

1 SANCTIFICATION

Ephesians 5:25-27

²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her so ²⁶that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by washing of water with the word ²⁷that He might present to Himself the church, all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she be holy and blameless.

Husbands are to be involved in their wives' sanctification.

The example they are to follow is Christ and the church.

What Is Sanctification ?

Sanctification is changing toward holiness. It is a course of events that leads to a purer level of living. It is a series of actions to achieve a God-honoring life. The word "sanctification" describes what this series of studies is all about: change in a Godward direction.

Look at this: 1 Thessalonians 4.3 "For this is the will of God, your sanctification." That is a strong statement! The idea conveyed in the language is that this is God's desire for us as His children, His purpose for what would occur in our lives. It is His will that we be involved in change that is sanctification.

The concept is amplified in other texts. Romans 12.2, the verse that describes transformation toward holiness as "metamorphosis," gives us a goal at which to aim: "Prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." Sounds like sanctification, doesn't it? And again, that idea is reinforced with the powerful phrase, the "will of God."

1 John 2.17 contrasts sanctification with the lusts of the world under the "will of God." It reads: "And the world is passing away, and also the one who does the will of God abides forever." Sanctification is the fruit in the believer's life. To live God's pattern of life, to do well in changing toward holiness, is to be what we are about as Christians. Since the desire of our Father in heaven, it is my desire ~~most~~ ~~to~~ ~~pro~~ ~~duce~~ sanctification.

The root of the Greek word translated "sanctification" (hagiasmos) is the word translated "Holy" (hagios). This term that signifies the sacred is defined in New Testament usages. The third person of the trinity is identified as the Holy Spirit (John 14.26). Jesus prayed to His Holy Father, John 17.11. 1 Peter includes this quote of the Lord: "I am Holy." In heaven God accepts worship in this form: "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is to come." Thus, the idea of sanctification is, indeed, changing toward holiness.

"Sanctify" and "sanctification" are sometimes used in different specific contexts. 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7, "sanctification" refers to the completion of the process of overcoming a particular sin (sexual immorality). In Hebrews 10:10 and 14 "Sanctified" communicates the passing into the Christian life through faith in Christ, that is to enter the process of changing toward holiness. In all the forms of "sanctification" identify, in general or in specific terms, the ongoing transformation toward Christlikeness is the occupation of all believers while on earth.

Justification--Sanctification--Glorification

There is a trio of theological terms that identifies the three stages of salvation. Justification, sanctification and glorification are the three segments that combined, comprise salvation.

Justification occurs the day a person becomes a Christian. When by faith one embraces the gospel, a lifetime of sin is forgiven and the one separated from Holy God begins a new life (Romans 5.1-2: "Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we exult in hope of the glory of God."). Reconciliation to God takes place (Romans 5.10-11: "For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation."). We are justified, forgiven (Romans 8.1: "There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."). Justification is not earned (Galatians 2.16: "We are justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus). Justification is permanent (Titus 3.7 "that being justified by His grace we might be heirs according to the hope of eternal life). Justification is an event that marks the beginning of all that is encompassed in the term "salvation" in the Bible.

Sanctification is all the time in between the precise points of justification and glorification. It is the putting off of sin and putting on of righteousness.

(Ephesians 4.22-24: That, in reference to your former life, you lay aside self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth is the transition from being slaves of unrighteousness to being slaves of the purpose of righteousness (Romans 6.10-13: For the death that He died died to sin, once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts. Sanctification is our occupation during our time on earth. It is what Christians are given to do from the day salvation began until the day we see Christ face.

Glorification will come to pass when the believer sees the Lord face to face in heaven (Revelation 21.1-7: And I saw a new heaven and a new earth. I heard a voice from the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His people...and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; and He said to me, It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. He who overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be His God and he will be His son. Sin will no longer be a temptation or an option (1 John 3.1-3: Great is the love that the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him because we shall see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope purifies himself, just as He is pure.). Glorification is the end of time, the point when believers in new bodies are in the presence of God forever. It is the final stage of the salvation process.

Each stage signifies a specific point in time or an era in time. Each stage is a place in the believer's life in regard to sin.

Contemplating sanctification as one of the three stages of salvation puts it in perspective. We once gained our introduction by faith into the Kingdom of God. For the first time we were forgiven, clean, not guilty. We were justified. One day we will reach our destiny, holiness in heaven, where there is neither sin nor the option of sin. We will be glorified. Consequently, it only makes sense that in between we are to be moving toward holiness, progressing in relation to our salvation, and changing: being sanctified.

Sanctification Is A Process, Not An Event

Sanctification is a journey, not a place. It is an ongoing labor, a work in progress. It is not a finished one-time act. For us as Christians it is our vocation, our purpose, and our calling. To be pursuing sanctification is our will to the Lord's.

In John 17:17 Jesus prays for future believers, those who would receive the gospel through the words of the apostles. He asks the Father to sanctify them in truth; He states that His Word is truth. This identifies sanctification since the work God accomplishes through the Word involves progress in relation to salvation (1 Peter 2:1-3). Jesus is asking the Father to act to change toward holiness through His Word.

Ephesians 5:26 also shows sanctification to be an ongoing process. There is said that part of the biblical husband's responsibility is to be used by his wife to grow spiritually. He is to sanctify her. No human being is so (except Jesus). Part of the husband's service to his wife is active involvement in her becoming more like Christ. This defines sanctification as a lifelong process.

Philippians 1:6 assures us of God's ongoing work in modifying who we are. He began this good work in us; He will continue bringing us toward perfection the day we see Christ (glorification). There is great refreshment in this assurance that the Lord Himself will be actively involved in this work of sanctification in us.

Paul exemplifies this explanation of sanctification as a process in Philippians 3:14. He is not perfect now. But he presses on toward that goal. The effort includes forgetting what lies behind (bondage to sin before salvation) and reaching forward to what is ahead (perfection in heaven). He understands the day in his life in relation to the three stages of salvation. He also sees sanctification as an ongoing progression, one in which he is diligent to participate.

What tools are available to believers for help in being sanctified?

How can a husband be involved in his wife's sanctification?

See Appendix 1: Hope From God's Word

See Appendix 2: Husband Study + Journal