

# What is Sanctification & Perseverance?

Objectives are to discuss the following subtopics:

## Sanctification

1. Explanation & Scriptural Basis
2. 3 Stages in Sanctification
3. Both God & Man Cooperate
4. The Means of Sanctification
5. Sanctification Affects the Whole Person
6. Motivations for Sanctification

## Perseverance

1. Explanation & Definition
2. Scriptural Basis
3. Can a believer have assurance?

# What is Sanctification?

## BFC Article 16 - Sanctification

16-1 Sanctification is a progressive work of the Holy Spirit in the believer that purifies the life and conforms the whole man to the image of Christ as the Word of God is believed and obeyed. It begins at regeneration, continues throughout the believer's life on earth, and reaches its completion at the appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ.

## Explanation & Scriptural Basis

- While the Gospel Call, regeneration, justification & adoption are something that God does to us in a moment at the beginning of our Christian lives, sanctification is the application of that redemption and is a progressive work that continues throughout our earthly lives. Unlike the monergistic nature (one sided - without cooperation) of the previous works of God, sanctification is synergistic (two sided - with cooperation) in nature including the cooperation of the new believer.
- 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.
- Difference between Justification & Sanctification

Justification	Sanctification
Legal Standing	Internal condition
Once for all time	Continuous throughout life
Entirely God's work	We cooperate
Perfect in this life	Not perfect in this life
The same in all Christians	Greater in some than in others

### 3 Stages of Sanctification:

#### **Stage 1: Sanctification clearly has a definite beginning at regeneration.**

A definite moral change occurs in our lives at the point of regeneration. Once we have been born again we cannot continue to sin as a habit or a pattern of life because the power of new spiritual life within us keeps us from yielding to a life of sin.

**Titus 3:5** - *“He saves us not because of works done by us in righteousness but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.”*

**1 Cor 6:11** - *“And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”*

There is an initial definite break from the ruling power and love of sin so that the believer is no longer ruled or dominated by sin and no longer loves to sin. The new believer has a power that he/she once did not have to overcome acts or patterns of sinful behavior. As Christians we are dead to the power of sin and by virtue of the power of the Holy Spirit and the resurrection of the life of Christ working in us we have power to overcome temptations and enticements of sin, whereby sin is no longer our master as it was before we became a Christian.

**Rom 6:11-14** - *“So you must also consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.”*

**Rom 6:17-18** - *“But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.”*

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Sanctification is the inevitable work of the Holy Spirit in a new believer’s life. Thus there is no salvation without sanctification. There is no class of Christians labeled as carnal!

The Lordship Salvation Debate: Can a “Christian” accept Christ as savior & deny Him as Lord? In other words, can someone be regenerate and be void of sanctification? **ABSOLUTELY NOT!** (See your notes pages 71 - under “We must beware of False Teaching”) If there is no change in a person’s life, then there is no salvation in a person’s life! (Luke 6:43-45, Matt 7:15-23, 1 Thess 4:7-8, 2 Peter 1:3-8)

#### **Stage 2: Sanctification increases through life.**

Even though there is a definite break from sin at the moment of regeneration, the Bible continues to see sanctification as a *process* that continues throughout our Christian lives. We are not to allow sin to “reign” and we are not to “yield” to sin (Rom 6:12-13). We must grow

in holiness being changed into the likeness of Christ from one degree of glory to another (2 Cor 3:18). We must forget what lies behind and press forward to what lies ahead (Phil 3:13-14). We must continue to “put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.” (Col 3:10)

