

Synergistic Sanctification – Part 01

Philippians 2:12

Series: Joy and Gratitude in Christ

1. Introduction

- a. Today we are going to use a couple of words that need to be defined:
 - i. **Monergism** – an act of only one person
 - ii. **Synergism** – an act involving multiple persons cooperating to achieve a goal.
 - iii. **Sanctification** - The generic meaning of sanctification is "the state of proper functioning." To sanctify someone or something is to set that person or thing apart for the use intended by its designer...A human being is sanctified, therefore, when he or she lives according to God's design and purpose. The Greek word translated "sanctification" (hagiasmos [[aJ-gi-as-mov](#)]) means "holiness." To sanctify, therefore, means "to make holy."
- b. Reformed theology has, as a tenant, that salvation is monergistic. In other words, it is a sole act of God and man contributes nothing to the regeneration of the sole. To be sure, man must repent and put his faith in Christ, but he is able to do so only because God has first drawn him to the Son.
 - i. **John 6:44** No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day...**John 6:65** And he said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father."
- c. However, after regeneration, then comes the process of sanctification. The Scriptures clearly teach that this is a synergistic relationship.
 - i. On the one hand, man must strive for holiness,
 - ii. and on the other hand, God ensures that each elected person is sanctified.
 - iii. Today, we will see man's role in the sanctification process.
- d. From the earliest days of the church, the relationship between the power of God and the responsibility of believers in living the Christian life has been debated. Scripture clearly teaches that sanctification involves both God's sovereignty and human response.
 - i. **Quietism** – The view that emphasizes God's role while virtually eliminating the believer's involvement. Let go and let God.

1. Striving for personal holiness is considered to be not only futile but unspiritual and counterproductive
 - ii. **Pietism** – The view that emphasizes man’s role while virtually eliminating God’s involvement.
 1. Pietist typically pursue correct doctrine and moral purity. The problem that there is no allowance for God’s grace and quite easily, the pietist falls into pride, arrogance, and self-righteousness.
 - e. There are five truths about personal holiness found within verse 12.
2. Verse 12(a) – Truth 1: Understanding the example left for us – Therefore
 - a. We must understand the example of Christ.
 - b. Jesus’ example of humility, submission, and obedience is the example
 - c. The, therefore, is referring us back to what was previously said.
 3. Verse 12(b) – Truth 2: Understanding that we are loved - ...my beloved...
 - a. Paul loved the believers in Philippi based on the truth that he has been loved by God. So the love that is demonstrated in this verse is only possible because of God’s love.
 - i. Despite their imperfections, they were loved. This is the reason Paul directs them to holiness, because he loved them and wanted them to be pleasing to God.
 4. Verses 12 (c) – Truth 3: Understanding our duty obey - ...as you have always obeyed...
 - a. Scripture dictates that absolute necessity for the believer to understand and be committed to obedience.
 - i. The meaning of the verbs here are placing oneself under and submitting to what has been taught.
 - ii. Hence, for a believer, bible study becomes supremely important
 - iii. **Matthew 28:19-20** Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (20) teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

- iv. As Christians, we understand that obedience is essential to sanctification.
5. Verses 12(d) – Truth 4: Understanding that I am personally responsible – not only as in my presence but much more in my absence
- a. It was the believer’s duty to obey whether Paul was watching or not. God is always watching.
 - b. Because we are sinful, we tend to blame others for our defaults, failures, choices, and sin. Not so! We are responsible and no one else.
 - i. **Philippians 1:27** Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel,
6. Verse 12(e) – Truth 5: Understanding sin’s consequences - work out your own salvation with fear and trembling
- a. God is loving and forgiving but in the same token, he holds each individual believer responsible for disobedience.
 - b. Work out – keep on working; incessantly working towards to
 - c. Knowing that we serve a just and holy God should cause us to live with
 - i. Fear – Greek ***phobos*** – phobia in English.
 - 1. It is fright or terror.
 - 2. **Psalms 111:10** The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever!
 - 3. Distrusting our own righteousness
 - ii. Trembling – Greek ***tromos*** – tremor, shaking, or earthquake.
 - 1. This is the proper reaction to our own weakness
 - 2. **Isaiah 66:2** All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the LORD. But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.
 - d. Working out our Salvation involves two things –
 - i. Personal conduct is imperative
 - ii. Perseverance

7. Benediction:

- a. **Psalms 111:10** The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever!