

Lesson 26

SANCTIFICATION

Compiled by Darrell Crow based upon personal studies, notes and prayer.

Darrell Crow

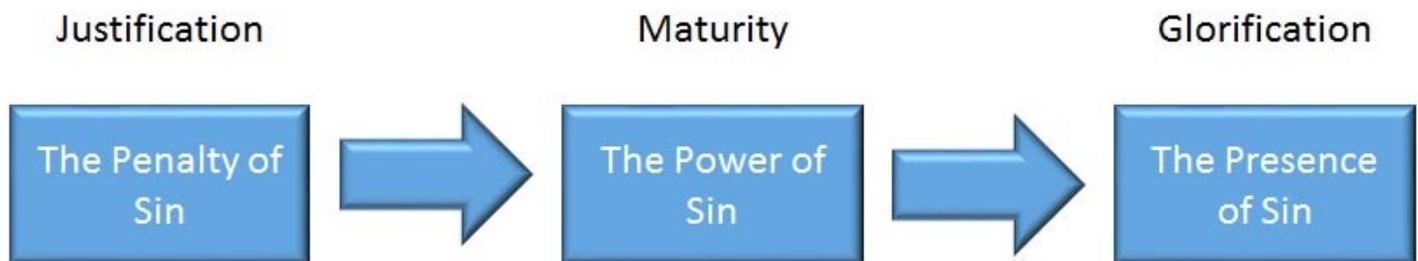
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SANCTIFICATION

Sanctification, or in its verbal form, **sanctify**, literally means "to set apart" for special use or purpose, that is, to make holy or sacred. Therefore, sanctification refers to the state or process of being set apart, i.e. made holy. In systematic theology, the term often carries a technical meaning that differs from the biblical word group. Sanctification is regularly equated with the Christian life.

In Christianity, the term can be used to refer to objects which are set apart for special purposes, but the most common use is in reference to the change brought about by God in a believer, begun at the point of salvation or justification and continuing throughout the life of the believer. Many believe that this process will only be completed in Heaven when believers are also glorified, but some believe that complete holiness is possible in this life.

Sanctification Is The Process of Setting Aside The Believer To Be Holy, Without Sin



Sanctification is God's will for us (1 Thessalonians 4:3 ³ *For this is the will of God, ⁱyour sanctification. ² *that you abstain from sexual immorality*). The word *sanctification* is related to the word *saint*; both words have to do with holiness. To "sanctify" something is to set it apart for special use; to "sanctify" a person is to make that person holy.*

Jesus had a lot to say about sanctification in John 17. In verse 16 the Lord says, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of it," and this is before His request: "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth" (verse 17). In Christian theology, sanctification is a state of separation unto God; all believers enter into this state when they are born of God: "You are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption" (1 Corinthians 1:30, ESV). The sanctification mentioned in this verse is a once-for-ever separation of believers unto God. It is a work God performs, an intricate part of our salvation and our connection with Christ (Hebrews 10:10 ¹⁰ *And by that will ^ewe have been sanctified through the offering of ^fthe body of Jesus Christ ^gonce for all.*). Theologians sometimes refer to this state of holiness before God as "positional" sanctification; it is the same as justification.

