## THE EQUIP INSTITUTE Theme: Christian Belief **Topic: Sanctification** Spring 2024 Introduction The Equip Institute exists to equip members of Taylors First Baptist Church to think rightly about God and His Word for the sake of living rightly before God in His world. This week's topic is sanctification. What's the Big Idea? While justification is a one-time, unrepeatable event, sanctification continues throughout the duration of the Christian life. Sanctification is the theological term we use to describe the ongoing spiritual maturity of a follower of Jesus Christ. The English words "sanctity," "sanctify," and "sanctification" are all tied to the biblical terms gadosh (Heb) and hagios (Gk), which we most often translate into English as the word "holy." There are two different aspects of sanctification: positional and progressive. In positional sanctification, we are set apart as holy unto God on account of our justification through Christ's imputed righteousness. In progressive sanctification, we become increasingly righteous as we mature in our faith and thus grow in personal godliness. In our sanctification we increasingly become what God declares us to be in our justification: righteous. Progressive sanctification is an outworking of Positional sanctification. We will be fully sanctified when we are glorified at the end of the age. What Does the Bible Say? Both positional and progressive sanctification are taught in the Old Testament. Sanctification is on account of God's unmerited grace toward Israel. Commands to be holy are rooted in Israel's status as God's holy people. Progressive sanctification flows from positional sanctification. (Deut. 7:6-8; Exod. 20:1-3; Lev. 20:7-8). The New Testament further develops this understanding



of sanctification. In particular, the Holy Spirit is seen to play a key role in progressive sanctification, empowering believers to obey God's commands and grow in personal

holiness. The fruit of sanctification is ongoing

mortification (putting to death) of one's sin. Progressive sanctification isn't optional but is promised to all Christians. Sanctification is an important line of evidence that one is truly a believer. The end result of sanctification is glorification, when we are freed from both the power and presence of sin. (1 Cor. 6:9–11; 1 Thess. 5:23; Col. 3:5; Gal. 5:16–24; Matt. 7:16–20; 1 Pet. 1:13–16; 1 John 3:2–3)

## What Has the Church Said?

Throughout church history, there have been four main views of sanctification, each of which is advocated today by various traditions.

The Roman Catholic view collapses justification and sanctification into each other, normally under the former term. God infuses holiness into the Christian's life through faith and faithful participation in the sacraments, which in turn causes him to grow in progressive holiness. In terms of what personal holiness actually looks like, Catholics tend to emphasize the cultivation of virtue rather than the mortification of sin; the latter is addressed through confession and penance.

The Wesleyan view argues for "Christian perfection" or "entire sanctification." In this view, some Christians experience a second baptism of the Holy Spirit that frees them from the desire to willfully sin. Though "perfected" Christians can fall into sin, they won't choose to sin. John Wesley briefly entertained this view, though Charles Finney, Hannah Whitall Smith, and Phoebe Palmer popularized it in the 19th century. Nazarenes, Holiness groups, some Pentecostals, and some conservative Methodists hold this view today.

The **Keswick view** (also called "Higher Life") argues for ongoing fillings of the Holy Spirit that grant Christians victory over particular sins and empowers them for seasons of heightened fruitfulness in evangelism and other ministries. The Keswick view was an intentional modification of the Wesleyan view by 19th-century evangelicals such as D. L. Moody, R. A. Torrey, and F. B. Meyer. It has been especially prominent among revivalists and the preachers on the prophecy conference circuit. Some noteworthy Southern Baptists have held this view, but it has never been the dominant understanding of sanctification in our tradition.

The <b>Reformational view</b> argues that progressive	
sanctification is a process that begins with conversion and	
continues throughout the Christian life, though perfect	
holiness is impossible in this life. According to this view,	
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gradual growth in Christian maturity is the norm for	
Christians and, humanly speaking, validates one's	
justification. Both Lutherans and Calvinists affirmed	
variations of this view during the Reformation, and it was	
dominant within both the Puritan and Pietist traditions	
that were the foundation of the modern evangelical	
movement during the 18th century. The reformational	
view remains the dominant position among Lutherans,	
Presbyterians, Anglicans, and most Baptists. Charles	
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Spurgeon, J. C. Ryle, and J. I. Packer are noteworthy	
proponents of the Reformational view.	
What Should We Believe?	
Christian maturity is a "long obedience in the same	
direction." Gradually, Christians grow in personal holiness,	
both mortifying sin and cultivating godly virtues.	
Perfection is never achieved in this life (Rom. 7; 1 John	
1:8–10), though over time we become increasingly what	
God declares us to be in our justification: righteous, holy,	
set apart, consecrated for His purposes. In the new	
creation, the work of sanctification will finally be complete,	
and believers will be fully glorified.	
The Baptist Faith and Message (2000)	
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Sanctification is the experience, beginning in	
regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's	
purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and	
spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the	
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Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should	
continue throughout the regenerate person's life.	
Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final	
blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.	
How Should We Then Live?	
We need to understand the relationship between the law	
and the gospel in Scripture.	
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We need to remember that the Lord is at work in us to	
make us more like Christ, but we respond to His divine	

initiative through putting our sin to death and cultivating

godly virtues.

We should avail ourselves of the means of grace that are commanded in Scripture or are consistent with biblical principles.	
We need to remember that our sanctification has a powerful "validating" role to play in our evangelism and service.	
Recommended Reading	
David Powlison, How Does Sanctification Work? (Crossway, 2017).	
Kevin DeYoung, The Hole in Our Holiness: Filling the Gap between Gospel Passion and the Pursuit of Godliness (Crossway, 2014).	
J. I. Packer, Rediscovering Holiness: Know the Fullness of Life with God (Baker, 2009).	
Michael Allen, Sanctification (Zondervan Academic, 2017).	
David C. Mathis, Habits of Grace: Enjoying Jesus through the Spiritual Disciplines (Crossway, 2016).	
John Owen, <i>Mortification of Sin</i> (1656; many editions available).	
J.C. Ryle, <i>Holiness</i> (1879; many editions available).	
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