

I. THE NATURE OF SANCTIFICATION (5th in the Ordo Salutis [regeneration, calling, faith, justification, sanctification]). *The final benefit purchased by Christ, applied by the HS to elect sinners.*

A. Sanctification is God’s work of making elect, justified sinners *holy*.

1. First, sanctification is the work of God, esp. of the Holy Spirit (He is the *Holy Spirit*).

- a. Remember that every step in the Ordo Salutis is the work of God. Salvation, as we understand it in Soteriology, is the work of the Holy Spirit in applying the benefits of salvation purchased by Jesus on the cross. Christ purchased holiness for us on the cross; the Spirit works that holiness in us (I Thess. 5:23; John 17:17; Eph. 5:26; I Thess. 4:3; II Thess. 2:13; Tit. 2:14).
- b. Sanctification is *not the work of man*. We can no more sanctify ourselves than we can justify ourselves, regenerate ourselves, call ourselves or work faith in ourselves (Job 14:4).
- c. Sanctification is not even a cooperative work between God and the sinner. It is true that the sinner is active in sanctification but his activity is only a fruit of God’s activity (Phil. 2:12-13).

2. Second, sanctification is the work of God of making elect, justified sinners *holy*

- a. God does not say, “Let him be sanctified,” and immediately the sinner is perfectly, completely sanctified, delivered from every stain of sin. Sanctification takes a lifetime.
- b. The work of sanctification is progressive: the sanctified sinner is making progress in holiness, but even the holiest Christian falls far short of the ideal (“small beginning of the new obedience” [Heid. Cat. LD 44, Q&A 114]).

3. Third, sanctification is the work of God of making elect, justified sinners *holy*.

- a. Holiness is a separation from the defilement, uncleanness and filth of sin; and holiness is a positive consecration, dedication or devotion to God in love.
- b. Sanctification is not merely some kind of outward setting someone apart for God: various things and people were “sanctified” in that sense in the Bible (especially in the OT); but sanctification is a making holy with an *inward, in-worked, spiritual holiness*.
- c. Sanctification is the spiritual cleansing of a justified sinner, freeing him from sin’s defilement, pollution and enslavement so that sin is dethroned and Christ is enthroned.
- d. But sanctification is not the eradication of sin, or the complete removal of sin. that awaits final glorification of the soul upon physical death and of the body at the Second Coming of Christ.

B. Sanctification needs to be carefully contrasted with justification.

1. Sanctification is different in nature to justification.

- a. Justification is a judicial (legal) act; sanctification is an ethical, moral work.
- b. Justification is external (outside of us) affecting our legal state (status) before God; sanctification is internal (inside of us) affecting our moral condition.
- c. Justification is a declaration about our state; sanctification is a cleansing work changing our condition.
- d. Justification delivers us from the guilt of sin; sanctification delivers us from the pollution and power (dominion, slavery, bondage, etc) of sin.
- e. Justification is complete and cannot increase or decrease (a completed, once-for-all act [declaration] of God); sanctification is progressive, a process (an ongoing work of God).

2. Justification and sanctification are related in a very specific way.

- a. Justification is always first; sanctification always follows justification (John 8:11; Tit. 3:8; II Cor. 7:1; I John 3:3, etc).
- b. Justification is the legal basis or ground for sanctification. No unjustified person has the right to be sanctified, to be delivered from the bondage and pollution of sin; sanctification can never be the legal basis or ground for justification (because sanctification in this life is never complete).
- c. Sanctification is the inevitable fruit of justification.

II. WHAT DOES SANCTIFICATION DO?

- A. Sanctification delivers from power (bondage, dominion, slavery) & pollution (defilement) of sin.**
- 1. God sanctifies us by dethroning sin which creates a spiritual struggle in our hearts.**
 - a. This spiritual struggle is between the flesh and the Spirit; or between the old man and the new man; between the sinful nature and the new nature in Christ (implanted in regeneration).
 - b. Sanctification is not the eradication (removal or destruction) or even the improvement of the old man (the flesh) but only its dethronement so that sin no longer rules in us (Rom. 6:12-14).
 - c. The old man of sin remains totally depraved (Rom. 7:18); but now the old man of sin has a rival, the new man, the life of Jesus Christ, the Spirit.
 - d. These two spiritual principles – the old man, the flesh, and the new man, the Spirit – cannot coexist at peace but are engaged in a bitter, deadly struggle (Gal. 5:17).
 - 2. The believer becomes active in this struggle: he is called to fight against that sin which remains in his life. This is called “mortification of the flesh.”**
 - a. To mortify is to kill, to put to death. The old man of sin has been crucified already but he is still “alive and kicking.” We kill him by “putting him off” (Eph. 4:22), by “denying” him his lusts (Tit. 2:12) ; by hating our sins (Col. 3:5, 8).
 - b. Fundamentally, mortification of the flesh is a heartfelt sorrow over sin and a turning from sin, but it is called mortification *because it is painful*. It is the putting to death of *our* old man; it is the denial of our own lusts. And we cannot do it except by the power of God.
 - c. We increase in sanctification by becoming more aware of our own depravity, by an increased sorrow over sin, a more intense desire to be free from sin; this is a painful, humbling knowledge (II Cor. 7:10). That knowledge drives us more and more to seek cleansing from Christ.
 - 3. But sanctification is not all negative –it also includes the quickening of the new man, that is a making alive, a reviving of the spiritual principle of the life of Jesus Christ.**
 - a. Instead of killing the new man, we put him on (Eph. 4:23-24; Col. 3:10, 14); we walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16); we “work out our salvation” (Phil. 2:12).
 - b. Quickenings the new man is to love God increasingly, to trust Christ increasingly, to rejoice in God’s grace increasingly, to increase in one’s desire to please God, to be increasingly thankful to God, increasingly to seek God. Notice the “increasingly,” the “more and more” aspect (progressive).
 - c. Thus in sanctification God not only increasingly breaks our love of sin, but He increasingly devotes us to Himself.
- B. Sanctification produces in the child of God a life of good works. Remember good works are not part of justification (because, although they are genuinely good, they are not perfect and cannot stand the scrutiny of God the Judge) but they are the fruit of justification and part of the life of sanctification.**
- 1. Good works are threefold according to the Scripture**
 - a. Good works are works performed in obedience to God’s commandments. They are not works invented by man; nor can a sincere work of man excuse the breaking of God’s Law.
 - b. Good works are works performed out of the principle of faith. Therefore no unbeliever can perform a genuinely good work (Rom. 14:23).
 - c. Good works are works performed to the glory of God (I Cor. 10:31).
 - 2. The means of sanctification are given us in the Word of God.**
 - a. The fundamental means of sanctification is the Word of God itself (John 17:17; Eph. 5:26). If you desire sanctification, be in the Word and especially hear the preaching of the Word.
 - b. The other means of sanctification is prayer. Sanctification is God’s will for us, and when we pray, “Father, sanctify me. Cause me to hate and to be sorry for my sins. Work a true love for Thee in my heart,” God will surely answer such a prayer (John 17:17).
 - 3. Next week, we will look at some errors concerning sanctification; and then at perseverance and at glorification which are the perfection of sanctification.**