

SANCTIFICATION 1.

Or 'God Is In The Business of Changing People'

By Jonny Matthew

PRAY

Romans 8:1-14

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.³ For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh,⁴ in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

⁵ Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. ⁶ The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷ The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. ⁸ Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.

⁹ You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. ¹¹ And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

¹² Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. ¹³ For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

Considering the implications of Steve's word the last week about Jesus' coming – ready or not! About being those who live ready.

*Matt.24:44 - So **you also must be ready**, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.*

We want to be those who live ready:

- We don't want to be those who have lost their conscience
- Those whose faith is at odds with their moral & ethical behaviour
- We WANT to be those ACTING in faithfulness to Jesus (as Steve emphasised)

- Living in an Isaiah 58 kind of way...

v.6-7 ...to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? ⁷ Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter— when you see the naked, to clothe them, ¹

MAC 1.

Spiritual readiness, spiritual preparation and spiritual growth do NOT just happen. It comes as a result of intentional habits, that we have deliberately built into our lifestyle.’ (Steve Greening)

It is our destiny to be like Jesus – but it’s not a passive process. We don’t just jump on the destiny train and arrive later at the station of holiness.

We have to deliberately LIVE holy lives, lives befitting our king – so we’re ready when he comes!

So today I want to talk to you about SANCTIFICATION – the process by which Christians become increasingly like Jesus.

“Sanctify them through Thy truth.”—JOHN 17:17

“This is the will of God, even your sanctification.”—1 THESS. 4:3

ἁγιάζω *hagiazō*, *hag-ee-ad’-zo*; from 40; to make holy, i.e. (cer.) *purify or consecrate*; (mentally) to *venerate*:— hallow, be holy, sanctify.²

To make holy (when you hear ‘sanctified’ THINK ‘holified’ – been & being made holy)

MAC 2.

The two-track nature of understanding SANCTIFICATION

1. He (God) does it – **POSITION** - **SALVATION**– HE’S DONE IT – **MADE HOLY**
2. We respond to it – **PROCESS** – **SANCTIFICATION**– HE’S DOING IT – **BECOMING HOLY**

Heb.10:12-14 - But when this priest [JESUS] had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³ and since that time

¹ Anon, 2011. *The Holy Bible: New International Version (Anglicised Edition, 2011)* Revised and updated edition., London: Hodder & Stoughton.

i.e. i.e. = that is

² Strong, J., 1996. *The New Strong’s Dictionary of Hebrew and Greek Words*.

he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool. ¹⁴ For by one sacrifice he has **made perfect** [POSITION] for ever those who are **being made holy** [PROCESS].

Sanctification is that inward spiritual work which the Lord Jesus Christ works in a man by the Holy Ghost, when He calls him to be a true believer. He not only washes him from his sins in His own blood, [POSITION] but He also separates him from his natural love of sin and the world, puts a new principle in his heart, and makes him practically godly in life. [PROCESS] (J.C.Ryle – Holiness)

Let's take each of these in turn (the Position & the Process) and look a bit more closely at each...

1. We have **BEEN** made holy

Heb.10:9-10 Then he [Jesus] said, "Here I am, I have come to do your will." ...
10 And by that will, **we have been made holy** through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

MAC 3.

Eph.2:2-4 - As for you, **you were dead in** your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world ... then is verse 4 ... But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ **made us alive** with Christ

Acts 26:18 - [Jesus came to] ...to open their eyes and turn **them from darkness to light**, and **from the power of Satan to God**, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who **are sanctified** by faith in me.

Eph.2 - Like the rest, we were **by nature** deserving of wrath. But...

2 Pt.1:4 - ...he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them **you may participate in the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

Holiness is something that happened TO US, when we were born again – AN EVENT!

Illustration – me and my Dad. (Speaking here on 11 October)

- **POSITION** – I'm his son; I have his blood; I have his genes

1 John 3:9 - No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because **God's seed remains in them**; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God.

'Seed' literally 'sperm' Gk. σπέρμα spērma, sper'-mah; Str. 4690; from 4687; something sown, i.e. seed (inc. the male "sperm");

I can't be unborn – I am my father's son whether he or I like it or not. Whether I doubt it or not. When there are days when I DON'T 'do him proud' or whatever – I AM HIS SON!

If you can forgive the extension of the metaphor – I can't withdraw his 'seed' from me! It's done.

Jesus said in John 15:3

³ *You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.*³

Have no doubt that God's seed is in you – you ARE his child. You ARE holy, forgiven, set apart...

1. We have BEEN made holy – that's our position before God as those forgiven through the work of Jesus on the cross

2. We are BEING made holy

We read it earlier

Heb.10:14 – about Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf... ¹⁴ For by one sacrifice he has made perfect [POSITION] for ever those who are being made holy [PROCESS].

We ARE holy but we are BEING made holy – position & process

- **PROCESS** – as I get older I notice more & more things that are like him – physical (nose, voice, backs of my hands) & character, too, traits of his that I notice in me.

Part of being God's child is to BECOME increasingly like Him – SANCTIFICATION!