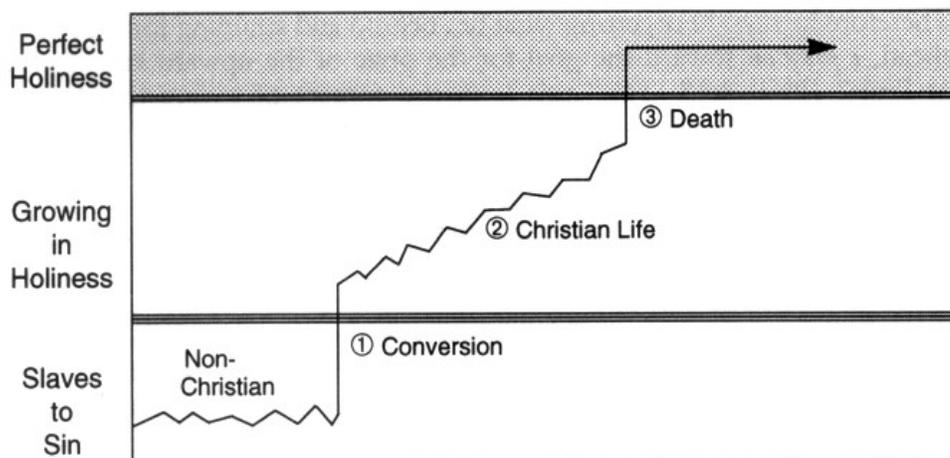
It is the expectation of the entire Bible that as Christians our sanctification will *increase* throughout our Christian lives. (Heb 12:1, 14, James 1:22, 1 Peter 1:15)

**Stage 3: Sanctification is complete at death (for our souls) and when the Lord returns (for our bodies)**

Because there is sin that still remains in our hearts even though we have become Christians (Rom 6:12-13, 1 Jn 1:8), our sanctification will never be completed in this life. But once we die and go to be with the Lord, then our sanctification is completed in one sense, for our souls are set free from indwelling sin and are made perfect (Heb 12:23)

The sanctification of our bodies will not be complete until the Lord returns and we receive new resurrection bodies. Then he “will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body” (Phil 3:21, 1 Cor 15:23, 49)

NOTE: Sanctification is NEVER completed in this life. Sinless perfection is not possible in this life. (1 John 1:8, 1 Kings 8:46, Prov 20:9, Eccl 7:20, Matt 6:11-12) However, this does not excuse every believer from striving to maturity. The more mature we get, the outward sins become less and less obvious, yet inward sins of attitudes and motives of the heart (pride, selfishness, lack of courage or faith, lack of zeal in loving God with all our hearts) still war within us.



The Process of Sanctification

**Both God & Man Cooperate in Sanctification**

While it is God who is primarily working out sanctification in the believer's life, it is appropriate to say that the believer must actively cooperate with God in the process of sanctification.

- Primary: God's role in sanctification. While the entire Triune God works in sanctifying every believer, the Holy Spirit specifically works to change us and sanctify us to a greater holiness.

**1 Thess 5:23** - *"May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly."*

**Phil 2:13** - *"God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."*

**Heb 13:20-21** - *"Now may the God of peace....equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in you that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever."*

**1 Peter 1:2** - *"the sanctification of the Spirit."*

**2 Thess 2:13** - *"sanctification by the Spirit."*

**Gal 5:22-23** - *"fruit of the Spirit."*

Other verses: Gal 5:16-18, Rom 8:14

- Secondary: Our role in sanctification. The role we play in our sanctification is both a passive one in which we depend on God and an active one in which we strive to obey God and take steps that will increase our sanctification.

- Passive role: We must depend on, trust in and pray to God to sanctify us.

**Rom 6:13** - *"Yield yourselves to God as men who have been brought from death to life."*

**Romans 12:1** - *"Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God."*

- Active role: We must actively strive to obey God & take steps that will increase our sanctification. We must not adopt the old adage that says "let go and let God." This is a tragic distortion of the doctrine of sanctification and only breeds lazy Christians who neglect their active role in their own holiness.

**Romans 8:13** - *"If by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live."*

**Phil 2:13** - *"...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."*

**Heb 12:14** - *"Strive...for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord."*

**1 Thess 4:3** - *"For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is that you abstain from sexual immorality....For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity but in sanctification. Consequently he who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you."*

**1 John 3:3** - we are to *“purify ourselves as he is pure.”*

**2 Cor 7:1** - *“Let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, and make holiness perfect in the fear of God.”*

Other verses: 1 Cor 6:18, 2 Cor 6:14, Rom 12:1-13, Eph 4:17-6:20, Phil 4:4-9, Col 3:5-4:6, 1 Peter 2:11-5:11

**The Means by which we grow in Sanctification:** There is no getting around the old fashioned, time-honored means of traditional discipline. We must “trust & obey for there’s no other way, to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.”

