

SESSION ONE—GROWING IN HOLINESS: THE CHRISTIAN’S NEW IDENTITY

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- I. Introduction: Positional/Definitive Sanctification as the basis for Progressive/Incremental Sanctification; or, the Indicative (who we are in Christ) as the basis for the Imperative (how we should live as Christians)
- A. Positional Sanctification: the present position or status of believers, from the moment of their conversion, of being definitively and unalterably separated unto God, in Christ. Thus, they are called “saints” or holy ones indicating their irreversible new identity as those who are separated from darkness to light, from the dominion of Satan to the kingdom of God’s beloved Son – Acts 26:18; 1 Cor 1:2; 6:11; Col 1:13-14; Heb 10:10 (cf. Rom 6:1-11; Eph 1-3)
- Acts 26:18 – [Paul’s missionary call to the Gentiles]: to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.
- 1 Cor 1:2 – To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified [perf ps prtc] in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours
- 1 Cor 6:11 – Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified [aor ps prtc], but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.
- Col 1:13-14 – ¹³ For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.
- Heb 10:10 – By this will we have been sanctified [perf ps prtc] through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.
- B. Progressive Sanctification: the continuous operation of the HS, enjoining the believer’s willful participation, to strengthen our newly imparted disposition toward holiness, freeing us increasingly from the power of sin and renewing us increasingly into the image of Christ – Rom 6:19; Col 1:10-14; 2 Cor 3:18; 1 Thess 4:3; 5:23; 2 Tm 2:21 (cf. Rom 6:12-23; Eph 4-6)
- Rom 6:19 – I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification.
- Col 1:10-14 – ¹⁰ so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹ strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously ¹² giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. ¹³ For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.
- 2 Cor 3:18 – 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.
- 1 Thess 4:3 – For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality
- 1 Thess 5:23 – Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2 Tm 2:21 – Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.
- II. The Christian’s New Identity
- A. Chosen by God / Elect of God – Deut 14:2; Eph 1:3-6; Col 3:12; 2 Thess 2:13; 1 Pet 2:9

Deut 14:2 – For you are a holy people to the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

Eph 1:3-6 – ³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, ⁴just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love ⁵He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, ⁶to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

Col 3:12 – So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience

2 Thess 2:13 – But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.

1 Pet 2:9 – But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light

B. Called by/of God – Rom 8:29-30; 1 Cor 1:9, 22-24; Rom 9:23-24; 1 Pet 5:10; 2 Pet 1:10

Rom 8:29-30 – ²⁹For 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; ³⁰and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

1 Cor 1:9 – God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 Cor 1:22-24 – ²²For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; ²³but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, ²⁴but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Rom 9:23-24 – ²³And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, ²⁴even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.

1 Pet 5:10 – After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.

2 Pet 1:10 – Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble;

C. Union with Christ – John 15:4-5; Rom 6:1-11; 7:1-6; 13:14; Gal 2:20; 5:24

John 15:4-5 – ⁴Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. ⁵I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

Rom 6:1-11 – ¹What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? ²May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? ³Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? ⁴Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, ⁶knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; ⁷for he who has died is freed from sin. ⁸Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, ⁹knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is

master over Him. ¹⁰ For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. ¹¹ Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Rom 7:1-6 – ¹ Or do you not know, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know the law), that the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives? ² For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband. ³ So then, if while her husband is living she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress though she is joined to another man. ⁴ Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God. ⁵ For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death. ⁶ But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

Rom 13:14 – But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.

Gal 2:20 – I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Gal 5:24 – Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

D. Justification-Sanctification Link – James 2:14-26; Rom 5:1-5; Eph 2:8-10; Gal 2:16 w/ 2:20

James 2:14-26 – ¹⁴ What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,” and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? ¹⁷ Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself. ¹⁸ But someone may well say, “You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.” ¹⁹ You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. ²⁰ But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless? ²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? ²² You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; ²³ and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS,” and he was called the friend of God. ²⁴ You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone. ²⁵ In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? ²⁶ For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

Rom 5:1-5 – ¹ Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. ³ And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; ⁴ and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; ⁵ and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Eph 2:8-10 – ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; ⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

Gal 2:16 – nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.
Gal 2:20 – I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

E. Adopted into God’s Family – Eph 1:5; Rom 8:14-17; Gal 4:4-7; 1 John 3:1-2

Eph 1:5 – He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will
Rom 8:14-17 – ¹⁴For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. ¹⁵For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!” ¹⁶The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.
Gal 4:4-7 – ⁴But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, ⁵so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. ⁶Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” ⁷Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.
1 John 3:1-2 – ¹See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. ²Beloved, 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.
Isa 43:1, 7 – ¹ . . . I have called you by name; you are Mine. ⁷Everyone who is called by My name, and whom I have created for My glory, whom I have formed, even whom I have made.

F. Temple of the Holy Spirit – 1 Cor 3:16; 6:18-20; Rom 8:3-4, 9-11; Gal 5:16-26; Eph 1:13-14; 1 Thess 4:8

1 Cor 3:16 – Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?
1 Cor 6:18-20 – ¹⁸Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. ¹⁹Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? ²⁰For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.
Rom 8:3-4 – ³For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.
Rom 8:9-11 – ⁹However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. ¹⁰If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. ¹¹But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.
Gal 5:16-26 – ¹⁶But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. ¹⁷For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. ¹⁸But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. ¹⁹Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of

anger, disputes, dissensions, factions,²¹ envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴ Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. ²⁶ Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.

Eph 1:13-14 – ¹³ In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory.

1 Thess 4:8 – So, he who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you.

G. People of the New Covenant – Jer 31:31-34; Luke 22:20; 2 Cor 3:1-6; Rom 8:3-4 (cf. Heb 8-10)

Jer 31:31-34 – ³¹ “Behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, ³² not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD. ³³ “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the LORD, “I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ³⁴ “They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares the LORD, “for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”

Luke 22:20 – And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.”

2 Cor 3:1-6 – ¹ Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some, letters of commendation to you or from you? ² You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men; ³ being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. ⁴ Such confidence we have through Christ toward God. ⁵ Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, ⁶ who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

Rom 8:3-4 – ³ For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

H. Knowledge of God – Isa 11:9; Jer 31:31-34; John 17:3; Phil 3:7-11

Isa 11:9 – They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea.

Jer 31:31-34 – ³¹ “Behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, ³² not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD. ³³ “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the LORD, “I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they

shall be My people. ³⁴They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

John 17:3 – This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

Phil 3:7-11 – ⁷But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, ⁹and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, ¹⁰that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; ¹¹in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

I. New Creation – Rom 6:6-7; 2 Cor 5:17; Eph 4:22-24; Col 3:9-11

Rom 6:6-7 – ⁶knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; ⁷for he who has died is freed from sin.

2 Cor 5:17 – Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

Eph 4:22-24 – ²²that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, ²³and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

Col 3:9-11 – ⁹Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, ¹⁰and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him— ¹¹a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all.

J. Abiding Sin – Rom 13:11-14; Gal 5:16-17; Col 3:10; James 3:2; 1 Pet 2:11; 1 John 1:8

Rom 13:11-14 – ¹¹Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. ¹²The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. ¹³Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. ¹⁴But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.

Gal 5:16-17 – ¹⁶But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. ¹⁷For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.

Col 3:10 – and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him

James 3:2 – For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well.

1 Pet 2:11 – Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.

1 John 1:8 – If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.