



HEBRON

Wednesday, January 15, 2020

Dr. Landon Dowden

## HOLINESS/SANCTIFICATION

### Lesson #1

#### **Some Introductory Questions:**

1. What is sanctification? What is holiness? How are they related?
2. How is pursuing holiness not the same thing as earning our salvation?
3. Why is growing and pursuing holiness not optional for believers?
4. Why is thinking on Christ's holiness beneficial for us?
5. What are some practical ways to intentionally think on Christ and His holiness on a daily basis?
6. If you were to teach on Sanctification, what biblical passages would you use?
7. What other resources would you use?

**DeYoung:** There is a gap between our love for the gospel and our love for godliness. This must change. It's not pietism, legalism, or fundamentalism to take holiness seriously. It's the way of all those who have been called to a holy calling by a holy God.

#### **Powlison's description of sanctification (from *How Does Sanctification Work?*):**

To be sanctified is to have your faith simplified, clarified, and deepened. . . . You know God. You love God. How other people are doing matters increasingly to you. Becoming more holy . . . means you are becoming a wiser human being. You are learning how to deal with your money, your sexuality, your job. You are becoming a better friend and family member. When you talk, your words communicate more good sense, more gravitas, more joy, more reality. You are learning to pray honestly, bring who God really is into the reality of human need. . . . It means you live in more clear-minded hope. You know the purpose of your life, roll up your sleeves, and get about doing what needs doing. You are honestly thankful for good things. You honestly face disappointment and pain, illness and dying.

#### **Sanctification (from *Grudem's Christian Beliefs: Twenty Basics Every Christian Should Know*)**

- ***Sanctification Defined***
  - Sanctification is a progressive work of both God and man that makes Christians more and more free from sin and more and more like Christ in their actual lives.
  - Sanctification is both a process and a partnership.
  - While Christians can expect to progress in their sanctification, they will never achieve perfection until Christ returns.
- ***Sanctification is a Position***
  - We are in Christ.
- ***Sanctification is a Process***
  - Sanctification starts at the point of regeneration and increases throughout life.



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- The initial break from the power of sin means that Christians are no longer ruled or dominated by sin and no longer love to sin (Romans 6:11, 14, 18)
- The Bible isn't specific on what amount of increase in sanctification we should expect in this life. It also doesn't tell us specifically what that increase will look like or with what specific sins we will no longer struggle. In fact, sometimes we will experience great freedom from one sin followed by deep struggle with another.
- Yet, in all of this, Christians should never give up their struggle.
  - We should never say any one sin has defeated us.
  - We should never say we cannot change.
  - We should cling to the promises of God – Romans 6:14 “Sin will have no dominion over you.”
- ***Sanctification is a Partnership***
  - Between us and God
    - God's role
      - Sanctification is primarily the work of God (1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 13:20-21)
      - God equips His children through the power of the Holy Spirit.
      - The Holy Spirit is the one who works within us to change and sanctify us, giving us greater holiness in life (1 Peter 1:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Galatians 5:22-23)
      - Progress in sanctification is a gift of grace.
    - Our role
      - We are both passively and actively involved in sanctification.
        - Passive – we've been brought from death to life (Romans 6:13)
        - Active – we put to death the deeds of the body (Romans 8:13)
        - Passive – God works in us, both to will and work for His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13)
        - Active – We are to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12)
      - Just as God honors our initial faith (faith that He gives us), He also honors our continual acts of faith and obedience, seen through
        - Bible reading and meditation (Psalm 1:2; Matthew 4:4; John 17:17)
        - Prayer (Ephesians 6:18; Philippians 4:6)
        - Worship (Ephesians 5:18-20)
        - Witnessing (Matthew 28:19-20)
        - Acts of mercy and justice (Matthew 23:23; James 1:27)
        - Christian fellowship (Hebrews 10:24-25)
        - Self-discipline or self-control (Galatians 5:23; Titus 1:8)



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- If we neglect actively striving to obey God, we become lazy Christians. If we neglect the passive role of trusting God and yielding to Him, we become proud and overly confident in ourselves.
- Between us and our faith family
  - [Hebrews 3:12-13 ESV] 12 Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. 13 But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.
  
  - [Heb 10:24-25 ESV] 24 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.
  - Romans 12:3-13
- ***Persevering through the Sanctification Process***
  - Sanctification is a lifelong process.
  - At times it will seem as if the process is going at a faster rate than you ever thought possible.
    - At these times, you need to guard against pride and self-righteousness (thinking yourself better than you are and taking credit for your goodness that is really a gift of grace).
  - At other times, you will wonder if there is any life inside you at all.
    - Pray this – Mark 9:24: “I believe; help my unbelief.”
  - In the midst of it all, hold sure to the promise that “by God’s power” you “are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Peter 1:5).
  - Take confidence in Jesus’ statement that “this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life, and I will raise Him up on the last day” (John 6:40).

