

Chapter 38: Sanctification (Growth in Likeness to Christ)

How do we grow in Christian maturity? What are the blessings of Christian growth?

Explanation and Scriptural Basis (746)

Sanctification is a progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and like Christ in our actual lives.

A) Differences Between Justification and Sanctification (746)

| Justification | Sanctification |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Legal Standing | Internal Condition |
| Once for all time | Continuous throughout life |
| Entirely God's work | We cooperate |
| Perfect in this life | Not perfect in this life |
| The same in all Christians | Greater in some than in others |

B) Three Stages of Sanctification (747-753)

- 1) Sanctification has a definite beginning at regeneration. (Titus 3:5; 1 John 3:9; 1 Cor. 6:11; Acts 20:32; Rom. 6:11-18)
- 2) Sanctification increases throughout life. (Rom. 6:12-13; Rom. 6:19; 2 Cor. 3:18; Phil. 3:13-14; Col. 3:10; Heb. 12:14; James 1:22)
- 3) Sanctification is completed at death (for our souls) and when the Lord returns (for our bodies). (Heb. 12:23; 2 Cor. 7:1; 1 Thess. 5:23; 1 Cor. 15:49)
- 4) Sanctification is never completed in this life.
 - a) Some individuals in the history of the church have taken certain commands and reasoned that since God gives us these commands, he must also give us the ability to obey them perfectly. (Matt. 5:48; 2 Cor. 7:1; 1 Thess. 5:23; 1 John 3:6)
 - b) Response
 - i) It is simply not taught in Scripture that when God gives a command, he also gives the ability to obey it in every case. In most of these passages, the goal of sanctification is indicated.
 - ii) There are many passages in Scripture that teach that no one can be morally perfect in this life. (1 Kings 8:46; Prov. 20:9; Eccl. 7:20; Matt. 6:11-12; James 3:2; 1 John 1:8)

C) God and man cooperate in sanctification. (753-756)

- 1) God's role in sanctification is primary. (1 Thess. 5:23; Heb. 12:5-11; 1 Cor. 1:30; Heb. 12:2; 1 Peter 2:21; 1 John 2:6; 1 Peter 1:2; Gal. 5:22-23)
- 2) Our role in sanctification is both passive and active; and it is secondary. (Rom 6:13, 8:13, 12:1; Phil. 2:12-13; Heb. 10:24-25)

D) Sanctification affects the whole person. (intellect: Col. 3:10; Rom. 12:1-2; Col. 1:10; 2 Cor. 10:5; emotions: Gal. 5:22; 1 Peter 2:11; 1 John 2:15; Rom. 6:17; will: Phil. 2:13; spirit: 2 Cor. 7:1; 1 Cor. 7:34; physical bodies: 1 Thess. 5:23; 2 Cor. 7:1; Rom. 6:12; 1 Cor. 6:13, 19-20) (756-757)

E) Motive for Obedience to God in the Christian Life (757-758)

- 1) a desire to please God and express our love to him (John 14:15)
- 2) the need to keep a clear conscience before God (Rom. 13:5; 1 Tim. 1:5)

- 3) the desire to be a “vessel for noble use” and have increased effectiveness in the work of the kingdom (2 Tim. 2:20-21)
 - 4) the desire to see unbelievers come to Christ through observing our lives (1 Peter 3:1-2, 15-16)
 - 5) the desire to receive present blessings from God on our lives and ministries (1 Peter 3:9-12)
 - 6) the desire to avoid God’s displeasure and discipline on our lives (the fear of God) (Acts 5:11; 2 Cor. 5:11; Eph. 4:30; Phil. 2:12; 1 Tim. 5:20)
 - 7) the desire to seek greater heavenly reward (Matt. 6:19-21; Luke 19:17-19)
 - 8) the desire for a deeper walk with God (Matt. 5:8; John 14:21; 1 John 1:6)
 - 9) the desire that angels would glorify God for our obedience (1 Tim. 5:21; 1 Peter 1:12)
 - 10) the desire for peace and joy in our lives (Phil. 4:9; Heb. 12:1-2)
 - 11) the desire to do what God commands, simply because his commands are right, and we delight in doing what is right (Phil. 4:8; Ps. 40:8)
- F) The Beauty and Joy of Sanctification (758)
- 1) The more we grow in the likeness of Christ, the more we will personally experience the “joy” and “peace” that are a part of the fruit of the Holy Spirit, and the more we will draw near to the kind of life that we will have in heaven. (Gal. 5:22; Rom. 6:22; 14:17; 1 John 3:3)