



Countryside Bible Church

Discipleship Counseling Notes – Level 1, Class 4 The Biblical Process of Change: Sanctification Key Elements in the Biblical Process of Change (Part 1)

INTRODUCTION:

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLICAL PROCESS OF CHANGE

General Considerations: Sanctification Explained

A. Sanctification Defined:

1. Sanctification or “to sanctify” means “to make holy.”¹
2. It carries the idea of being separated from sin and therefore being made useful to God (2 Tim 2:21).

B. Sanctification Stages:

1. Positional Sanctification (Phil 1:6)
Freedom from the Penalty of Sin
2. Progressive Sanctification (Phil 1:6)
Freedom from the Power of Sin
3. Perfect Sanctification (Phil 1:6)
Freedom from the Presence of Sin

C. “Progressive” Sanctification Defined:

“Sanctification is a progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and like Christ in our actual lives.” Grudem, Systematic Theology, 746

¹ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 744.

D. Sanctification: Position and Power

1. Sanctification begins when one is placed (positionally) in Christ (Romans 6:1-7).
2. Sanctification is possible because the Holy Spirit energizes (powers) our efforts (2 Corinthians 3:18) and is motivated by Christ's love (2 Corinthians 5:14-15, God's truth/will (1 Thessalonians 4:3), and the encouragement of fellow believers (Romans 12:1, Hebrews 13:3).

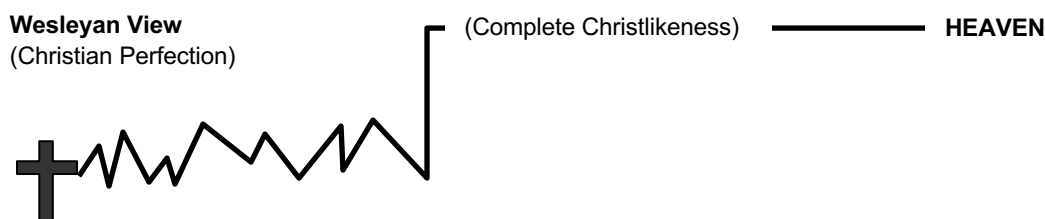
E. Sanctification Differs from Justification²

1. Justification
 - a) Legal Standing
 - b) Once for all time (at moment of conversion)
 - c) Entirely God's Work
 - d) Perfect in this life
 - e) The same in all Christians
2. Sanctification
 - a) Internal condition
 - b) Continuous throughout life
 - c) We cooperate
 - d) Not perfect in this life
 - e) Greater in some than in others

F. Sample Models (Three Models of Sanctification³)

1. The Wesleyan View (Christian Perfection)

A "second work of grace" catapults the believer into a state of sinlessness, which is often called "entire sanctification." (Sin is defined as only that which is a "willful transgression of the known law of God." Anything we do not clearly "intend" to do or are ignorant about is merely a "mistake.") Spiritual growth takes place after the second work of grace by increasing in good works.



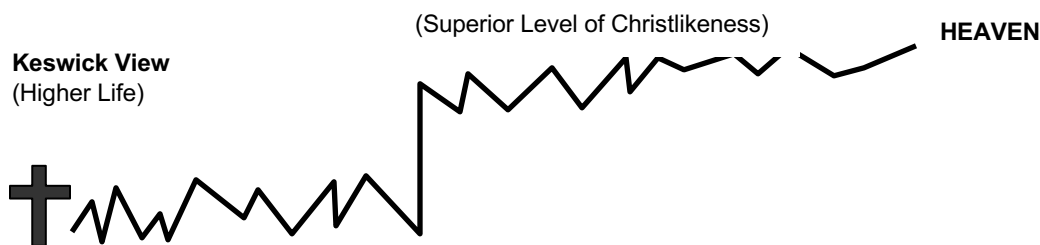
² Grudem, Systematic Theology, 746

³ Two books discussing the various views are: *Five Views on Sanctification* (1987, Zondervan) and *Christian Spirituality: Five views on Sanctification* (1988, IVP).

Thoughts and Discussion:

2. The Keswick View (Higher Life, Deeper Life, or Victorious Christian Life)

A unique post-salvation commitment (or enlightenment) allows the believer to enter into a victorious and consistent life of obedience. The struggle with sin continues, but it is lessened significantly by the new truth that has been understood and accepted. Spiritual growth takes place after that primarily by a passive trust in the work of God, appropriately represented by the slogan "let go and let God."



Thoughts and Discussion:

3. The Biblical View of Progressive Sanctification (commonly referred to as The Reformed View)

A lifelong cycle of sin, confession, repentance, forgiveness, renewal, and growth in our faith in Christ that will only be complete when we meet our Lord (Rom.6-8). This is accomplished through the active discipline of the believer himself, who trusts that the Holy Spirit is energizing his efforts (Philippians 2:12-13; Romans 8:13; Colossians 1:28-29; Titus 2:11-14).

a) The Westminster Confession, Chapter XII states:

“They who are effectually called and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them, are further sanctified, really and personally, through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, by His Word and Spirit dwelling in them; the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified, and they more and more quickened and strengthened, in all saving graces, to the practice of true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

“This sanctification is throughout in the whole man, yet imperfect in this life; there abideth still some remnants of corruption in every part, whence ariseth a continual and irreconcilable war, the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.

