



HEBRON

February 19, 2020

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SANCTIFICATION AND THE TRINITY

Review:

Whose work is sanctification?

It is most important for us to realize that sanctification is not something we do by ourselves, with our own efforts and in our own strength. Sanctification is not first of all a human activity, but a divine gift. Sanctification, however, also involves our responsible participation.¹

Although sanctification is first and foremost a supernatural work of God in a person's life, it also requires the active cooperation of the person through faith, obedience, and submission to the divine work (Romans 6:19; 12:1; Philippians 2:12–13; 2 Timothy 2:21; Hebrews 12:14).

Philippians 2:12–13:¹² Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,¹³ for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Sanctification is the work of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (John 17:17, 19; 1 Corinthians 1:2, 30; Ephesians 5:25–27; Colossians 1:22; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 10:10–13; 13:12, 20–21).

The Father

- Scripture plainly teaches that God is the author of sanctification.
 - o John 17:17
 - o Hebrews 12:10
 - o Hebrews 13:20–21
 - o 1 Thessalonians 5:23
- It is the God of peace who is going to do this. It is the Father. It is He, who brought the Lord Jesus, His Son, from the dead, who will make us perfect.²
- “The Father is the Grand Architect, the Wise Designer of all that has occurred in the created order. From initial creation through ultimate consummation and everything that happens in between, it is God the Father who is the Architect, the Designer, the one

¹ Anthony A. Hoekema, *Saved by Grace* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), 199–200.

² David Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *God the Holy Spirit* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1997), 205–206.

who stands behind all that occurs as the one who plans and implements what he has chosen to do.”³ - Bruce Ware

- The Scriptures say a few things about the Father’s role in Sanctification
 - The Father as Architect
 - The Father as Law Giver
 - For this discussion, the use of the Law is seen as the means of obeying the calling of God to “be Holy as I am Holy.”
 - Each law has many facets revealing an important character of God and his demand for holiness. The Father, in establishing the Law, displays the measure by which faithfulness will be judged in sanctification, not salvation.
 - The Father as the sender of the Son and the Spirit
 - He sends the Son and the Spirit as agents to complete the work that He set in motion.
 - It is clear from Scripture that God’s purpose from eternity was to bring the Son to earth, providing salvation, and then the Spirit to secure it for eternity.

The Son

- Scripture teaches sanctification is the work of the Son.
 - Ephesians 5:25–27
 - Titus 2:13-14
 - 1 Corinthians 1:30
 - John 14:15, 21
- The role of Christ in the believer’s sanctification is seen in the believer’s union in Christ’s death and the motivation that gives to believers that they are no longer controlled by the sins of the flesh but have been freed to live a holy life.⁴
- This does not guarantee that Christians will not sin or fail, but that they now have the old life removed.
 - Romans 6:6

The Holy Spirit

- Sanctification is finally ascribed to the Holy Spirit.
 - 1 Peter 1:1-2
 - Romans 15:16
 - 2 Thessalonians 2:13:
 - While, therefore, we can say that sanctification is the work of the three Persons in the Trinity, it is especially, of course, the work of the third Person, the Holy Spirit because, as we have seen already, it is He who mediates Christ to us; it is He who applies the work of Christ to us; it is He who forms Christ in us; it is He who joins us to Christ. - D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones
- Scripture’s frequent designation of the *Holy* Spirit speaks to the fitting nature of the Spirit’s role as sanctifier.

³ Bruce Ware, *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: Relationship, Roles, and Relevance* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2005) 51.

⁴ <https://thepublicans.org/2018/02/05/trinitarian-sanctification-the-son/>

- There are several ways the Spirit is involved in the sanctification process:⁵
 - The Holy Spirit Secures us.
 - Ephesians 1:12–14
 - Dietrich Bonhoeffer did extensive work drawing out the work of the Spirit as the “sealer” of faith. He focuses first on the fact that this seal is proof of the salvation believers have received in Christ, and explains three distinct ways this sealing maintains a Christian’s faith⁶.
 - First: It will keep them separated from the world.
 - Second: It will maintain their walk in a way worthy of their calling.
 - Third: It will secure their faith in the life of Christ Himself.
 - The Spirit Grows us.
 - He gives man the ability to pursue holiness along with the desire to run hard after Him.
 - Kenneth Boa points out that the role of the Holy Spirit is “bearing witness to Jesus Christ, applying Christ’s redemptive work in human hearts, and working personally and progressively to form Christ likeness in the lives of believers.”⁷
 - 1 Corinthians 6:11
 - The Spirit Convicts us.
 - The Holy Spirit’s work in sanctifying believers also takes on the role of convicting believers of their sins.
 - John 16:8–11
 - The Spirit Teaches us
 - John 16:13
 - 1 John 2:27
 - John 16:14
 - The Spirit is working in the hearts of believers to teach them the truth of the Lord and is connected with His role as convicting believers of their sin.
 - The illumination of the Scriptures themselves reflects this truth.
 - He is the Active Agent of Prayer
 - Romans 8: 26-27
 - The Holy Spirit plays an important role as the active agent in the lives of believers that brings about a holy life before God.

⁵ <https://thepublicans.org/2018/02/12/trinitarian-sanctification-the-spirit/>

⁶ Dietrich Bonhoeffer. *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York, Touchstone, 1959), 278

⁷ Kenneth Boa, *Conformed to His Image: Biblical and Practical Approaches to Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan 2001), 292.