

BIBLE TRUTHS EXPLAINED

What the Bible Teaches About

SANCTIFICATION

Revised Edition, 2026

GORDON LYONS

ESV Edition

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Bible Truths Explained

Sanctification

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Sanctification

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PART 1

Synopsis: Sanctification

Sanctification is that work of the Holy Spirit in the inward life of a believer which progressively changes that person's old sinful manner of life to the new holy manner of life: a life that produces righteous behaviour and good works. Sanctification is the gradual renewal of the whole person after the image of Christ. This involves the changing of that person's character and conduct from one degree of glory to another, until the Holy Spirit perfects him in holiness of life (glorification). Sanctification is a life-long process, and it is never finally completed during this life. When the Lord takes the believer into his presence, then he will finally complete his sanctification. Then, and then only, will the believer experience glorification, and then the Lord will present him faultless and blameless before the throne of God. Sanctification must immediately follow regeneration and justification. No unregenerate and unjustified person can ever benefit from the Spirit's work of sanctification, but all genuinely regenerated and justified children of God must produce the fruit of a sanctified and holy life.

Note 1: Recreating God's Image in the Believer

Because of the Fall, Adam and Eve lost much of the image and likeness of God in which the Lord had created them. Our first parents conveyed this loss of original righteousness to all their posterity; i.e. to the entire human race (except Christ). Man's whole nature has become depraved (utterly corrupted) by sin. His heart's desire is to obey and satisfy his sinful nature, instead of obeying and pleasing his Creator. Sanctification—which applies only to those whom God has redeemed through faith in Christ Jesus—is the process of reversing this evil trend. During this process, the Holy Spirit transforms a regenerated and justified person's whole nature, causing him to seek and to obey God's will. The Spirit also begins to recreate within that person the image and likeness of his or her Creator.

Scripture References (ESV)

Recreating God's Image in the Believer

Genesis 5:1-3

¹ This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. ² Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created. ³ When Adam had lived for 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth.

Genesis 6:5

⁵ The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. (See vv.1-13; cf. Gen 8:21)

1 Corinthians 15:49

⁴⁹ Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven. (See vv.47-54)

2 Corinthians 3:18

¹⁸ And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 4:16

¹⁶ So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. (See vv.17-18)

Note 2: Sanctification is a Life-Long Process

To sanctify means to cleanse, to consecrate and to set apart from common to holy (or hallowed) use. The believer has been redeemed and set apart from the world and from the corruption of sin, and has been consecrated and set apart to God and to holiness of life. Sanctification—which is a gift of God and a work of the Holy Spirit—follows on from justification. However, it differs from justification in this respect: justification is a once-for-all act in which God declares or pronounces a believing sinner to be just or righteous. God reckons the believer just or righteous solely on the grounds of the perfect righteousness of Christ. This righteousness of Christ, which God credits to the sinner's account, is known as *imputed* righteousness. God imputes or reckons this righteousness to a believer immediately the Holy Spirit brings him to faith in Christ. Sanctification, however, is the life-long process of making a believer inwardly righteous: a process that will only be finally completed in glory. This life-long process is known as *imparted* righteousness. The Holy Spirit progressively imparts this righteousness to the believer during his ongoing sanctification.

Scripture References (ESV)***Sanctification is a Life-Long Process***

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, ²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. (See vv.15-18; cf. 1 Cor. 3:16-17; cf. also 2 Cor. 6:16)

1 Thessalonians 4:3-8

³ For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴ that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honour, ⁵ not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; ⁶ that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you

beforehand and solemnly warned you. ⁷ For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. ⁸ Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you. (See vv.1-2)

Hebrews 10:10

¹⁰ And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. (See vv.1-9)

Hebrews 10:14

¹⁴ For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. (See vv.11-18)

Note 3: Striving Toward Victory

Neither justification nor sanctification results in a person attaining to perfection at any time during this life. Although God has justified the believer, or declared him righteous, the Holy Spirit continues the life-long process of making that person inwardly righteous. By the indwelling and sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, the believer must continually put to death the desires arising from his old sinful nature. In many cases, a child of God can—and must—immediately forsake sinful attitudes and habits. However, no believer will achieve complete victory over all sin during his life on earth. Rather, there will always be a constant spiritual warfare between the evil desires of the old nature and the holy desires of the new nature.

Scripture References (ESV)

Striving Toward Victory

Romans 7:18-20

¹⁸ For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. ¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. (See vv.7-17)

Romans 7:21-23

²¹ So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. ²² For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, ²³ but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. (See vv.24-25)

Galatians 5:16-17

¹⁶ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of

the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. (See v.18)

Philippians 3:12-14

¹² Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³ Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on towards the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (See vv.7-16)

Philippians 3:20-21

²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself. (See vv.17-19)

Colossians 3:5-10

⁵ Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶ On account of these the wrath of God is coming. ⁷ In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. ⁸ But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. ⁹ Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. (See vv.1-14)

Note 4: Forsaking Sin and Pursuing Righteousness

No child of God will attain to perfection during this life. Even so, the believer must constantly strive after holiness of life: for, without holiness, no-one will see the Lord. Those who belong to Christ must put on Christ. They must learn to make no provision for the evil desires of the 'flesh' (i.e. the sinful nature). The believer must allow the Spirit of holiness to dominate and control his life. He must not yield to the corrupt desires and passions of his old sinful nature. When, however, a believer does sin, he must repent and confess his sin to God. He must also renounce his sin and endeavour to live by the power of the Spirit of holiness and of sanctification. Those whom the Spirit has converted, and whom he is sanctifying, cannot continue in the deliberate practice of sin. Those who continue in the deliberate practice of sin, call into question the reality of their conversion.

Scripture References (ESV)

Adopted Children are Heirs of Glory

Romans 13:14

¹⁴ But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires. (See vv.12-13)

2 Corinthians 7:1

¹ Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body ¹ and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God. (See 2 Cor. 6:14-18)

Ephesians 4:22-24

²² to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, ²³ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. (See vv.17-32)

Hebrews 12:14

¹⁴ Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. (See vv.11-17)

Related Bible Truths

The doctrine of sanctification stands closely related to regeneration, justification, adoption, and good works. There can be no process of sanctification in a person's life if that person has not first been regenerated by the Holy Spirit, justified by God, and adopted into his family. Conversely, no person who is being sanctified can continue to practise a sinful manner of life. Holiness and sin are antithetical.²

Again, one of the major fruits of sanctification is good works. Good works are those works that God enjoins or commands. To be acceptable to God, however, good works must come from a heart that has been cleansed through personal faith in the Son of God and his atoning work. These good works or deeds must issue from a life that the Holy Spirit has renewed, and which is productive of such characteristics as love, mercy, compassion, humility, justice and equity. Again, each one of us must perform good works out of genuine love for God, and love for our neighbour.³

¹ body: [2 Corinthians 7:1](#) Greek *flesh*. (ESV footnote)

² See further on Bible Truths Explained: *Regeneration; Justification; Adoption*.

³ See further on Bible Truths Explained: *Good Works*.

Summary below

Part 1 Summary

BTE12 Summary — Sanctification (ESV Edition)

Part 1: Synopsis of Sanctification

Definition

Sanctification is the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit whereby regenerated, justified, and adopted believers are progressively transformed into the likeness of Christ. Through this lifelong process, the Spirit renews the believer's character and conduct, producing holiness, righteousness, and good works, until sanctification is finally completed in glorification at the return of Christ or upon entering His presence.

Key Truths

1. **Sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit** — He progressively transforms believers into Christ's likeness.
 2. **Sanctification follows regeneration and justification** — only those who are saved can experience this work of grace.
 3. **Sanctification restores God's image in believers** — the Spirit renews what was corrupted by sin.
 4. **The Fall corrupted human nature** — humanity inherited a sinful disposition through Adam.
 5. **Sanctification reverses the effects of sin** — believers are increasingly conformed to God's will.
 6. **Sanctification is progressive** — growth in holiness occurs gradually throughout the Christian life.
 7. **Sanctification differs from justification** — justification declares a sinner righteous, while sanctification makes a believer increasingly righteous in practice.
 8. **Justification involves imputed righteousness** — Christ's righteousness is credited to the believer.
 9. **Sanctification involves imparted righteousness** — the Holy Spirit progressively works righteousness within the believer.
 10. **Believers never attain perfection in this life** — the struggle against sin continues until glorification.
 11. **The Christian life involves spiritual warfare** — the new nature and the old sinful nature remain in conflict.
-

12. **Believers must actively pursue holiness** — sanctification requires continual resistance to sin.
 13. **Sanctification produces good works** — holy living is a necessary fruit of genuine faith.
 14. **Persistent, deliberate sin is inconsistent with sanctification** — God's people cannot comfortably continue in a sinful lifestyle.
 15. **Holiness is essential for God's people** — sanctification is God's will for every believer.
 16. **Glorification completes sanctification** — believers will finally be perfected in holiness in God's presence.
-

Biblical Foundations

Recreating God's Image in the Believer

1. **Genesis 5:1-3** — humanity was created in God's image, but Adam's descendants inherited his fallen likeness.
2. **Genesis 6:5** — sin corrupted the thoughts and desires of humanity.
3. **1 Corinthians 15:49** — believers will bear the image of the heavenly Man, Christ.
4. **2 Corinthians 3:18** — believers are transformed from one degree of glory to another.
5. **2 Corinthians 4:16** — the inner person is renewed day by day.

Sanctification Is a Life-Long Process

6. **1 Corinthians 6:19-20** — believers belong to God and must glorify Him in their bodies.
7. **1 Thessalonians 4:3-8** — God's will is the sanctification of His people.
8. **Hebrews 10:10** — believers are being sanctified through Christ's sacrifice.
9. **Hebrews 10:14** — those redeemed by Christ are continually being sanctified.

Striving Toward Victory

10. **Romans 7:18-23** — believers experience ongoing conflict with indwelling sin.
11. **Galatians 5:16-17** — the flesh and Spirit oppose one another.
12. **Philippians 3:12-14** — believers press on toward spiritual maturity.
13. **Philippians 3:20-21** — final transformation awaits Christ's return.
14. **Colossians 3:5-10** — believers must put off the old self and put on the new.

Forsaking Sin and Pursuing Righteousness

15. **Romans 13:14** — believers must put on Christ and reject sinful desires.
 16. **2 Corinthians 7:1** — God's people must pursue holiness.
 17. **Ephesians 4:22-24** — believers are renewed after God's likeness in righteousness and holiness.
 18. **Hebrews 12:14** — holiness is necessary for seeing the Lord.
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Practical Implications

1. **Pursue holiness intentionally** — sanctification is God's will for every believer.
 2. **Depend on the Holy Spirit daily** — spiritual growth comes through His power.
 3. **Expect ongoing spiritual conflict** — believers must continually battle sin.
 4. **Put sinful practices to death** — sanctification requires active repentance and obedience.
 5. **Do not expect perfection in this life** — growth is progressive rather than instantaneous.
 6. **Rejoice in God's transforming work** — the Spirit is steadily renewing believers into Christ's image.
 7. **Practice good works** — they are evidence of genuine sanctification.
 8. **Confess and forsake sin quickly** — ongoing repentance is part of spiritual growth.
 9. **Keep your focus on Christ** — He is both the model and goal of sanctification.
 10. **Look forward to glorification** — God's work of sanctification will one day be completed perfectly.
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Summary Sentence

Sanctification is the lifelong work of the Holy Spirit whereby regenerated and justified believers are progressively transformed into the likeness of Christ, increasingly forsake sin, pursue holiness and good works, and are ultimately perfected in glory when God completes His renewing work within them.

PART 2

Preliminary Remarks: Freedom of Conscience

For the people of God, the Bible is the sole rule (or standard) of faith and duty. It is to this rule—and to this rule alone—that God requires us to conform our lives; in love, trust, and obedience.

In the context of sanctification and good works, we can regard nothing as obligatory on our conscience if the Word of God does not expressly command or forbid it. Alternatively, we can regard as obligatory on our conscience, only those matters that we can deduce from a clearly taught principle of God's Word. Unscriptural, man-made rules, regulations, and codes of conduct form no part of the work of sanctification. Such extra-Biblical teachings have absolutely no authority to bind the conscience of any believer. If we would hold fast to our freedom in Christ, then we must steadfastly uphold the principle that—in *matters of faith and morals*—the people of God are bound by nothing but the Word of God.

We need only remember that our freedom in Christ does not give us the freedom to do as *we* will, but only the freedom to do as *God* wills. Freedom of conscience is never a licence to lead us into sin. The overruling principle that must govern our actions in all such cases must be that of love for God, and love for our fellow believer.

Matters of Indifference and Conscience

Some things are matters of indifference; i.e. matters that are not in themselves wrong (although, under certain circumstances, they may become wrong). So long as no sin is involved, matters of indifference are matters of individual conscience.

A Christian may believe that he is doing right by abstaining from a certain course of action. If so, then he is free to maintain this position so that he may honour God, and satisfy his conscience. However, since it involves a matter of indifference, then that person is not at liberty to impose his personal convictions upon other believers. Again, this believer does not have the right to expect other believers to conform to his personal views. Thus, the apostle Paul says:

Romans 14:4

⁴Who are you to pass judgement on the servant of another? It is before his own master ⁴that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand. (See vv.1-3)

Romans 14:10

¹⁰Why do you pass judgement on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgement seat of God; (See vv.11-13)

To cite one example from Scripture: the eating of meat bought from a meat market—meat that might possibly have been associated previously with sacrifices in a pagan temple. Its possible prior use in an

⁴ master: [Romans 14:4](#) Or lord. (ESV footnote)

idol's temple caused some Christians to doubt whether they should buy and eat it. Hence, Paul's response.

The apostle Paul recognised that the eating of meat was not in itself wrong. However, a person could abstain from eating meat if he believed that that particular meat had been associated with pagan worship or idolatrous sacrifice.

