



## Progressive Sanctification

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**Introduction:** Anyone who is a counselor needs to be familiar with certain basic doctrines which directly affect the process by which we counsel. If we start with incorrect suppositions about God, man, and sin, we will not arrive at a truly biblical solution to the challenges our counselees are facing. A proper understanding of sanctification in particular is foundational to properly assessing the problem and then leading the counselee to a godly solution. Part of that understanding is getting a handle on what is meant by progressive sanctification. Counseling is an instrument God intends for us to use in cooperating with the Holy Spirit to help believers move toward a more complete holiness. It is an intensive ministry of discipleship.

### I. What is progressive sanctification?

#### a. Definition of \_\_\_\_\_

- To set apart for God's purposes and use  
e.g. – utensils to be used in the temple and the priests who serve there.  
e.g. – Paul and Barnabas –

**Acts 13:2** - *While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, " \_\_\_\_\_ for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."*

- To take what is considered common and set it apart as holy  
e.g. – a common ordinary pot or kettle used in everyday life is not satisfactory for temple use without being properly cleansed and dedicated. Once it is so dedicated it must never be used for ordinary purposes again.

- To establish a person who was once a sinner as righteous  
**1 Thessalonians 4:7** - *For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness.*

**2 Timothy 2:21-22** - *Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work.*

#### b. Definition of \_\_\_\_\_

- Happening or developing gradually or in stages

#### c. Definition of \_\_\_\_\_

- The process by which man is gradually changed, step by step, so that his character and values more perfectly represent the image of God in which he was created.

- **2 Corinthians 3:18** - *And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one \_\_\_\_\_ of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.*

## 2. Relationship of Justification to Sanctification, and Glorification

- a. **Justification** is a \_\_\_\_\_ event occurring at conversion in which the believer is declared righteous by God because of Christ's substitutionary death on his behalf.  
**Hebrews 7:27** - He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself.

**Hebrews 10:18** - Where there is forgiveness of these (sins), there is no longer any offering for sin.

- b. **Sanctification** is the \_\_\_\_\_ by which the believer becomes in practice what he is \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ.

**1 Thessalonians 5:23** - Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

If sanctification were a finished process, Paul would not have been sending such a closing blessing in his letter to the Thessalonians. Nor would all the of the rigorous instruction through which believers are put by the Holy Spirit, moving them toward maturity be necessary. Sanctification is the process which precedes our glorification.

- c. **Glorification** is the \_\_\_\_\_ toward which progressive sanctification is moving us. This stage is only accomplished when we enter \_\_\_\_\_. As Thomas Kelly wrote:

*Then we shall be where we would be,  
 Then we shall be what we should be,  
 Things that are not now, nor could be,  
 Soon shall be our own.*

**Romans 8:17** - *and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.*

## 3. Nature of man

### a. Material

#### Body

**Genesis 2:7** - *then the LORD God formed the man of the \_\_\_\_\_ from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.*

**Genesis 2: 23** - *Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."*

#### Physical Consciousness

**Gen 28:11** - And he came to a certain place and stayed there that night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place to sleep.

## b. Immaterial

### Intellect – capacity for independent thought

**Romans 12:2** - Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your \_\_\_\_\_, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

### Emotion – capacity for strong feelings

**James 5:17** - Elijah was a man of like **passions** with us, and he prayed **fervently** that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth for three years and six months. (ASV)

### Will – capacity for making independent choices

**James 3:4** - Look at the ships also: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the \_\_\_\_\_ of the pilot directs.

**Conscience – capacity to sense the difference between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.**  
**Moral sensibility. Capacity to feel guilt.**

*The conscience manifests itself in the feeling of obligation we experience, which precedes, attends and follows our actions. (Webster's 1828 Dictionary)*

**1 Timothy 1:5** - The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good **conscience** and a sincere faith.

**Hebrews 9:9** - According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the \_\_\_\_\_ of the worshiper,

**Hebrews 9:14** - ...how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our \_\_\_\_\_ from dead works to serve the living God.

## Soul/Spirit

**1 Thessalonians 5:23** - Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## c. Fallen

**Jeremiah 17:9** - The heart is \_\_\_\_\_ above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?

**Rom 3:23** - ...for all have sinned and **fall short** of the glory of God....

## 4. Nature of sin

### a. Rebellion against God

**1 John 3:4** - Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.

**Sin is transgression of the law** – “The spirit of the law as well as of the Gospel is, that ‘we should love God with all our powers, and our neighbor as ourselves.’ All disobedience is contrary to love; therefore, sin is the transgression of the law, whether the act refers immediately to God or to our neighbor.” Adam Clarke – Commentary on the Whole Bible

**b. Present from the moment of conception**

**Psalms 51:5** - Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in \_\_\_\_\_ did my mother conceive me.

**c. Persists as a principle as long as we are alive**

**Jeremiah 17:9-10** - The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? "I the LORD search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds."