**What Holiness Is and Is Not – By Kevin DeYoung (taken from *The Hole in our Holiness*):**

- **Holiness is not...**
  - **Holiness is not mere rule keeping.**
    - It’s all too easy to turn the fight of faith into sanctification-by-checklist.
    - A moral checklist doesn’t take into consideration the idols of the hearts.
    - Inevitably, checklist spirituality is highly selective.
    - Mere rule keeping is not the answer because holiness cannot be reduced to a little ethical refurbishment.
  - **Holiness is not generational imitation.**
    - Every generation has both its insights and its blind spots. It takes wisdom to learn from the good and avoid the bad.



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- **Holiness is not generic spirituality.**
  - Being spiritual in contemporary jargon means you are open to mystery and interested in “spiritual” things like prayer, healing, and inner peace.
  - True spirituality means being transformed by the Spirit through communion with the Father and the Son.
  - If you are interested in spirituality, your priority should be to grow in the holiness that comes from the Spirit.
- **Holiness is not “finding your true self.”**
  - In secular Western society, the truly good person is the one who has learned to be true to himself.
  - The world’s holiness is not found in being true to God; it’s found in being true to yourself.
- **Holiness is not the way of the world.**
  - We’ll never make progress in holiness if we are waiting for the world to throw us a party for our piety.
  - Worldliness is whatever makes sin look normal and righteousness look strange.
  - Many Christians have the mistaken notion that if only we were better Christians, everyone would appreciate us. They don’t realize that holiness comes with a cost.
  - Saving yourself for marriage, staying sober on Friday night, turning down a promotion to stay at your church, refusing to say the f-word, turning off the television – these are the kinds of things the world doesn’t understand.
  - Don’t expect them to. The world provides no cheerleaders on the pathway to godliness.
- **Holiness is...**
  - **Holiness looks like the renewal of God’s image in us.**
    - The holy person is being renewed in knowledge after the image of the Creator (Colossians 3:10), which means growing in righteousness and holiness (Ephesians 4:24).
    - This does not happen all at once, but rather, we are transformed into the image of God from one degree of glory to another (2 Corinthians 3:18).
  - **Holiness looks like a life marked by virtue instead of vice.**
    - Romans 12:9-21; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7; Galatians 5:22-23; Colossians 3:12-15; 2 Peter 1:5-7
    - You can think of holiness, to employ a metaphor, as the sanctification of your body. The mind is filled with the knowledge of God and fixed on what is good. The eyes turn away from sensuality and shudder at the sight of evil. The mouth tells the truth and refuses to gossip, slander, or speak what is coarse or obscene. The spirit is earnest, steadfast, and gentle. The heart is full of joy instead of hopelessness, patience instead of irritability, kindness instead of anger, humility instead of pride, and thankfulness instead of envy.



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- The sexual organs are pure, being reserved for the privacy of marriage between one man and one woman. The feet move toward the lowly and away from senseless conflict, divisions, and wild parties. The hands are quick to help those in need and ready to fold in prayer. This is the anatomy of holiness.
- **Holiness looks like a clean conscience .**
  - The accusations of the Devil can be silenced by the blood of the Lamb (Revelation 12:10-11; Romans 8:1; Zechariah 3:2).
  - God speaks to us through the conscience, and when we ignore that voice, we put ourselves in grave danger.
  - The conscience is not infallible and is no substitute for the Bible.
  - As we pursue holiness, we must always be mindful of God's voice speaking to us through a tender conscience informed by the Word of God.
- **Holiness looks like obedience to God's commands.**
  - It sounds really spiritual to say God is interested in a relationship, not in rules. But it's not biblical. From top to bottom the Bible is full of commands. They aren't meant to stifle a relationship with God, but to protect it, seal it, and define it.
  - Never forget: first God delivered the Israelites from Egypt, then he gave them the law. God's people were not redeemed by observing the law, but they were redeemed so they might obey the law.
- **Holiness looks like Christlikeness.**
  - The whole goal of our salvation is that we should be conformed to the image of God's Son (Romans 8:29).
  - We see in Jesus the best, most practical, most human example of what it means to be holy.
  - In all that Jesus Christ did, during His whole life and especially as His life came to an end, He loved God with His whole being and loved His neighbor as Himself.

**DeYoung:** No matter what you profess, if you show disregard for Christ by giving yourself over to sin – impenitently and habitually – then heaven is not your home.