Again, even although he had fully satisfied himself that the meat had not been offered previously in sacrifice to idols, a person could still abstain from eating it. He might do this, for example, if he thought that—by exercising his freedom to eat on this occasion—he might cause a weaker brother or sister to stumble in the faith.

Thus, God's Word says:

Romans 14:6b-8

^{6b} ... The one who eats, eats in honour of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains, abstains in honour of the Lord and gives thanks to God. ⁷ For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. ⁸ For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. (See vv.5-9)

Again, God's Word says:

Romans 14:20-21

²⁰ Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God. Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for anyone to make another stumble by what he eats. ²¹ It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that causes your brother to stumble. (See vv.14-23; see esp. v.23)

To the Corinthians, the apostle Paul said:

1 Corinthians 8:8-11

⁸ Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. ⁹ But take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. ¹⁰ For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? ¹¹ And so by your knowledge this weak person is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died. (See vv.1-7)

Some Christians had been eating meat in an idol's temple believing that an idol was a non-existent entity and a figment of its devotees imagination. Therefore a non-existent idol could not possible contaminate the meat in any sense. These Christians believed that the meat was ceremonially clean and therefore felt free to eat it.

Other Christians, however, were offended by these brothers and sisters' actions. It was these other Christians' sincere belief that any association by a Christian with an idol's temple was wrong in and of itself. Therefore, the Christians eating in the idol's temple were in grave danger of causing their 'weaker' brothers and sisters to stumble and possibly fall into sin. The sin would be that the doubting believers might be encouraged to join with the other believers in eating the meat offered to idols—against the convictions of their own consciences. Thus, Paul declares:

1 Corinthians 8:12-13

¹² Thus, sinning against your brothers ⁵ and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. ¹³ Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

Matters of indifference are matters of conscience. However, the right to exercise our private judgment in these matters must take into account the possible effects our actions might have on the lives of other believers. Ultimately, the individual believer must decide for himself—before a holy and righteous God—when a particular matter is right, and when it is not. No-one else, however, must attempt to impose his own personal views or opinions on that believer.⁶

To this end, the Scripture says:

Galatians 5:1

¹ For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. (See vv.2-4)

Colossians 2:16-17

¹⁶ Therefore let no one pass judgement on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. ¹⁷ These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. (See vv.18-19)

Colossians 2:20-23

²⁰ If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations— ²¹ “Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch” ²² (referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings? ²³ These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

We have sought to lay down these important principles regarding Christian freedom, individual conscience, the right of private judgment (or discernment), and our responsibilities toward our weaker

⁵ brother: [1 Corinthians 8:12](#) Or brothers and sisters. (ESV footnote)

⁶ See further on Bible Truths Explained: *The Divine Inspiration of The Bible*, under *Matters of Conscience*.

brothers and sisters. Now, we will begin to consider in more detail what the Bible teaches about sanctification—or growth in grace and holiness of life.

Summary below

Part 2 Summary

BTE12 Summary — Sanctification (ESV Edition)

Part 2: Freedom of Conscience and Sanctification

Definition

Sanctification is governed by God's Word alone. In matters of faith and conduct, believers are bound only by what Scripture expressly commands, forbids, or clearly teaches by principle. Christian freedom does not permit sin, but enables believers to obey God from a willing heart while exercising a biblically informed conscience in matters that Scripture does not specifically regulate.

Key Truths

1. **The Bible is the sole rule of faith and duty** — believers are accountable to God's Word alone.
 2. **Only Scripture can bind the conscience** — human traditions and man-made regulations possess no divine authority.
 3. **Christian freedom is freedom to obey God** — liberty in Christ is not permission to sin.
 4. **Love for God and others governs Christian liberty** — freedom must always be exercised responsibly.
 5. **Some matters are morally indifferent in themselves** — Scripture neither commands nor forbids certain practices.
 6. **Matters of indifference are matters of conscience** — believers may reach different conclusions while seeking to honour God.
 7. **Christians should not judge one another over non-essential matters** — each believer ultimately answers to God.
 8. **Personal convictions must not be imposed on others** — individual conscience does not create universal law.
 9. **Christian liberty must not become a stumbling block** — believers should avoid actions that unnecessarily harm weaker Christians.
 10. **Love sometimes limits liberty** — believers may voluntarily surrender legitimate freedoms for another's spiritual welfare.
 11. **A weak conscience must be treated with care** — spiritual maturity includes concern for others.
 12. **External regulations cannot produce holiness** — man-made rules are ineffective in overcoming sin.
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13. **True sanctification comes through the Spirit and the Word** — holiness is not achieved through legalism.
 14. **Believers must exercise discernment** — each Christian must make conscience decisions before God.
 15. **Unity does not require uniformity in non-essential matters** — differences can exist without division.
 16. **Biblical liberty and personal responsibility must remain in balance** — freedom is exercised under the lordship of Christ.
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Biblical Foundations

Freedom of Conscience

1. **Galatians 5:1** — Christ has set believers free; they must not return to bondage.
2. **Colossians 2:16-17** — believers should not be judged regarding food, drink, or ceremonial observances.
3. **Colossians 2:20-23** — human regulations cannot restrain sinful desires or produce true holiness.

Matters of Indifference and Conscience

4. **Romans 14:4** — believers stand or fall before their own Master.
 5. **Romans 14:10** — Christians should not judge or despise one another.
 6. **Romans 14:6-8** — believers may differ in practice while seeking to honour the Lord.
 7. **Romans 14:20-21** — liberty must never be used to cause another believer to stumble.
 8. **1 Corinthians 8:8-11** — food itself does not commend a person to God.
 9. **1 Corinthians 8:12-13** — wounding a fellow believer's conscience is a sin against Christ.
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Practical Implications

1. **Submit your conscience to Scripture** — God's Word alone is the final authority.
 2. **Reject man-made legalism** — human traditions must not be elevated to divine commands.
 3. **Exercise Christian freedom responsibly** — liberty should honour God and serve others.
 4. **Respect fellow believers' consciences** — differences on non-essential matters should be handled graciously.
 5. **Avoid judging others unnecessarily** — God alone is Lord of His servants.
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6. **Be willing to surrender personal freedoms** — love sometimes requires restraint.
 7. **Do not pressure others to adopt your preferences** — personal convictions are not universal obligations.
 8. **Consider the spiritual welfare of weaker believers** — actions should be guided by love as well as liberty.
 9. **Pursue holiness through God's means** — sanctification comes through the Word and Spirit, not merely external rules.
 10. **Make decisions prayerfully before God** — each believer is responsible to act according to a biblically informed conscience.
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Summary Sentence

Sanctification is governed by God's Word alone, and while believers enjoy freedom of conscience in matters not explicitly commanded or forbidden by Scripture, they must exercise that liberty in love, avoiding legalism, respecting the consciences of others, and seeking always to honour God and promote the spiritual good of fellow believers.

PART 3

Doctrine of Sanctification: Meaning of Sanctification

The verb *to sanctify* (Greek, **ἀγιάζω**, *hagιάzō*) means *to consecrate* or *set apart* (from common to sacred use), *to hallow*, or *to treat as holy*.

In the temple of God, certain vessels were set apart from common or ordinary use. These vessels were cleansed and consecrated to holy use. Similarly, God sets apart the believer as holy to himself. The Lord separates his redeemed children from sin and from the world (or from the world, the flesh, and the devil), and he consecrates them to himself. Thus, the apostle Paul says:

Romans 12:1-2

¹ I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world,⁷ but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (See vv.3-16)

As an example of what God's Word means by not being conformed to this world (v.2), the following verse clearly illustrates this point:

Romans 13:13

¹³ Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarrelling and jealousy. (See v.14)

In body and soul, God's Spirit has consecrated us as holy to the Lord. Therefore, we must allow the Holy Spirit to work within us the work of grace and of sanctification. We must allow him to cleanse us from anything and everything that defiles our lives. He must purify us so that we are vessels fit for the Master's use, and ready for any good work.

Thus, the Scripture says:

2 Timothy 2:20-21

²⁰ Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for honourable use, some for dishonourable. ²¹ Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonourable, he will be a vessel for honourable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work. (See vv.14-26)

⁷ world: [Romans 12:2](#) Greek *age*. (ESV footnote)

Meaning of the Word 'Flesh'

When the apostle Paul speaks of the *deeds of the flesh* (or *the works of the flesh*), he is referring usually to the deeds of the sinful nature; i.e. the corrupt thoughts and practices of the old self or the old nature. These evil thoughts and practices originate from within. Thus, the Lord Jesus teaches that the things which defile a person, and make him or her morally unclean, are the things that come from within—from the corrupt or sinful nature.

Thus, it is written:

Mark 7:20-23

²⁰ And he said, "What comes out of a person is what defiles him. ²¹ For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, ²² coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. ²³ All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person." (See vv.14-19; cf. Matt. 15:18-20)

Following the teaching of the Lord Jesus on this subject, the apostle Paul condemns the deeds of the flesh or sinful nature; i.e. all those things that originate from our old corrupt nature. Paul tells us, however, that we are to reckon our old sinful nature as having been crucified with Christ. Therefore, we must no longer yield ourselves to its controlling influence over our lives. As saints of God, we must not yield to the desires of the old sinful nature, nor must we practise them. Rather, we must put off that nature—as though it were a filthy garment. We must reckon our old self dead with Christ. This is one important aspect of sanctification that we will be considering more fully at a later stage.

Sanctification and Revelation

Sanctification is the imparting of righteousness to the believer through the personal agency and work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit imparts this righteousness to each child of God by revealing to him the truths of God's holy Word; i.e. the Bible. Hence, in God's Word, the Lord Jesus says:

John 15:3

³ Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. (See vv.1-8)

John 17:17

¹⁷ Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. (See vv.14-19)

Ephesians 5:25-27

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶ that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ so that he might present the church to himself in splendour, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. (See vv.28-32)

The Bible is the revelation of God's word and will. Through the Bible, the Spirit reveals to the believer everything that he needs to know for life and godliness. Thus, the apostle Peter says:

2 Peter 1:3-4

³ His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, ⁴ by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. (See vv.5-8)

Taken by itself—i.e. apart from the illuminating and enlivening power of the Spirit—God's Word does not produce sanctification, nor does it impart righteousness to the believer. This means that sanctification and righteousness of life does not result from 'moral persuasion' alone. Sanctification and holiness of life result from a work of divine grace within the believer. This ongoing work of grace is effected by the Holy Spirit in conjunction with the Word of God. The indwelling Holy Spirit applies the truths of God's Word to the heart and mind of each believer. Subsequently, the believer reflects the Spirit's work of grace through changes to his or her character and conduct.

The more thoroughly acquainted we become with God's Word, and with what God requires of us, the more the Holy Spirit will be able to sanctify us. The more we understand and trust God's Word, the more the Spirit is able to impart to us ever-increasing degrees of righteousness. This increasing level of imparted righteousness ought then to lead to even greater consecration of the mind and will to God, and to ever increasing holiness of life.

It is in this way that we are being inwardly renewed in the image and likeness of our Creator; in true righteousness, holiness, and knowledge. Thus, God's Word says:

2 Corinthians 3:18

¹⁸ And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. (See vv.7-17; cf. 1 Cor. 13:12)

2 Corinthians 4:16

¹⁶ So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. (See vv.13-18)

Ephesians 4:23-24

²³ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. (See vv.17-32)

Colossians 3:9-10

⁹ Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. (See vv.5-15)

Summary below

Part 3 Summary

BTE12 Summary — Sanctification (ESV Edition)

Part 3: Meaning of Sanctification

Definition

Sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit by which believers are cleansed, consecrated, and set apart to God for holy use. Through the Spirit's application of God's Word, believers are progressively transformed in character and conduct, separated from sin, renewed in the image of Christ, and prepared to live lives that are pleasing and useful to God.

Key Truths

1. **To sanctify means to consecrate and set apart as holy** — believers are separated from common use and devoted to God.
 2. **God sets believers apart from the world, the flesh, and the devil** — sanctification involves separation from sin and dedication to God.
 3. **Believers are called to be living sacrifices** — their whole lives are to be offered to God in worship and obedience.
 4. **Sanctification involves transformation, not conformity** — Christians are to be changed by God rather than shaped by worldly values.
 5. **Believers are vessels for holy use** — God cleanses and prepares His people for service.
 6. **The "flesh" refers to the sinful nature** — it describes the corrupt desires and tendencies that remain within believers.
 7. **Sin originates from within the fallen heart** — outward sins flow from inward corruption.
 8. **Believers must put off the old sinful nature** — sanctification includes rejecting former patterns of sin.
 9. **The old self has been crucified with Christ** — Christians are not to live under the control of sinful desires.
 10. **The Holy Spirit imparts righteousness** — sanctification is God's ongoing work within believers.
 11. **God's Word is the primary instrument of sanctification** — the Spirit uses Scripture to cleanse, instruct, and transform.
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12. **Sanctification is not produced by moral persuasion alone** — true holiness requires the Spirit's inward work of grace.
 13. **Knowledge of God's Word promotes spiritual growth** — greater understanding provides greater opportunity for sanctification.
 14. **The Spirit applies Scripture personally** — He brings God's truth to bear upon the believer's heart and life.
 15. **Believers are progressively renewed in God's image** — sanctification restores righteousness, holiness, and spiritual knowledge.
 16. **Sanctification prepares believers for good works** — holy living results in usefulness for God's service.
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Biblical Foundations

Meaning of Sanctification

1. **Romans 12:1-2** — believers are to present themselves to God and be transformed by the renewing of their minds.
2. **Romans 13:13** — Christians are not to live in the sinful practices of the world.
3. **2 Timothy 2:20-21** — believers are sanctified vessels prepared for every good work.

Meaning of the Word "Flesh"

4. **Mark 7:20-23** — sinful actions arise from the corrupt heart within.
5. **Matthew 15:18-20** (referenced) — inward corruption produces outward defilement.

