

# The Holy Spirit Sanctifies

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- [0:00] When he comes into his house, he doesn't like the way that it looks in its present condition. It's sort of a bit of an untruth, we'll say, that the Lord just accepts us the way we are.
- He doesn't accept us, for Jesus' sake. But yet, he's not satisfied with the way we are. But does he move out? No.
- He stays there. And he gets to work. And project by project, he changes us. And bit by bit, more and more, he changes us into what he wants us to be. And he's not done yet.
- But year after year, we're getting closer to what he wants from us. And so the Holy Spirit's remodeling project is called sanctification.
- He's the sanctifier, and that's what we're talking about today. He's the ultimate do-it-yourselfer. He doesn't hire the work out to anyone.
- [1:06] No, we are God's workmanship. And he pours his life and his thought and his energy, his effort, his power, his strength into us. And that's the work of the Holy Spirit that we're going to be looking at today.
- The Holy Spirit is sanctifying. And so four points this morning. And the first point is, is why? Why do we need to be sanctified?
- And I don't want to take a long time, and so let me just ask you, why does the Holy Spirit do this work? What are some of the reasons that he has? Anything?
- Anyone? Tell us to be holy like you do. Very good. There's this golden thread throughout the whole scripture. It's in more than one place.
- Leviticus 11.44. I am the Lord your God. Consecrate yourselves and be holy because I am holy. And it says that a couple times in Leviticus.
- [2:06] And then Peter takes it up again in 1 Peter. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do. For it is written, be holy because I am holy.
- And so, why does the Holy Spirit do this work? Well, because he's the Holy Spirit. And he wants us to be holy. Why does the Holy Spirit take up this work?
- And why should we take up this work? Because the God that we have to do with, the God that we're in relationship with, the God that we live with, the God that lives inside of us, is a holy God.
- Our Father is holy. Holy Spirit. Jesus prays in John 17. Holy Father. When Jesus thought of his Father, he thought he is a holy Father.
- Our Father is holy. The one who loves us, Jesus himself is holy. God is holy. And that means not only is he sinless. There's a negative side to holiness and a positive side.
- [3:11] And the negative side is that there's no sin in him. There's absolutely no sin. He cannot be tempted, nor does he tempt anyone. But the positive side is, is he loves every holy, every pure thing, every grace, every virtue.
- He loves. He is patient. He is kind. He's full of gentleness, love, and justice. Negative, he abhors sin. Positive, he loves righteousness.

And so, why does God sanctify us? Why does the Holy Spirit sanctify us? Because he is holy and he calls us to be holy. What else can we say? Why does the Holy Spirit take up this work?

To form us into the image of Christ. Exactly. We need it, don't we?

I think that's it. We're not, in some, we're not yet there. And so we need it. When, going back to that house picture, the house isn't the way God wants it to be.

[4:26] There's wrong things all over the place. And so, the Holy Spirit comes in and he conforms us to the image of Christ. What else?

Why does the Holy Spirit do this work? That started way back before time.

An election. You know, the Bible doesn't tell us exactly why God chose one and not another. But he does, the Bible does tell us what he chose us for.

Ephesians. Ephesians 1.4 says, For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. That's what Steve was just talking about.

To be purified. Holy and blameless. And so, God chose us for this. And the Holy Spirit now takes up that work and says, That's what the Father chose these for, so I will do this work in them.

[5:33] What else? Yeah. We're going to talk about this in a little bit, but that word likeness and image, those are actually family words. Adam was made in the image of God, and he's called the Son of God.

And then, in the next generation, Seth is said to be in the image of Adam. And Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the image of his Father. Image and likeness, they have family connotations in the Bible.

And so, part of the Holy Spirit's work is binding us all together, or making us all together one as a family holy. How about this?

Jesus died to make us holy. Why should we care about holiness, and why does the Holy Spirit care about holiness in us? Well, it's because Jesus not only died to set us free from sin's condemning power, it's guilt, but he died to save us from sin's controlling power.

Going back to 1 Peter, he himself bore our sins in his body, that we might die to sins and live for righteousness.

[6:41] Christ died to make us holy. And so, can I just sit there like a lump on a log, not caring about my holiness?

No, because he, Jesus, suffered in agony, not only to save me from the guilt of sin, but to save me from its controlling power, that I might live under righteousness.

One of the seven so-called deadly sins is sloth. And in the original Latin, the language of the seven deadly sins, the word isn't so much talking about sitting in front of your TV all day long.