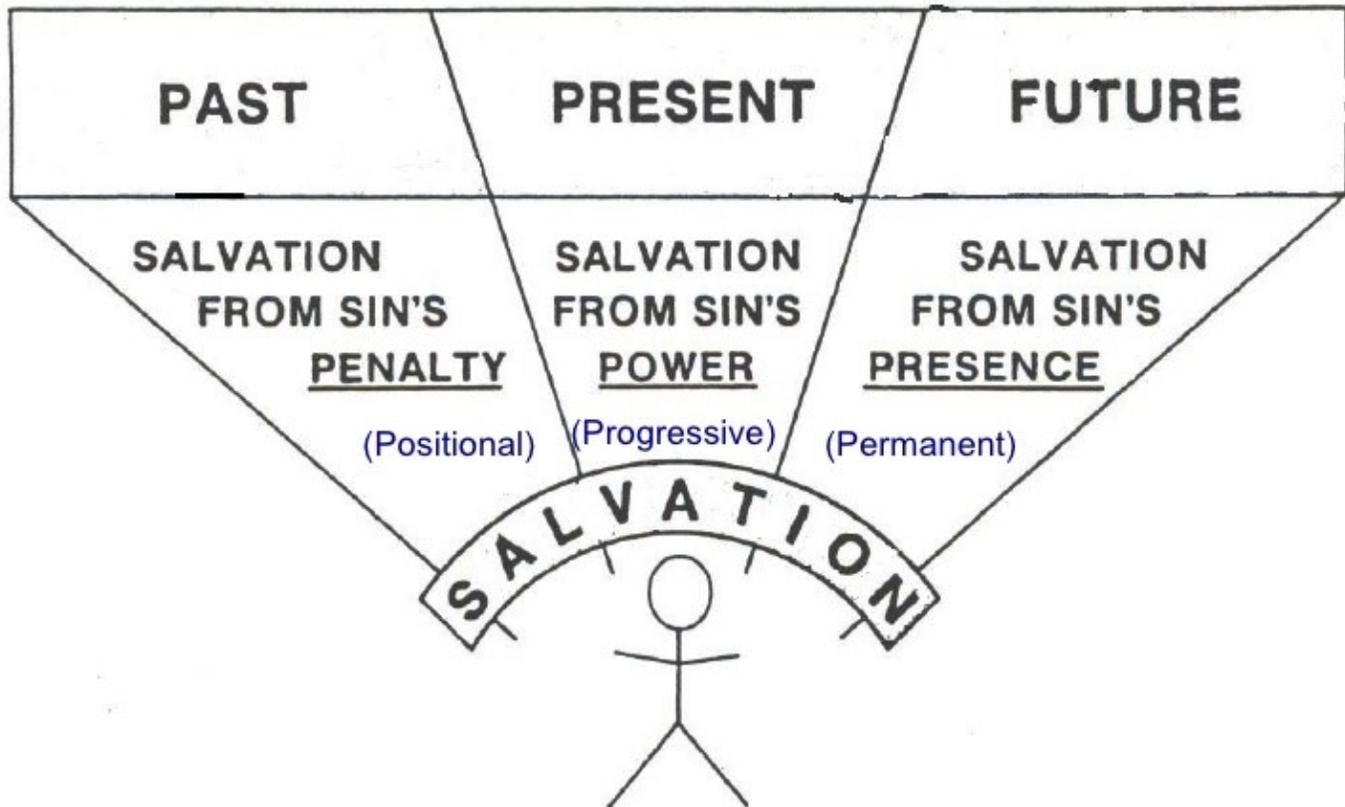
While we are *positionally* holy ("set free from every sin" by the blood of Christ, *Acts 13:39* ³⁹ *and by him ^eeveryone who believes is freed ²from everything ^afrom which you could not be freed by the law of Moses.*), we know that we still sin (*1 John 1:10* ¹⁰ *If we say we have not sinned, ^wwe make him a liar, and ^xhis word is not in us.*).

That's why the Bible also refers to sanctification as a practical experience of our separation unto God. "Progressive" or "experiential" sanctification, as it is sometimes called, is the effect of obedience to the Word of God in one's life. It is the same as growing in the Lord (*2 Peter 3:18* ¹⁸ *But ^sgrow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. ^tTo him be the glory both now and to the day of ^ueternity. Amen.*) or spiritual maturity.

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The Christian is also a sanctified person. Sanctify, in its word derivation, means ‘to set apart.’ With reference to the child of God, it is used in three ways.

SALVATION'S PERSPECTIVES (PERTAINING TO SANCTIFICATION)



First, at the moment of salvation, the believer was sanctified positionally.

- The believer was set apart from the world unto God.
- This is an accomplished fact and event.
- ² *To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, ^[a]saints by calling, with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours: (1 Corinthians 1:2)*
- These carnal, sinning believers were nevertheless saints (“set apart ones”).
- The believer’s position in Christ Jesus made possible their sanctification
 - ³⁰ *But ^[a]by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, ^[b]and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, (1 Corinthians 1:30)*
 - ¹¹ *Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:11)*

