

Pneumatology
The Doctrine of the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN SANCTIFICATION – Part 1

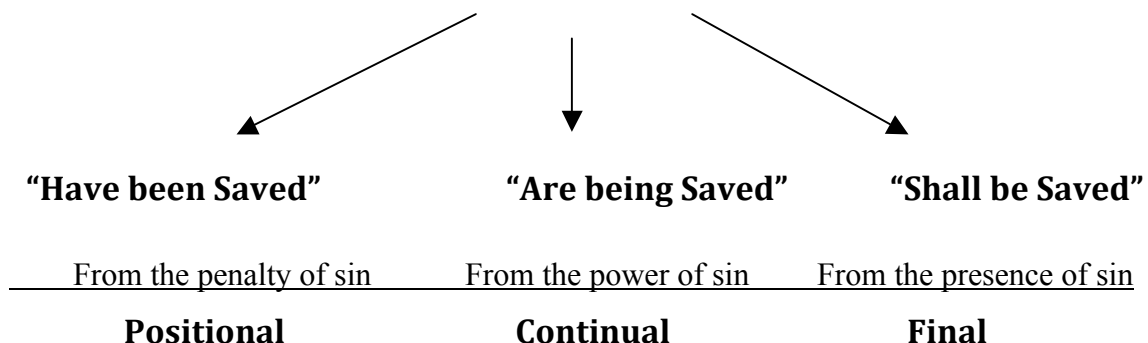
I. Progressive Sanctification

- A. Definition Of Progressive Sanctification: The Holy Spirit is progressively at work in the Christian to produce moral and ethical holiness, conforming him more and more into the spiritual image of Christ.
- B. General Meaning Of Sanctification: The primary meaning of sanctification is separation (to set apart) or consecration (cf. John. 10:36; 17:19) - the Lord is said to be sanctified so it couldn't mean to be made holy (1 Tim. 4:5; 1 Cor. 7:14; 2 Tim. 2:15). In the Old Testament when something was set apart to God, it would become holy (Ex. 29:1,36; 40:13).
- C. General Definition Of Sanctification: That work of God whereby, through the Cross and the agency of the Holy Spirit, He sets apart the Christian for divine possession, worship and service.
- D. Sanctification Related To Salvation: Sanctification in all its forms is but one aspect of the total plan of salvation. Thus salvation is the all inclusive term, and sanctification is but one phase of salvation. See **Chart #3**

CHART #3

ASPECTS OF SALVATION

I. SALVATION



JUSTIFICATION SANCTIFICATION GLORIFICATION

E. Types of Sanctification

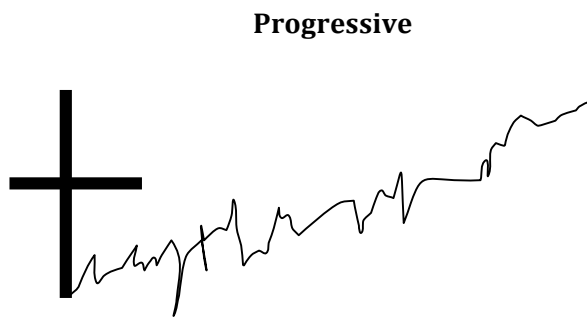
1. **Preparatory Sanctification:** This is a pre-cross work whereby the Holy Spirit sets apart a person to believe in Christ (1 Pet. 1:2 and possibly 2 Thess. 2:13). **Related To Salvation:** Preparatory sanctification is related to the drawing power of the Father in salvation (John 6:44).
2. **Positional Sanctification:** This is a past work, a finished work and a positional work of God (1 Cor. 1:2; 1:30; 6:11). The moment a person believes on Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, he is positionally set apart unto God. This is an eternal and unchanging position (Heb. 10:10, 14). NOTE: The word "saint" is related to sanctification and means one set apart. However, those who are saints should live saint-like. **Related To Salvation:** Positional sanctification is related to past salvation in that one is delivered positionally from the penalty and guilt of sin (2 Tim. 1:9; Eph. 3:5, 8; Acts 16:31). Past salvation is a positional fact and a complete act.
3. **Progressive Sanctification:** This is a work of God based on the cross in which a Christian is continually, gradually and progressively set apart, by means of the Holy Spirit, through renewing of the whole new man, whereby he is being delivered from the power of sin in the daily life and enabled to live unto righteousness (1 Thess. 4:3; Eph. 5:26; John 17:17; 2 Cor. 7:1; 1 Pet. 1:15-16; Heb. 12:14). NOTE: God's method of progressive sanctification for the Christian is to become in his experience what he already is positionally in Christ. **Related To Salvation:** Progressive sanctification is related to present salvation in that one is being continually delivered from the power of sin in his experience (Phil. 1:6; 2:12-13; 2 Cor. 2:15; 1 Cor. 15:2). Present salvation is an experiential reality but an incomplete act.
4. **Prospective Sanctification:** This is a finished work of God in bringing Christians into the likeness of Christ at His coming or at the time a believer dies physically (1 Thess 5:23-24; Eph. 5:27). At this time there will be an eradication (removal) of the sin nature (1 Thess 3:13) and separation unto God for eternal service. **Related To Salvation:** Prospective sanctification is related to future salvation in that one is saved completely from the presence of sin (1 Pet. 1:5; Phil. 3:21; 1 John 3:1-2; Rom. 8:23, 30). Future salvation is a complete reality and a final act. See **Chart #4**