- Bible reading & meditation. (Josh 1:8, Ps 1:2, Matt 4:4, Jn 17:17)
- Prayer. (Eph 6:18, Phil 4:6)
- Worship. (Eph 5:18-20)
- Witnessing. (Matt 28:19-20)
- Christian Fellowship. (Heb 10:24-25)
- Self-discipline or self-control. (Gal 5:23, Titus 1:8)

### **Sanctification Affects the Whole Person**

- Sanctification affects our intellect. We are to “grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18). Our knowledge should be renewed (Col 3:10) and transformed (Rom 12:2) and increasing (Col 1:10). Our minds should become mature, being able to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor 10:5), enabling us to think only on things that are true, right, honorable, etc. (Phil 4:8-9)
- Sanctification affects our emotions. We should see an increase in “love, joy, peace, and patience” (Gal 5:22). There should be more power to “abstain from the passions of the flesh that wages war against our soul” (1 Peter 2:11). There should be a significant decrease in love for the world and the things in the world (1 Jn 2:15). There should be a decrease in negative emotions involving “bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor & slander.” (Eph 4:31)
- Sanctification affects our will. Our will should become more and more conformed to the will of God the Father. There should be an increase in a desire to love and obey God’s will (Rom 6:17).
- Sanctification affects our spirit. We are to “cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, and make holiness perfect in the fear of God.” (2 Cor 7:1, 1 Cor 7:34)
- Sanctification affects our physical bodies. There should be a decrease in allowing sin to “reign” in our mortal bodies (Rom 6:12). We should not allow our bodies to participate in any way in immorality (1 Cor 6:13). We should treat our bodies as the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19-20). We should have an increasing desire to keep our bodies “sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Thes 5:23) We should have an increasing desire to use our bodies as useful servants of God being

more and more responsive to the will of God and the desires of the Holy Spirit. (1 Cor 9:27)

### Motives for Obedience to God/Sanctification in the Christian Life

- Our greatest motivation should be to a strong desire to please God and express our love to Him. (Jn 14:15, 21, 1 Jn 5:3, 2 Cor 5:9)
- The need to keep a clear conscience before God. (Rom 13:5, 1 Tim 1:5, 19, 2 Tim 1:3, 1 Peter 3:16)
- The desire to be a “vessel for noble use” and have increased effectiveness in the work of the Kingdom. (2 Tim 2:20-21)
- A desire to make the Gospel look attractive to unbelievers so that the Word of God may not be dishonored, that there would be no opportunity to say anything bad about us, and that the doctrine of God our Savior would be adorned in every respect (Tit 2:5, 8, 10).
- A desire to see unbelievers come to Christ through observing our lives. (1 Peter 3:1-2, 15-16)
- The desire to receive present blessings from God on our lives and ministries. (1 Peter 3:9-12)
- The desire to avoid God’s displeasure and discipline on our lives - sometimes referred to as “the fear of God.” (Acts 5:11, 9:31, 2 Cor 5:11, 7:1, Eph 4:30, Phil 2:12, 1 Tim 5:20, Heb 12:3-11, 1 Pet 1:17, 2:17)
- The desire to seek greater heavenly rewards. (Matt 6:19-21, Luke 19:17-19, 1 Cor 3:12-15, 2 Cor 5:9-10).
- The desire for a deeper walk with God. (Matt 5:8, Jn 14:21, 1 Jn 1:6, 3:21-22, Ps 66:18, Is 59:2)
- The desire that angels would glorify God for our obedience. (1 Tim 5:21, 1 Peter 1:12)
- The desire for joy, peace & beauty in our lives. (Phil 4, Heb 12:1-2) The more we grow in Christ-likeness the more we will personally experience the joy and peace that are a part of the Christian life. (Rom 14:17) Furthermore, the more beautiful we become as we conform to holiness.
- The desire to do what God commands, simply because his commands are right, and we delight in doing what is right. (Phil 4:8, Ps 40:8)

