

ESSENTIALS - Session 3 "The Essential of Sanctification"

INTRO

- Justification is a legal standing with God. He has declared you innocent by the virtue of Christ's sacrifice. You played no part in the process.
- **Ephesians 2:8-9** states it is by GRACE you have been saved through faith, and it is NOT of works, so no man may boast. GRACE is unmerited, unearned favor. You played no part.
- 1) What is sanctification, 2) How does it work, and 3) What does that mean for you and me?

WHAT IS IT?

- Justification happens once and is done for all time.
- Sanctification is a lifelong process that began immediately following that MOMENT of justification.
- Sanctification is going to involve 3 S's: suffering, spiritual warfare, and spiritual disciplines.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

- Justification was that moment in time; Sanctification is the Now and Not yet. Justification rested entirely on God, and you had no role to play, but that's not exactly how sanctification works.
- Only through the power of the Spirit will you move through sanctification and grow to be more like Jesus.
- We are responsible for our actions, and must cooperate with the Spirit, but we are not fighting the battle alone. Some of the ways we cooperate: Read and follow God's word; Pray for Guidance; Avoid Sin; Grow in Christian virtues.
- All of these are things we must learn to do because they are not natural to us. The natural state of man is selfish.
- It takes discipline to train yourself to do something that doesn't come naturally.
- Though the training can be painful, pain is not the purpose. The suffering we often feel is the corrupted flesh giving up something we want more than God.
- Three broad categories of suffering: 1) Suffering to give up bad things – think sinful desires, drugs, stealing, etc. 2) Suffering for what we otherwise think of as "good" things – think marriage, kids, work, the hidden idols of life, 3) Spiritual Warfare

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR US?

Letting Go of Bad Things:

- Salvation brings our desire for truth and ability to see the evil within us, but the fallen flesh still wants what it wants. Sanctification takes time.
- God disciplines those he loves.
- Sin REIGNED, sin was KING, you were a slave, a servant. But there can only be one King and God owns that title.
- Only the blood sacrifice of Christ and the empowering of the Holy Spirit set you free.
- You aren't going to be victorious every time. Wars have many battles, setbacks, and losses. But you aren't in this alone. The Spirit fights for you and with you.

- Each struggle prepares us for the next struggle. Each struggle becomes a testimony of God's goodness.

Letting Go of "Good" Things

- John Calvin is famously quoted as saying the human heart is an idol factory. What he is talking about is that our fallen condition continually raises up something new to worship in place of God.
- What about when your marriage has become an idol. Your children. Your job. Your public image. Idolatry occurs when we put our trust, identity, or joy in anything other than God. We can suffer from losing good things and bad things.
- These idols may demand our time, attention, and loyalty in a way that draws us away from God.
- He lovingly removes or reshapes these things to refocus our hearts on Him. This suffering serves a purpose—God is refining us.
- When good things become idols, they enslave us. But through sanctification, God teaches us to enjoy these blessings rightly, without making them ultimate in our lives.

Spiritual Warfare

- If there is good, there is evil. If there is evil, it has an agenda.
- The Bible presents the enemy's agenda in Genesis 3. He wants you to doubt God's goodness, separate you from his love, and join him.
- He knows you better than you know yourself. He knows your weaknesses and the idols of your heart.
- He doesn't blindly attack but has a battle plan laid out just for you.
- We are called to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God.
- If you confuse that justification MOMENT with this LIFELONG sanctification process, you will find yourself questioning your salvation, and that is exactly what the enemy wants.
- Push back the lies of the enemy. Lean on others for support, listen to their testimonies of God's goodness. Know that you aren't alone in this fight.
- Sanctification requires being equipped for battle!
- **Ephesians 6: 10-18** Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God...
- Satan's goal is to derail our spiritual growth through lies, temptations, or worldly distractions.
- Sanctification through warfare means recognizing these attacks and relying on God's power to overcome them. **James 4:7** submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.
- Only one offensive weapon, which is the Sword of the Spirit which is the word of God. Faith comes from hearing and hearing by the word of God.
- Roman armor was designed for frontal assault, their backs were exposed. The only protection they had in the rear was each other. Praying at all times in the Spirit making supplication for all the saints, is your rear guard.
- Christianity is not an individual sport! Don't limit yourself.

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

- Three basic seasons of life: You are Going into a storm, In a storm, or Coming out of storm.
- The Lord allows us to face struggles. If you never grow past your initial salvation you are vulnerable to the next enemy attack!
- You have two options: You can feed your flesh or you can feed the Spirit. You can fight of your own strength, or you can rely on Christ.
- **Jeremiah 29:11** - For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.
- There is the promise of another day. Our scars are testimonies to future generations of God's goodness and of his never-failing love.
- When you're stuck between a rock and a hard place, turn to the Rock and let Him deal with the hard place.

KEY TERMS

- Justification - a legal standing with God. Our declared righteousness before God, made possible by Christ's death and resurrection for us.
- Sanctification - our gradual, growing into the likeness of God, made possible by the Spirit's work.
- Grace - unmerited, unearned favor.
- Discipline - training to do something that doesn't come naturally.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Before tonight, how would you have defined discipline? Why do you think it's important to understand that pain is not the point?
- Why is it important to understand the differences between justification and sanctification? How can the enemy use confusion between the two against you?
- What are some major things that have helped shape your identity? How has God used that to sanctify you?
- How would you identify when a "good" thing has become an idol? Judging by your daily schedule, who owns your time and energy - you or God. Explain.
- What do you think John Calvin meant by the heart is an endless idol factory? Why do you think that is?
- What are some examples of feeding the flesh or feeding the Spirit?
- Before tonight, have you considered that the enemy has a battle plan designed specifically for you? What ways do you defend against his attacks? Where do you wish you were stronger?
- Do you feel equipped for battle? Read Ephesians 6:10-18. How have you used the various pieces of the Armor of God in your struggle against the enemy? Who is your rear guard?
- Is anyone willing to share a personal testimony of struggle and how God saw them through?

REVIEW

- Read: First Steps of Faith Chapter 6

HOMEWORK!!! ...Because the deepest part of your discipleship is personal!!

- Read: First Steps of Faith Chapter 2

SCRIPTURES

- Ephesians 2:8-9 - For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.
- 1 Peter 3:18 - For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,
- Luke 23:43 - And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise."
- 2 Corinthians 3:18 - And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.
- 1 Thessalonians 4:3 - For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality;
- 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.
- Hebrews 10:14 - For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.
- Romans 8:9 - You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.
- Philippians 2:13 - for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.
- 2 Peter 1:3 - His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence
- Psalms 119:105 - Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.
- Matthew 26:41 - Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."
- 2 Timothy 2:22 - So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.
- Galatians 5:22-23 - But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.
- Romans 3:10-12, 23 - as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one." for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
- Hebrews 12:5-6 - And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives."
- 1 Peter 1:6-7 - In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold

that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

- Romans 8:28 - And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.
- Galatians 5:19-21 - Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.
- Romans 6:12-14 - Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.
- Colossians 3:1-8 - If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth.
- Exodus 20:3-4 – “You shall have no other gods before me. “You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.
- James 1:2-4 - Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.
- John 15:1-2 - “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.
- Psalms 16:11 - You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.
- 1 Peter 5:8 - Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.
- John 8:44 - You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.
- Luke 4:13 - And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.

- 1 Peter 5:6-10 - Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.
- Ephesians 6:10-18 - Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,
- James 4:7 - Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.
- Galatians 6:8 - For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.
- Jeremiah 29:11 - For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.