

Di223 We Believe

Lesson Di223-18 Sanctification

Have you ever heard about the chameleon? A chameleon is a small lizard that has the ability to change its color. It may turn green, yellow, or grayish black. Sometimes this can help the lizard blend in with its surroundings and hide from its enemies. Camouflage clothing is often used by soldiers and hunters for the same reason. The clothes help them blend into the background.

Did you know there are ‘chameleon’ or ‘camouflage’ Christians? Chameleon Christians are people who act like Christians when they are in church or with Christian friend. Then when they are with people who are not Christians, they talk and act like non-Christians. They don’t want to be different or stand out. This is displeasing to God. As Christians we are supposed to live consistent holy lives. Hebrews 12:14 says, “Make every effort...to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.” People who do not serve God should be able to see that we are different. In this lesson we will see how the Holy Spirit can help us through a special work called ‘sanctification.’

What is sanctification? Sanctification is what God the Holy Spirit does in us after we are saved. It is separation from sin to God. Sanctification is a continuing work of the Holy Spirit to help believers become more Christlike. The original meaning of sanctify was ‘to set apart’ or ‘to separate.’ Sanctification is the separation and dedication of a person or an object to and for God. It means to belong only to him and to be used for his glory.

The apostle Paul had a dramatic salvation experience. He had been a devoted Pharisee; he was present at the stoning of Stephen. He persecuted the Early Church followers of Christ, believing they were heretics. Yet, when Saul of Tarsus met Christ in a vision on the Damascus road, he became a zealous believer. At that moment of his faith in Christ, Saul was seen as holy before God. He was sanctified by Christ’s holiness. He later wrote, “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” (2Cor 5:17). Saul was changed to Paul.

A sanctified person is set apart from a sinful world and enters a special relationship with a holy God. The Scriptures teach that “without holiness no one will see the Lord” (Heb 12:14). Only by the power of the Holy Spirit are we able to obey the command, “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’” (1Peter 1:15-16). Our behavior is our outward part of sanctification. The inward part is the person’s desire and determination not to sin and to live a holy life. There is a change from disobedient to obedient behavior, a move from worldliness (acting like sinners) to holiness (acting like Jesus).

Satan is always working to make us fall. If we were completely sanctified, we would never fall, for we would be perfectly holy. No person on earth is perfectly holy. Paul, the apostle, realized he had not reached perfection, perfect holiness. He said, “Not that I have already...been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me” (Phil 3:12).

Paul confessed his struggle to become holy when he said, “I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. ...the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. ...What a wretched man I am! (Rom 7:18-19, 24). Though at salvation Paul was declared holy before God, he realized that holiness is a process. Only the power of Christ Jesus living in him could set him free from the power of sin. Paul makes the struggle and victory clear when he says, “Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in

accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.... You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit if the Spirit of God lives in you” (Rom 8:5, 9).

In the next lesson you will learn more about the process of sanctification, including God’s part and our part in this process.

The ninth *Statement of Faith* says, “We believe sanctification is working with the Holy Spirit to separate ourselves from sin and to dedicate ourselves to God.” Our memory verse says: “I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship” (Rom 12:1).

This story is **important** because Paul helps us understand the struggle between the old sinful nature of a person and the new creation nature that wants to please God. Sanctification has two sides. When a person receives Christ as Savior, God sees them as holy. The Holy Spirit comes to stay and help a person to be holy. A person actually becomes holy only as they choose to reject that which is evil and dedicate themselves to God.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that we are declared sanctified and holy with Christ’s holiness at salvation. The change in our behavior from worldliness to holiness is a process called ‘sanctification.’ The Holy Spirit living in us will help us make the right choices.

Let’s **review** this lesson—

1. What is sanctification? [Pause.]
A. If you answered, “Sanctification is what God the Holy Spirit does in us after we are saved—separating us from sin to God,” you answered correctly.
2. What are the two parts of sanctification in the believer? [Pause.]
A. If you answered that our behavior is the outward part of sanctification and our desire and determination not to sin and to live a holy life instead, is the inward part, you are correct.
3. What did the apostle Paul say is our victory in our struggle with sin? [Pause.]
A. If you answered, “Our victory is when we are controlled by the Spirit,” you are right.

Your **assignment** is to memorize the ninth *Statement of Faith*: “We believe sanctification is working with the Holy Spirit to separate ourselves from sin and to dedicate ourselves to God.” The memory verse is: “I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship” (Rom 12:1). Share with two other people your testimony of walking in the Spirit in order to live a holy life. Pray with them that this may be their experience too.