Sanctification and Revelation

6. **John 15:3** — believers are cleansed by Christ's Word.
7. **John 17:17** — God's truth sanctifies His people.
8. **Ephesians 5:25-27** — Christ sanctifies His church through the washing of the Word.
9. **2 Peter 1:3-4** — God's revealed truth provides everything necessary for life and godliness.

Renewal into God's Image

10. **2 Corinthians 3:18** — believers are transformed from glory to glory by the Spirit.
 11. **2 Corinthians 4:16** — the inner person is renewed daily.
 12. **Ephesians 4:23-24** — believers put on the new self created in righteousness and holiness.
 13. **Colossians 3:9-10** — the new self is renewed after the image of its Creator.
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Practical Implications

1. **Dedicate your life wholly to God** — sanctification involves being set apart for His purposes.
 2. **Resist conformity to the world** — pursue God's standards rather than worldly values.
 3. **Put sinful habits and attitudes to death** — sanctification requires active rejection of sin.
 4. **Immerse yourself in Scripture** — the Spirit uses God's Word to transform believers.
 5. **Depend on the Holy Spirit daily** — genuine holiness comes through His power.
 6. **Allow God to expose areas needing change** — sanctification begins with honest self-examination.
 7. **Pursue continual spiritual growth** — renewal is progressive throughout life.
 8. **Seek usefulness in God's service** — sanctified believers become vessels fit for the Master's use.
 9. **Guard your heart** — outward conduct reflects inward spiritual condition.
 10. **Grow in knowledge of God** — deeper understanding of Scripture promotes deeper sanctification.
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Summary Sentence

Sanctification is the Holy Spirit's ongoing work of setting believers apart to God, cleansing them from sin, renewing them through the truth of Scripture, and progressively transforming them into the image of Christ so that they may live holy lives and become useful vessels for their Master's service.

PART 4

Sanctification and Holiness

The Relationship

Sanctification, and holiness of life, are inseparably linked terms. The believer's life has been, and is being, emptied and cleansed of all impurities, and set apart from the world to the service of the Lord. However, a cleansed vessel does not remain an empty vessel. It is the Lord's vessel, and the Holy Spirit fills that vessel with his sanctifying presence, power and influence. This cleansed vessel is our lives: the dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Let us refer for a moment to an Old Testament incident concerning God's people during their Babylonian captivity. Among these people were selected individuals who were responsible for carrying back to Jerusalem the sanctified vessels of the temple. In this connection, God's Word says:

Isaiah 52:11

¹¹ Depart, depart, go out from there;
touch no unclean thing;
go out from the midst of her; purify yourselves,
you who bear the vessels of the LORD. (See vv.1-12)

Referring to this passage, the apostle Paul says:

2 Corinthians 6:16-18

¹⁶ What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said,

"I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them,
and I will be their God,
and they shall be my people. {Lev. 26:12; Jer. 32:38; Ezek. 37:27}

¹⁷ Therefore go out from their midst,
and be separate from them, says the Lord,
and touch no unclean thing;
then I will welcome you, {Isaiah 52:11; Ezek. 20:34,41}

¹⁸ and I will be a father to you,
and you shall be sons and daughters to me,
says the Lord Almighty." {2 Samuel 7:14; 7:8; Isaiah 43:6-7} (See 2 Cor. 6:14-15)

2 Corinthians 7:1

¹ Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.

Our lives are the dwelling place of God. For this reason, our lives ought to be sanctified to the Lord. For the Lord whose glory fills the temple, fills the temple of our lives—and the temple of the Lord is holy.

Thus, the Scripture says:

Ezekiel 10:4

⁴ And the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub to the threshold of the house, and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was filled with the brightness of the glory of the LORD. (See vv.1-3; cf. Exod. 40:34-35)

Habakkuk 2:20

²⁰ But the LORD is in his holy temple;
let all the earth keep silence before him.” (See vv. 18-19)

By God's grace and the Spirit's power, we must live our lives in the pursuit of holiness—not in pursuing and gratifying sinful desires. For, without holiness, no-one will see the Lord. (Heb. 12:14) Holiness of life, therefore, is of the essence of sanctification. It is the purpose for which God has called us by his grace; that we might be a people set apart as holy to the Lord in all manner of life.

Thus, it is written:

Leviticus 20:7-8

⁷ Consecrate yourselves, therefore, and be holy, for I am the LORD your God. ⁸ Keep my statutes and do them; I am the LORD who sanctifies you. (See vv.1-6)

Leviticus 20:26

²⁶ You shall be holy to me, for I the LORD am holy and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine. (See vv.22-25)

1 Thessalonians 4:7-8

⁷ For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. ⁸ Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you. (See vv.1-6; see esp. v.3)

1 Peter 1:14-16

¹⁴ As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, ¹⁵ but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶ since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” {*Lev. 11:44,45; 19:2; 20:7,26*} (See 1 Pet. 1:17-25)

1 Peter 2:9

⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. (See vv.10-12)

Sinless Perfection

Perfectionism (the teaching that a Christian can attain to sinless perfection in this life) is an erroneous doctrine. It is not the teaching of the Bible; nor was it the experience of any of the people of God whose lives are revealed to us in God's holy Word. On the contrary, the Bible makes it abundantly plain that even the holiest of God's people were not free from sin in their walk with God.

If sinless perfection be attainable in this life, then the penitential Psalms are of little value to the people of God. If sinless perfection be attainable, then the petition in the prayer that the Lord taught to his disciples, *'forgive us our debts...'* cannot apply to all of God's people. (Matt. 6:12.) If sinless perfection be attainable, then the apostle Paul did not experience it, or he would not have cried out, *'...Who will deliver me from this body of death?'* (Rom. 7:24.) If sinless perfection be attainable, then the apostle John erred when he wrote, *'If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar...'* (1 John 1:10.) This, however, would be to imply an error in the inspired and infallible Word of God. Clearly, therefore, John did not err but recorded for us the very truths of God. To this end, God's Word says:

Psalms 51:1-3

¹ Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.
² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin!
³ For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me. (See vv.4-19)

Matthew 6:11-12

¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread,
¹² and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
(See vv.9-15; cf. Luke 11:1-4)

Romans 7:24

²⁴ Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?
(See vv.12-25)

1 John 1:10

¹⁰ If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. (See vv.6-9)

Who Has Loved God Perfectly?

While a believer remains in this present mortal body, he never will become so sanctified that he will be free from all sin. Such indeed will be the believer's experience when he is glorified. Glorification, however, never takes place in this life (until the coming of the Lord).

Concerning this present life, we commit sin—not only by what we think, say, and do—but also by what we fail to think, say, and do. Again, we commit sin when we do not love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and our neighbour as ourselves. Who, though, among the people of God would claim to have loved God perfectly? If, therefore, we fall far short in this one essential matter, then clearly sinless perfection in this life is an impossibility.

One day, we will experience freedom from all sin. This will happen when the Lord appears in his glory, or when he calls us into his glorious presence. Then, he will fully and finally complete our sanctification by crowning the Spirit's work with our glorification. Then—and then only—will he present us faultless and blameless before God with rejoicing.⁸

Summary below

⁸ See further on Bible Truths Explained: *Heaven*.

Part 4 Summary

BTE12 Summary — Sanctification (ESV Edition)

Part 4: Sanctification and Holiness

Definition

Sanctification and **holiness** are inseparably connected. Sanctification is the Holy Spirit's work of cleansing, separating, and consecrating believers to God, while holiness is the visible result of that work in the believer's life. Through sanctification, God's children become increasingly devoted to Him, purified from sin, and transformed into vessels fit for His service until their sanctification is completed in glorification.

Key Truths

1. **Sanctification and holiness cannot be separated** — true sanctification always results in increasing holiness of life.
 2. **Believers are set apart for God** — they are separated from sin and consecrated to His service.
 3. **The believer is God's temple** — the Holy Spirit dwells within God's people.
 4. **God fills the life He has cleansed** — sanctified believers become vessels for His presence and service.
 5. **Holiness is the purpose of God's calling** — God calls His people out of impurity and into holiness.
 6. **God's people must be distinct from the world** — they are not to be conformed to sinful practices.
 7. **God's holiness is the pattern for the believer's holiness** — Christians are called to reflect His character.
 8. **Sanctification requires continual cleansing** — believers must reject everything that defiles body and spirit.
 9. **God's people are a holy nation** — they belong exclusively to Him as His treasured possession.
 10. **Holiness is essential for fellowship with God** — without holiness no one will see the Lord.
 11. **Sinless perfection is not attainable in this life** — even mature believers continue to struggle with sin.
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12. **The Bible consistently rejects perfectionism** — Scripture records the ongoing need for repentance and forgiveness.
 13. **All believers fall short of perfect love and obedience** — failures of thought, word, deed, and omission remain.
 14. **The Christian life requires continual repentance** — believers must regularly seek God's cleansing grace.
 15. **Glorification completes sanctification** — only then will believers be entirely free from sin.
 16. **Perfect holiness belongs to the future state** — complete conformity to Christ awaits eternity.
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Biblical Foundations

Sanctification and Holiness

1. **Isaiah 52:11** — God's people are called to separate themselves from uncleanness.
2. **2 Corinthians 6:16-18** — believers are the temple of the living God and are called to holiness.
3. **2 Corinthians 7:1** — Christians are to bring holiness to completion in the fear of God.
4. **Ezekiel 10:4** — God's glory filled His temple.
5. **Habakkuk 2:20** — the Lord is in His holy temple.
6. **Leviticus 20:7-8** — God commands His people to consecrate themselves and be holy.
7. **Leviticus 20:26** — God separated His people to belong to Him.
8. **1 Thessalonians 4:7-8** — God calls His people to holiness, not impurity.
9. **1 Peter 1:14-16** — believers must be holy because God is holy.
10. **1 Peter 2:9** — God's people are a holy nation chosen for His glory.

Against Sinless Perfection

11. **Psalms 51:1-3** — David confessed his continuing need of God's mercy.
12. **Matthew 6:11-12** — Christ taught His disciples to pray for forgiveness.
13. **Romans 7:24** — Paul acknowledged his ongoing struggle with sin.
14. **1 John 1:10** — those who claim sinlessness deceive themselves and contradict God's Word.

Future Completion of Sanctification

15. **Hebrews 12:14** (referenced) — holiness is necessary for seeing the Lord.
16. **Jude 24** (alluded to) — God will ultimately present His people blameless before His presence.

Practical Implications

1. **Pursue holiness intentionally** — sanctification is not passive but requires cooperation with the Spirit.
 2. **Remember that your life belongs to God** — believers are His holy temple.
 3. **Separate yourself from sinful influences** — avoid practices that dishonour God.
 4. **Seek continual cleansing from sin** — repentance remains a regular part of Christian growth.
 5. **Reject perfectionist expectations** — spiritual maturity does not eliminate the need for grace.
 6. **Do not become discouraged by ongoing struggles** — sanctification is progressive.
 7. **Measure growth by increasing holiness** — not by claims of sinlessness.
 8. **Depend on the Holy Spirit daily** — He alone produces genuine holiness.
 9. **Fix your hope on glorification** — complete victory over sin is still ahead.
 10. **Live as God's holy possession** — strive to reflect His character in every area of life.
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Summary Sentence

Sanctification is the Holy Spirit's ongoing work of setting believers apart to God and producing holiness in their lives, progressively cleansing them from sin and conforming them to God's character, while complete freedom from sin and perfect holiness await their final glorification in the presence of the Lord.

PART 5

Effects of Sanctification

In both regeneration and justification, the believer is *passive*; i.e. he cannot assist or co-operate with God in these aspects of his salvation. In sanctification, however, the believer is *active*; i.e. he actively co-operates with the Holy Spirit in putting off the old nature and putting on the new nature.

The Holy Spirit works in every area of the believer's life, fitting him for that day when he will dwell forever in the glorious presence of the Lord. Then, the believer will be free from every remaining vestige of sin and from the corruption associated with this present mortal body.

In what way, however, does sanctification effect changes in our day-to-day lives?

Sanctification Transforms our Character

From the time of his regeneration and justification, and for the remainder of his present life, the believer's whole soul is being constantly (but gradually) changed through the process of sanctification (imparted righteousness). These changes are being effected by the inward work of the Holy Spirit—a work that is unseen, except by its results.

As the work of sanctification progressively changes the believer's character, these inward changes are reflected outwardly by corresponding changes in his conduct. This becomes more evident as the believer grows in grace, and his mind becomes ever more closely aligned with the mind of Christ.

The Holy Spirit effects these changes toward ever-increasing holiness by revealing God's will and way to the believer through God's Word. In the process, the Spirit of God makes the believer conscious of the changes that he must make to conform his life more closely to the image of Christ. In this respect, therefore, the Holy Spirit carries out the work of sanctification in co-operation with the believer, and by means of the Word.

Sanctification Transforms our Conduct

Sanctification not only changes our character (our inward attitudes and dispositions); it also changes our conduct (our outward manner of life). However, for the Spirit of God to work effectively in our lives, we must be willing to yield ourselves wholly to his sanctifying power and influence. This means that—when he makes us aware of sin—then we must confess and forsake these sinful thoughts, words, and deeds; or these sinful attitudes, tendencies, or habits.

Similarly, when the Holy Spirit convicts us of something that is displeasing or dishonouring to God (although, not necessarily sinful in itself), then we must submit to the Spirit of holiness. We must forgo or forsake that which displeases the Lord, and which dishonours the name of Christ our Redeemer. These are examples of changes in our character that should produce corresponding changes in our conduct.

As we have seen, sanctification involves both a negative and a positive element. It is a process of forsaking sin (negative element—but with numerous positive benefits), and of being renewed in

character and conduct; or in true righteousness, holiness, and knowledge (positive element—or, the fruit of imparted righteousness).

By the power of the Holy Spirit, we must put off the old sinful nature, and put on the new spiritual nature. We must walk or live by the Spirit, so that we will not fulfil the lusts of the flesh that are still within us. The lusts of the flesh are those excessive, impure, or uncontrolled and sinful desires, longings, or cravings of the mind, which arise from our old fallen nature.

