

Sanctification

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Sanctify and *Sanctification* are New Testament words that are part of the same word family as *holy*, *holiness*, and *saint*. *Saint* is the common designation for Christians in the New Testament, appearing fifty-six times. All of these words involve separation of some one or some thing to or from some one or some thing. The thing or the one that is sanctified is thereby consecrated, dedicated, or set apart.

Thus *in sanctification of the Spirit* (2 The. 2:13), the separation is **to God**. However, *your sanctification* (1 The. 4:3) emphasizes the Christian's separation **from the world** and its lusts. *Sanctification* therefore describes the life befitting that separation to God and from the world (Rom. 6:19). Consider now some Biblical facts about sanctification:

- **"Initial" sanctification:**

When is one sanctified? At the same time he is washed from sin and justified by God (1 Cor. 6:11). In the very nature of conversion, one consciously dethrones (separates himself from) Satan and enthrones (separates himself to) Christ when he repents. Having been cleansed of the guilt of his abandoned sins by the blood of Christ in the waters of baptism, one sets himself apart to serve Christ exclusively. This one now walking in "newness of life" (Rom. 6:1-4) is sanctified – a saint.

- **"Progressive" sanctification:**

Besides "initial" sanctification, there must be a "progressive" sanctification in the life of each saint. Those already sanctified are further told to "present your members as servants to righteousness unto sanctification" (Rom. 6:19). To people initially sanctified, Peter wrote: "Be ye yourselves also holy [sanctified, DM] in all manner of living" (1 Pet. 1:15). The ideal before us is so continually to set ourselves apart until there is no part of our lives from which Christ is excluded. Such is the complete dedication toward which Scripture prompts us (1 The. 5:23).

- **The agent of sanctification:**

The Holy Spirit is the agent, the Word of God His means. God is the Author (1 The. 5:23), Christ is the enabling ground (I Cor. 1:30) and the Holy Spirit is the agent of our sanctification (Rom. 15:16; I Cor. 6:11). The Word of God is the means the Holy Spirit uses to sanctify, convict, and convert men (John 17:17; Eph. 5:26; Rom. 6:17-18). We must consciously sanctify ourselves in our manner of living (1 Pet. 1:15), separate ourselves from practices of unbelievers (2 Corinthians 6:14-18), and present ourselves as a holy, living sacrifice to God (Rom. 12:1-2).

- **The need for sanctification:**

Many saints today are failing to be a people distinct from the world in their speech, their dress, the places they go, the way they spend their money, and in their moral convictions. Few churches will purge the corrupting leaven (1 Cor. 5:7). God expects us to be different, distinct. Even the world expects this of us. Some in the world are outliving some of us. It is amazing that some of the saints see nothing wrong with dancing, social drinking, indecent apparel, and such like, but people worldly folk almost always understand these things to be incompatible with Christian behavior.

People who are not different from the world cannot attract the world to Christ. Without sanctification we cannot see the Lord (Heb. 12:14), for only the sanctified are promised the eternal inheritance of Heaven (Acts 26:18).

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