## **What is Perseverance?**

## BFC Article 17 - Perseverance

Salvation is the work of God, from its commencement to its consummation. Those regenerated by the Word of God through the work of the Holy Spirit become partakers of the divine nature. They are preserved by the power of God so that they shall never totally or finally fall away, but shall persevere unto the end.

### Explanation & Scriptural Basis

- Definition: The perseverance of the saints means that all those who are truly born again will be kept by God's power and will persevere as Christians until the end of their lives, and that only those who persevere until the end have been truly born again.

Assurance is given to those who are truly born again because God's power will keep them until they die. However, continuing in the Christian life is one of the evidences that a person is truly born again. So, all who are truly born again will persevere to the end. AND only those who persevere to the end have been truly born again.

- There are many passages that teach that all who are truly born again **will** persevere to the end.
  - John 6:38-40 - "I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me; and this is the will of him who sent me, that I should **lose nothing** of all that he has given me, but raise it up at the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."
  - John 10:27-29 - "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give them eternal life, and **they shall never perish**, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand."
  - John 3:36 - "He who believes in the Son has **eternal** life." (Jn 5:24, 6:47, 10:28, 1 Jn 5:13) Eternal means without end.
  - Romans 8:1 - "There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."
  - Romans 8:30 - "And whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified, and whom He justified, these **He also glorified.**" There is a clear connection between God's eternal purpose in predestination & his working out of those purposes in life ultimately ending in "glorification."
  - Eph 1:13-14 - "In him you also, who have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation and have believed in him were **sealed with the promised Holy Spirit**, which is the **guarantee** of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory." (Phil 1:6)

- 1 Peter 1:5 - “who are *protected* by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” (“continually being guarded”)
- There are also scriptural passages, which teach that only those who persevere to the end have been truly born again.
  - John 8:31-32 - “Jesus then said to the Jews who have believed in him, “if you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth and the truth will make you free.” Evidence of genuine faith is continuing in his word.
  - Matt 10:22 - “He who endures to the end will be saved.”
  - Col 1:22-23 - “in order to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him, provided that you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel which you heard.”
  - Heb 3:14 - “For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm to the end.”
  - 1 John 2:19 - “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that it might be plain that they all are not of us.” (These people left the apostolic teaching of Christ rejecting Him. This is NOT a group of people who simply moved their church letter.)
- Those who finally fall away may give many external signs of conversion. These are not people who “lose” their salvation. They were never truly born again.
  - Gal 2:4 - “false brethren secretly brought in.” (2 Cor 11:15, 26)
  - Matt 7:21-23 - “Not every one who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you evildoers.’”
  - Mark 4:5-17 - The parable of the soils is a very important parable explaining the fact that though some people have a “joy” and an appearance of a conversion their “falling away” indicates that they never had life. There was no real saving faith in their hearts.
  - John 15:1-7 - This passage does not teach that there are some that lose their salvation. The branches that do not bear fruit though they are in some way connected to Jesus and give an outward appearance of being genuine branches, nonetheless give indication of their true state by the fact that they bear no fruit. They also fail to “abide” in Christ.
  - Hebrews 6:4-8 - Again this passage does not teach that one can lose their salvation. This group of people has been “enlightened” but has not fully understood. They have only “*tasted* the heavenly gift” but have not ingested the

gospel. They had “partaken” in the work of the Holy Spirit in only a loose superficial way. Since they committed apostasy, it is impossible “to restore again to repentance” because in the end they have willfully rejected the gospel of Jesus Christ and turned away from all of those temporary blessings. If those blessings were not enough to convert them, it is impossible for them to repent only proving that they were never Christ’s people in the first place. It is important to interpret the following parable (v. 9-12) as a description of these people. They were only “thorns & thistles” because they never produced fruit. The writer is positive that those who are truly the “beloved” will produce “better things that accompany salvation.”

