

## SANCTIFICATION

**We believe sanctification is both instantaneous and progressive.**

The biblical concept of sanctification is a process of bringing the whole of life into line with the will of God. Its basic meaning is to set life apart in consecration of one's total self to God. To sanctify anything is to declare that it belongs to God.

In the Old Testament, sanctification was primarily used to consecrate places, days, seasons, and objects of worship. New Testament usage is limited chiefly to persons. It portrays a Savior who was so completely consecrated to God that those who believe in him can also be sanctified.

Sanctification of the person is instantaneous and simultaneous with regeneration. Sanctification of the nature is a continuing growth in grace, truth, and relationship with God.

Justification is God's imputed work upon us; sanctification is God's imparted work within us. While justification refers to a change in status before God, sanctification refers to a change within one's being. This change in being begins at the time of regeneration and continues in a gradual growth of Christ likeness. It could be said that sanctification is to regeneration as growth is to birth.

**We believe transformation of the believer's life and character follows from our consecration to God.**

Those who belong to Christ are called to live in him. "I urge you, then—I who am a prisoner because I serve the Lord: live a life that measures up to the standard God set when he called you" (Ephesians 4:1 TEV). "You have been raised to life with Christ, so set your hearts on the things that are in heaven, where Christ sits on his throne at the right side of God. Keep your minds fixed on things there, not on things here on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. Your real life is Christ and when he appears, then you too will appear with him and share his glory" (Colossians 3:1-4 TEV; also Colossians 3:5-14; Romans 6-8).

Ability to make one's lifestyle more Christlike is given through the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. Sanctification is a lifelong process, daily appropriated through surrender of life to God. It is not complete in any given act. It is not complete short of the life to come (1 John 3:2).

**We believe it is the privilege and responsibility of believers to live holy lives.**

Holiness is a characteristic of God and should mark the Christian walk. "Just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy' " (1 Peter 1:15 -16 NIV). This is a command, but also implies that believers are to choose to be holy. We continue to be free moral agents throughout the process of sanctification. Holiness does not mean sinless perfection, or that at some point our fallen nature is eradicated. Sin and our fallen nature continue to be present with us in this life (Galatians 5:17). Yet God wants a holy people, and the believer must deliberately decide to yield life to the Holy Spirit to be holy. Holiness of life is not how much we have of the Holy Spirit, but how much the Holy Spirit has of us.

Holy living is possible only as the believer experiences a moment-by-moment yielding to the Holy Spirit. Followers of Christ depend on the power and help of the Holy Spirit to produce Christ's life in us, Paul said: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God" (Romans 12:1-2 KJV). "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another" (Galatians 5:22 - 26 NASB). Holy living is the believer's privilege and responsibility because it will bring honor and glory to God.