Part of our mission as believers is to respond to the work of the spirit in us

Charles Hodge (Systematic Theology) wrote:

i.e. i.e. = that is

incl. incl. = including, inclusive, inclusively

³ Anon, 2011. *The Holy Bible: New International Version (Anglicised Edition, 2011)* Revised and updated edition., London: Hodder & Stoughton.

The proximate result of obedience to God is inward conformity to the divine image. (p.34)

So, as we practice the 'recipe for success' that Steve's been sharing on Tuesdays – reading the word, prayer, etc. – and strive to hear him, to obey him and to please him, we WILL become more & more LIKE him.

MAC 4.

Jerry Bridges, in his book 'The Pursuit of Holiness' says:

Holiness is nothing less than conformity to the character of God. (p.26)

*Rom.8:28-9 - And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those God foreknew he also predestined **to be conformed to the image of his Son**,*

The Amplified Bible has,

*to **be molded into the image of His Son** [and share inwardly His likeness],⁴*

Conformed, molded into...

σύμμορφος, *soom-mor-fos* - *sharing the form* of another.⁵ Or fashioned **like unto** [another]⁶

Reminds me of the potter & the clay again...

Is.45:9 Does the clay say to the potter, 'What are you making?'

The Potter – the one who is forming us – He...

- KNOWS the clay
- He LOVES the clay
- **OUR ROLE is to lean in** & let Him do his thing! Let Him MOLD us to be like Him!

MAC 5.

⁴ Anon, 1987. *The Amplified Bible*, La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

⁵ Souter, A., 1917. *A Pocket Lexicon to the Greek New Testament*, p.245.

⁶ Strong, J., 1996. *The New Strong's Dictionary of Hebrew and Greek Words*.

Larry Tomczak in People of Destiny Magazine in 1987 (Nov/Dec) wrote:

*...holiness is a lifelong process. It's the **adventure of co-operation** with the Holy Spirit as he sanctifies us by the word of God and transforms us by our **willing obedience**. (p.19)*

So, there you go!...

- | |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. We have BEEN made holy – that's our POSITION before God as those forgiven through the work of Jesus on the cross2. We are BEING made holy – that's the PROCESS we're in, as we co-operate with the work of God to make us more like him. |
|--|

Next week I want to look a bit more closely at HOW we can maximise this, what we need to DO!

SANCTIFICATION 2.

Or 'God Is In The Business of Changing People'

By Jonny Matthew

PRAY

Romans 8:1-14

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.³ For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh,⁴ in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

⁵ Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. ⁶ The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷ The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. ⁸ Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.

⁹ You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. ¹¹ And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

¹² Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. ¹³ For if you live according to the flesh, you will

die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

Last week we looked at the idea of sanctification – the ‘holifying’ process we’re all now in

MAC 6.

- We looked at our POSITION – we have BEEN MADE holy by Jesus’ work on the cross, and...
- We looked at the PROCESS – we are BEING made holy by the work of the spirit in us now

We finished off last week looking at Larry Tomczak’s quote in *People of Destiny Magazine* in 1987 (Nov/Dec) wrote:

*...holiness is a lifelong process. It’s the **adventure of co-operation** with the Holy Spirit as he sanctifies us by the word of God and transforms us by our **willing obedience**. (p.19)*

So, how do we co-operate with this work God is doing in us, to make us more like Jesus?

4 Things we can do to further God’s work of sanctification in us

1. Accept our responsibility

MAC 7.

Jerry Bridges in *‘The Pursuit of Holiness’* wrote:

*The New Testament leaves no doubt that holiness is our **responsibility**. (p.86)*

Bishop J.C. Ryle in his book *Holiness*, wrote:

*I maintain that believers are eminently and peculiarly **responsible** and under special **obligation** to live holy lives...[because]...they are alive to God. (p.19-20)*

Paul in 2 Cor.5:9

*...we make it our goal to **please Him**.*

1 Peter 1:15

*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”***

We are not puppets – automatically responding to the whim of God, we have to acknowledge our responsibility to act in line with his promptings.

- 'It's just the way I am' – is not a valid excuse for sin
- 'My mother was like this, so I am too – what can you do?' – has no place in Christian life
- 'I've tried, but just keep falling back into my old ways' – is self-centred defeatism

Whilst all of these may be true, they're not a reason to give up on becoming more like Jesus

We're in a war to resist the pull of the flesh, of sin, and to fully allow the work of the gospel to holify us and make us more & more Christ-like.

MAC 8.

Paul writes about this push/pull war against sin in Romans 7:21-5

*²¹ So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. ²² For in my inner being I delight in God's law; ²³ but I see another law at work in me, **waging war** against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. ²⁴ What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!*⁷

We have a responsibility to keep waging war against sin, to keep allowing God to work in us, to accept our responsibility to live obediently and keep co-operating with the work of sanctification!

1. Accept our responsibility to be holy

2. Enhance our receptivity

We don't automatically hear God's promptings – we must be attentive.