**Romans 7:14** - For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin.

**Philippians 3:12** - Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.

**5. Nature of Redemption**

**a. Sacrificial**

**Hebrews 9:22** - Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with \_\_\_\_\_, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

**Hebrews 9:13-14** - For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

**b. Substitutionary**

**1 Peter 2:24** - He himself \_\_\_\_\_ our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his stripes you have been healed.

**2 Corinthians 5:21** - For \_\_\_\_\_ he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

**c. A \_\_\_\_\_ of God, not a work of man**

**Titus 3:5** - \_\_\_\_\_, 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,

**Ephesians 2:8-9** - For by grace you have been saved through \_\_\_\_\_. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of \_\_\_\_\_, so that no one may boast.

## 6. Nature of Sanctification

### a. The Work of God

**Philippians 1:6** - *And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to \_\_\_\_\_ at the day of Jesus Christ.*

**Romans 15:16** - *to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.*

### b. Ministry of the Holy Spirit

#### (1) Conviction

**John 16:8** - *And when he comes, he will \_\_\_\_\_ the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment:*

#### (2.) Regeneration

**Titus 3:5** - *he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of \_\_\_\_\_ and renewal of the Holy Spirit,*

#### (3.) Indwelling

**John 14:16-17** - *And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he \_\_\_\_\_ with you and will be \_\_\_\_\_ you.*

**(4) Illumination** – the ministry by which the Spirit of God helps us understand the truths of God which we might not otherwise be able to understand in our natural minds.

**John 16:13** - *When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.*

**Ephesians 1:16-18** - *I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,*

**1 Corinthians 2:11-12** - *For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.*

**(5.) Empowerment** – the ministry of the Holy Spirit by which we are enabled to change and to live godly lives.

**Romans 15:13** - *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.*

**Ephesians 3:16** - ...that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be \_\_\_\_\_ with power through his Spirit in your inner being...

#### **(6.) Preservation**

**2 Corinthians 1:21-22** - And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us and who has also put his \_\_\_\_\_ on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

**Ephesians 1:13** - In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were \_\_\_\_\_ with the promised Holy Spirit,

#### **c. The responsibility of Man**

**Hebrews 12:14** - **Strive** for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.

**Philippians 2:12** - Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, **work out** your own salvation with fear and trembling,

**2 Timothy 2:22** - So \_\_\_\_\_ youthful passions and \_\_\_\_\_ righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

#### **Implications for counseling**

1. The counselor cannot “fix” anyone. He or she is simply an instrument for \_\_\_\_\_ in the hand of God.
2. The counselor must first be certain that he or she is in a \_\_\_\_\_ to counsel
3. The counselor is limited in his or her effectiveness by the \_\_\_\_\_ condition of the counselee. If the counselee is not a believer only superficial changes can be expected.
4. The counselee has to be willing to \_\_\_\_\_ with the counselor and the Holy Spirit.
5. The counselor must be ready to use the \_\_\_\_\_ as the primary instrument for addressing the counselee’s problems, since the root issues are spiritual.
6. The counselor must discover the root problem which is a matter of the **heart** before trying to take corrective measures.

#### **Challenges to Successful Counseling**

This is not a complete list, but it is a sampling of some of the roadblocks that we face in dealing with other people’s problems.

1. **People who are focusing on perfectionism**
2. **People who are perceiving themselves as victims**
3. **People who believe there is no help**

4. People who are waiting for something to happen to them

#### **Approach to Counseling**

1. Provide them with hope
2. Identify their problem
  - a. Their awareness of the truth
  - b. The level and nature of their sin
  - c. Their readiness to address the fundamental issue
  - d. Their willingness to cooperate with the Holy Spirit
3. Map a strategy for dealing with the counselee
4. Provide them with homework and an opportunity for accountability
5. Pray for them
6. Reassure them of your commitment to their success

#### **Suggested Reading:**

*A Theology of Christian Counseling*, Jay Adams, Chapters 14-17  
*Christian Theology*, Millard Erickson, Chapter 47