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## Sanctification

### First Corinthians 1:2 and 6:9-11

**Sanctification DIG:** Why is perfectionism impossible? What are the three aspects of sanctification? What is justification? When did it happen? Why are we sanctified? Who participates in our practical sanctification? Who ultimately sanctifies? What is the result of our growth in holiness? What is our ultimate hope?

**REFLECT:** Since God the Father justified you at the moment of faith in Yeshua, can you imagine the Son ever denying this? How have you grown spiritually since you were saved? Write down some examples? How did this happen? What is glorification? Who is glorified? When does it happen? When does our struggle end?

**Sanctification means to be set apart; specifically, to the holy use and purposes of God.**

The doctrine of **sanctification** cannot be interpreted by experience. Only one aspect of **sanctification** out of three (see **three aspects** below) deals with the problems of human experience in daily life. Thus, some personal experience must not be substituted for the teaching **of the Word of God**. Even if **sanctification** were limited to the field of human experience, there would never be an experience that could be proven to be its perfect example, nor would any human statement of that experience exactly describe the full measure of the divine reality. The Bible interprets experience; experience does not interpret the Bible. Thus, our experiences will be validated by Scripture.

What does it mean to be set apart for the purposes of **God**? **Yeshua** was set apart to go into the world to fulfill the will of **the Father (John 17:18-19; Second Timothy 2:21; First Peter 3:15)**. **He** set **Himself** apart at the cross; **He** set **Himself** apart by physical death; **He** set **Himself** apart to be separated from **the Father** when **He** cried **out with a loud voice: Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46)**; **He** set

**Himself** apart, totally and completely to the will of **the Father** so that **He** could say: **Here I am, I have come to do your will (Hebrews 10:9 quoting Psalm 40:6-8). The apostles** were set apart by **Messiah** to go as **His** representatives, as **His ambassadors**, to reveal **the Son**, so that **He** might continue to reveal **the Father**.

Three words have a common connotation, and signify that which has been set apart for the holy use and purposes of **God**. These words primarily had to do with one's position, not with one's experience or practice. **Sanctify** means to be set apart (**Hebrews 7:26**). **Holy** is used over 400 times in the TaNaKh and 12 times in the B'rit Chadashah. The word **holy** means to be set apart from what is unholy. The root word is related to the word **sanctification**. **Yeshua Messiah** is said to be holy because **He** is set apart, or set off, or divided from that which is worldly. **Kedoshim** means holy ones and is used in the TaNaKh, and **saints** is the common reference to believers in the B'rit Chadashah.

**Sanctification** is not a state of sinlessness. John Wesley and Charles Finney misused the Holiness Movement and taught that perfection was possible in this life. A good book to read on this is *Studies in Perfectionism* by Benjamin B. Warfield, published in 1931. Perfectionism teaches either complete freedom from known sin or sometimes actual sinlessness. But after all is said and done, I really don't think B. B. Warfield needed to write his book when all he had to do was to ask the wives what they thought of their husbands who believed that they had reached perfection! At any rate, **perfectionism is impossible for two reasons**.

**First, common sense:** What did **the Master** say the two greatest commandments were? Known as **the Sh'ma** (see the commentary on **Deuteronomy, to see link click Bw - Sh'ma Isra'el**) and reaffirmed by **Yeshua** in the B'rit Chadashah: **You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind (Matthes 22:37)**. True perfection, true sinlessness would mean that every moment of every day, you would have to be fulfilling **the Sh'ma!** But **Paul**, in **Romans 7**, says: **I don't do the things I want to do**. We fall short of **Matthew 22:37** every day in thought, word, and deed.

What must you do if you think it's possible to perfect yourself? If you think you can become free of known sin, or actually become sinless, you must re-define sin to maintain that state. However, by rejecting sin, we must disobey **ADONAI** because we were supposed to confess our sins. **John** tells us that **if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all**

**unrighteousness (First John 1:9).** If we deny our sin, what we are saying is that **God** can't use our struggle with sin to perfect our character.

