

## 8: What Else Happens When You Are Born Again?

Justification makes you right with God. You could go to heaven the moment you are justified because you are clothed with Christ's righteousness and therefore acceptable to God. Just as you were unable to do anything to bring that about, there is nothing you can or need to do to improve your standing with God.

But God does not stop at justifying us. He immediately begins a process of change in us called sanctification. Justification freed us from the guilt of sin and its condemnation; sanctification frees us from the power of sin and its rule in our lives and makes us holy.

"For this is the will of God, your sanctification... For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness.

1 Thessalonians 4:3 – 7

### You Are Sanctified

The Bible speaks of sanctification in two ways. First, it tells us we have been sanctified:

"But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God"

1 Corinthians 6:11

In this verse, and others, we are taught that God has sanctified everyone who has been born again, that is He has separated us from everything that is unholy and set us apart for service to him. That is why Paul is able to write to the believers in Corinth, with all their faults, and address them as saints or those who are sanctified.

"To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours."

1 Corinthians 1:2

**Question:** What practical differences does it make when you see yourself as someone who has been sanctified?

### You Are Being Sanctified

Secondly, the Bible refers to sanctification as a process that begins when we are born again. It is a process of change by which we become increasingly holy in our thoughts and conduct: a process by which we become more and more like Jesus. So far as that process is concerned, no one attains complete sanctification in this life.

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

1 John 1:8

Yet the Bible tells us that the saints in heaven are completely free from the power of sin.

"For they are without fault before the throne of God."

Revelation 14:5

So our sanctification is completed either at death or immediately after. Until then there is constant tension between the old nature, the flesh, with its sinful desires and habits and the new nature, the spirit which delights in the law of God.

“The flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.”

Galatians 5:17

At times it may appear that the old nature has the upper hand — no one lives a constantly victorious life — but defeat is never final. Now that we are new creatures in Christ, sin has no authority over us. It has no power to make us obey it and we can triumph over it.

“Our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin... Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body.”

Romans 6:6 and 12

## **The Holy Spirit Sanctifies**

Who is responsible for our sanctification? The Bible is clear; sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit.

“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

2 Corinthians 3:18

“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely... He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.”

1 Thessalonians 5:23 – 24

Without God’s Spirit any efforts we might make to grow in holiness would be futile. He enables us and assists us by working within us and through what we call the means of grace: the teaching of God’s Word, prayer, worship and Christian fellowship.

## **We Have Work to Do**

Nevertheless, it is also clear that we are responsible for our own growth in holiness for we are commanded to strive against sin and put it to death. How do we reconcile these apparently conflicting ideas? The nearest we can come to an answer is found in Paul’s letter to the Philippians.

“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”

Philippians 2:12 – 13

## **Sanctification Is Not An Optional Extra**

Sanctification is not an optional extra. It is an absolute necessity. So much so that we are told that the evidence that someone is saved is that his life is being changed.

“As He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.””

1 Peter 1:15 – 16

## **Key Words**

Sanctification	To make holy or to set apart for a holy purpose.
Saint	Someone who is sanctified or set apart for God’s service.
Holiness	Separation from all that is profane.

## **Memory Verses**

- ☺ Romans 6:6
- ☺ Romans 6:12
- ☺ Philippians 2:12 – 13