Putting Off the Old Nature

Practical Examples

As has been stated above, part of the work of sanctification consists in putting off the old sinful nature, and putting on the new nature. In Ephesians chapter 4, the apostle Paul summarises some of the acts of the flesh or sinful nature. God's Word requires us to forsake all these evil acts. The sinful acts enumerated by Paul in this passage are considered separately below.

1. Falsehood or Lying

Ephesians 4:25

²⁵ Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbour, for we are members one of another.

Falsehood is engaging in deceit, giving false testimony or bearing false witness to the truth. All forms of falsehood (including lies) are sinful. On occasions, however, a person may risk committing a greater sin by revealing the whole truth at a particular time (e.g. by disclosing planned military strategy in war, thereby causing even greater loss of life). In these situations, a believer must act according to his conscience; knowing that—one day—God will hold him accountable for what he says, or fails to say.

Examples of Falsehood or Lying

Half-truths; distortions of the truth; exaggerations, and all forms of deceit, are falsehoods. Similarly, to make a deliberately misleading statement is a falsehood. To provide false information (verbally, or in writing) when it is lawfully required of us (e.g. for Benefits, Revenue or other official purposes) is a falsehood. Again, to misrepresent the truth (as, for example, in some forms of commercial advertising) is a falsehood.

Falsehoods can also assume other forms. For instance, hypocrisy is a form of falsehood, since we are deceiving people about the true state of our character. In this situation, we would be living a lie—as were many of the Pharisees. Mental reservation is a form of falsehood; e.g. to say when asked, '*He is not here*' (meaning, he is not in this room), *even although we know that this person is in another nearby room*, is a falsehood. Our answer conceals or mentally reserves part of the truth, and is deliberately intended to mislead. (See the similar example in Acts 5:3-4 of Ananias and Sapphira, quoted below.)

Scripture References (ESV)

Falsehood or Lying

Colossians 3:9-10

⁹ Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

Acts 5:3-4

³ But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land?

⁴ While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."

1 John 4:20

²⁰ If anyone says, "I love God", and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.

2. Anger

Ephesians 4:26-27

²⁶ Be angry and do not sin; {*Psalm 4:4*} do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷ and give no opportunity to the devil.

We must emphasise clearly that not all anger is sinful. The Bible speaks repeatedly of the righteous anger (or wrath) of God; and the Lord Jesus expressed justified and righteous anger on a number of occasions. The anger to which the apostle Paul refers in the above verses might well have been justified anger (originally, at least). We must not, however, prolong our anger, or harbour in our hearts a resentful or unforgiving attitude.

Anger (of the Lord Jesus)

Anger is not necessarily sinful. Jesus was angry on several occasions:

When he cleansed the temple, the Lord Jesus was angry with the money-changers for abusing God's house of prayer (desecration or sacrilege, by carrying on commercial enterprises within the sacred precincts).

Mark 11:15-18

¹⁵ And they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. ¹⁶ And he would not allow anyone to carry anything through

the temple. ¹⁷ And he was teaching them and saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? {*Isaiah 56:7*} But you have made it a den of robbers." {*Jer. 7:11*} ¹⁸ And the chief priests and the scribes heard it and were seeking a way to destroy him, for they feared him, because all the crowd was astonished at his teaching. (Cf. Matt. 21:12-13; Luke 19:45-48; John 2:13-17)

Jesus was angry with the Pharisees on several different occasions. On one such occasion, these religious leaders had sought to find fault with the Lord and ultimately to discredit, denounce and destroy him because he was about to heal a man on the Sabbath day:

Mark 3:1-5

¹ Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there with a withered hand. ² And they watched Jesus, to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him. ³ And he said to the man with the withered hand, "Come here." ⁴ And he said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?" But they were silent. ⁵ And he looked round at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. (See v.6; cf. Luke 13:10-17)

On several other occasions, the Lord Jesus was angry with the teachers of the law (scribes) and Pharisees for their hypocrisy, and he rebuked them accordingly:

Matthew 23:13-15

¹³ "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in. ¹⁵ Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves. (See vv.16-33; see esp. v.33; cf. Luke 11:37-52)

Examples of Sinful Anger

Unjustified or uncontrolled anger, rage, and the desire for revenge (or vengeance) amount to sin. Similarly, anger resulting from malice, caprice, envy, pride, or any other evil attitude, is sinful. Again, hate, resentment or bitterness (an unforgiving and angry heart) is sinful. To hold a grudge against someone is sinful. Bad temper, ill will, moodiness, and refusing to speak to someone is sinful. Justified anger becomes sinful when we harbour bitterness or resentment against another person. In obedience to God's Word, we must settle our disputes at the earliest opportunity.

Scripture References (ESV)

Anger

Ephesians 4:26-27

²⁶ Be angry and do not sin; *{Psalm 4:4}* do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷ and give no opportunity to the devil.

Colossians 3:8

⁸ But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth.

Romans 12:17-21

¹⁷ Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honourable in the sight of all. ¹⁸ If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." *{Deut. 32:35; Heb. 10:30}* ²⁰ To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." *{Prov. 25:21,22}* ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (See also Matt. 5:43-45)

Hebrews 12:14-15

¹⁴ Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. ¹⁵ See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; (See vv.16-17; cf. v.15a with 2 Cor. 6:1; cf. v.15b with Deut. 29:18)

James 1:19-21

¹⁹ Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; ²⁰ for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. ²¹ Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. (See vv.22-25)

James 4:1-3

¹ What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? ² You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do

not have, because you do not ask. ³You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.

James 4:4

⁴You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. (See vv.5-12; see esp. vv.11-12; cf. 1 John 2:15-17)

3. Give No Opportunity to the Devil

Ephesians 4:27

²⁷and give no opportunity to the devil. (Cf. 2 Cor. 2:10-11)

We give the devil a foothold (or we give the devil an opportunity) when we allow him to lead us into temptation, or when we yield to temptation when it comes. Instead of yielding, of course, we should resist the temptation or flee from it.

Examples of Giving Place to the Devil

One example of giving the devil a foothold is yielding to temptation. (Temptation can have its source in the world, the flesh, or the devil. The 'flesh' means the old sinful nature.) Another example of giving place to the devil is to put ourselves into a situation where we know we are likely to meet temptation. We must never encourage the devil to tempt us, or make it easy for him to do so. Rather, we must resist him, and we must avoid the very appearance of evil.

Scripture References (ESV)

Give No Opportunity to the Devil

Acts 5:3

³ But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? (See vv.1-10)

Ephesians 6:10-13

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. (See vv.14-18; see esp. vv.16-17; cf. v.12b with 1 John 5:19; contrast v.12 with Eph. 1:19-21)

James 4:7

⁷ Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (See vv.1-12)

1 Peter 5:8-9

⁸ Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. (See vv.5-7)

1 Peter 5:10-11

¹⁰ And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. ¹¹ To him be the dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

4. Theft

Ephesians 4:28

²⁸ Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labour, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

To steal is to appropriate to ourselves that which does not belong to us, with no intention of making payment or reparation to the rightful owner.

Examples of Theft

All forms of stealing, fraud, misappropriation of funds, goods, services, and many other forms of dishonesty, are theft. We may also include under the heading of theft, needlessly taking time off work (or being carelessly late for work). These are examples of theft of an employer's time; and, indirectly, his money. Additionally, we might include in this category, taking advantage of the privileges or fringe benefits afforded by employers to their employees. For example, the employee who abuses or misuses his staff privileges to provide goods or services to his friends at reduced prices. Unless previously agreed upon with an employer, this is stealing from an employer by depriving him of his due profit. It is therefore wrong—unless the employer has previously told his employees that they are at liberty to extend their staff privileges or benefits to certain other people as well.

Scripture References (ESV)

Theft

Luke 19:7-8

⁷ And when they saw it, they all grumbled, “He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.” ⁸ And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, “Behold, Lord, half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold.” (See vv.1-10)

Luke 16:10-12

¹⁰ “One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. ¹¹ If then you have not been faithful with the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? ¹² And if you have not been faithful with that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? (See vv.1-9; cf. v.10 with Matt. 25:21,29-30)

Jeremiah 7:9-11

⁹ Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, make offerings to Baal, and go after other gods that you have not known, ¹⁰ and then come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, ‘We are delivered!’—only to go on doing all these abominations? ¹¹ Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I myself have seen it, declares the LORD. (See vv.12-15; cf. v.11 with Matt. 21:13)

Romans 2:21

²¹ you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? (See vv.22-24a)

5. Unwholesome Talk or Corrupt Communication

Ephesians 4:29

²⁹ Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. (See also Eph. 5:4)

Unwholesome talk includes any kind of coarse or crude talking or joking, and every kind of impure, filthy, or corrupt speech. Such speech is always sinful. To take part with others in listening to their corrupt talking and joking is also sinful.

Examples of Unwholesome Talk

Foul, coarse, or crude language; unclean remarks; remarks or jokes with an expressed, implied or suggested double meaning; corrupt innuendo or suggestive language; common swearing; cursing; using God's name profanely or in vain, are all examples of this sin. We might also include under unwholesome and sinful talk, any form of doubtful language or expression. Again, we might include under this heading any kind of idle gossip, slander, malicious misinformation, unjust criticism, unkind remarks, or any other form of sinful speech against our neighbour. We must always remember that—in speaking evil of our neighbour—we are implicitly speaking evil of God. For man is made by God, and in God's image and likeness.

Scripture References (ESV) *Unwholesome Talk*

Ephesians 5:4

⁴ Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. (See vv.3-7)

Colossians 3:8-10

⁸ But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. ⁹ Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. (See vv.5-14; cf. v.10 with Eph. 4:23-24)

Mark 7:20-23

²⁰ And he said, "What comes out of a person is what defiles him. ²¹ For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, ²² coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. ²³ All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person." (See vv.14-19; cf. Matt. 15:18-20)

Regarding the tongue, James says:

James 3:2

² For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body. (See vv.1-4)

James 3:5-6

⁵ So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things.

How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! ⁶ And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell.

James 3:7-8

⁷ For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, ⁸ but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

James 3:9-12

⁹ With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. ¹⁰ From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. ¹¹ Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water? ¹² Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water. (See also Jas. 4:11-12; cf. Jas. 3:12 with Matt. 7:15-20)

Instead of speaking evil of one another, the Scripture says:

Colossians 3:12-14

¹² Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³ bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴ And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. (See vv.15-17)

Too much direct speaking can be like salt on an open wound. Therefore, God's Word says:

Colossians 4:6

⁶ Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

Again, God's Word says:

1 Peter 3:15-16

¹⁵ but in your hearts honour Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defence to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶ having a good conscience,

so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behaviour in Christ may be put to shame. (See vv.13-17)

6. Grieving The Holy Spirit

Ephesians 4:30

³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. (Cf. Isa. 63:7-10; 1 Thess. 5:19)

Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. As such, we should consecrate it to God. Anything, therefore, which defiles God's temple grieves the indwelling Holy Spirit. We can grieve the Holy Spirit by the things we think, say, or do.

Examples of Grieving the Holy Spirit

Misusing or abusing our body or mind grieves the Holy Spirit. Similarly, using our body to express or to fulfil the impure and sinful desires of the mind (as opposed to God-given and God-glorifying natural desires) grieves the Holy Spirit. Again, using any parts of our body, or the faculties of our soul (e.g. intellect, will, emotions) for sinful purposes, grieves the Holy Spirit—for our body is the Spirit's holy dwelling place. We also grieve the Holy Spirit, and sin against him, when we think or speak evil of another person. Similarly, we grieve the Spirit when we do not honour God fully in and with our lives. Our lives belong wholly to God. We should be living to his glory and according to his will for us—not according to our own sinful desires or selfish ambitions.

Scripture References (ESV) *Grieving The Holy Spirit*

1 Corinthians 3:16-17

¹⁶ Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? ¹⁷ If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple. (See vv.10-14; cf. 2 Cor. 6:16 - 7:1; Eph. 2:19-22)

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, ²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. (See vv.12-18; cf. 1 Pet. 1:18-19)

1 Thessalonians 4:7-8

⁷ For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. ⁸ Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you. (See vv.1-6; cf. 1 Pet. 1:14-15)

7. Putting Off Every Form of Evil

Ephesians 4:31

³¹ Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. (Cf. Col. 3:8)

Each of the sins listed above originates in the mind or ‘heart’; i.e. in the inward person. As those who are being sanctified, we must put off everything that belongs to the ‘flesh’ or sinful nature. Like contaminated and filthy clothing, we must cast it from us and clothe ourselves instead with the new nature of Christ.

Examples of Putting Off Every Form of Evil

Besides the examples listed in the above verse (*bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, slander, and malice*), we should forsake anything and everything that we know to be sinful. We should also forsake anything and everything that tends to arouse our sinful desires or lusts. For example, we must forsake covetousness—for covetousness is greed, and greed is idolatry. This may constitute the sinful desire or lust to possess things that we do not need. Alternatively, we may express covetousness or greed by an excessive desire to attain to an equal or better level of achievement, or of greater material wealth or possessions, than our neighbour. *Keeping up with the Jones’* is representative of the sins of envy, covetousness, and pride.

Scripture References (ESV)

Putting Off Every Form of Evil

Galatians 5:19-21

¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, ⁹ enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (See vv.16-18; cf. Col. 3:5-10)

1 Timothy 6:8-11

⁸ But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. ⁹ But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.

¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

¹¹ But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. (See vv.3-12)

⁹ *sorcery*: [Galatians 5:20](#); Including *witchcraft; occultism, spiritualism, demonism* and similar practices.

James 3:13-16

¹³ Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. ¹⁵ This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. ¹⁶ For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. (Cf. v.15 with Jas. 1:5,16-17)

James 3:17-18

¹⁷ But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. ¹⁸ And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

There are many other sins that we must forsake during the process of sanctification. We will deal with some of these more fully in the pages that follow.