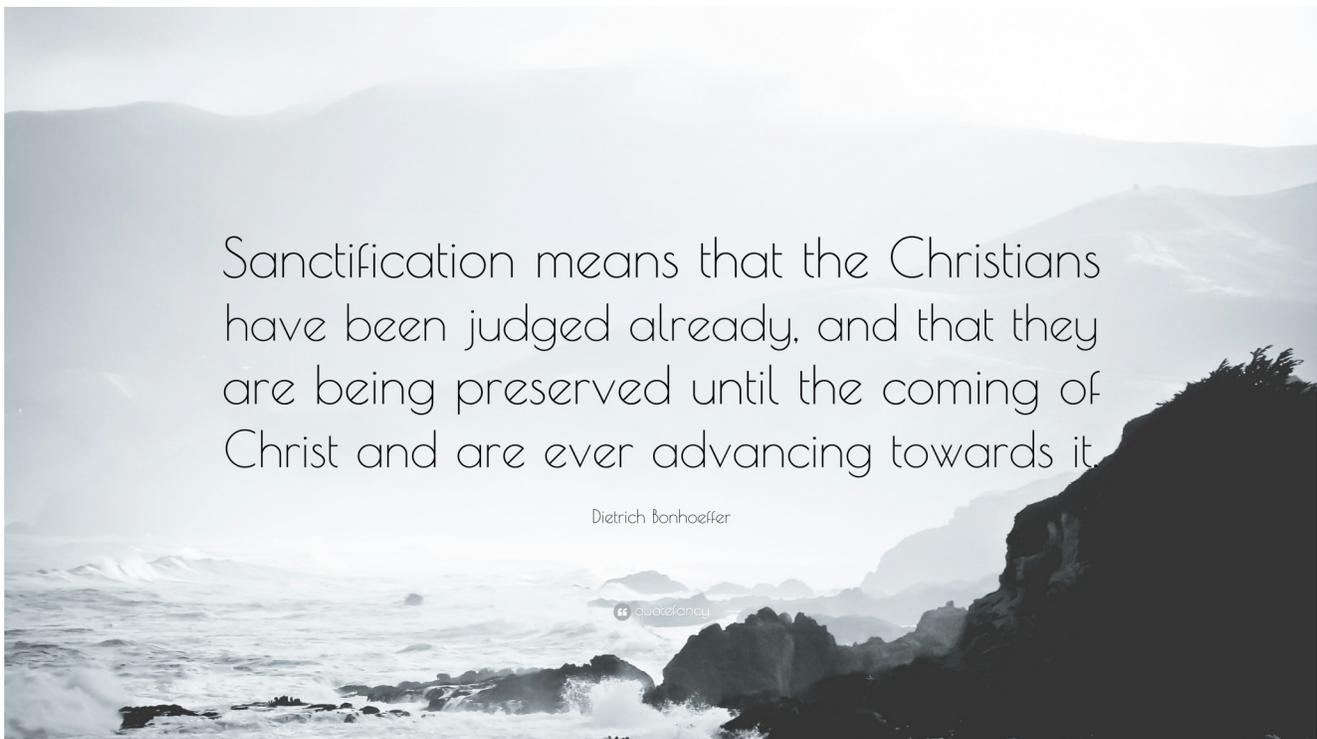
Second, there should be **progressive sanctification** taking place in the daily life of a Christian.

- God wants every believer to be holy as He is holy
 - ¹⁶ *because it is written, “YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.”* (1 Peter 1:16).
- This was part of Christ’s concerns in His intercessory prayer.
 - ¹⁷ *Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.* (John 17:17)
- Jesus sanctified Himself for our sake.
 - ¹⁹ *For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.* (John 17:19)
- The believer’s practice is not yet up to his position. He needs to be set apart daily from the influence of the sin nature, the system of the world, and the devil. Christ’s death and resurrection. His ministry of intercession in the presence of God, and the application of the Word of God by the Holy Spirit can enable the believer to walk the holy separated life.

Third, **permanent sanctification** will come at the return of Christ.

When will the believer be without moral spot or wrinkle? When will he be perfectly holy and without blemish. When the Christian actually sees Christ and is changed to be like Him (² *Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is* 1 John 3:2), then he will be permanently set apart from the aftereffects and presence of sin.