It's sort of the word for indifference. It's the spiritual shrug of the shoulders. You know what will condemn your soul forever? Eh. About God.

About Jesus. About holiness. Without holiness, no one will see God. So why does the Holy Spirit take up this work so faithfully, so diligently, so patiently, so persistently?

[7:48] It's because Jesus died for us. The Father chose us. He wants to make us like himself. He is holy. So, this is what the Father planned for us.

This is what the Son died for. And now the Holy Spirit is going to work it out. And if God cares so much about our holiness, then we have no choice but to care the same.

So that's the first point. Why? The second point is, is very briefly, what is that work? And we've kind of already hit on a lot of these things.

But that's the why. Now the what is, is what does this work look like? Going back to that remodeling image, when the Spirit remodels our hearts, remodels our insides, our souls, what is he doing?

What is that work? What does he actually work in us? And there's a number of ways to look at it. There's a number of ways to look at it.

[ 8 : 58 ] But I guess I want you to see is that they're all, it's all really the same work looked at from different perspectives. And they all kind of boiled down really at their core to this very same thing.

And so someone said holiness, our sanctification is being made like Jesus. It's being made like Jesus. Jesus was the perfect God man.

He was, he is what righteousness and holiness and its perfection, what it looks like in a human. He was the image of God.

And so in every single way, he reflected, he showed the holiness of God through his humanity. And the Spirit has come to make us just like Jesus.

Why don't you turn in your Bibles to Romans 8.29? Romans 8.29.

[ 10 : 08 ] Romans 9.29. And this sort of connects along with what we saw in Ephesians chapter 1 verse 4.

As it begins with this knowledge that God has. This intimate, he knows us, he's chosen us before. And it says, for those God foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

My mom said that it has to do with becoming like a family. You see it here. And again, likeness and image in the Bible are family words.

And so it's, what is the Holy Spirit doing in us? He's making us like his father. Or like our father. He's making us like our father.

Look like our father. Act like our father. Think like our father. Feel like our father. And so we start to take on the family likeness. It's one of the strange, weird, wonderful, horrifying things that our children act like us.

[ 11 : 35 ] In the small things and in the big things. They begin to act like us. We pour out our life and our effort. And we're talking to them constantly.

And as we interact with them, our children begin to not only physically look like us through genes and DNA, but they begin to act like us.

And our priorities become their priorities. And so what is the Holy Spirit doing? Well, he's making us look like Jesus.

He's making us look like the father. And so God hates sin. He abhors sin. And then we begin to hate it.

Isn't that one of the great, wonderful things about sanctification? Is the things that we used to love, now we abhor our feelings, our desires have totally changed. And then positively, he's patient.

[ 12 : 35 ] And kind. Slow to anger. And abounding in love. And in sanctification, the spirit makes us more like that.

So we become slow to anger. Or once we were quick to anger. Abounding in love. And it's not just in theory, but it's in reality.

Not in principle. But in actuality. So in my day-to-day life, I'm becoming to be more like God.

Amazing. That's what the Holy Spirit is doing. Another way to look at it. And again, really, it's all the same work looked at from different perspectives.

Is that we begin to obey wholeheartedly the law of God. And the law of God is just the written out commands.

[13:36] The written out in commandment form of requirements of God's nature. It's His holiness. It's His beauty. It's His majesty. It's His blessedness.

It's all of those things. It's His wisdom and grace. It's all written out in form. In a command form. And that's why all the commands come down and boil down to those two great commands.

To love God and love your neighbor. And then we could say God is love. Those commands are the foundation because God is love.

And so when we become more like God, we obey His commands, which are commands of love. And so what does the Spirit do in us?

Well, He makes us long to obey. He gives us new desires. Where once all we had were evil desires.

[14:37] And so now we delight in the law of God in our inner man, Paul says. And that delight translates into action.

The things that we delight in, we do. The things that we don't like, we're slow to do. When we were on vacation, we went to a water park with lots of slides.

And Cademan loved going down this one slide. He delighted in it. And so you know what he did? He took the great effort to walk up seven flights of stairs to go down the slide again and again. His delight translates into action.

And that's what God the Holy Spirit is doing in us. He gives us this delight. Delight. And then out of that delight, we begin to do. We make the effort to do. And so He moves us to obey that law, Ezekiel says.

He moves us. He's a positive force in pushing us towards obeying that law. It was written on the stones, but now He writes it into our very hearts.

