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We Are People Who Are Consecrated To God

1 CORINTHIANS 6:9-11

Introduction

1. Over the last few weeks we have been looking at the significance of our lives as Christians:
 - a. We started with the fact that each of us who is a Christian is a new creation in Christ and as such we are living a new life with a new loyalty to God.
 - b. Then we looked at what God says about us belonging to Him; we are His special people, His beloved children, pilgrims in this world, traveling toward our eternal home — heaven.
 - c. Last week we studied Paul’s statement that we are a people who “walk by faith and not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7).
2. Tonight, I would like for us to examine what God’s Word says about us as a sanctified people:
 - a. Not only are we God’s special people, we have been set apart by Him for a special purpose.

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I. The Concept of Sanctification

A. ALL OF US WHO ARE CHRISTIANS ARE SANCTIFIED

1. Let’s start by looking at one of the churches in the New Testament which had its share of problems — the congregation in Corinth.

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2. In the beginning of Paul’s letter we learn that the congregation struggled with division (1 Corinthians 1:10-12)

“Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment. For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe’s people, that there are quarrels among you. Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, “I am of Paul,” and “I of Apollos,” and “I of Cephas,” and “I of Christ.”” (1 Corinthians 1:10–12, NASB95)

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3. In the first three verses of chapter three of this letter Paul spoke of their immaturity:

“And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?” (1 Corinthians 3:1–3, NASB95)

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4. In spite of these issues, Paul still recognized them as people who had been sanctified; he even called them saints:

“To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours:” (1 Corinthians 1:2, NASB95)

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5. In spite of their past, Paul used the fact of their sanctification, to argue that they should now lead holy lives:

“Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards,

nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.” (1 Corinthians 6:9–11, NASB95)

- ❑ So, tonight, if you have been washed in the waters of baptism, you have been sanctified and God considers you one of His holy people.

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B. OUR SANCTIFICATION, WHICH BEGAN AT OUR CONVERSION, CONTINUES AS WE GROW IN FAITH

1. Our sanctification began at our conversion, and continues as we grow in faith (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:23).

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“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Thessalonians 5:23, NASB95)

2. As Christians, you and I are to pursue sanctification, also known as holiness (Hebrews 12:14; 2 Corinthians 7:1).

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“Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.” (Hebrews 12:14, NASB95)

“Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:” (Hebrews 12:14, NKJV)

“Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” (2 Corinthians 7:1, NASB95)

3. Even as God is holy, so we are to be in all our conduct (1 Peter 1:15-16).

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“but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”” (1 Peter 1:15–16, NASB95)

4. When God called us through the gospel to be holy, sanctified people.
5. In our obedience to that gospel we were sanctified.
6. Now, it is our goal to pursue and perfect our holiness.
7. However, we are not alone in this pursuit.
8. God aids us in the process

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II. God Aids Us In Our Ongoing Sanctification Through . . .

A. THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. Our initial sanctification is continually connected in Scripture to the work of the Holy Spirit:
 - a. In Paul’s letter to the Christians in Rome, he indicated his desire to offer the Gentiles to God as those “sanctified by the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:16).

“. . . because of the grace that was given me from God, to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, so that my offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:15b-16, NASB95).

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- b. As we have already seen, Paul told the Christians in Corinth, “. . . you were washed . . . you were sanctified . . . you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6:11, NASB95).
- c. He told the Christians in Thessalonica “. . . God has chosen you from the

beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth” (2 Thessalonians 2:13, NASB95).

2. The Holy Spirit also has an important role in our on-going sanctification:

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- a. He was instrumental in our spiritual regeneration when we became Christians (cf. Titus 3:5-6).

“He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,” (Titus 3:5–6, NASB95)

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- b. As Christians, our bodies now serve as His temple (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.” (1 Corinthians 6:19–20, NASB95)

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- c. He is the agent through whom God strengthens our inner man (Ephesians 3:16).

“that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man,” (Ephesians 3:16, NASB95)

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B. HIS WORD

1. In the prayer which Jesus prayed to His Father, there in the upper room, on the eve of his crucifixion, He asked God to “Sanctify them in (by) the truth; Your word is truth” (John 17:17, NASB95).

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2. In Ephesians 5:25-26, the apostle Paul instructs those of us who are husbands to love our wives, “just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word.”
3. Since, according to Paul, “the word of God” is “the sword of the Spirit,” it is evidently the instrument which the Spirit uses to bring about our sanctification.
4. Let’s make it our goal to hide God’s word in our hearts so that we might not sin against Him, but instead, that we might “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18).

Conclusion

1. As Christians, you and I enjoy the special privilege of being consecrated or set apart to God.
2. God “has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9) so that we might become part of a “holy nation.”
3. God calls us to be holy even as He is holy (1 Peter 1:16).
4. His desire is to sanctify us completely so that He may live in us and among us.

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5. With that in mind, let us take to heart these words of the apostle Paul to the church in Corinth:

“Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” (2 Corinthians 7:1, NASB95)