### Can a Believer have Genuine Assurance?

What external signs can serve as genuine proof of real conversion?

1. Do I have a present trust in Christ for salvation?

Many people speak of faith/trust in Christ as something that was done in the past. Scripture however identifies true believers who continually put their faith in Christ in the present. The Apostle Paul tells the Colossian believers that they will be saved on the last day, “provided that you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel which you have heard.” (Col 1:23) The writer of Hebrews tells us “we share in Christ, if only we hold our first confidence firm to the end.” (Heb 3:14) and encourages his readers to be imitators of those “who through faith and patience inherit the promises (Heb 6:12). The main question we should ask ourselves is, “Do I today have trust in Christ to forgive my sins and take me without blame into heaven forever? Do I have confidence in my heart that he has saved me? If I were to die tonight and stand before God’s judgment seat, and if he were to ask me why he should let me into heaven, would I begin to think of my good deeds and depend on them, or would I without hesitation say that I am depending on the merits of Christ and am confident that he is a sufficient savior?” The emphasis **MUST** be on present faith in Christ as opposed to what happened 20 or 30 years ago!

2. Is there evidence of a regenerating work of the Holy Spirit in my heart?

“Works” are wonderful, but they can sometimes be wrongly evaluated (ex. Tithing, church attendance, baptism, etc.). The real evidence is whether there is a work of the Holy Spirit in our lives and the fruit that He alone produces. We are called to examine ourselves to see whether we are in the faith (2 Cor 13:5-6)

- **The Presence & Guidance of the Holy Spirit.** The Holy Spirit bears witness with our own hearts that we are God’s children (Rom 8:15-16, 1 John 4:13). We are also keenly aware of being led by the Holy Spirit in paths of obedience to God’s will (Rom 8:14).
- **Holy Spirit wrought character consistent with our profession.** If we are genuinely saved the Holy Spirit will produce *fruit* (singular - implying all of the following characteristics are the fruit NOT fruits of His own kind: “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Gal 5:22-23). Are these character qualities exhibited in my life? Am I growing in them over the years? It would be impossible to fake these qualities over a long period of time. (2 Peter 1:5-11)

- **Positive influence on others & the Church.** Is there evidence that your life is having a positive influence on others and the church? Jesus was clear that you will know false teachers (professors) by their fruit. There are some people who always seem to discourage others, have a divisive spirit among the church, tend to drag others down and injure the faith of others, provoke controversy and tear the church down. Then there are others who seem to always be encouraging others, edifying others, building up the church. Jesus said, “you will know them by their fruits.” (Matt 7:16-20)
- **Belief & acceptance in the sound teaching of the Church.** Those who deny the major doctrines of the faith give serious negative indications concerning their salvation. For example you CANNOT deny the deity of Christ and be a Christian (1 John 2:23-24, 4:6). True believers continually read and accept God’s Word as the authority and delight in their lives. Those who do not believe and delight in God’s Word give evidence that they are not “of God.”
- **A continuing present relationship with Jesus Christ.** Jesus said “abide in me, and I in you” and “if you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.” (Jn 15:4,7) There is a day-by day trust in him but also a regular fellowship with him in prayer and worship.
- **Obedience to God’s commands.** “He who says ‘I know him’ but disobeys his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps his word, in him truly love for God is perfected. By this we may be sure that we are in him, he who says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way which he walked” (1Jn 2:4-6). This doesn’t mean perfection, but is the direction of your life bent in this way? (James 2:17-18, 1 John 3:17)

3. Do I see a long-term pattern of spiritual growth in my Christian life?

Are we growing and continuing to grow in faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection & love? (2 Peter 1:5-7). The way we confirm our calling and our election is to continue to grow in these things. Our assurance should become stronger as we see ourselves growing stronger and deeper toward Christian maturity.