

1 John 1:5-2:2

- 5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you,
that God is light,
and in him is no darkness at all.
- 6 If we say we have fellowship with him
while we walk in darkness,
we lie and do not practice the truth.
- 7 But if we walk in the light,
as he is in the light,
we have fellowship with one another,
and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.
- 8 If we say we have no sin,
we deceive ourselves,
and the truth is not in us.
- 9 If we confess our sins,
he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins
and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
- 10 If we say we have not sinned,
we make him a liar,
and his word is not in us.
- 1 My little children,
I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.
But if anyone does sin,
we have an advocate with the Father,
Jesus Christ the righteous.
- 2 He is the propitiation for our sins,
and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. (ESV)

Confession becomes Careful Repentance¹

1. Saying to God, “I am wrong”
2. Saying to God, “I am sorry”
3. Saying to God, “Forgive me”
4. Saying to God, “Cleanse me”
5. Saying to God, “Empower me to live consistently righteously.”

Change in Focus

Motivation

Personalization/ Realizations

1. Realize the impact of sin on your relationship with God
Sin distances us from God as we turn our backs on Him
2. Realize the need to keep God’s standard
His standard is Himself—He has revealed it, He wants us to have victory over sin
3. Realize the need to be honest with God
He knows we will sin—provides forgiveness and fellowship for the honest
4. Realize that He has provided for our success
God wants us to succeed!

Conclusion: Applicational Questions

1. If you have lowered God’s standards to meet your abilities (or comfort level) you need to be honest with God, confess and ask for God’s help to meet His standards.
2. If you have tried to set up lots of rules, to keep the standard high, confess to Him that you have been trying to do His job.
3. Be honest with God. He already knows your weaknesses and failings.

¹Brandt & Skinner, *The Heart of the Problem*, Broadman & Holman.

Brief Summary of the Doctrine of Sanctification

Sanctification Defined:

- Sanctification is the work of God to transform the sinner into the image of Jesus Christ. (Romans 8:29)
- From our standpoint it should be: Taking Justification Seriously

Sanctification is often defined within three stages or aspects: Positional, Progressive, and Prospective or ultimate. But as I was thinking about this, other “P’s” also helped me better understand different elements involved.

The believers’ practice is based on their position in Christ. This practice involves a progress. A believer’s sanctification is based on his position in Christ which is then related to his practice in that it is a process or progress.

The progressive aspect is the key to understanding sanctification. Sanctification—being set apart from sin and to God—is progressive in that in the present believers are not perfect. Perfection, contrary to some denominations, is not a part of the believers’ experience until glorification. So the believers’ progressive sanctification is not perfection.

But though sanctification can be defined in part as a process, this process is not solely based on performance. Progressive sanctification is not related to simply what believers do, but what is being done for them by God through the Holy Spirit. The fact that sanctification is not based on our performance only, is comforting because what we do will never match up to God’s holiness.

This is not to say that the believer is not involved. Progressive sanctification is not passive. That is, the believer does not sit around waiting for God to make him more holy. Neither is progressive sanctification permissiveness. Just because sanctification is primarily a work of God does not mean that believers can tolerate sin in their lives. Or to put it another way, progressive sanctification should not be promiscuous. In the words of Paul, “What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?” (Romans 6:1-2). Progressive sanctification, though not based solely on the performance of the believer, is not permissive or a ticket for license.

Another aspect of progressive sanctification that is often omitted is the corporate element of sanctification. Believers are placed into the body of Christ and are to foster holiness within a relational context. Only in a relational context can sanctification be developed, demonstrated and tested. Only in a relational context can believers grow to be what God intended them to be.

Finally, ultimate sanctification can be seen as prospective or potential in that it will be affected in the future. This is the believers’ hope, the promise and pledge God has given. When the struggle or battle is raging in progressive sanctification, the believer can anticipate the day when he will be sanctified completely. In this respect ultimate sanctification can be seen as predestination, “predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son.” (Romans 8:29)

All three elements of sanctification are related to the power of God: through Christ in salvation, through the Holy Spirit and the Word in progressive sanctification, and through the Father’s will to conform us to His Son.

Positional—Romans 6; Hebrews 10:10; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2

Progressive—Practice—Romans 8; 2 Peter 3:18; John 17:17 through His Word; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Philippians 1:6; Hebrews 13:20-21

—not perfection—Romans 7

—not performance—Galatians 5 {see v.16, 25}; Ephesians 5:11-25; Colossians 3:9-10

—not passive, permissive, or promiscuous—Philippians 2:12-13; Romans 12:9, 16-17; Romans 8:13

Prospective/ Promise —Romans 8:29; 1 John 3:1-3; Ephesians 1:4; Jude 24; 1 Thessalonians 5:23, 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14

— Predestined—Romans 8:29

— Perfection

Placed in the Body (Ephesians 2; 4:7, 12-16)

Power of God (1 Corinthians 1:18)

Past—Salvation from the penalty of sin—Ephesians 2:8

Present—Salvation from the power of sin—Romans 5:10; 6:11-14

Future—Salvation from the presence of sin —Jude 24; 1 Thessalonians 5:23

By reflecting on sanctification I am encouraged and exhorted. I am encouraged by realizing no matter how much I struggle, I have the assurance (hope) that I will be transformed to conformity with the position I have in Christ. It is also encouraging that my sanctification is not conditioned only on what I do. The exhortation is that in view of what Christ has done on my behalf, I need to strive in the power of the Holy Spirit to be holy in light of what I will be and the price paid for me.

Conclusion: “To know God is to live a holy life—obligation. We need to brainwash our minds with the Bible to act, think, and do God’s will instinctively.” (Howard Hendricks)