[15:47] The flesh of our hearts. And so that law that was outside of us, He takes and He embeds it. He impresses it. He carves it into our very souls.

And so that law, remember we talked about this, that we would not submit to. In our sinfulness, that was the bone of contention.

Does God have the right to tell me what to do? And I said no. So I would agree, but I would never submit. Submit. Sometimes I would agree, but I would never submit.

But He makes that law to be the very warp and woof of my soul. Warp and woof are actually tapestry words.

They're, what do you call that? Weaving words. The warp are the vertical strings and the woof are the horizontal strings. He takes the law and He runs it through our hearts.

[16:51] So the very fabric of our hearts begins to beat after God's law. And in all of this, there's more and more of the Spirit of Christ.

Christ. Present in us. And so that we say, your will be done. Your will be done.

Salvation begins with that, doesn't it? Of us bowing our hearts. Giving ourselves and putting ourselves into His hands. Saying, your will be done. Robert Layton, an old pastor said, Thy will be done is the very essence of sanctification.

We used to go our own way. But now we submit to His way. Listen to Octavius Winslow. Remember, for those of you who are visiting, we're using the book, The Work of the Holy Spirit, A Practical and Experiential View by Octavius Winslow.

And this is what Octavius Winslow says. When the will of the believer, we're talking about our will, things that we say, I'm going to choose to do this.

[18:15] The will of the believer, when the will of the believer rises and blends itself with God's will. And in the spirit of sonship, so we're not talking about slavery, we're talking about in the spirit of sonship, he responds, Lord, is it Thy will that I should be holy?

Then make me so in body, in soul, and in spirit. Subdue all my corruptions. Break the power of my lust. Bring every thought, affection, word, and look into sweet obedience to thyself.

Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. How truly does the work of sanctification advance in the soul?

That was a long sentence, but when the will of the believer blends with God's will, and when we say, Lord, I want to be holy, your will be done, and then the work of sanctification advances in the soul.

So what is the work that the spirit is doing in us? He's making us like God. He's leading us to obey God. He's putting into our hearts more and more the words of Christ that says, not my will, but your will be done.

[19:36] When it's hard, we say, not my will, but your will be done. And when it's easy, when we find great delight in his commands, we say, your will be done.

That's what the Holy Spirit is doing. He's moved in, and he's changing us. From glory to glory, he's changing us. Just pause there, and we can thank the Holy Spirit for that work.

Thank him. He's at work. He's busy at work. Well, now how does he do it? How does he do it? What are his methods?

What are his tools? Actually, before that, let me just remind you that it is the Holy Spirit who sanctifies us.

And I think sometimes we can be so adverse to the theology of let go and let God, and rightfully so, that we can almost fall into the other ditch and think that it's completely up to us.

[20:49] That it's all us. It's me or nothing. We aren't... And so, on the one hand, we aren't passive, and on the other hand, it's not all us.

We can lean the way of against letting go and letting God that we forget or we don't reckon with the other truth, that the Holy Spirit, he is the effective, he's the powerful, effective, he gets the work done, necessary, without him, as much as I try, I am not going to grow in holiness.

Without him, I can do nothing. He's the effective and necessary agent of sanctification. Without him, we can't sanctify ourselves.

And so, yes, we play a part. And he is the necessary, he's the supreme agent. And so, our sanctification isn't ultimately only up to us.

It's not let go and let God, and it's not just all us. The Spirit sanctifies us. 1 Corinthians 6.11, Paul, he's saying there that you were once sexually immoral. You remember this verse in idolaters, and that's what you were, but you were washed.

[22:06] You were sanctified. You were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. By the Spirit of our God, he sanctifies us.

2 Thessalonians 2.13, Paul says, God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit. And in Ezekiel, the reason we obey when once we never did obey is God has put a new spirit in us.

The flesh wars against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh. So he's the one who sanctifies. We're not only saved by God the Father and God the Son.

You are being saved presently by God the Holy Spirit as he saves you from the controlling power of sin, as he saves you more and more from the sin in your own life.

So how does he do that? How? Again, what tools? So let's go back to that. What tools are we talking about? Well, first of all, he shows us our sin.

[23:12] This seems kind of backwards. But if you're going to begin with it, if you're going to have a cure for a disease, you have to know what disease you're working with. I just saw a commercial for our cancer center.

And they said, if your doctor diagnoses you with lung cancer, you need to ask, or do three things. First, one, ask what kind of lung cancer is it?

