

“For this is the will of God, your sanctification” 1Thess.4:3

Sanctification as a word is not found in the Old Testament. However ‘sanctified’ is, and according to Strongs Concordance, the Hebrew word ‘qadash’ means ‘to be clean, to make clean, to pronounce clean, to observe as clean’. If something or someone is to be consecrated to God, there must be the purification thereof.

The Concise Bible Dictionary definition of ‘qadesh’ is: “to set apart to sacred purposes, consecrate”. These two sources give a well-rounded sense of what it means to be sanctified.

Of interest is the timing of this study as our assembly families are self-isolating, both to keep clean and to be observed by the world as being clean in consideration of our testimony.

NOTE: once a person or a thing is sanctified, obedience to God’s Word is required.

Days are sanctified. God sanctified the seventh day in which He rested. Gen. 2:3

It was afterwards to be kept holy by the Israelites. Exodus 20:8

Persons are sanctified. Moses was to sanctify the Israelites and have them wash their clothes. Ex.19:10

The first-born of man and beast were to be sanctified to God. He said, “They are mine”. Ex.13:2

The priests and Levites were sanctified to the service of God. Ex.30:30

Places and vessels of Divine service are sanctified. Ex.30:29

The priests, Levites, and people were often called to sanctify *themselves*, to be ceremonially fit to approach God. Lev.20:7, Num.11:18 etc. God declared, “I will be sanctified in them that come near Me”. In Lev.10:1-3, Moses reminded Aaron upon the death of his sons Nadab and Abihu when they offered strange fire to the Lord. “By those who come near me I must be regarded as holy; and before all the people I must be glorified.” “So Aaron held his peace”.

God must be approached with reverence and in separation from what is unsuited to Him. Another requirement is that He will get the glory and not men.

In the New Testament, *sanctification*(the noun) is from the Greek word ‘hagiasmos’ which is also translated as *holiness* in our Bibles. It is used of: (a) separation to God 1Cor.1:2,30,31. 2Thess.2:13, 1Pet.1:2. I urge you to look up these references for a much greater blessing. This sanctification is positional and what God does upon salvation by faith and is to be *enjoyed* by all saints! On that note, it is a source of wonder and joy to me that God has made us saints and called us saints!

(b) the life-choices befitting those so separated

1Thess.4:3-7, 1Tim.2:15, Heb.12:14, Rom.6:19-22. This sanctification is conditional and what we do out of appreciation for Christ and obedience to the Word of God. This should be *applied* by all saints.

Here is William MacDonald’s SANCTIFICATION line-up:

“There are four phases of sanctification in the NT ---pre-conversion, positional, practical or progressive, and perfect.

1. Even before a person is saved, he is set apart in a position of external privilege. Thus we read in 1 Corinthians 7:14 that an unbelieving husband is sanctified by his believing wife. This is *pre-conversion sanctification*.

2. Whenever a person is born again, he is *positionally sanctified* by virtue of his union with Christ. This means that he is set apart to God from the world. It is referred to in such passages as Acts 26:18; 1Corinthians 1:2; 6:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 10:10,14
3. But then there is *progressive sanctification*. This is a present setting apart of the believer to God from the world, sin, and self. It is the process by which he becomes more Christlike. This is the sanctification which Paul prays for the Thessalonians here. It is also found in 1Thessalonians 4:3&4; 2Timothy 2:21. It is brought about by the Holy Spirit when we are obedient to the word of God (John 17:17; 2Cor.3:18). Such practical sanctification is a process that should continue as long as the believer is on earth. He will never achieve perfection or sinlessness on earth, but he should ever be pressing toward that goal.
4. *Perfect sanctification* refers to the believer's final condition in heaven. When he goes to be with the Lord, he will be morally like the Lord, completely and final set apart from sin (1Jn.3:1-3)"
MacDonald

There is also the obligation to sanctify oneself from vessels of dishonor in 'the great house' of profession in order that a man or woman may be "a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work." 2Tim.21.

Also, food "is sanctified by the word of God and prayer." Hence "every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving." 1Tim.4:4.

The word of God is absolutely essential for our progressive sanctification. In John 17:17 Jesus said "Sanctify them by your truth. Your word is truth". It is God's truth that causes us to think different and act different from the world. Thus reading and obeying it we are set apart from harm and contamination and, positively, are useful to God.

In John 17:19 Jesus states, "For their sakes I sanctify myself." He *set Himself apart*.

The Lord Jesus *set Himself apart* from the positional glories of heaven that we might be made saints. Once here on earth," He made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross." Phil 2:7&8.

While He was doing the work of His Father here on earth, He *set Himself apart* from rights that belonged to Him as man. Some suggestions are: His right to choose His own pathway, His right to have a wife, & His right to legal justice. "Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having a spot or a wrinkle or any such thing' but that she should be holy and without blemish". Eph.5:25-27.

I hope this partial study on sanctification and especially the example of Christ will give us the motivation to sanctify ourselves. "For this is the will of God, your sanctification" 1Thess 4:3

[This sanctification must be learned from God by His word and it must be pursued by the believer earnestly. For this holy character is not vicarious. It cannot be transferred or imputed, it is an individual possession, built up, little by little, as the result of obedience to the word of God, and following the example of Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. ---VINE'S]

1 Thessalonians 5:23: " Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."