

Of Sanctification

What is the difference between justification and sanctification?

I became a Christian once for all upon the basis of the finished work of Christ through faith; that is justification. The Christian life, sanctification, operates on the same basis, but moment by moment. There is the same base (Christ's work) and the same instrument (faith); the only difference is that one is once for all and the other is moment by moment. . . If we try to live the Christian life in our own strength we will have sorrow, but if we live in this way, we will not only serve the Lord, but in the place of sorrow, He will be our song. That is the difference. The 'how' of the Christian life is the power of the crucified and risen Lord, through the agency of the indwelling Holy Spirit, by faith moment by moment.

Francis Schaeffer

What is the relation of sanctification to regeneration?

Regeneration is the commencement of sanctification, and sanctification is the completion of the work commenced in regeneration. As regeneration is an act of God's free grace, so sanctification is a gracious work of God, and eminently of the Holy Spirit.

A.A. Hodge

Confessional language pertaining to sanctification makes use of the phrase "more and more." What do you think is the purpose of such language?

What parts of a human are affected by sanctification? (section II)

Sanctification involves the whole person – mind, emotions, will, body and soul.

Sanctification has both a "negative" and a "positive" dimension. What are these dimensions as the Confession describes them? (section III)

Sanctification includes the gradual destruction of the sinful nature, the strengthening of grace in the new man, purification of the heart and mind, and the actions that proceed therein.

Is sanctification perfected in this life? (section III)

Biblical considerations

I John 1:10

I Corinthians 10:12

Galatians 5:16

II Corinthians 10:3

Historical Views of Perfectionism:

Pelagians assert that the law of God only applies to voluntary exercises and actions (not the motivations to do evil, called concupiscence) and God would not require something of us we could not obey. Pelagius utilized Leviticus 19:2, "You shall be holy for I the Lord your God are holy" and Matthew 5:48, "You must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" in support of this argument. Augustine said, "No one lives in this corruptible body, however righteous he may be, without sins of some kind." Therefore, the evidence of true election in Christ is not perfection but rather perseverance until death.

The Arminian view states that men can do nothing right without the grace of God and even with this grace no one can keep the original Adamic law of perfection. They

maintain that God, for Christ's sake, has lowered the demands of the law in the case of believers, from absolute perfection to faith and evangelical obedience. It is the privilege and duty of all men in this life to attain perfect love and sincere obedience to the gospel law, which they call gracious or Christian perfection.

As the gospel is applied to right living—"Jonathan Edwards points out that 'true virtue' is only possible for those who have experienced the grace of the gospel. Any person who is trying to earn their salvation does the right thing in order to get into heaven, or in order to better their self-esteem. In other words, the ultimate motive is self-interest. But persons who know they are totally accepted already do the right thing out of sheer delight in righteousness for its own sake. Only in the gospel do you obey God for God's sake, and not for what God will give you. Only in the gospel do you love people for their sake (not yours), do good for its own sake (not yours), and obey God for his sake (not yours). Only the gospel makes "doing the right thing" a joy and delight, not a burden or a means to an end."

Tim Keller

What was the Galatians heresy in relationship to sanctification?

Gal. 1:6-7 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—not that there is another gospel, but there are some who are confusing you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.

A person can understand our justification to be by grace through faith alone in order to gain God's favor, one could then "work out their salvation" such that God's continued favor is predicated upon their good works. In the Galatians heresy, the Judaizers were attempting to add the Mosaic law to Christ in order to be in right standing with the church and subsequently right standing with God. While the Mosaic Law cannot be equated with "works" the principle is such that anyone who adds anything by way of a requirement to gain God's favor apart from faith in Christ alone will in effect deny grace on the back end of salvation even if affirming it on the front end.

Tim Keller noted three ways this could happen:

- (1) Many evangelical churches teach you are saved by your surrender to Christ plus right beliefs and behavior. This can reject the grace-first principle. They teach we are saved because of the level of our faith, instead of through faith. This makes our performance the savior. It is not the *level* but the *object* of our faith that saves us.
- (2) Liberal churches often teach that it doesn't matter so much what you believe as long as you are a loving and good person. This also rejects the grace-first principle by teaching that virtue is enough to get us to God. It negates the necessity of the cross and provides no hope for bad people.
- (3) Legalism is another example of a thwarted view of sanctification. Such a church might ask of its members conformity in styles of dress, dating, diet, and so on. Cultural imperialism, especially among missionaries, can be another form of legalism.

Chapter XVI. Of Good Works

What are the characteristics of good works?

1. Commanded by God

Not self-development, not the realization of an ideal end, but obedience to a personal authority without and above us, is precisely what reason, conscience, and Scripture require. The good man is the obedient man. . . . God has given in the inspired Scriptures a perfect rule of faith and practice. Every principle, every motive, and every end of right action, according to the will of God, may there be easily learned by the devout inquirer. God says to his Church: "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it (Deut. 12:32, Rev. 22:18,19). And God very energetically declares his abhorrence of uncommanded services, of "voluntary humility" and "will-worship" (Is. 1:11-12, Col. 2:16-23).

A.A. Hodge

2. Spring from faith and love

Unregenerate men perform many actions, good so far as their external relations to their fellow-men are concerned. But love to God is the foundation-principle upon which all moral duties rest, just as our relation to God is the fundamental relation upon which all our other relations rest. If a man is alienated from God, if he is not in the present exercise of trust in him and love for him, any action he can perform will lack the essential element which makes it a true obedience. Good works, according to the Scriptures, are the fruits of sanctification, having their root in regeneration; "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10). James says, (James 2:18, 22) that faith is shown by works; which of course implies that the kind of works of which he speaks springs only from a believing heart.

A. A. Hodge

What are the effects and uses of good works?

1. Express gratitude, which manifests the grace of God in the believer and thus adorns the profession of faith
2. They glorify God.
3. Develop grace by exercise increasing assurance
4. They edify the body of believers.
5. They stop the mouth of adversaries.
6. They are an essential element of salvation because grace leads to good works.

We are dependent on the Holy Spirit for them.