Chart #4

TYPES OF SANCTIFICATION

Positional

Prospective



I.
II.

Preparatory

OLD LIFE

- F. Progressive Sanctification Contrasted with Justification: “Justification” means to declare righteous. “Sanctification” means to make righteous.
1. Justification declared a sinner righteous. Sanctification makes a saint righteous.
 2. Justification is a once and for all act. Sanctification is a continuous work.
 3. Justification causes salvation. Sanctification is the effect of salvation.
 4. Justification removes the guilt and penalty of sin. Sanctification removes the growth and power of sin.
 5. Justification deals with the Christian’s standing before God. Sanctification deals with the Christian’s experience in life.
 6. Justification is objective. Sanctification is subjective.

7. Justification changes a person's position before God. Sanctification changes a person's disposition.
8. Justification is for the sinner. Sanctification is in the saint.

G. Characteristics of Progressive Sanctification

1. Author: The author of sanctification is God (Phil. 2:13; 1:6), but is applied by the Holy Spirit. Thus the sanctification process is supernatural.
2. Reason: Every Christian needs sanctification because all Christians have sin (1 John 1:8; 1:10; Gal. 5:16-18).
3. Relationship to Regeneration: Sanctification results from the continuation of the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration (Phil. 1:6). Regeneration is the imparting of life. Sanctification is the development and growth of that life, and its transforming influences in the life of the regenerate person. If sanctification does not grow it does not live!
4. Process: Sanctification is gradual, continual and progressive (Phil. 1:6; 2 Cor. 3:18; Col. 3:9-10; 2 Cor. 4:16). Thus there are degrees of sanctification. Election, regeneration or justification do not allow for degrees because a person cannot be more of these than he already is, but a person may be more sanctified than he is. POINT: Each moment of the day, in every experience of life, God is working upon the Christian through the Spirit and is transforming him progressively and gradually into the image of His Son (Rom. 8:28-30 cf. 2 Cor. 3:18).
5. Finality: Sanctification once begun is never lost (Phil. 1:6). The sanctification process may fluctuate with the faithfulness of the Christian but he never falls back into the stupor of the unregenerate state.
6. Human Responsibility: In the sanctifying process, God does not operate apart from the human will but through it. Faith-obedience is the means that God has ordained by which the Christian appropriates and realizes the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit (John 7:38; Gal. 2:20; Heb. 11:6 cf. Heb. 11:8; John 7:17; Col. 2:6).
7. Importance of the Word: There is a definite relationship between progressive sanctification and a knowledge and application of the Word of God to life (John 17:17; Eph. 5:26). From the human viewpoint, the rapidity of progressive sanctification will be determined by person's knowledge of the Bible and his willingness to put it into practice.
8. Importance of Change: The Bible clearly states that sanctification involves an inward change of heart as well as an outward change of behavior. It is not reformation but transformation. It is not just the removal of sin; but also growth in grace. There is progressive love for Christ, the Bible, Christians, etc. It involves not only a negative removal of sin, but a positive life lived for Jesus Christ. The change is gradual but there must be change.

H. Counterfeits of Progressive Sanctification

1. Moral Virtue (good clean living): There are many who are not Christians and many who profess Christ that think living a moral life makes one a Christian. They feel that if a person is a good fellow, a good citizen and a good churchman, this is acceptable with God. Answer: The unsaved man can reach great heights of morality, but the moral worldling has a secret hatred of grace and despises the fact that he is a sinner by nature. True sanctification is not only a negative removal of sin, but a positive instilling of love for Christ, the Bible, Christians, etc., and a desire to please and serve the Lord Jesus Christ in one's life.
2. Superstitious Devotion: Some people believe that adoration, images, altars, holy water, possession of a Bible, mumbling a prayer, etc., makes them sanctified. Answer: A superstitious holiness costs no great labor; there is nothing of the

heart in it. If speaking over a few beads, bowing to images, mumbling a few pious prayers were sanctification, and this was all that was required for a person to be saved, then hell would be empty, none would go there. But sanctification is much more than superstitious devotion.

3. Hypocrisy: Men make a pretense of holiness, which they do not have. They go to church, give their money, do good deeds, etc., but their hearts are far from Jesus Christ and their minds do not want to be subject to God's will for their lives. Answer: This is self-delusion. The hypocrite deceives others in time but he himself will not be deceived in eternity as he spends it in hell (cf. Matt. 7:15-23).
4. Restraining Fear: Men may not do evil although they do not hate it. Conscience, social pressures, law enforcement and fear of the consequences of sin restrain them. Answer: Sanctification involves a change of heart towards Christ and sin. Restraining fear may curb sin but it cannot cure it. Only God, in the person and work of Christ, has the power to cure sin forever.

I. Theological Problems

1. Introduction: The Biblical position on progressive sanctification involves both God's working and the Christian working (Phil. 2:12-13). The Holy Spirit works in the Christian and the Christian works out his salvation. It is because the Spirit works in the Christian that he is able to work at all. Since God works sovereignly in the Christian, there is no more room for inactivity or quietness in Biblical sanctification than there is for natural striving apart from the sanctifying Spirit.

*"To be sure we do not act in our own power, but only in so far as the Spirit graciously gives power and ability to act. It is not as though the Spirit works partially in us, setting us in motion, whereupon we do the rest, rather God works 100% in all we do, and we work 100% in all we do. It is because the Spirit works in us that we are able to work. Every single ethical act we do—whether it is resisting temptation, doing a positive good, or believing on Jesus Christ—we do only because the Spirit enables us to do it. Yet, true as this may be, it is our solemn obligation to try as hard as we can. We may not "sit still," "let him do it all," and seek an effortless victory. (Palmer, *The Holy Spirit*, p. 96)*

While progressive sanctification is a total work of God, yet man co-operates with God and God holds the Christian responsible to exercise faith-obedience.

2. The Mystery of Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility

- a. Problem: The relationship of divine sovereignty to human will is a mystery and the two truths can never be reconciled to the human mind. They can be only reconciled in the mind of God. That sanctification is God's work and man's work we acknowledge, but we admit a mystery and do not try to explain it. POINT: The Apostle Paul recognized a mystery, why shouldn't we? (cf. Phil. 2:12-13; 1 Cor. 15:10). [See **Chart #5**]

- b. Mysteries of Scripture: By a mystery we mean an antinomy. An antinomy is two truths, equally right, which are irreconcilable to the human mind. As Christians, we accept antinomies constantly because they are taught in Scripture even though they seem somewhat paradoxical to us.
- (1) The Bible: it was written by God and also written by men.
 - (2) Jesus Christ: He was both God and Man.
 - (3) Salvation: God has an elect people who will be saved and yet whosoever wills may be saved.
 - (4) Sanctification: God works in the Christian and the Christian works out his salvation.
 - (5) Trinity: God is Three Persons yet One God.
- c. Mysteries of sanctification:
- (1) The sin nature has been put to death at the cross (Rom. 6:6), yet sin is to be put to death by the Christian (Col. 3:5).
 - (2) The Christian is being renewed (Col. 3:10; 2 Cor. 3:18; 4:16), yet he is to renew his own mind (Rom. 12:2).
 - (3) The believer has put on Christ at conversion (Gal. 3:27), yet he is to put on Christ, making no provision for the flesh (Rom. 13:14).
 - (4) Works are from God (Eph. 2:10), yet they are to be produced by men (Titus 3:8).
 - (5) God works in the Christian (Phil. 2:13), yet the Christian works out his salvation (Phil. 2:12).
 - (6) The believer is sanctified (1 Cor. 1:30), yet he is to be sanctified (1 Thess. 4:3).
 - (7) Faith is a gift (Phil. 1:29), yet true faith works (Gal. 5:6; 1 Thess. 1:3).
 - (8) The Christian is an elected new man (Col. 3:10; Eph. 1:4), yet he is to put on practical righteousness as an elected new man (Col. 3:12-13).
 - (9) The Christian has eternal life (Rom. 8:1; Titus 1:2), yet he is to lay hold of eternal life (1 Tim. 6:12-19).
 - (10) The Christian is commanded to produce love (2 Pet. 1:7), yet only the Holy Spirit can produce this love in Him (Gal. 5:22-23).
3. The Problem of Sin
- a. Every writer of inspired Scripture always places the responsibility for sin upon the individual who commits it. God is never responsible for sin.
 - b. When the Christian does good it is because God did it through him. When the Christian sins, he has done it and God is never held responsible for that sin. Yet, at the same time, this act of sin did not take God by surprise and it was not outside His hidden plan. Again there is a mystery, paradox or antinomy.

"In no place does God ever hint that His people are not responsible for their faults and failures; neither does he ever hint that they are self-sanctifiers or that He waits on them; rather He sets forth the necessity of their faithfulness and obedience in the multitude of new Testament exhortations and under-girds those with the promise of His own efficacious and sovereign ministry of sanctification. This is a mystery but a mystery of great comfort to those who are the Elect people of God."
(Robert Newsom, *The Holy Spirit's Work in Salvation*)