Apparently, there's lots of different kinds. You want to know exactly the kind that you're dealing with. Number two, find out what stage it is. And number three, find some good doctors.

And that's where the advertisement came in. What does the Holy Spirit do when he begins to sanctify us? Well, he begins to show us the disease. Shows us our sin.

And he leads us to this deeper acquaintance, knowledge with our indwelling sin. So much of the time, immediately following salvation, immediately following conversion, we can be very blind to what's going on in our hearts.

[24:19] Now, we know enough of our sin to flee from it. And we know enough of our sin to run to Jesus and throw ourselves into his arms and flee to the cross. But we don't know yet the monsters that are in here.

That are in the depths. And they are there. And the Spirit begins to shine his light on them. He doesn't do it all at once.

Or we, I think, would be overthrown. It would be too much for us to handle. We'd be destroyed. But bit by bit, through the Word, through his own, the way he can clarify our thinking and teaches our understanding and opens our eyes to ourselves, he shows us our sin.

And that's why in the maturest Christians, you find two things living side by side that are so amazing. One is a deep humiliation for their sin.

And two is this great confidence and comfort. It's not one without the other. The maturest saints have the lowest opinion of themselves.

[25:41] I remember one time our brother Dennis Hoskins, he taught on Paul's words about I'm the least of the apostles.

And then he, and then there's the other passage where he says, I'm the worst of sinners. sinners. And he showed that those statements chronologically went from, the first was, I'm the least of the apostles.

And as years passed, he came to the point of, I am the greatest of sinners. Now, I don't know how much to look into that, but there is that growth downward in the Christian life.

But the Spirit shows us our sin. And this is the thing. And this, if he's beginning to show you your sin, or if he's showing you more and more of your sin, or some new sin has come to your light, to light in you, where once you were blind to it, but now you're starting to see.

This is what I wanted to tell you. He does that not to destroy you. He does it not because his heart towards you has changed. He knew that sin was there all along.

[26:55] He's showing that sin to you that you might repent. That you might begin to fight against it. He shows you that next monster, not so that the monster will destroy you, but so that you can begin to destroy it.

He shows us our sin not to destroy us, but that we might flee to Christ for more grace. To find every grace in Him. Every virtue.

He shows you that sin. So maybe it's impatience. You always thought you were a patient person, and then now you realize I'm not a patient person. I'm a very impatient person. And he begins to show you that.

Why? So that you could run to Jesus Christ for patience. So that you could humble yourself at Christ's feet and say, I am so impatient. So that you can begin to fight against it.

So the Holy Spirit makes us rich, truly rich, by showing us how poor we are. And so that's the first tool the Holy Spirit uses.

[27:53] He uses a flashlight. It's the Word of God. It shines a light to my path. It's the Word of God that x-rays my soul. It's His own immediate way that He can teach us and clarify our thinking and take away the blinders.

It's through circumstances. Sometimes our heart hasn't had a lot of chance, opportunity, to express itself in that sinful way, but yet the heart was that way, and circumstances change, and so we see what was in the dark all along.

So that's first. He shows us our sin. Now secondly, He makes us yearn for righteousness. Blessed are those who hunger, thirst for righteousness.

He gives us that desire for holiness. Desires are strange things, aren't they? Sometimes we really don't have much to do with, or it seems like we don't have very much to do with the things that we like.

Just naturally speaking, onions and green peppers and mayonnaise, yuck. I don't want anything to do with them. Why? I don't know.

[29:15] I didn't have a bad experience as a child. It's not like trauma or something. It's just my taste buds are that way, right? And we have, likewise, we have spiritual taste buds.

We sing of that when we sing, I was blinded by my sin, had no taste for heaven's joys. I didn't like that. I wanted earth's joys, not heaven's joys.

But then the spirit gave me life. And so if his first tool is a flashlight, his second tool is an appetite-enhancing drug. An appetite-enhancing drug.

Cancer patients who struggle to eat or feel hungry sometimes are given appetite-enhancing drugs to make them want to eat. I think we're all born or we're all recovering spiritual anorexics where we don't want to eat.

We don't have a taste for spiritual food. And the spirit gives us new birth so that we now hunger and thirst and we want this pure spiritual milk that we might grow up in our salvation.

[30:22] So the spirit makes us long for holiness. That desire comes from him. And so he gives us those new desires and then, like a gardener, he cultivates them.

So we want more and more. We're never satisfied with what we have. I think that's a true sign of real conversion.