Summary below

Part 5 Summary

BTE12 Summary — Sanctification (ESV Edition)

Part 5: Effects of Sanctification

Definition

Sanctification is the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in which believers actively cooperate by putting off the old sinful nature and putting on the new nature in Christ. Through this process, the Spirit transforms both character and conduct, producing increasing holiness, obedience, and likeness to Christ in everyday life.

Key Truths

1. **Believers actively participate in sanctification** — unlike regeneration and justification, sanctification involves conscious obedience and cooperation with the Holy Spirit.
 2. **Sanctification transforms the whole person** — the Spirit works in every area of life, preparing believers for glory.
 3. **Character transformation precedes conduct transformation** — inward renewal produces outward change.
 4. **The Holy Spirit works through God's Word** — Scripture reveals God's will and exposes areas requiring change.
 5. **Sanctification requires yielding to the Spirit** — spiritual growth depends upon submission to His leading.
 6. **Sanctification has both a negative and positive aspect** — believers forsake sin and pursue righteousness.
 7. **The old nature must be put off** — sinful attitudes, habits, and practices must be rejected.
 8. **The new nature must be put on** — believers are called to reflect Christ's character and holiness.
 9. **Truthfulness replaces falsehood** — sanctified believers speak honestly and reject deception.
 10. **Righteous anger differs from sinful anger** — believers must not harbour bitterness, resentment, or revenge.
 11. **Christians must resist the devil** — sanctification involves spiritual vigilance and warfare.
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12. **Theft and dishonesty must be abandoned** — believers are to work honestly and act faithfully.
 13. **Speech must be sanctified** — words should build up, encourage, and give grace to others.
 14. **The Holy Spirit can be grieved by sinful behaviour** — believers must avoid actions that dishonour God.
 15. **All forms of evil must be put away** — bitterness, malice, envy, selfish ambition, and other sins are inconsistent with holiness.
 16. **Sanctification produces righteousness in everyday life** — transformed character expresses itself in godly conduct.
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Biblical Foundations

Sanctification Transforms Character

1. **Ephesians 4:22-24** (theme throughout) — believers put off the old self and put on the new self.
2. **Colossians 3:9-10** — the new self is being renewed after the image of its Creator.

Falsehood or Lying

3. **Ephesians 4:25** — believers must put away falsehood and speak truth.
4. **Acts 5:3-4** — Ananias and Sapphira were condemned for deceit.
5. **1 John 4:20** — false claims about loving God are exposed by hatred toward others.

Anger

6. **Ephesians 4:26-27** — believers may be angry without sinning and must not give opportunity to the devil.
7. **Mark 11:15-18** — Jesus displayed righteous anger in cleansing the temple.
8. **Mark 3:1-5** — Jesus was angered by hardened hearts.
9. **Romans 12:17-21** — believers are forbidden from personal vengeance.
10. **Hebrews 12:14-15** — bitterness defiles and damages spiritual life.
11. **James 1:19-21** — human anger does not produce God's righteousness.

Give No Opportunity to the Devil

12. **Acts 5:3** — Satan exploited Ananias' sinful choices.
 13. **Ephesians 6:10-13** — believers must stand against the devil's schemes.
 14. **James 4:7** — resisting the devil causes him to flee.
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15. **1 Peter 5:8-11** — Christians must remain watchful and steadfast.

Theft

16. **Ephesians 4:28** — thieves must stop stealing and work honestly.
17. **Luke 19:7-8** — Zacchaeus demonstrated repentance through restitution.
18. **Luke 16:10-12** — faithfulness in small matters reflects true character.
19. **Romans 2:21** — believers must practice what they teach.

Unwholesome Talk

20. **Ephesians 4:29** — speech should build up others.
21. **Ephesians 5:4** — crude and foolish talk is out of place.
22. **Colossians 3:8-10** — believers must put away slander and obscene speech.
23. **James 3:2-12** — the tongue has great power for good or evil.
24. **Colossians 4:6** — speech should be gracious and wise.
25. **1 Peter 3:15-16** — Christians should speak with gentleness and respect.

Grieving the Holy Spirit

26. **Ephesians 4:30** — believers must not grieve the Spirit.
27. **1 Corinthians 3:16-17** — believers are God's temple.
28. **1 Corinthians 6:19-20** — Christians belong to God and must glorify Him.
29. **1 Thessalonians 4:7-8** — God calls His people to holiness.

Putting Off Every Form of Evil

30. **Ephesians 4:31** — bitterness, wrath, slander, and malice must be removed.
31. **Galatians 5:19-21** — the works of the flesh are condemned.
32. **1 Timothy 6:8-11** — believers must flee greed and pursue godliness.
33. **James 3:13-18** — heavenly wisdom produces righteousness and peace.

Practical Implications

1. **Cooperate actively with the Holy Spirit** — sanctification requires intentional obedience.
2. **Practice honesty at all times** — truthfulness reflects the new nature.
3. **Deal with anger quickly** — unresolved anger can become sinful bitterness.
4. **Resist temptation and spiritual compromise** — do not give the devil a foothold.
5. **Work with integrity** — avoid every form of theft, dishonesty, and exploitation.

6. **Guard your speech carefully** — use words to encourage rather than harm.
 7. **Avoid grieving the Holy Spirit** — live in a manner worthy of His indwelling presence.
 8. **Put away sinful attitudes as well as sinful actions** — sanctification addresses the heart as well as behaviour.
 9. **Reject envy, greed, and selfish ambition** — pursue contentment and godliness.
 10. **Seek continual growth in Christlikeness** — sanctification is demonstrated through transformed character and conduct.
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Summary Sentence

Sanctification progressively transforms both the character and conduct of believers as they cooperate with the Holy Spirit in putting off the old sinful nature and putting on the new nature in Christ, resulting in increasing truthfulness, purity, love, self-control, holiness, and obedience to God.

PART 6

Sanctification of Body and Soul

The Body is Not Sinful

In condemning the works of the flesh, the apostle Paul is not implying that the body is sinful. Although marred by the effects of sin, God originally designed and created the human body as a vessel of signal beauty, dignity, and honour. When cleansed and consecrated to God, the body becomes sacred in his sight. This is especially true since it is the dwelling place of his Holy Spirit.

It is true that the body may be, and often is, used for sinful purposes; (and, in his Word, God condemns all such abuses of the body). Sins that involve the abuse of the body, however, always originate in a person's mind—not in the body itself. It is these evil inclinations and desires of the mind or heart that results in a person abusing or misusing the body that God has created. In the case of the believer, God has also redeemed and set that person apart—in body and soul—for himself. When we use the body as an instrument of sin (in our speech or actions), we are defiling or desecrating God's temple, and sinning against the Holy Spirit.

Caring for Body and Soul

It is vitally important for the believer to nourish, sustain, and exercise the soul using the appropriate means (such as Bible study, prayer, praise, worship, and church fellowship). In its own way, it is important for him to nourish, sustain, and exercise the body using the appropriate means (such as food, clothing, and exercise). To neglect the care of the soul would be culpable. Similarly, to neglect the care of the body—which is the temple of the Holy Spirit—would also be culpable. However, while we must honour God by caring for both soul and body, we must also be careful to honour God by avoiding anything that would contaminate or defile body or soul.

Our Body is God's Temple

Our body is holy in the sight of God, for it is the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. Thus, the Scripture says:

1 Corinthians 3:16-17

¹⁶ Do you not know that you ¹⁰ are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? ¹⁷ If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple. (See vv.9-15)

In verses 16 and 17, the pronoun 'you' is plural in Greek. Therefore, in this passage, Paul is referring to the whole church at Corinth and not specifically to individual members. However, in this context, what is true of the church as a whole is true also of each member of the church.

To do anything that dishonours the body is to defile the temple of God. Again, God's Word says:

¹⁰ you: [1 Corinthians 3:16](#) The Greek for you is plural in verses [16](#) and [17](#). (ESV footnote)

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, ²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. (See vv.12-18)

The Holy Spirit sanctifies and hallows our body to the Lord. Hence, we must never use our body for any purpose that does not honour God. That would be to desecrate or wilfully defile God's holy temple. Our body—indeed our whole life—is not our own. We are the purchased possession of the Lord our God, and the dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Our Body is a Living Sacrifice

The Scripture says:

Romans 12:1-2

¹ I appeal to you therefore, brothers, ¹¹ by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world, ¹² but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. ¹³ (See vv.3-8)

In this passage, it is evident that the apostle Paul is addressing individual believers.

A living sacrifice is a total offering to God. To yield anything less than our whole selves to God is to withhold ourselves from God. Conformity to the world is alienation from—and enmity with—God. We can conform *either* to the world's standards of conduct or behaviour, or to God's standards—but we cannot conform to both. God requires that we be *transformed in mind*—not *conformed in mind* to this present evil age, or to its sinful attitudes and practices. By yielding ourselves wholly to God, we separate ourselves from the world (i.e. from the sinful standards and practices of the world) and consecrate ourselves (in body and soul) to God.

Separation and consecration, however, does not mean total withdrawal and isolation from the world. Although we are not *of* the world, we are *in* the world—and God has placed us in the world for a purpose. While we are in the world, we are the salt of the earth. Salt not only flavours, it also preserves from decay and corruption. Our redeemed and sanctified lives should have a preserving effect on the lives of those around us and on society as a whole.

¹¹ brothers: [Romans 12:1](#) Or brothers and sisters. (ESV footnote)

¹² world: [Romans 12:2](#) Greek age. (ESV footnote)

¹³ perfect [Romans 12:2](#) Or what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God

Thus, to his followers, the Lord Jesus said:

Matthew 5:13

¹³ “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

Again, while we are in the world, we are a light to the world. Without the light of the gospel, people would remain utterly lost in the darkness of their own sinful minds. By the sovereign grace of God, we have been redeemed and delivered from that darkness. Now, it is our duty and responsibility to shine forth for Christ in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

Thus, the Lord Jesus said:

Matthew 5:14-16

¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Philippians 2:14-16

¹⁴ Do all things without grumbling or questioning, ¹⁵ that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, ¹⁶ holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labour in vain. (See vv.12-13)

Summary below

Part 6 Summary

BTE12 Summary — Sanctification (ESV Edition)

Part 6: Sanctification of Body and Soul

Definition

Sanctification of Body and Soul is the Holy Spirit's work of consecrating the whole person to God. Because believers belong to Christ and are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, both body and soul are to be used for God's glory. Sanctification involves caring for, preserving, and dedicating every aspect of life to the Lord while living as His holy temple in the world.

Key Truths

1. **The body is not inherently sinful** — God created the human body with dignity, beauty, and purpose.
 2. **Sin originates in the heart and mind** — sinful actions arise from corrupt desires, not from the body itself.
 3. **Believers are redeemed in both body and soul** — the whole person belongs to God.
 4. **The body is the temple of the Holy Spirit** — God's presence dwells within His people.
 5. **Defiling the body dishonours God** — misuse of the body is a desecration of God's temple.
 6. **Christians are responsible for caring for both soul and body** — neglect of either is inconsistent with faithful stewardship.
 7. **The believer's body is sacred to God** — it has been purchased by Christ and set apart for holy use.
 8. **Believers are living sacrifices** — sanctification requires the total dedication of life to God.
 9. **Transformation must replace conformity** — Christians are called to be renewed in mind rather than shaped by worldly values.
 10. **Separation from the world does not mean isolation from it** — believers live in the world while remaining distinct from its sinful practices.
 11. **God's people are called to influence society for good** — they serve as salt that preserves and restrains corruption.
 12. **Believers are the light of the world** — they are called to display God's truth and righteousness.
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13. **Good works glorify God** — holy living points others to the heavenly Father.
 14. **Sanctification affects every area of life** — worship, conduct, relationships, and service all come under God's authority.
 15. **The Holy Spirit's indwelling presence demands holiness** — God's temple must be kept pure.
 16. **The Christian life is a witness to the world** — sanctified lives testify to God's saving and transforming grace.
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Biblical Foundations

Our Body Is God's Temple

1. **1 Corinthians 3:16-17** — believers collectively are God's temple, indwelt by His Spirit.
2. **1 Corinthians 6:19-20** — individual believers are temples of the Holy Spirit and must glorify God in their bodies.

Our Body Is a Living Sacrifice

3. **Romans 12:1-2** — believers are called to present their bodies as living sacrifices and be transformed by renewed minds.

Separation and Consecration

4. **Isaiah 52:11** (theme continued) — God's people are called to purity and separation from uncleanness.

Salt and Light in the World

5. **Matthew 5:13** — believers are the salt of the earth.
 6. **Matthew 5:14-16** — believers are the light of the world and should let their light shine before others.
 7. **Philippians 2:14-16** — Christians shine as lights in a dark and crooked generation.
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Practical Implications

1. **Honour God with your body** — use your physical life in ways that glorify Him.
 2. **Care for both soul and body responsibly** — spiritual and physical stewardship are important.
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3. **Guard your mind and heart** — sinful actions begin with sinful thoughts and desires.
 4. **Present your entire life to God** — hold nothing back from His service.
 5. **Reject worldly patterns of thinking** — pursue transformation through God's truth.
 6. **Do not isolate yourself from society** — engage the world while maintaining holiness.
 7. **Influence others positively** — be salt that preserves and light that illuminates.
 8. **Recognize your value before God** — you have been purchased by Christ and belong to Him.
 9. **Live visibly for God's glory** — let your conduct point others to Christ.
 10. **Remember that God's Spirit dwells within you** — every choice should reflect His holy presence.
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Summary Sentence

Sanctification consecrates both body and soul to God, making believers temples of the Holy Spirit who are called to present themselves as living sacrifices, pursue holiness in every area of life, and serve as salt and light in the world, glorifying God through a life wholly devoted to Him.

PART 7

Dishonouring the Body Sexually

Sexual Immorality is an Abuse of the Body

Concerning the abuse of the body sexually, God's Word says:

1 Corinthians 6:13b

^{13b} “...The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.”

