

## Sanctification

Over the past three weeks we have studied how the believer not only walks with God (through Scripture and prayer) but also how he/she experiences Him in a deep way. We have seen that we need new life through union with Christ (Romans 6), we need a new heart through regeneration (John 3:1-18), we need a new status with God through justification (Romans 3:19-26), and, this week, we see that we need a new direction in life through sanctification. While God's act of justification removes our condemnation, sanctification gradually removes our corruption. Listen to how the apostle Paul states it:

### Romans 8:1-11

<sup>1</sup>There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup>For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. <sup>3</sup>For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, <sup>4</sup>in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

<sup>5</sup>For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.

<sup>6</sup>For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. <sup>7</sup>For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. <sup>8</sup>Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

<sup>9</sup>You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. <sup>10</sup>But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup>If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

### Sermon Summary

Paul makes several crucial points in this text about Christian sanctification:

- 1. Remember what God has done for you.** He has accomplished two things that the law could not: freedom from condemnation and freedom from bondage to sin.
- 2. Be who you are.** Sanctification can only occur in the lives of regenerate (born again) believers (v. 5). Our "walk" determines our thinking. If we are unregenerate, we will think about and pursue carnal things; if we are regenerate, we will think about and pursue spiritual things. We must be born again to experience God. Sanctification occurs as we increasingly "set our minds" on the Spirit (v. 6-10), not the law. God has set us free, through union with Christ, from the curse of the law and the bondage of sin, and we now can grow in the likeness of Christ. Unlike regeneration, which is "monergistic," sanctification is "synergistic," that is, it occurs by the power of God and the willing, conscious submission of the believer.
- 3. Contemplate what you shall become.** Sanctification one day ends in our glorification (v. 11). Paul says in II Cor. 4:16 that now our outer nature is wasting away while our inner nature is being renewed (sanctified), but one day our outer nature will also be sanctified.

God is transforming us spiritually now, but later also physically. His renovation of sinners will not cease until we are gloriously transformed into the likeness of Christ and placed in the new (sanctified) heavens and the new (sanctified) earth. Glory! Hallelujah!

**Discussion Questions**

- 1) Why is the new birth necessary for Christian sanctification?
  
- 2) Why is it necessary to believe and understand clearly the biblical doctrine of justification in order to experience true sanctification?
  
- 3) What are some of the defective ways in which church people try to grow in sanctification? Why do these methods not work?

**Related Reading**

[The Discipline of Grace](#)  
by Jerry Bridges

[Growing Your Faith](#)  
by Jerry Bridges

[Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter XIII](#)