A fake convert will get so far and desire no more. He's satisfied. But the one who's really born again, who's born of the spirit, wants, he hungers and thirsts for righteousness all the days of his life to the very end.

Now third, how does he make us more and more holy? He deepens our living fellowship with God. He deepens our living fellowship with God.

He broadens it. He deepens it. That shared life with God. That living communion with Jesus. So the closer we are to Jesus, the more we're walking with him.

[31:38] The more intimate our walk with him. There's less and less of ourselves that we keep hidden away from him or unexposed to him.

The holier we live. And so the greater our desire when we're walking close with God, the greater our desire for holiness, the greater our carefulness about our life, the deeper our love for him.

You don't grow in holiness apart from a living, daily, hourly, moment-by-moment walk with God. It's not enough just to have your devotions.

It's not just about doing your devotions or reading your Bible or doing these things. Those are all a means to an end. The end is a closer, more lively, more real walk with Jesus.

And the Spirit does that. He's the one that binds our hearts together with the Lord's and together with our Father. And so, we cry, Abba, Father.

[ 32 : 55 ] Those are the words of the Lord Jesus as He prays Abba. We begin to take on that spirit of sonship more and more. So we cry, Abba, Father.

He's the one that draws us and unites us to Christ. Romans 8, he who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin and yet your spirit is life because of righteousness.

And so the Holy Spirit brings the life of God into our hearts. And He makes us know and He makes us walk with Christ more and more. And so it's through living by the Spirit that we put to death the misdeeds of the body.

Romans 8, 8, living according to the flesh that is apart from God on your own, separate from Him, separate from Christ. And you will die but by living according to the Spirit and you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

So how does the Spirit sanctify us? All those things of making us more like Jesus, more like our Father, make us more obedient.

[ 34 : 08 ] He doesn't do it apart from Jesus. God doesn't send some, the Holy Spirit doesn't send like spiritual power packets apart from Jesus.

No, He, the Holy Spirit ties us in more and more closely with Jesus who is eternal life. He ties us into Jesus, the source of all spiritual life.

He runs more and more lines from our souls to Jesus and the deeper and the fuller He ties us into Christ, the more the life of Christ pours over into our lives and flows into us.

And so like the branch and the vine, He makes that connection and He broadens it and deepens it and opens up the veins so the sap flows from Him to us.

So we become more like Him. Well, there's more to say. We're almost out of time, but let me just end with this. So what should we do?

[ 35 : 18 ] Well, what should we do? What should you do? You should pursue holiness in the way of the Spirit. And what I mean is don't be afraid of searching yourselves. Search me and know me.

Try me. See if there's any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting. That should be a prayer that we pray. Lord, I don't see all that's going on in here. You see it.

Now show it to me. Search me. Try me. And so don't be afraid of the Spirit's flashlight. Don't be afraid of exposing your heart to this x-ray power of God's Word. Call for it and ask the Holy Spirit to use it upon you.

Cry out for deeper desires for holiness. And beware of anything that dulls those desires. This world is so full of things bad and just neutral or innocuous that can dull our desires.

For me, one of the most heart-dulling things I could do is get up and look at my phone before I have my devotions. makes me miserable when I do it.

[ 36 : 25 ] So I've guard myself and trained myself. I'm not looking at my email. I'm not checking my text. I'm not looking at the news. I'm not. I'm not. I can't do it. Dulls my heart.



And third, make it your daily work to walk with God. Realize that you are in this close relationship with Him and now live in it.

Living on the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. In Christ has piled every blessing, every grace, every virtue. If you need purity, He's pure.

If you need love, He was no greater love than that. It's found in Him. Patience. Was He patient with His disciples? Was He patient with those who stood against Him?

Kindness. Gentleness. Self-control. He was mocked and He didn't return it back upon them. Joy. Peace.

[37 : 30] He's full of it all. He's full of it all for us. So live upon Him. Last thing is don't grieve the Holy Spirit and quench that relationship.

If we're so tied in with Jesus and all of our spiritual life depends upon Him and the Holy Spirit is the one that does that work, then don't grieve the Holy Spirit. Don't quench the Holy Spirit and cause damage to that relationship that is our life, that is our joy, that is our peace.

Winslow says, do it for your own happiness sake. Your holiness is your happiness. The more holy you are, the more happier you will be. And so for your own sake, don't grieve the Holy Spirit.

Our time is gone and so we're dismissed. Thank you. you