1 Thessalonians 4:3

³ For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality;

Taken in its restricted sense, the expression, ‘sexual immorality’ is referring to sexual intercourse before or outside of marriage. The Word of God expressly forbids pre-marital and extra-marital sexual relations. Thus, God's Word says:

1 Corinthians 6:18

¹⁸ Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. (See vv.12-20; see esp. vv.19-20)

In the Bible, the term *sexual immorality* or *fornication* (Greek, πορνεία **porneia**) is used to include all forms of sexual uncleanness. For example, adultery is sexual immorality; and so also is a ‘one night stand’, ‘sleeping around’, ‘living together’, and any other kind of casual sexual relations. Again, the expression, *sexual immorality* may apply to other kinds of sexual impurity. This includes impure thoughts, impure talk, or impure gestures or actions. For example, the man who looks at a woman lustfully is guilty of sexual immorality (adultery—in the heart). All forms of sexual immorality are gross and wilful violations of the seventh and tenth commandments.

Taken in its wider sense, *sexual immorality* encompasses other forms of immoral behaviour. This includes unnatural sexual relations such as homosexual or lesbian practices. It also includes any form of sexual relations other than between a husband and his own wife (male with female exclusively).

Sexual immorality, therefore, covers all forms of impure, excessive or uncontrolled sexual desire or passion—in thought, word, and deed. It does not, however, cover pure, natural and controlled desire. Impure and excessive sexual desire is lust, and lust is sin. Pure, natural, and controlled sexual desire is a gift and a blessing from God. But this gift must be practiced between married couples (male and female) alone. Marriage between a man and a woman was instituted by God. Male with female marriage is the only form of marriage recognised as lawful and valid in God's sight.

‘The Two Will Become One Flesh’

In the sight of God, the sexual union within marriage is sacred. It is the uniting of a biological man and a biological woman into one flesh. Sexual intercourse *before* marriage is utterly abhorrent in God’s sight since it fails to recognise the sacred nature of the sexual union. It also disregards the fact—that by this union—two people become one flesh.

In this regard, the Scripture says:

1 Corinthians 6:15

¹⁵ Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! (Cf. Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:27)

In this context, the word *prostitute* refers to anyone who is willing to provide illicit sexual favours. This includes the practising prostitute. However, it also includes any man and woman who engages in sexual relations outside of marriage. God’s Word further says:

1 Corinthians 6:16

¹⁶ Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, “The two will become one flesh.” {*Gen. 2:24*} (Cf. Matt. 19:5; Eph. 5:31)

It is because our body becomes one flesh with another person that the Word of God condemns especially sexual immorality. The Lord has redeemed us in body and soul, and both body and soul belong to him. It is his holy temple. All forms of sexual sin or uncleanness defile the temple of the Lord. God has warned, however, that he will destroy that which defiles his holy dwelling place. (1 Cor. 3:16-17) In this context, *to destroy* means *to bring to ruin* or *to lay waste*. It implies severe punishment—possibly even death in some extreme cases—but not loss of salvation. (Cf. 1 Cor. 11:30-32)

Sometimes, our sin—or its effects—may be visited upon our children. For example, David’s adulterous relationship with Uriah’s wife, Bathsheba, did not result in the loss of David’s salvation. However, it *did* result in the loss of his son whom God took from him as a punishment for his sin. (2 Sam. 12:13-14)

Again, the Scripture says:

1 Thessalonians 4:7-8

⁷ For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. ⁸ Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you. (See vv.3-6; cf. v.8 with Luke 10:16)

Anyone who rejects, despises, or disregards this commandment to forsake uncleanness, and to live a pure and holy life, is rejecting, despising and disregarding God. Whoever despises God, and treats his Holy Spirit with contempt, will be judged accordingly.

Therefore, God's Word warns:

Hebrews 13:4

⁴ Let marriage be held in honour among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.

God Forgives the Truly Repentant

To those, however, who truly repent of their sin, God is abundantly merciful. The Lord Jesus illustrated this truth very clearly in the parable of the lost (or prodigal) son. In that parable, the wayward son forsakes his father's home, and squanders his inheritance in wild living. Upon his repentance, however, this young man is welcomed home by his father. The father proves his intense love for his younger son by showing him great—and undeserved—compassion. Again, the father celebrates his lost son's return from the world and from the 'pleasures' of sin by restoring his younger son to his place within his house and family. Thus, God's Word records:

Luke 15:13

¹³ Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. (See vv.11-16)

Luke 15:20-24

²⁰ And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. ²¹ And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' ²² But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. ²³ And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. ²⁴ For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate. (See vv.17-19)

The elder son, however, demonstrated resentment and anger when he learned that his father had forgiven his younger son, and had welcomed him home with much celebration. To this end, God's Word says:

Luke 15:29-30

²⁹ but he answered his father, 'Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!' (See vv.25-28)

Luke 15:31-32

³¹ And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³² It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'"

Similarly, the psalmist David says:

Psalms 32:1-7

¹ Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered.
² Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity,
and in whose spirit there is no deceit.
³ For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away
through my groaning all day long.
⁴ For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. *Selah*
⁵ I acknowledged my sin to you,
and I did not cover my iniquity;
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD",
and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. *Selah*
⁶ Therefore let everyone who is godly
offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found;
surely in the rush of great waters,
they shall not reach him.
⁷ You are a hiding place for me;
you preserve me from trouble;
you surround me with shouts of deliverance. *Selah*
(See vv.8-11; see also Isa. 1:18; Micah 7:18-19)

Summary below

Part 7 Summary

BTE12 Summary — Sanctification (ESV Edition)

Part 7: Dishonouring the Body Sexually

Definition

Sanctification in relation to the body requires believers to honour God with their bodies by maintaining sexual purity. Since the body belongs to the Lord and is the temple of the Holy Spirit, all forms of sexual immorality defile what God has redeemed and consecrated. Sanctification therefore calls believers to flee sexual sin, uphold the sanctity of marriage, and pursue holiness in thought, word, and deed.

Key Truths

1. **The body was created for the Lord** — it is not intended for sexual immorality.
 2. **Sexual purity is God's will for believers** — sanctification includes abstaining from sexual immorality.
 3. **Sexual immorality includes all forms of sexual uncleanness** — impurity in thought, word, or action violates God's design.
 4. **Impure desires and lust are sinful** — sanctification requires purity of heart as well as conduct.
 5. **Sexual relations are sacred within marriage** — God designed sexual union exclusively for marriage between a man and a woman.
 6. **Marriage is God's institution** — it provides the proper context for sexual intimacy.
 7. **Sexual union creates a one-flesh relationship** — Scripture treats this union as sacred and significant.
 8. **Sexual sin is uniquely serious** — it directly involves and dishonours the body that belongs to God.
 9. **Believers' bodies belong to Christ** — they are members of His body and temples of the Holy Spirit.
 10. **Persistent sexual sin defiles God's temple** — such conduct dishonours the One who dwells within believers.
 11. **God disciplines His children for serious sin** — forgiveness does not remove all earthly consequences.
 12. **Holiness and impurity are incompatible** — God has called His people to holiness, not uncleanness.
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13. **Marriage should be held in honour** — believers must preserve the purity of the marriage covenant.
 14. **God judges sexual immorality** — He takes sexual sin seriously.
 15. **God is merciful to repentant sinners** — genuine repentance brings forgiveness and restoration.
 16. **No sin places the repentant believer beyond God's grace** — the Father welcomes back those who truly turn to Him.
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Biblical Foundations

Sexual Immorality Is an Abuse of the Body

1. **1 Corinthians 6:13** — the body is for the Lord, not for sexual immorality.
2. **1 Thessalonians 4:3** — God's will is the believer's sanctification and sexual purity.
3. **1 Corinthians 6:18** — believers are commanded to flee sexual immorality.

The Two Will Become One Flesh

4. **1 Corinthians 6:15** — believers' bodies are members of Christ.
5. **1 Corinthians 6:16** — sexual union creates a one-flesh relationship.
6. **Genesis 2:24** (quoted) — God's design for marriage joins husband and wife as one flesh.
7. **Matthew 19:5** and **Ephesians 5:31** (referenced) — affirm the one-flesh union of marriage.

God's Call to Holiness

8. **1 Thessalonians 4:7-8** — God calls His people to holiness, not impurity.
9. **Hebrews 13:4** — marriage must be honoured and the marriage bed kept pure.

God's Mercy Toward the Repentant

10. **Luke 15:13** — the prodigal son squandered his inheritance in sinful living.
 11. **Luke 15:20-24** — the father lovingly welcomed the repentant son home.
 12. **Luke 15:31-32** — repentance results in restoration and rejoicing.
 13. **Psalms 32:1-7** — confession of sin brings forgiveness and blessing.
 14. **Isaiah 1:18** and **Micah 7:18-19** (referenced) — God delights to pardon repentant sinners.
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Practical Implications

1. **Honour God with your body** — remember that it belongs to Christ.
 2. **Flee sexual temptation immediately** — do not entertain situations that encourage impurity.
 3. **Guard your thoughts as well as your actions** — sanctification begins in the heart.
 4. **Respect God's design for marriage** — sexual intimacy belongs within the marriage covenant.
 5. **Take sexual sin seriously** — it dishonours both God and His temple.
 6. **Recognize that sin has consequences** — even forgiven sins may carry earthly effects.
 7. **Pursue holiness in all relationships** — purity should characterize every aspect of life.
 8. **Do not despair after failure** — God's grace remains available to those who genuinely repent.
 9. **Confess sin honestly before God** — repentance is essential to restoration.
 10. **Rejoice in God's mercy** — He welcomes back repentant sinners and restores them to fellowship.
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Summary Sentence

Sanctification requires believers to honour God with their bodies by fleeing every form of sexual immorality, preserving the holiness of marriage, and living in purity before the Lord, while finding assurance that genuine repentance brings forgiveness, restoration, and renewed fellowship with the God who is rich in mercy.

PART 8

Honouring the Body Sexually

Sexual Union in Marriage is Sacred

At the creation, God made mankind male and female so that the descendants of Adam and Eve might leave their father and mother and cleave to their husband or wife. God holds the sexual union particularly sacred because it is the bonding of two people into one [flesh]. They are no longer two. In God's sight, they have been bound together as one. This bond, of course, is not only a physical bond. It is also a spiritual, emotional and psychological bond. It is a complete oneness—yet, without the loss of each partner's distinct individuality or personality. God intends that the sexual union be preserved absolutely pure and inviolate. Hence the reason why God's Word so firmly condemns all forms of sexual immorality or uncleanness—not only in deed, but also in thought and speech.

Husbands and wives must consider the privilege and blessing of sharing and enjoying sexual union with their marriage partner as a precious gift from God. They ought never to abuse, misuse or disparage this gift. Similarly, they must not neglect nor refuse to provide for their partner's needs. In marriage, our body is not ours alone. Our marriage partner has full rights over our body—just as though it was his or her own. To deny sexual relations to our husband or wife, or to neglect these relations, is sin. It is sin against God, against our marriage partner—with whom God has made us one [flesh]—and against our own body. Our body, we must remember, is the temple of God's Holy Spirit. Thus, God's Word says:

1 Corinthians 7:1-7

¹ Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: "It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman." ² But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. ³ The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. ⁴ For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. ⁵ Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

⁶ Now as a concession, not a command, I say this. ⁷ I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another. (See vv.8-40; see also Matt. 19:1-12; 1 Thess. 4:3-8)

Within marriage, a husband and his wife are to participate in natural sexual relations, with thanksgiving to God their Creator. Again, both partners are to enjoy these relations; for—under these circumstances—God commends and blesses this union. Thus, God’s Word says:

Genesis 2:24-25

²⁴Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. ²⁵And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. (See vv.18-23; see also Gen. 1:26-28)

Hebrews 13:4

⁴Let marriage be held in honour among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.

Summary below

Part 8 Summary

BTE12 Summary — Sanctification (ESV Edition)

Part 8: Honouring the Body Sexually

Definition

Honouring the Body Sexually is an important aspect of sanctification in which believers recognize sexual union within marriage as a sacred gift from God. Marriage joins a husband and wife into one flesh, and sexual intimacy within that covenant is to be preserved in purity, mutual love, faithfulness, and thanksgiving to God.

Key Truths

1. **God created humanity male and female** — marriage is part of His design from creation.
 2. **Marriage establishes a one-flesh union** — husband and wife are joined together by God in a unique covenant relationship.
 3. **The marital bond is more than physical** — it includes spiritual, emotional, psychological, and relational unity.
 4. **Sexual union within marriage is sacred** — it is ordained and blessed by God.
 5. **God intends marital intimacy to remain pure and undefiled** — it is to be protected from all forms of sexual immorality.
 6. **Sexual intimacy is a gift from God** — it is provided for the blessing and strengthening of marriage.
 7. **Husbands and wives should value this gift gratefully** — it is not to be abused, neglected, or treated with contempt.
 8. **Marriage involves mutual responsibility** — spouses are called to care for one another's needs.
 9. **The body is not solely one's own within marriage** — husband and wife share mutual rights and responsibilities toward one another.
 10. **Unnecessary deprivation within marriage is discouraged** — prolonged neglect of marital intimacy may create temptation.
 11. **Marital intimacy helps guard against sexual temptation** — God provides it as part of His design for marriage.
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12. **Sexual relations within marriage are honourable before God** — He approves and blesses them.
 13. **Marriage should be held in honour by all people** — believers should esteem God's institution of marriage.
 14. **God condemns sexual immorality outside marriage** — sexual purity is required by His Word.
 15. **The marriage covenant reflects God's holy purposes** — fidelity and purity honour Him.
 16. **Sanctification influences marital life** — holiness extends to how spouses relate to one another.
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Biblical Foundations

The Sacredness of Sexual Union in Marriage

1. **Genesis 2:24-25** — a man and woman become one flesh and enjoy their union without shame.
2. **Genesis 1:26-28** (referenced) — God's creation design includes marriage and family.