“In which war, although the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail, yet, through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part doth overcome; and so the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

Biblical View
(Progressive Sanctification)



HEAVEN

Thoughts and Discussion

Many people who claim to believe the biblical view nevertheless fall practically into the errors of the other approaches.

1. We may echo both the Wesleyan and Keswick views when we seem to be waiting for some divine event that will take away the strongest pulls of sin and eliminate the need for concentrated Spirit-dependent discipline and self-control.
2. We may echo the Wesleyan view specifically when we admit that we sin "all the time" but very seldom confess it or ask forgiveness.
3. And we may echo the Keswick view specifically when we "let go and let God's Word" or "let go and let the Gospel" by thinking that the "hearing alone" of scriptural teaching or dwelling only on one's position alone without its practice, will change us.

KEY ELEMENTS WITHIN THE CHANGE PROCESS

In the believer's pursuit of knowing, loving, and serving our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, he must possess a deep theological understanding of sin and guilt, conscience, repentance and faith, forgiveness and covering, and replacement (including mind renewal) in order to help people change biblically. Because these concepts are so central to the doctrine of sanctification, Satan, the world, and man's sinful flesh work overtime to distort them.

Before trying to teach a believer these key elements of sanctification, one needs to remind him of who he is in Christ, the importance of living in light of the gospel of Jesus Christ on a daily basis,⁴ the role and power of the Holy Spirit within us, the importance of unceasing prayer, and the place of the local church (Rom 5-8).

I. Sin & Guilt

A. Sin ⁵

In answer to the question, "What is sin?" the Shorter Catechism explains, "Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God." We could point to 1 John 3:4 "...sin is lawlessness."

"Sin is anything (whether in thoughts, actions, or attitudes) that does not express or conform to the holy character of God in his moral law" ⁶

B. Guilt

1. The contemporary war against guilt – The world says, "guilt is our enemy."

a) Explanations for the effects of guilt

- 1) Environment
- 2) Sickness
- 3) Heredity

⁴ An excellent supplemental book to Scripture in helping the believer to live in light of the Gospel is Milton Vincent's book, *The Gospel Primer*.

⁵ **Only clear sins are to be dealt with** (violation of or omission of God's commands), not matters of conscience (Rm. 14), not preference issues (Phil.2), not motives of the heart (1 Cor.4), not physical maturity issues (child to adult – 1 Cor 13), not wisdom issues (Proverbs), "halo" data issues (Eli and Hannah – 1 Sam), personhood (personality) issues (e.g. irritations, rubs, insensitive, personal differences – Col 3:) –unless they greatly affect one's ministry or witness.

⁶ ESV Study Bible, 2530

4) "False guilt"

5) "Shame"

b) Efforts to eliminate the effects of guilt

1) More sin

2) Chemicals

3) Blame-shifting

4) Self-esteem

5) Self-gratification

2. The biblical understanding of guilt

a) Definition: A legal liability or culpability to punishment

1) The fact of guilt vs. the feeling of guilt

2) The term "guilt" properly denotes the fact of liability and not the feeling that often accompanies it. Negative feelings are a result of guilt. So we can be truly guilty but not feel guilty (e.g. searing the conscience, ignorance).

b) Dealing with guilt

1) We must never minimize the *fact* of guilt.

- Guilt is universal because sin is universal (Rom.3:19, 23).
- Guilt is serious because God is a holy Judge (Rom.1:18, 2:5-6).
- Guilt will remain even if it is explained away or if its effects are somehow lessened, and where guilt remains punishment is inevitable.

2) We must never minimize the *feeling* of guilt.

- There is always an underlying reason for guilty feelings, and taking them seriously provides great hope for change.

3) We must never underestimate the *effects* of guilt.

- Psalm 32:1-5 and Psalm 38:1-8 graphically reveal the devastating emotional and physical effects guilt can have on a person.

3. The "warning light" that reveals guilt

God has given us the faculty of conscience to help us identify the presence of guilt. The word literally means “a knowing with” (*suneidesis*) and has been defined as “the soul reflecting on itself.” Our inner man uses the information it possesses to evaluate our thinking and actions, much like a diagnostic program running perpetually on a computer.

NOTE: Conscience involves what we know or believe rather than what we feel. We may believe something is right but feel hesitant or even hostile toward it, and we can feel good about what we know is wrong. Feelings are often a result of the operations of conscience but are not identical with them.

a) The importance of a clean conscience

- 1) Explicit references – Acts 23:1, 24:16; 1 Timothy 1:19; Hebrews 13:18
- 2) Implicit references – Romans 14:23

b) Variations of conscience referred to in Scripture

- 1) A seared conscience (I Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:15; Ephesians 4:19)
Such a conscience has been silenced through repeated sin, bad theology, or excuses.
- 2) An untrained conscience (cf. Lev.4:22-24; I Timothy 1:13; Hebrews 5:14)
- 3) An overactive conscience (Rom.14:1-5, 23)
- 4) A biblical conscience

c) The solution to guilt

The only true answer to guilt is forgiveness through repentance. God must remove the guilt of our sin through His appointed means of repentance. This is true before salvation (Luke 24:47) and after (Matt.6:12).