OUR SANCTIFICATION
Marc Gibson

To be sanctified means "to be set apart," "consecrate," "to make holy." Christians are a sanctified people, made holy by God and set apart to Himself. Looking closer at our sanctification will help us appreciate the need to live as a holy people in the world today.

How are we sanctified? We are sanctified by:

THE SACRIFICE OF JESUS – The sacrificial death of Jesus shed the precious blood by which we are sanctified: "Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate" (Heb. 13:12). The blood of Jesus is the "blood of the covenant by which [we are] sanctified…" (10:29). This is why it is declared that "we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all…for by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (10:10, 14). By the grace of God, we are sanctified in Christ, called to be saints today (1 Cor. 1:2).

THE HOLY SPIRIT – The Holy Spirit plays an important role in our sanctification. The apostle Peter addressed Christians as "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:2). Please note that this sanctification "of the Spirit" does not work alone, but in conjunction with the "sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ (see point #1), and obedience (man's part). In a similar vein, the apostle Paul wrote that "…God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth" (2 Thess. 2:13). Salvation is through the sanctification by the Spirit *and* belief in the truth. Sanctification is never presented as a miraculous, better-felt-than-told experience of the Spirit. It is always linked with belief and obedience on the part of man.

FAITH – Paul was sent to the Gentiles "to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me" (Acts 26:18). Faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17). Jesus prayed to the Father that He would "sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth" (Jn. 17:17). Our faith, trust, dedication, conviction, and obedience to the truth of God will result in being sanctified by God. This salvation is made possible by the sacrifice of Jesus revealed by the Holy Spirit in the word that produces faith and obedience in those who desire to be saved. As it is written, "Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word" (Eph. 5:25, 26). Baptism is where our sanctification is realized – we are forgiven of sin and set apart to God!

When one is sanctified, what is the result?

TURN FROM SIN – Many of the Corinthian brethren had been involved in vile sins, such as fornication, idolatry, homosexuality, thievery, drunkenness, etc., but they were "washed," "sanctified," and "justified" (1 Cor. 6:9-11). They "were" these kinds of people, but no more. They had turned from sin. Paul wrote, "For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor" (1 Thess. 4:3, 4). We are to live like sanctified people, made holy by God: "But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct" (1 Pet. 1:15). Let us "pursue peace with all men, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14). Make a clean break from sin and live a holy life that will glorify God and shine a light of truth before men.

SANCTIFY GOD IN YOUR HEART – We must "sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. 3:15). We must make God holy and special in every way in our life. He and His ways must come first.

Have you been sanctified? Have you obeyed the truth of God? If not, you will be lost in sin and unworthy to abide in God's eternal home.

"And now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace,

which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified." (Acts 20:32)