sanctification is separation from all that is unholy and impure and being dedicated to God. If we are honest, we will admit that we are less than holy and pure in one area or another: areas such as love, humility, patience, kindness, gossiping, slander and self-control etc. We all know the things we need to repent of, even though we may not like to admit it or talk about it.

Being purified of an ungodly way does not come automatically, nor easily, because it is often very deeply rooted in our sinful nature. A leopard can't change its spots and we can't cleanse our own heart; it can only be done through the power of the Holy Spirit. Sanctification is a divine work for purity that requires human response, in a lifelong process. Rom. 15:16 tells us that we are "... *sanctified by the Holy Spirit*" and Phil. 2:13 adds to this saying, "*it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose*". So, to be cleansed we need the Holy Spirit to empower us to act in a manner that is pleasing to God. Sanctification is a simple process to understand but it can be a hard road to travel on because we love our worldly ways.

The steps of sanctification are straightforward -

1. The Spirit convicts (John 16:8).
2. We confess our sins (1 John 1:9).
3. God forgives and cleanses us of our unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

Steps 1 & 3 are guarantees because they are God's work but #2, confession, will stop the process if we have no intention of turning from the sin. Confessing a sin without any intention of turning from it will not bring forgiveness as it is like saying, "Yeah God, I did it. I did it again but that's just me". God hates sin so to receive His forgiveness, and be cleansed of the sin, our confession must come from a repentant heart. Real repentance is heartfelt, godly sorrow and it does not come easily at times because we are often strongly inclined to cling to our old, sinful ways.

Getting cleansed of deeply rooted ungodliness requires a determined effort because a spiritual war rages within every believer. Gal. 5:17 says, "... *the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want*". Simply put, we want to continue in our sins while the Spirit wants us to stop. Victory comes when we submit to the Spirit's leading as Gal 5:16 tells us: "*So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature*". So we can see that through the Spirit we can be freed from slavery to our sinful nature.

The Devil will give us many reasons why we should not repent and the fact is we are often more inclined to listen to him than to the Spirit's conviction. However, if we exercise self-control, resist the devil and submit to God then, in His time, He will lift us up and make us strong, firm and steadfast (1 Pet. 5:5-10 and James 4:6-10). As we willingly and wholeheartedly subject ourselves to the sanctifying process of the Holy Spirit we will be empowered to resist sin and live a holy life.

The road of sanctification is not easy. Heb. 12:1-13 talk about our struggle with sin and the hardship of discipline but v.11 encourages us in saying, "*No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.*" The road of sanctification is tough but the goal of righteousness and peace makes it very worthwhile.

Finally, The Calvary Road, by Roy Hession, is a great little book on sanctification. It is free to download from the following link -

<http://www.christianissues.biz/pdf-bin/sanctification/thecalvaryroad.pdf>

This article can be downloaded as a PDF or an MP3 from -

<http://www.christianissues.biz/downloads.html>

The video of “Sanctification” can be seen on YouTube at-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HWKXaCrW7Lc>

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