

Sanctification

I. The Definition

- **Distinct from Justification:** While justification is a one-time legal declaration of being made right with God, sanctification is the subsequent, lifelong process of being made holy.
- **A Set-Apart Life:** The core meaning involves being "set apart" from the common use of the world for God's specific, holy purposes.
- **Progressive Transformation:** It is the internal work of the Holy Spirit that gradually transforms a believer's character, desires, and behaviors to align with the likeness of Jesus Christ.

II. The Source of Power

- **The Holy Spirit's Role:** Sanctification is primarily a work of God; it is the Spirit who produces fruit such as love, joy, and self-control within the believer.
- **Synergistic Effort:** Unlike justification (which is entirely God's work), sanctification involves a "cooperative" relationship where the believer actively responds to and works with the Spirit.
- **The "New Heart":** Growth is made possible because God provides a new nature and new desires that replace the old heart of stone.

III. The Process: "Put Off and Put On"

- **Removing the Old Self:** Believers are commanded to "put off" old habits, sinful patterns, and worldly mindsets that belong to their former way of life.
- **Adopting Christ-likeness:** Simultaneously, they must "put on" the new self, actively practicing virtues like humility, kindness, and forgiveness.
- **Renewing the Mind:** This process is fueled by a constant renewal of how one thinks, shifting focus from earthly distractions to eternal truths.

IV. The Means of Grace (Spiritual Disciplines)

- **The "Grace Pipes":** Spiritual disciplines are not ways to earn favor but are the channels or "pipes" through which God's transformative grace flows into the life of the believer.
- **Scripture and Prayer:** Engaging with the Word of God and maintaining a life of prayer are essential tools for hearing God's voice and receiving His strength.
- **Community and Worship:** Sanctification rarely happens in isolation; it requires the accountability, encouragement, and shared worship found within the local church body.

V. The Goal and The Marathon

- **The Metaphor of the Race:** The Christian life is compared to a marathon rather than a sprint, requiring long-term endurance, discipline, and a focus on the finish line.
- **Reflecting God's Glory:** The ultimate end of sanctification is for the believer to act as a mirror that reflects God's holiness and character to a watching world.
- **Preparation for Glory:** This earthly process prepares the believer for "Glorification," the final state where they will be entirely free from the presence and power of sin.