ILLUS: Voice game - Joby in the cupboard – I KNOW her voice

So, how can we familiarise ourselves with and be receptive to the voice of God?

2 things: **a)** Expose ourselves to the word of God, and **b)** Open ourselves up to trusted others

a) Open (expose) ourselves to the word of God

Jesus prayed:

Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. (John 17:17)

Just reading the Bible has a sanctifying – a holifying – effect on us.

⁷ Anon, 2011. *The New International Version*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Bridges again:

Every Christian who makes progress in holiness is a person who has disciplined his life so that he spends regular time in the Bible. There simply is no other way. (p.101)

So, here's the application question: how much time do I spend with the Bible?

Compare it with how much time we spend:

- Drinking wine,
- Playing golf
- Watching telly
- Reading other things

Theophrastus wrote:

Time is the most valuable thing a man can spend⁸

One of the best things to spend it on is God's word – read it, listen to it, consume it!

The Bible is a plumbline (Amos 7:8). It sets the **standard** for attitudes and actions, thoughts and behaviours

b) Open ourselves up to trusted others

*Many of those who believed now came and **openly confessed** their evil deeds. Acts 19:18*

Context for this verse is the extraordinary miracles the disciples were performing and the casting out of the demons – the fear of God creates the felt need to deal with sin!

The confession of sin is not just for salvation – the Good News version of this verse reads like this:

Many of the believers came, publicly admitting and revealing what they had done. Acts 19:18

1843. **ἐξομολογέω** *ex-om-ol-og-eh'-o*; from 1537 and 3670; to *acknowledge* or (by impl. of *assent*) *agree fully*:— confess, profess, promise.⁹

- **To acknowledge, confess or profess**

MAC 9.

⁸ From Diogenes Laertius, Lives of Eminent Philosophers
impl. impl. = implied, impliedly, implication

⁹ Strong, J., 1996. *The New Strong's Dictionary of Hebrew and Greek Words*.

David Watson in his book *Discipleship* said:

The acknowledgement of sin in the presence of another [believer] is a safeguard against self-deception. (p.53)

The principle of accountability, if applied, gives added support, encouragement and incentive in dealing with issues that need to change in us – husband/wife; close friend; HGL

Accountability can really help keep us going in the right way – let's be a church that is honest about our battles with sin and let's be supportive of others to sort it out!

1. Accept our responsibility to be holy
2. Enhance our receptivity (expose ourselves to the Bible; open ourselves up to trusted others)

3. Take action to change

MAC 10.

*Colossians 3:5 **Put to death**, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.*

The ESV says it like this...

*Put to death therefore what is **earthly** in you*

Ephesians 4:22-24

*You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, **to put off your old self**, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to **put on the new self**, created to be **like God** in true righteousness and holiness.*

It takes ACTION to change our attitudes & behaviour. Don't just THINK about changing, don't just PLAN to change – we have to DO SOMETHING about it, make the change itself!

MAC 11.

Jerry Bridges again:

If we are to pursue holiness, we must take some decisive action (p.86)

Thomas A'Kempis in his *Imitation of Christ*, writes:

*Two things in particular are a great help to the amendment of life – a **forcible withdrawal** from any vice to which our nature inclines, and a **ferveat pursuit** of any grace of which we stand in particular need. (p.63)*

On other words:

1. STOP what needs to be changed; or START what needs to be started

2. RECEIVE whatever grace we need to help us
3. ACT differently

We mustn't excuse it by say, 'it's just the way I am'...

We have to go beyond THEORY and on into PRACTICE

Steve Farrar in his book *Point Man* (talking about reading the bible and praying) says:

...application's the name of the game in the Christian life. Without it we're just playing games. (p.111)

It's not a game – we're here to glorify God, to reflect him, be like he is – increasingly

James says: ...faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. (James 2:17)

So, let's take action to change

1. Accept our responsibility to be holy
2. Enhance our receptivity (expose ourselves to the Bible; open ourselves up to trusted others)
3. Take action to change

4. Keep abandoning ourselves to the holy spirit

Remember, **we can't do** all the changing ourselves – this is about **co-operation with what God is doing** in us!

These principles can NEVER replace the work of HS – they can only enhance it, allow it, yield to it.

ILLUS: Child born: we don't give it a bowler hat, broly & a briefcase & then send it off to work

The child needs it's parents to help it grow, learn & develop into independence

WE NEED OUR HEAVENLY FATHER!

Bob Mumford (MTP KOG) writes:

I don't need Jesus to do more FOR me, yet I do need him to do more IN me. (p.6)

THAT'S what sanctification is all about – what God is doing in us, with our co-operation – to make us like Jesus.

He's sanctifying us – holifying us – so that we reflect him more fully. Blessing follows obedience!

There that's it:

1. Accept our responsibility to be holy
2. Enhance our receptivity (expose ourselves to the Bible; open ourselves up to trusted others)
3. Take action to change – open ourselves to his word, open ourselves up to others
4. Take decisive action – identify something to change, ask for God's help, start to be different.

Let me leave you with this question:

What needs to change in your life & what are you going to do about it?