

John 17:14-19 - Sanctification, part 2

Reflection Guide

Sanctification: **God's Work to make Us Holy**, has 2 sides...like a coin.

- a. Definitive - this is something that God does in regeneration, when your eyes are opened to see Jesus, and the Holy Spirit takes up residency in you...you are set apart by God for God.
- b. Progressive - we are not yet what we will be...but God wills that we be transformed into the likeness of Christ...in thought / motive / affection / action...whole person.

You and I have very little tolerance for immaturity in other people, but we can live with a striking level of contradiction when it comes to how willing we are to allow ourselves to be immature. Jesus prays specifically for us to be delivered from the enemies of our maturity or sanctification.

[15] I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.

The enemy without (the world) and the enemy within (indwelling sin).

1. **The World.** It's Jesus intention that we remain in the world...a place that was then and is now increasingly hostile to the work of the Gospel. And we need to understand that the world has a different agenda for you and I contrary to our sanctification.

The World Seeks To Mold Us Into It's Image. Our world is flooded with temptations that are designed to capture our hearts at their weakest moments and overcome us when our resistance is low. It wants to squeeze us into it's mold and we are often hard pressed to resist the pressure. Sanctification is our being molded into the likeness of Jesus...but the world's agenda is to mold us...thoughts / desires / attitudes / views and actions...into it's image

The World Seeks To Choke Out the Voice of God's Word in Us:

Mt. 13:7 - Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Jesus tells a parable of a farmer who sows seeds on different types of ground (path, rocky, thorny, good) and the different outcomes. Thorns = *22 As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.* When the Word of God is sown into a heart that is full of these things it becomes unfruitful b/c it gets choked out. That process isn't instantaneous...it's a process that happens over time as the breath seems to be sucked out of the voice of God's Word. Whatever spiritual vitality that was there seems non-existent now.

2. **Indwelling Sin..."flesh"** We know that as Christians we are now "in Christ" and b/c of the Jesus the power of sin over us is broken...we're no longer sin's slaves... We are dead to sin...but sin is not dead in us. What has changed is our relationship to sin...not it's presence or it's reality. From conversations and modern Christian writing...this is the threat that we are most blind to.

Graciously, The Apostle Paul opens up about indwelling sin and his own dealing with it in Romans 7.
15 For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.

*[18] For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. [19] For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. [20] Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but **sin that dwells within me.***

*[21] So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. [22] For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, [23] but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of **sin that dwells in my members.** [24] Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?*

So after writing about the law of God that is to rule our lives as Christians, Paul freely admits that the law of sin is powerfully at work in him. calls it a law b/c he wants us to see it's power...it's constantly work trying to mold us into it's image. Jesus has overthrown it's rule, severed it at the root so that it cannot produce the fruit of eternal death in you but it's nature and purpose remain unchanged...

Sin is at work in you. We know it intellectually...but there's a disconnect...like knowing about cancer then hearing you have it. It's at work when you're at your best. Paul saw this indwelling sin at work in him even when he wanted to do what was right...even when he wanted to do what was pleasing to God. There was the sin in him...enticing him away...

THE TACTIC OF THE ENEMY: DECEIT

"to make someone believe that things are other than they are so that he will do something that he would never otherwise do." That has always been the strategy of the evil one, *"did God really say"*... The law of sin in you comes from it's father, the evil one, and works the same way. **Ephesians 4: 22] to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, [23] and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, [24] and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.**

**Are you GROWING in holiness or have you made peace with sin?
What's one area of idolatry and behavior that you need to be saved from but
have become comfortable with? How is that sin affecting you and others?
Why have you allowed this?
Have you consciously reasoned: "did God really say?"**

**Are we active participants in our sanctification process? Would our actions
reveal we are thinking the victory can we won without our effort?**

HOW WE ARE TO FIGHT

1) Realize God's role in sanctification. *"God is at work both to will and to work for His good pleasure"* (Phil 2:13) God cultivates in us a desire to do His will and then gives us what we need to actually do it. The Father wills it and empowers it. Jesus earned your sanctification through his sinless life, sacrificial death and his victorious resurrection. Jesus also *"left us an example that we should follow in his steps"* (1 Peter 2:21) The Holy Spirit works within us to change us...produces the fruit of transformation in us

2) Realize our role. We do not wait passively for God to change us. We do not *"let go and let God"*... tragic distortion of the wisdom of God's plan for our sanctification and the many Scriptural imperatives that God gives us which play a role in our sanctification. God changes us but he has ordained to do it through our human effort. His sovereignty works through our responsibility. Paul says: ***"run a good race, pursue holiness, abstain from immorality..."*** We must wake up to the war raging inside our hearts.

3) Fight by the Spirit. *"If by the Spirit, you put to death the deeds of the body you will live."* (Rm. 8:13) *if your right eye causes you to sin, cut it out...* it's not to be resigned to This is the work of God and our work...side by side. The saints of old called this "the mortification of sin"...

To follow Jesus means to pronounce a death sentence upon sin and be in the process of putting that sentence into effect by daily crucifixion of all that sets itself against God's purposes in your life.

4) Fight for obedience. as you put the old man to death, **you put on the new man.** we don't just kill sin...we pursue obedience as well. Holiness involves a joyful resting in who we are in Christ & a joyful obedience because of who we are in Christ. We need both equally.

5) Fight From Victory. God has through Christ freed us from the bondage of sin, assured us of the day when sin will no longer be a present reality...in the mean time, He has empowered us with His Spirit to lead us into all truth, and to put to death the sin that remains making war on indwelling sin.

Which of these fighting positions have we forgotten?

“God changes us but he has ordained to do it through our human effort.”

What does this look like in your life right now?

What effort would you like to have this week? How can the community be praying for you?

FORGOTTEN WEAPON OF OUR WARFARE: THE CHURCH

Sanctification is something that happens as a community of people. Heb. 3:12-13: *[12] Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. [13] But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.*

Heb. 10:24-25: *[24] And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, [25] not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*

In our battle against the deceitfulness of sin, God has given us each other. You have a role to play in each others sanctification. Friends don't let friends be deceived by sin and live with a hardening heart Friends don't let friends believe lies...

“This is just the way that I am, always have been, always will be...take it or leave it”

- fundamental rejection of the the doctrine of sanctification
- fundamental rejection of your responsibility in the transformation process
- God is calling us to a new way of living...

“this is just what I think”

- friends help one another take every thought captive and judge it by God's Word

This is what our community should be profoundly marked by. Intentionality to help each other die to ourselves. The actually helps us to enjoy life more! We must expose deception and stir love and obedience. If you can see me being deceived and you're ok with that...willing to let me go on in deception...if you have no desire to see me grow in obedience and love...what kind of friend are you? Let's not neglect so great a privilege and so great a responsibility.

How has this happened in our Community?

How can we be intentional for it to happened with more frequency?

Have our relationships with Christians had the opposite affect instead? Where have we not been good friends? Is there anything we need to confess? Is there anyone we need to repent to for letting them down?