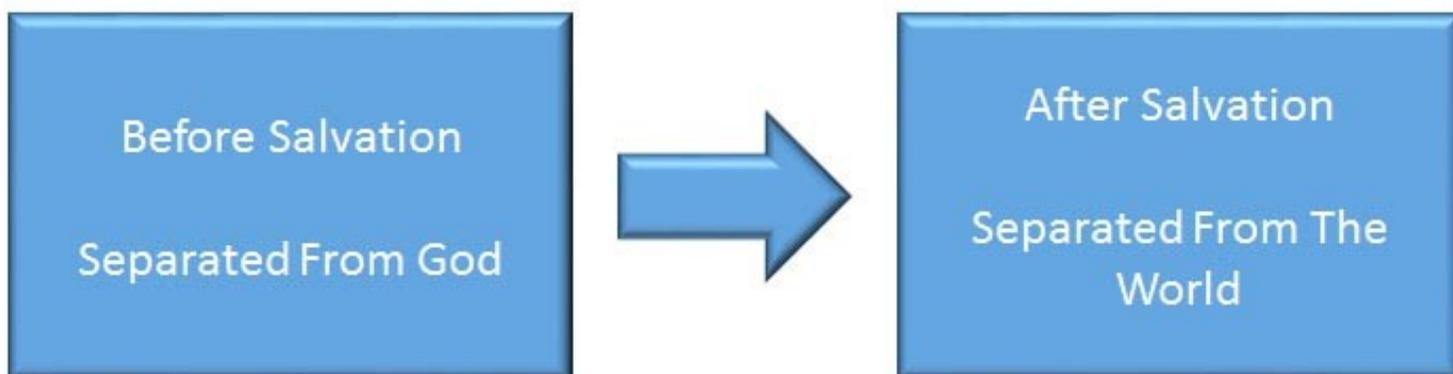
²⁵ *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,* ²⁶ *so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,* ²⁷ *that He might present to Himself the church ^[a] in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.* (Ephesians 5:25-27)



God started the work of making us like Christ, and He is continuing it (*Philippians 1:6* ⁶ *And I am sure of this, that he who began ^la good work in you ^lwill bring it to completion at ^lthe day of Jesus Christ.*). This type of sanctification is to be pursued by the believer earnestly (*1 Peter 1:15* ¹⁵ *but ^kas he who called you is holy, you also be holy ^lin all your conduct,* ; *Hebrews 12:14* ¹⁴ *Strive for peace with everyone, and for the ^uholiness ^uwithout which no one will see the Lord.*) and is effected by the application of the Word (*John 17:17* ¹⁷ *Sanctify them ²in the truth; ^myour word is truth.*).

Progressive sanctification has in view the setting apart of believers for the purpose for which they are sent into the world: “*As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified*” (*John 17:18–19*). That Jesus set Himself apart for God’s purpose is both the basis and the condition of our being set apart (see *John 10:36* ³⁶ *do you say of him whom ^bthe Father consecrated and ^csent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because ^dI said, ‘I am the Son of God’?*). We are sanctified and sent because Jesus was. Our Lord’s sanctification is the pattern of and power for our own.

Sanctification: To Be Set Aside To Be Made Holy.



The sending and the sanctifying are inseparable. On this account we are called “saints” (*hagioi* in the Greek), or “sanctified ones.” Prior to salvation, our behavior bore witness to our standing in the world in separation from God, but now our behavior should bear witness to our standing before God in separation from the world. Little by little, every day, “*those who are being sanctified*” (*Hebrews 10:14, ESV*) are becoming more like Christ.

There is a third sense in which the word *sanctification* is used in Scripture—a “complete” or “ultimate” sanctification. This is the same as glorification. Paul prays in *1 Thessalonians 5:23*, “*May the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (*ESV*). Paul speaks of Christ as “*the hope of glory*” (*Colossians 1:27*) and links the glorious appearing of Christ to our personal glorification: “*When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory*” (*Colossians 3:4*). This glorified state will be our ultimate separation from sin, a total sanctification in every regard. “*We know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is*” (*1 John 3:2*).

To summarize, “sanctification” is a translation of the Greek word *hagiasmos*, meaning “holiness” or “a separation.” In the past, God granted us justification, a once-for-all, positional holiness in Christ. Now, God guides us to maturity, a practical, progressive holiness. In the future, God will give us glorification, a permanent, ultimate holiness.

These three phases of sanctification separate the believer from

1. the penalty of sin ([justification](#)),
2. the power of sin ([maturity](#)), and
3. the presence of sin ([glorification](#)).

(The basis of this discussion came from Got Questions.org)