

Sanctification

Leviticus 20:7 Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the LORD your God.

Sanctify is found in the New Testament Twenty Nine times. The AV translates the Greek (agiazw) as sanctify twenty-six times, as hallow two times, and to be holy one time. In the Old Testament we find the word sanctify one hundred and seventy two times. The AV once more translates the Hebrew as it did the Greek with sanctify being the choice one hundred and eight times of the one hundred and seventy two times it is used. Two understandings can be seen here as inclusive of each other not as separate parts, to wash or cleanse and to set apart from. In the Bible then we can see that to sanctify is to separate from profane things and to dedicate to God. To purify is another way or wording the results of sanctification.

Sanctification in the biblical sense then is much more than a simple moral reformation of the character. It is a cleansing of the person by the Holy Spirit who brings the whole nature of the person under the principles that were given by God in regeneration. Sanctification can be said to be the carrying on or forward the process of cleansing began in regeneration. Sanctification extends to the whole person, body, soul, and mind.¹ It is of the office of the Holy Spirit to carry on the work of sanctification.² Faith can be seen as the instrument of sanctification in that it is by faith the believer secures union with Christ³ and faith that brings the believer into contact with the living Word of God where he is led to obey God in fear and trembling at the threatenings of God and embraces the promises of God in eternal hope in Christ alone in this life and the life yet to come.

Whereas justification is a once for all declaration of God aquired by the same gift of faith from God; sanctification is a lifelong process that will not know perfection in this life.⁴ As a man grows in grace and faith moving forward in sanctification the more humble and

¹ Rom. 6:13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. 2 Cor. 4:6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Col. 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: 1 Cor. 6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

² 1 Cor. 6:11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. 2 Thess. 2:13 But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

³ Gal. 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

⁴ 1 Kings 8:46 If they sin against thee, (for there is no man that sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives unto the land of the enemy, far or near; Prov. 20: 9 Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin? Ecc. 7:20 For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not. James 3:2 For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.

self-conscious of his sins he will become. Believers thus find that life on earth is a constant battle and it is as if they are to take the kingdom of heaven by force. Consider Paul's words concerning his inability to do that which he desired while he engaged that very thing which he hated. Hodge worded it this way:

"The more holy a man is, the more humble, self-renouncing, self-abhorring, and the more sensitive to every sin he becomes, and the more closely he clings to Christ. The moral imperfections which cling to him he feels to be sins, which he laments and strives to overcome. Believers find that their life is a constant warfare, and they need to take the kingdom of heaven by storm, and watch while they pray. They are always subject to the constant chastisement of their Father's loving hand, which can only be designed to correct their imperfections and to confirm their graces. And it has been notoriously the fact that the best Christians have been those who have been the least prone to claim the attainment of perfection for themselves."

Sanctification is of such a necessity in the believer that some tend to mix it with justification or to see sanctification or holiness as that work which man is supposed to do but in a way that would lead a man to think there was some merit in his work toward sanctification. The Westminster Assembly chose the wording concerning justification to show this connection of necessity yet maintaining the distinction between sanctification and justification⁵ "Faith alone is the instrument of justification, yet it is not alone in the person justified but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces."

For purposes of understanding then we can say that faith is first or superior and stands alone as the instrument of justification. However with the forensic declaration of justification by God come all of the other saving graces of God so that we can say that faith is never alone. Perhaps not the best of analogies but I think we can see this alone yet never alone within the Godhead whereby we can properly say wherever the Holy Spirit is the fullness of God resides, yet the Holy Spirit is a distinct person within the Godhead and can also be said to act alone though it is impossible to separate God. In like manner we cannot separate works from faith. This works for purposes of illustration but

⁵ XI. II. Faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification:[1] yet is it not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love.[2]

1. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. John 3:36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. Rom. 3:28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. 1 John 3:18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.
2. James 2:17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. James 2:22 Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? James 2:26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. Gal. 5:6 For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

fails in that faith and works are not the whole of the saving graces alone as the persons of the Godhead are. We can rightly then say that faith is never alone but ever accompanied by perseverance with no harm. The same statement can be said of all of the various saving graces because God does no partial work but all of His works are perfect and complete. That all of these things are of God and His gift in grace to the elect binds them together into the whole of conversion or salvation. The Bible is clear that faith is the first gift if a sequence must be sought, however to try and sequence the events within conversion seems a curious pursuit that leads more to confusion and disorder than the unity of spirit among believers that is the will of God. For practical purposes then, faith, justification, sanctification, perseverance, glorification can be said to be the gift of God as if of a whole and the time line drawn by men could not be measured on the most accurate of our instruments to measure time. Yet each of these may be made manifest in the believer in time in such a way that they appear to be separate gifts in a sequence of time that in places can be said to have considerable length.

We are commanded to grow in grace⁶ by becoming more aware of Jesus Christ or in knowledge of Christ. We can see this interrelatedness of faith, grace, and all other saving graces in Romans 5:2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. While there is a distinct sovereign grace whereby God elected all in Christ, grace is also seen in all other parts of conversion. As noted above even the works the believer walks in are of grace; that is they are the gift of God created by God ahead of time just for the believer to walk in.

So while justification is by grace and a one time act likewise sanctification is a gift of God by grace through faith which is also a command of God for we find in the Bible in both Old and New testaments the command to be holy or sanctified. Thus while man is sanctified by faith even as he is justified we find no passage in the Bible that commands man to be justified. This is what Paul meant in Galatians when he said faith works in love.⁷ It is by obedience (works in love) that a man sanctifies self as the Holy Spirit leads him. So even these works have no merit in that man is not the creator or finisher of these works, they were created by God for the justified to walk in which man would not do apart from the Holy Spirit working within man so that it is of God for man both to will and to do.⁸ Peter says by doing the will of God we can make our calling and election sure by our obedience to God.⁹ This is no more than faith in action or working by love to do the will of God.

Let us all then seek to grow in grace by the true knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We were elected, called and justified for this purpose alone that in this we might glorify God.

⁶ 2 Peter 3:18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

⁷ Gal 5:6

⁸ Philippians 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

⁹ 10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: