

The Doctrine of Sanctification

Philippians 1:6: *And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.*

2 Thessalonians 2:13 *But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.*

Ephesians 4:20–24 *But that is not the way you learned Christ!—[21] assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, [22] to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, [23] and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, [24] and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.*

Romans 6:1–2 *What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? [2] By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?*

Romans 6:4–6 *We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.* (ESV)

Romans 6:15–18 *What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! [16] Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? [17] But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, [18] and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.*

Romans 6:22 *But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.*

Romans 12:1–2 *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. [2] Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

1 Corinthians 1:30–31 *And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, [31] so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”*

1 Thessalonians 4:3a *For this is the will of God, your sanctification...*

1 Peter 1:13–16 *Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. [14] As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, [15] but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, [16] since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”*

Westminster Confession of Faith: Chapter 13 (On Sanctification)

Section I.—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.

Section II.—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.

Section III.—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.

Westminster Larger Catechism:

Question 75: What is sanctification? A: Sanctification is a work of God's grace, whereby they whom God has, before the foundation of the world, chosen to be holy, are in time, through the powerful operation of his Spirit¹ applying the death and resurrection of Christ unto them², renewed in their whole man after the image of God³; having the seeds of repentance unto life, and all other saving graces, put into their hearts⁴, and those graces so stirred up, increased, and strengthened⁵, as that they more and more die unto sin, and rise unto newness of life.⁶

1. Ephesians 1:4; 1 Corinthians 6:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13
2. Romans 6:4-6;
3. Ephesians 4:23-24
4. Acts 11:18; 1 John 3:9
5. Jude 1:20; Hebrews 6:11-12; Ephesians 3:16-19; Colossians 1:10-11
6. Romans 6:4; Romans 6:6; Romans 6:14; Galatians 5:24

Westminster Shorter Catechism:

Question 35: What is sanctification? A: Sanctification is the work of God's free grace¹, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God², and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness³.

1. 2 Thessalonians 2:13
2. Ephesians 4:23-24
3. Romans 6:4,6; Romans 8:1

Helpful Quotes:

John Owen: "The growth of trees and plants takes place so slowly that it is not easily seen. Daily we notice little change. But, in course of time, we see that a great change has taken place. So it is with grace.

Sanctification is a progressive, lifelong work ([Prov 4:18](#)). It is an amazing work of God's grace and it is a work to be prayed for ([Rom 8:27](#)). ("[The Holy Spirit](#), 108-109)

Thomas Watson: "Sanctification is heaven begun in the soul. Sanctification and glory differ only in degree: Sanctification is glory in the seed, and glory is sanctification in the flower."

Kevin DeYoung, "...the will of God for your life is pretty straightforward: Be holy like Jesus, by the power of the Spirit, for the glory of God." ([Just Do Something](#), 62)

John Owen: "The vigour, and power, and comfort of our spiritual life depends on the mortification of the deeds of the flesh...The choicest believers, who are assuredly freed from the condemning power of sin, ought yet to make it their business all their days to mortify the indwelling power of sin...Do you mortify; do you make it your daily work; be always at it whilst you live; cease not a day from this work; be killing sin or it will be killing you." ([Mortification of Sin In Believers](#))

Sinclair Ferguson : "When I know that Christ is the one real sacrifice for my sins, that His work on my behalf has been accepted by God, that He is my heavenly Intercessor - then His blood is the antidote to the poison in the voices that echo in my conscience, condemning me for my many failures. Indeed, Christ's shed blood chokes them into silence!" ([In Christ Alone](#), 151)