Mutual Responsibilities Within Marriage

3. **1 Corinthians 7:1-7** — husband and wife are to fulfill their marital responsibilities toward one another.
4. **Matthew 19:1-12** (referenced) — Jesus affirms God's design for marriage.
5. **1 Thessalonians 4:3-8** (referenced) — God's will is sexual purity and holiness.

Honouring Marriage

6. **Hebrews 13:4** — marriage is honourable, the marriage bed is to remain pure, and God judges sexual immorality.
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Practical Implications

1. **View marriage as a gift from God** — honour His design for marital relationships.
 2. **Protect the purity of your marriage** — maintain faithfulness in thought, word, and deed.
 3. **Value the one-flesh relationship** — recognize the depth and significance of the marital covenant.
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4. **Treat marital intimacy with gratitude and respect** — it is a blessing from God, not merely a physical activity.
 5. **Practice mutual care and consideration in marriage** — spouses should lovingly serve one another.
 6. **Avoid attitudes that neglect or disparage God's gift** — honour what He has established.
 7. **Guard against sexual temptation** — God's design for marriage provides protection and stability.
 8. **Uphold biblical standards of sexual purity** — sanctification includes holiness in this area of life.
 9. **Reflect God's character in marriage** — faithfulness, love, and selflessness should characterize the marital relationship.
 10. **Honour God with both body and relationships** — sexual conduct should always glorify Him.
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Summary Sentence

Sanctification calls believers to honour God through sexual purity by recognizing marriage as His sacred institution, cherishing the one-flesh union between husband and wife, faithfully fulfilling marital responsibilities, and preserving sexual intimacy as a holy and God-given gift within the marriage covenant.

PART 9

Acts of the Sinful Nature

Sanctification involves putting to death the acts of the old sinful nature that is still within us. What, however, are these acts? God's Word declares:

Galatians 5:19-21

¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (See vv.16-18)

Again, God's Word warns:

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

⁹ Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practise homosexuality, ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (See vv.1-8)

We cannot mistake the teaching of God's Word. Those who continue to practise any of the sins listed above will not inherit God's kingdom.

Sins of the Flesh

Sometimes, we tend to place undue emphasis on *the sins of the body* to the virtual neglect of *the sins of the mind*. However, we must remember that the Scriptures do not usually make a distinction between these two categories. When the Bible speaks of, and condemns, the sins of the flesh, it is speaking comprehensively of, and condemning, all the sins which issue from our depraved or fallen nature.

Sins of the flesh are not sins of the body as such. They are, primarily, sins of the mind (or 'heart'); i.e. the inner person. However, it is certainly true that many sins originating in the mind find outward expression through the members of the body. In these cases, the body is being used as the vehicle or instrument of evil. This is true of all those evil practices or sins that we may commit through the abuse, misuse, or neglect of the body.

We have discussed some of these sins earlier, so we will not further elaborate on them here. We must remember, however, that we can use any part of the body for sinful purposes. For example, the person

who engages in idle gossip, tale bearing, malicious talk, or slander, is misusing a member of his body (the tongue). By thus misusing his body, that person is sinning against the Lord and against his body (the Lord's temple).

Sins of the flesh also include the harbouring of evil thoughts secretly in our minds; or the evil tendencies, inclinations, attitudes, or dispositions within our hearts or minds.

Sins of the Mind (or Heart)

The Lord Jesus always emphasised the true source of our sinful thoughts and acts—namely, our evil heart (or mind). All sin originates from within, and it is this evil disposition or inclination toward sin that defiles a man and makes him unclean.

Mark 7:20-23

²⁰ And he said, "What comes out of a person is what defiles him. ²¹ For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, ²² coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. ²³ All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person." (See vv.14-19; cf. Matt. 15:18-20)

Explanation of Terms (Mark 7:21-22) ¹⁴

Evil thoughts	Evil deliberations; wicked schemes; sinful reasoning, calculations, plans or purposes.
Sexual immorality	Violations of chastity (sexual purity), by either married or unmarried persons—in thought, word, deed, or gesture.
Theft	Stealing (e.g. of goods, services, or time); shop-lifting; housebreaking (burglary); receiving stolen goods; pilfering; embezzlement; fraud; making false statements or submitting false accounts (e.g. for taxation purposes); or false claims (e.g. for benefit or insurance purposes), and any other form of dishonesty.
Murder	Unlawful killing, homicide, termination of life; hatred (murder of the heart).
Adultery	Violations of the marriage vow and covenant (unfaithfulness) by engaging in extra-marital relations; looking at a person lustfully (adultery of the heart)
Coveting	The desire to possess more (or more than others); covetousness or avarice; ambitious arrogance; lust for power, prestige, property, etc.

¹⁴ *Explanation of Terms:* The Table presents the terms as understood and interpreted in the Bible. It is not my intention here to present precise dictionary definitions of these terms.

Wickedness	Evil dispositions or tendencies; a malevolent attitude [desirous of evil to others]; intense ill-will; spite; bitterness, vindictiveness.
Deceit	To misrepresent (a situation, goods, property, or a person); e.g. by engaging in craft, cunning, guile, subtlety, underhand tactics, lies, etc.
Sensuality	Unchaste or obscene attitudes, speech, or behaviour; unbridled lust; wanton, lewd, or licentious behaviour; grossly impure thoughts, words, or deeds.
Envy	<i>Lust of the eyes.</i> Resentful or thoughtfully admiring of those more fortunate (in prestige, position or possessions) than ourselves. <i>Jealousy:</i> a grudging attitude toward others; ‘green with envy’; ‘sour grapes’, bitterness, etc.
Slander	Proud or spiteful anger resulting in reviling and abusive words or language against God or man. <i>Blasphemy:</i> Evil and slanderous remarks or suggestions aimed directly against God the Father, Son, or Holy Spirit. (Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (i.e. attributing the Spirit’s work to Satan) constitutes the only sin that God will never forgive.) <i>Slander:</i> Uttering a false report or allegation intentionally and maliciously against another person (libel, if expressed in writing). <i>Defamation of character:</i> innuendo; untrue, abusive, and harmful suggestions (or oblique hints) concerning a person; veiled speech; hinted remarks intended to injure or destroy a person’s character or reputation.
Pride	Proud, haughty or arrogant [toward God or man]; disdainful; showing oneself above others; overbearing; self-assertive; narcissistic; high and mighty; superior; condescending or patronising toward others; conceited, etc.
Foolishness	Devoid of reason, common sense, or understanding (especially in regard to moral and spiritual matters); morally deficient; senseless [lit., unconscious, and therefore incapable of sensation; hence, insensitive to moral issues; i.e. spiritually dead]; wildly foolish behaviour, grossly unwise conduct, etc.

Sin originates in the heart or mind. Therefore, it is our inward life (or character) that we must permit the Holy Spirit to deal with. Our outward life (or conduct) may appear respectable and presentable—but God does not look upon the outward appearance, but upon the heart.

Resembling whitewashed sepulchres that belie the corruption buried within, our inward lives still hold the remnants of the moral filth attaching to our fallen, sinful nature. It is true, of course, that God has

cleared us judicially of all guilt (justification), and is presently cleansing and sanctifying our character by his Holy Spirit.

Although addressed to the self-righteous scribes and Pharisees, the following remarks of the Lord Jesus give some indication of man's inward corruption:

Matthew 23:27-28

²⁷ "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like white-washed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. ²⁸ So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

This corrupt condition is common to all mankind. Even in the regenerate, this condition has not been completely removed. As we have seen, sanctification is the process of cleansing and purifying our souls (including our minds) by the gradual transformation of our inward lives or character. It is essential that we put off those sins normally associated with the *body*. It is also essential that we put off those sins normally associated with the *mind*. Both alike are evidences of our corrupt, sinful nature (or 'heart').

The sins of the flesh (or the works of the flesh) include such sins as greed or covetousness, selfish ambition, envy, pride, a disagreeable temperament, sulkiness or moodiness, unjustified anger, bitterness, and hatred.

Although each of these sins originates in the mind, the Bible refers to them as sins (or works) of the flesh (or sinful nature). During the process of sanctification, we must—by God's grace and the Spirit's power—endeavour to put off all these sins, and every other sin in our lives.¹⁵

Summary below

¹⁵ See also on Bible Truths Explained: *Sin*, under *Protestant Doctrine of Original Sin*.

Part 9 Summary

BTE12 Summary — Sanctification (ESV Edition)

Part 9: Acts of the Sinful Nature

Definition

Sanctification involves the continual mortification (putting to death) of the sinful nature and its works. The Holy Spirit progressively cleanses believers from both outward sins and inward corruption, transforming the heart, mind, character, and conduct into increasing conformity with Christ. Since sin originates within the heart, sanctification must address both external actions and internal attitudes.

Key Truths

1. **Sanctification requires putting to death the works of the flesh** — believers must actively oppose sinful desires and practices.
 2. **Persistent practice of sin is incompatible with inheriting God's kingdom** — Scripture warns against continuing in the works of the flesh.
 3. **The "works of the flesh" include both outward and inward sins** — God condemns sins of the mind as well as sins of behaviour.
 4. **Sin originates in the heart and mind** — evil thoughts and desires produce sinful words and actions.
 5. **The body is often the instrument of sin, but not its source** — sinful actions arise from the corrupt inner person.
 6. **Sanctification must address internal corruption** — holiness begins with the transformation of the heart.
 7. **Evil thoughts are sinful** — wicked plans, motives, and schemes reflect the corruption of the fallen nature.
 8. **Covetousness, envy, pride, and selfish ambition are serious sins** — inward attitudes are as sinful as many outward acts.
 9. **Hatred, bitterness, and resentment reveal inner corruption** — sinful attitudes defile the soul even when not outwardly expressed.
 10. **Deceit and hypocrisy are works of the flesh** — dishonesty in any form is contrary to sanctification.
 11. **Slander and abusive speech are sins of the heart** — harmful speech exposes inward spiritual problems.
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12. **Pride opposes true godliness** — sanctification cultivates humility instead of self-exaltation.
 13. **Foolishness includes moral and spiritual blindness** — rejection of God's wisdom is evidence of a fallen nature.
 14. **External respectability does not guarantee holiness** — outward appearance can conceal inward corruption.
 15. **Even regenerate believers still battle remaining sin** — sanctification is an ongoing process, not an instant perfection.
 16. **The Holy Spirit progressively purifies both heart and conduct** — inward transformation produces outward holiness.
-

Biblical Foundations

The Works of the Flesh

1. **Galatians 5:19-21** — the works of the flesh are condemned and exclude those who persist in them from God's kingdom.
2. **1 Corinthians 6:9-11** — believers were formerly characterized by such sins but have been washed, sanctified, and justified.

Sin Originates in the Heart

3. **Mark 7:20-23** — evil thoughts and sinful actions arise from within the heart and defile a person.
4. **Matthew 15:18-20** (referenced) — inward corruption produces outward sin.

The Danger of Outward Religion Without Inner Holiness

5. **Matthew 23:27-28** — Jesus compared hypocrites to whitewashed tombs that appear clean outwardly but remain corrupt within.

Sanctification and Mortification of Sin

6. **Galatians 5:19-21** — believers must reject the works of the flesh.
 7. **1 Timothy 6:8-11** — Christians are called to flee greed and pursue godliness.
 8. **James 3:13-18** — earthly wisdom produces envy and disorder, while heavenly wisdom produces righteousness and peace.
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Practical Implications

1. **Examine your heart regularly** — sanctification begins with addressing inward motives and desires.
 2. **Guard your thoughts carefully** — sinful actions often begin as sinful thoughts.
 3. **Repent of inward sins as seriously as outward sins** — pride, envy, and bitterness are not harmless.
 4. **Avoid hypocrisy** — strive for genuine holiness rather than merely maintaining appearances.
 5. **Put sinful attitudes to death** — resentment, selfish ambition, and covetousness must be rejected.
 6. **Watch your speech** — slander, deceit, and harmful words reveal spiritual problems within.
 7. **Pursue humility and contentment** — these virtues oppose pride and envy.
 8. **Depend on the Holy Spirit for transformation** — only He can cleanse the inner life.
 9. **Remember that sanctification is progressive** — growth involves continual repentance and renewal.
 10. **Seek holiness in both character and conduct** — God desires purity of heart as well as righteous actions.
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Summary Sentence

Sanctification requires believers to put to death the works of the flesh by allowing the Holy Spirit to cleanse not only outward behaviour but also the inward corruption of the heart, transforming sinful thoughts, attitudes, desires, and actions into increasing holiness, humility, righteousness, and Christlike character.

PART 10

Forsaking Sin—in Thought, Word, and Deed

Sanctification, then, is not confined to the forsaking of sinful acts or practices alone. Sanctification requires and involves the forsaking of *all* sin—in thought, word, and deed. The person who imagines that he can forsake sinful acts, but still continue to harbour sinful thoughts, indulge in sinful speech, or listen to sinful conversation, is deluding himself. Sinful thoughts and speech arise from the heart. The person who continually dwells on evil thoughts, or who indulges in sinful forms of speech, demonstrates that his heart is not right with God. Thus, God's Word says:

Ephesians 5:3

³ But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. (See vv.1-2)

'...must not even be named among you ...' Or, as the NIV renders it: '...among you there must not be even a hint...' Not the least trace of uncleanness, immorality, impurity, or greed should be discernible among God's redeemed and holy people. The Scripture continues:

Ephesians 5:4-5

⁴ Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. ⁵ For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. (See v.6)

Not even a hint of filthy and unwholesome, immoral or foolish talk; and not even a hint of coarse joking or jesting, should be heard among the people of God. Nor should they listen to such depraved talk or joking. As those who are being sanctified, God's people must separate themselves from all such moral filth. (Jas. 1:21)

In his letter to the church at Colosse, the apostle Paul says:

Colossians 3:5-6

⁵ Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶ On account of these the wrath of God is coming. (See vv.1-4)

God's Word places greed or covetousness in the same category as sexual immorality. All alike are sins of the flesh (the fallen nature), and all alike are examples of immoral behaviour or attitudes of mind. The Word of God continues:

Colossians 3:7-8

⁷ In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. ⁸ But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth.

