

- I. How Theology Shapes Marriage Part 3: How does the biblical doctrines of sanctification help us have a more godly marriage?
- a. Establish the need: Do you know what is the doctrine of sanctification? And have you ever wonder how does those doctrines helps our marriage? This is a brief sketch.
 - b. Purpose: In this series we will explore how theology shapes marriage and here in our third session we shall consider how does the doctrine of sanctification helps us have a more godly marriage.
 - c. Biblical Teaching (For the purpose of instruction, we'll cover only six truths):
 - i. Truth #1: What is sanctification?
 - a. Sanctification literally means to be set apart, to make holy.
 - b. Basis: **1 Peter 1:16** states "*You shall be holy, for I am holy*"
 - c. According to Wayne Grudem's definition, "Sanctification is a progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and like Christ in our actual lives."¹
 - d. According to Wayne Grudem's definition: "The Christian Pursuit of God-given Holiness" (Michael Riccardi, Sanctification, 7).
 - e. My modified definition: "The Christian joyful pursuit of being set apart by being like Christ."
 - ii. Truth #2: The Goal of Sanctification is to be more transformed to be more like Christ
 1. "*But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.*" (**2 Corinthians 3:18**)
 - a. Note the verse mentioned "*being transformed*"
 - b. The Greek verb "*transformed*" has the idea of being changed from the inside out.
 - c. What are we being transformed into? "*into the same image.*" But what is "*the same image*?" Look below.
 2. "*For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;*" (**Romans 8:29**)
 - a. Here we are to be conformed to the image of His Son!
 - b. That's the goal!
 3. "*Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.*" (**1 John 3:2**)
 - iii. Truth #3: Sanctification is the work of God
 1. Remember earlier **2 Corinthians 3:18** taught "*being transformed into the same image ... from the Lord, the Spirit.*" (**2 Corinthians 3:18**)
 2. "*Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without*

¹ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 746.

blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Thessalonians 5:23)

- a. Note here that it God Himself who sanctifies entirely.
 - b. From start to end, it is the work of God, from early part of us (“*your spirit and soul and body*”) the preserving sanctifying work is by Him!
3. There are passive verbs on “sanctifying” that shows it is the work of God (**Acts 20:32, Hebrews 10:10**)
- iv. Truth #4: Sanctification involves our responsibilities
1. “*For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from [d]sexual immorality;*” (**1 Thessalonians 4:3**)
 2. Think of all those commands in the Bible for us to walk in Him and pursue godliness. It shows and presupposes our responsibilities!
- v. Truth #5: Sanctification is progressive
1. We must acknowledge that there is a past, present and future aspect to sanctification which also has practical implications for our lives (see <https://veritasdomain.wordpress.com/2016/02/27/sanctification-positional-progressive-and-perfected/>) but Scripture’s main emphasis is on the progressive and present sanctification of the believers.
 2. “*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*” (**Philippians 3:13-14**)
 - a. Note the forward focus.
 - b. We are reaching towards the goal in our walk with God.
- vi. Truth #6: Sanctification is a benefit: “*But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.*” (**Romans 6:22**)
1. A truth is stated of what God has done for us: “*having been freed from sin and enslaved to God,*”
 2. Note this verse says “*you derive your benefit,*”
 3. What is the benefit? “*resulting in sanctification,*”
- d. Implications towards marriage
- i. The goal of marriage is not primarily to please the other partner with our conduct and attitude; rather it is to please God!
 1. Paul does acknowledge that married partners pleases one another: “*but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife,*” (**1 Corinthians 7:33**).
 2. However if Christian’s main goal of life is to be conformed to Christ, then pleasing a partner must be secondary.
 3. We are driven to please God first!
 4. Therefore all marriage problem is first a problem of being with God first and not please ourselves.

- ii. With the sins in our marriage problem, we can never say we can't change
 - 1. Remember sanctification is the work of God! The work of a Sovereign God!
 - 2. Let Paul's work sink in: "*For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.*" (Philippians 1:6).
 - 3. Therefore we have hope in God with our marriage problem! Do you hope in God?
- iii. Since sanctification is progressive, we need to realize change is slow. We must be patient with our spouse!
 - 1. Also even as we are patient with our spouse with God's work in our lives, don't forget God is also trying to transform you to be patient and loving!
 - 2. Sanctification is a two way street!
- iv. Since sanctification is progressive, we can never say we are perfect. Thus there is always room for growth! No room for pride of having arrived!
- v. Since sanctification involves our responsibilities, we must work hard in pursuing Godly virtues in our marriage!
 - 1. We can't become hyper-Calvinistic by saying "let go and let God..."
 - 2. Pursue with all energy Godliness, yet knowing God is giving you that strength and pray for God to strengthen you to pursue Godliness!
- vi. Since Sanctification is a benefit we must have joy in pursuing sanctification and godliness!
 - 1. What is your motive like? Does it reflect your faith in His word that it's a benefit rather than a hinderance to your marriage?
 - 2. Meditate on this truth, and be motivated to pursue Godliness in marriage!