



Learn Your Bible

Resources to help you learn and understand the Bible

Short Study 017: Sanctification

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Read Hebrews 10:5-14

1. Sanctification: What does it mean? The Dictionary definition of *sanctify* is (1) to make holy, (2) to free from sin, (3) to declare or render (something) productive of or conducive to holiness or grace.

Holiness, in the Bible, means "set apart" from the world and to God.

2. Is sanctification God's will? The first half of 1 Thess 4:3 tells us God's will in the matter of sanctification and holiness. What is it? Why does the Lord require us to be holy? (Read Leviticus 11:45, 1 Peter 1:15-16.)

3. How can we be holy? The "He" referred to in Hebrews 10:5 is Jesus. He has taken away our sin by dying on the cross in our place and taking our punishment for sin upon Himself. Now read verses 10 and 14 again. Does there appear appear to be a contradiction here? According to verse 10 we *have been* sanctified already, but verse 14 tells us are still *being* sanctified. Can you explain it? Actually there is no contradiction. Verse 10 refers to our *position* before God, won for us through Jesus' death on the cross. Verse 14 refers to the *process* that leads to the completion in the believer of being separated wholly to God.

4. So who does the sanctifying? Read 1 Thess 5:23. Do we play a part or does God do it all? Read Philippians 2:12-16. Through these Scriptures we can see that we are sanctified through the work of God, but our choices and attitudes are also part of the process.

What will guide us in making those choices? You will find the answer in Jesus' prayer, in John 17:16-19. The *word* to which He refers is what God has declared in the Scriptures, which are our true guide. (Note the cross reference to Hebrews 10:10 in verse 19). It is through *obedience* to the Word that sanctification takes place.

What should be our attitude? The answer is found in what Jesus says in John 17:19 and explained by St. Paul in his letter to the Philippians (read Phil 2:5-8).

To think about and apply: Ask the Holy Spirit to show you any areas in your life that need to be sanctified and to lead you to the instruction in His Word to follow and so begin the process.

To dig deeper: The Bible teaches that both perseverance and discipline will be necessary in the process of sanctification. Read James 1:2-8 and Hebrews 12:1-11 as a start in exploring this further.