**Second, Scripture:** (see the commentary on **Romans Cb - The Inner Conflict**). These verses in **Romans 7:14-25** refer to the believers' experience because **Paul** wrote them as a mature, godly man, not as a backslidden believer. **Paul** had killed believers in Messiah around 30 AD. This is twenty-five years later in 57 AD (see the commentary on **Galatians Ae - Dates of the Books of the B'rit Chadashah**). The point is that as a mature believer, **he** still struggled with sin.

**There are three aspects to sanctification:** To **sanctify** occurs more than one-hundred times in the TaNaKh and more than thirty times in the B'rit Chadashah:

**1. Positional sanctification (or justification):** **Justification** is the act of **God the Father** whereby, negatively, **He** forgives our sins and, positively, **God** declares us to be **righteous** by transferring all of **Messiah's righteousness** to us by faith (**Luke 18:9-14**). It is a one-time event that happens at the moment of salvation (see **The Life of Christ Bw - What God Does for Us at the Moment of Salvation**). Once **God the Father** declares us **righteous**, **His** judgment is final (see **The Life of Christ Ms - The Eternal Security of the Believer**). But **it** is not a reward for anything good we have done. It is an undeserved free gift. And it is not something that we cooperate with **God** in accomplishing (see **The Life of Christ Ct - The Authority of the Son**).

**2. Practical sanctification (or spiritual growth in holiness):** **God the Father** has already declared you **righteous** at the moment of salvation and set you apart in **holiness** for **His** purposes. Therefore, you have been declared acceptable to **God** by **His** legal act of justifying you through **Yeshua Messiah**. This is true of the weakest and youngest believer. This does not depend on your maturity, your knowledge, your good works, your feelings, or your own **righteousness**. It is a divine work of **God** in which we cooperate. **He** sets believers apart for **Himself**, and is a result of our yieldedness to **Him (First Corinthians 1:2 and 6:9-11; Jeremiah 1:5; Hebrews 10:10 and 14)**. There is a struggle involved in **sanctification (Romans 6:13-16 and Titus 2:14)**. It takes work (**Romans 12:1-2; First Peter 5:8-9; First Corinthians 10:13; Hebrews 12:3-4**). And is a process that takes a lifetime (**Second Corinthians 3:18 and Ephesians 4:11-16**)! The end result of our **sanctification** is inward **peace (Isaiah 32:17)**, the outward result is **good spiritual fruit (Second Corinthians 9:8 and Second Peter 1:5-11)**, and the upward result is that **God is honored (John 15:8)**.

**3. Ultimate sanctification (or glorification):** The final stage of the process of sanctification is glorification. In Paul's words, those who God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son . . . and those whom He predestined He also called; and those whom He called He also justified; and those He justified He also glorified (Romans 8:29-30).

**Glorification** is the point at which the doctrine of salvation and doctrine of the last things overlap, for it looks beyond this life to the world to come (First John 3:2; Jude 24; Ephesians 5:27; First Corinthians 1:7-8). **Glorification** is multidimensional. It involves both individual and collective eschatology. It involves the perfecting of the spiritual nature of the individual believer, which takes place at death, when the believer passes into the presence of **the Lord**. It involves the perfecting of the bodies of all believers, which will occur at the time of the resurrection in connection with the Second Coming of **Messiah** (see the commentary on [Isaiah Kg - The Second Coming of Jesus Christ to Bozrah](#)). It even involves transformation of the entire creation (see [Romans Ck - The Creation and Redemption](#)).<sup>88</sup>



**Paul** teaches us that even though **sanctification** is a cooperative effort (see [Ay - The Believer's Role in Sanctification](#)): **May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Yeshua Messiah (First Thessalonians 5:23-24).** Therefore, ultimately it is **ADONAI** who **sanctifies** us (see [Az - God's Role in Sanctification](#)) and **molds us into the image of Messiah (Romans 8:29b).** We cannot do it alone as a result of our sin nature. We have a battle with sin until our death (**Second Peter 1:5-8; First Timothy 1:15 and 18; Proverbs 4:18; First Timothy 6:12; Job 17:9; Second Timothy 4:7; Second Peter 3:18).**