From unjustified anger to filthy language (filthy communication)—together with the unrighteous or unclean thoughts from which they originate—we must utterly forsake all these manifestations of our old fallen nature. Again, God’s Word says:

Colossians 3:9-10

⁹ Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. (See v.11; cf. v.10 with Eph. 4:23-24)

We are a new creation in Christ Jesus—created unto a life of true righteousness and holiness. Therefore, we must abandon all forms of deceit and dishonesty. Everyone must speak the truth with his or her neighbour, for we are all members of one body—the church: that body of which Christ is Head. (Eph. 4:15-16; Col. 1:18) As God’s Word says:

Ephesians 4:15

¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,

And:

Ephesians 4:25

²⁵ Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbour, for we are members one of another.

Whether it be in thought, speech or act, we must forsake all sin and allow the Holy Spirit to sanctify us wholly.

We Must Live by The Spirit

In all respects, we must walk or live by the Spirit of holiness, and not by the spirit of our own self-will: that rebellious spirit arising from our old fallen nature. That nature has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer our old selves that live. Rather, it is Christ who lives within us and who sanctifies us unto God. The Scripture says:

Galatians 5:16

¹⁶ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. (See vv.13-18)

Again, God’s Word says:

Galatians 5:24-26

²⁴ And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. (See vv.22-23)

The proof that a person has been regenerated and justified, and that he is being sanctified, is that he *utterly forsakes* the sins in which he formerly engaged. The believer is not perfect, but it must be his heart's desire to mortify the sinful nature and to walk with the Lord. We cannot, however, walk with the Lord and walk with the world as well. We cannot claim to be led by the Spirit while any part of our lives is not being sanctified by the Spirit of holiness.

Summary below

Part 10 Summary

BTE12 Summary — Sanctification (ESV Edition)

Part 10: Forsaking Sin in Thought, Word, and Deed

Definition

Sanctification requires believers to forsake sin completely, not only in outward actions but also in thoughts, attitudes, desires, and speech. Through the Holy Spirit's work, Christians progressively put off the old sinful nature, put on the new nature in Christ, and learn to walk consistently under the Spirit's control rather than according to the desires of the flesh.

Key Truths

1. **Sanctification addresses all sin** — believers must forsake sin in thought, word, and deed.
 2. **Sinful speech reveals a sinful heart** — unclean words originate from inward corruption.
 3. **God's people must avoid even the appearance of moral impurity** — holiness excludes every form of uncleanness and greed.
 4. **Impure conversation is inconsistent with sanctification** — filthy talk, foolish speech, and crude joking must be rejected.
 5. **Believers should neither engage in nor enjoy sinful speech** — holiness affects both speaking and listening.
 6. **Covetousness is a serious spiritual sin** — Scripture identifies greed as idolatry.
 7. **The old sinful nature must be put to death** — believers are called to reject its desires and practices.
 8. **Anger, malice, slander, and deceit belong to the old life** — they must be abandoned through sanctification.
 9. **Truthfulness characterizes the new nature** — Christians are called to speak truth in love.
 10. **Believers are renewed into God's image** — sanctification restores righteousness, holiness, and truthfulness.
 11. **Walking by the Spirit is essential for victory over sin** — the Spirit enables believers to resist the flesh.
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12. **The sinful nature has been crucified with Christ** — believers are no longer to live under its control.
 13. **Sanctification is evidenced by a changed lifestyle** — genuine believers increasingly turn away from former sins.
 14. **True holiness requires separation from worldliness** — believers cannot live for Christ while embracing the world's sinful values.
 15. **The desire to mortify sin is evidence of spiritual life** — sanctified believers seek to overcome sin even though they are not yet perfect.
 16. **Every area of life must come under the Spirit's influence** — sanctification is comprehensive, not partial.
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Biblical Foundations

Forsaking Sin in Thought, Word, and Deed

1. **Ephesians 5:3** — impurity, immorality, and greed should not even have a place among God's people.
2. **Ephesians 5:4-5** — filthy speech, crude joking, and impurity are inconsistent with God's kingdom.
3. **James 1:21** (referenced) — believers must put away moral filth and receive God's Word.

Putting Off the Old Nature

4. **Colossians 3:5-6** — believers must put to death sexual immorality, impurity, evil desires, and greed.
5. **Colossians 3:7-8** — anger, malice, slander, and obscene talk must be abandoned.
6. **Colossians 3:9-10** — Christians have put off the old self and put on the new self.

Speaking the Truth

7. **Ephesians 4:15** — believers are to speak the truth in love.
8. **Ephesians 4:25** — falsehood must be replaced by truthfulness.

Living by the Spirit

9. **Galatians 5:16** — walking by the Spirit prevents gratification of sinful desires.
 10. **Galatians 5:24-26** — believers have crucified the flesh and are called to live by the Spirit.
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Practical Implications

1. **Examine your thoughts as well as your actions** — sanctification begins in the heart.
 2. **Guard your speech carefully** — words should reflect holiness and truth.
 3. **Reject even tolerated forms of sin** — believers must not make peace with impurity.
 4. **Put greed and covetousness to death** — contentment opposes idolatry.
 5. **Cultivate honesty in all relationships** — truthfulness reflects the new nature.
 6. **Walk under the Spirit's control daily** — spiritual growth requires dependence on Him.
 7. **Separate yourself from worldly patterns of behaviour** — holiness involves distinctiveness.
 8. **Pursue consistency in every area of life** — sanctification is not selective.
 9. **Be quick to repent when sin is revealed** — continual repentance is part of spiritual growth.
 10. **Measure growth by increasing obedience** — sanctification is demonstrated by a lifestyle that increasingly honours Christ.
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Summary Sentence

Sanctification requires believers to forsake all forms of sin in thought, word, and deed, putting off the old sinful nature and walking by the Holy Spirit, so that their lives increasingly reflect truth, purity, holiness, and conformity to Christ in every area of life.

PART 11

God is Not Mocked

Regarding those who claim to belong to Christ, yet who still live to please their sinful nature, God's Word warns:

Galatians 6:7-8

⁷ Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. ⁸ For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. (See v.9; cf. 2 Cor. 9:6)

Note what the Scripture teaches here:

Galatians 6:8a

^{8a} For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption...

Those who sow to please their sinful nature (i.e. who sow to gratify the flesh) will—from that same sinful nature—reap corruption.

Sowing to the Flesh Destroys the Man

If we feed our minds on sinful material (e.g. through the lust of the eyes), then our minds will become increasingly corrupted by that material. Eventually, we will be unable to distinguish clearly between that which is evil and that which is good. This confusing of moral and spiritual values is a direct consequence of feeding the flesh or sinful nature on that which is evil and degrading, and of depriving the soul and new nature of that which is good and wholesome. Thus, a man *reaps in his mind* what he has *sown in his mind*. Similarly, if we indulge our bodies in sinful pleasures, then both body and soul (including our mind) will become corrupted and damaged by the deceitfulness of sin: for sin always pays its wages—in full.

Sin arises from our hearts. For this reason, sinful actions against the body affect us not only in body, but also in mind. The more we expose our mind to corrupting influences, the more we will begin to imagine that sinful pleasures are normal and natural pleasures. This again is an example of reaping in our mind what we have sown in our mind. Thus, again, the Scripture says:

Galatians 6:8a

^{8a} For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption...

Or, as rendered by the NIV:

^(8a) The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction... (NIV)

God's Word does not warn in vain, and God is not mocked by those who disbelieve the consequences of disregarding his express warnings. Sowing to the sinful nature destroys the man; and no one can remain at peace with God while he continues to feed and nurture the desires of his old sinful nature. Rather, he is at enmity with the one who has redeemed him, and who has delivered him from sin's bondage and dominion over him. Such a person is provoking God to act in (punitive) discipline to magnify his righteous and holy Name, and to preserve a rebellious soul from eternal death.

God Disciplines Those Who Sin

God's Word plainly teaches that the pleasures of sin are corrupt and corrupting. They are evil pleasures; and this is the kind of pleasure that we must utterly forsake. We must never under-estimate the truth of God's Word:

Jeremiah 16:17-18

¹⁷ For my eyes are on all their ways. They are not hidden from me, nor is their iniquity concealed from my eyes. {Cf. *Prov. 5:21-23; Jer. 32:19*}

¹⁸ But first I will doubly repay their iniquity and their sin, because they have polluted my land with the carcasses of their detestable idols, and have filled my inheritance with their abominations." {*Contrast Isa. 40:1-2*} (See *Jer. 16:1-21*)

Again, God's Word says:

Jeremiah 17:4

⁴ You shall loosen your hand from your heritage that I gave to you, and I will make you serve your enemies in a land that you do not know, for in my anger a fire is kindled that shall burn for ever." (See vv.1-10; see esp. vv.9-10; cf. v.4b with *Jer. 15:13-14*)

The inheritance God gave his people was the land of Canaan. However, because of their stubborn sinfulness, God caused his backsliding people's expulsion from that land, sending them into captivity in Babylon.

That which applies to God's backsliding people of old, applies in principle also to us. We cannot lose our heavenly inheritance, since God has guaranteed this inheritance to us through the merits of, and on the basis of, Christ's redeeming work. However, like Israel (or more particularly, Judah), we can forfeit our earthly blessings—spiritual and material.

We reap what we sow. We reap this harvest not only in the life to come, but also in this present life. For this reason, some of God's backsliding people have brought upon themselves the fruit of the sinful deeds. They disbelieved God's warnings, until it was too late. Now, in their own persons, they are paying the penalty for their contempt of God's holy Word. Thus, the Scripture says:

Jeremiah 4:18

¹⁸ Your ways and your deeds
have brought this upon you.
This is your doom, and it is bitter;

it has reached your very heart.”
(See vv.14-17; cf. Jer. 2:13-19)

Or, with the NIV:

⁽¹⁸⁾ “Your own conduct and actions have brought this upon you. This is your punishment. How bitter it is! How it pierces to the heart!” (NIV)

God still deals with his people through his works of providence. By this means, he still chastises them severely when they stubbornly and wilfully refuse to heed all other forms of correction.¹⁶

Disciplined, But Not Condemned

Backsliding believers still belong to Christ. The Lord has delivered them from the coming final judgment, and they will not face eternal condemnation along with the world.

However, as we have seen, God has not spared them from judgment in this present life (*temporal* judgment). To a greater or lesser extent, they have forfeited God’s blessing upon their lives, and are now enduring God’s hand of discipline. Yet, although painful for a time, it is the loving discipline of a Father who cares. It is the loving discipline of the one who is preparing his own children to share with him in holiness and in glory.¹⁷

Worldliness

We are not at liberty to describe as worldly, anything that the Scriptures do not condemn, either by precept or by a clearly defined principle. Having said this, there is a vast range of matters that may indeed be described as worldly, or that may tend to lead to worldly attitudes or standards of behaviour.

Basically, worldliness consists of anything that causes us to set our hearts or minds on the things of the world, or on the sinful pleasures obtained by gratifying the evil or excessive desires of our fallen nature. Instead, of course, we should be setting our hearts and minds wholly on Christ, and endeavouring by his grace to walk by the Spirit of holiness. (Col. 3:1-2)

Worldly-mindedness stands opposed, totally and irreconcilably, to spiritual-mindedness. We may pursue one or the other, but we cannot pursue both. Friendship with the world (i.e. an inordinate affection for the things of the world, or indulgence in any sinful attitudes or practices) is enmity with God. Thus, God’s Word says:

James 4:4

⁴You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. (See vv.1-3; cf. 2 Pet. 1:4; 2:20)

¹⁶ See further on Bible Truths Explained: *Sovereignty of God; Providence*.

¹⁷ See further on Bible Truths Explained: *Adoption*, under *Discipline*.

Again, God's Word says:

1 John 2:15-17

¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world. {Cf. *Rom. 13:13-14; Eph. 2:3; Eccl. 2:4-10; Matt. 20:25-27*}

¹⁷ And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides for ever.

Worldliness and Legitimate Pastimes

While we must utterly forsake those things of the world that are sinful, there are many other things of the world that we are not at liberty to describe as sinful. For example, there are legitimate pastimes, interests, hobbies, sports, or recreational and leisure activities in which a Christian may become involved.

The believer is free to engage in any legitimate interest, provided he can do so with a clear conscience in the sight of God. Provided, also, that his involvement does not require him to encroach upon the time he owes to the Lord, or to dishonour the Lord's name, or to desecrate the Lord's Day.

In all matters of indifference and conscience (matters that are not in themselves sinful), one particular believer's idea or opinion about what constitutes worldly attitudes or standards of behaviour must never be made the rule for other believers. The Lord alone is Lord of the conscience. *Man must not forbid what God has not forbidden.*

Sanctification Must be Taken Seriously

As God's people, we must take seriously the implications of sanctification. We are not our own. The Lord has redeemed us. He has set us apart and consecrated us to God as his holy people. Our body and soul—our whole person and personality—is the possession of God; and our body is the sacred dwelling place or temple of God's Holy Spirit.

We are God's purchased possession—his consecrated people, and his adopted children. We are the children of light or holiness. It is our responsibility, therefore, to yield ourselves wholly to God's sanctifying and life-changing power. We must allow the Spirit of God to cleanse us, and we must be willing to put off the deeds of the old sinful nature and to put on the deeds of the new nature. We must forsake sin and pursue holiness of life or conduct always.

We have already seen what is involved in putting off the old nature. In the next part of this study, we will consider what is involved in putting on the new nature. The new nature is that nature in which God has created anew in Christ Jesus, in true righteousness, holiness and knowledge.

Summary below

Part 11 Summary

BTE12 Summary — Sanctification (ESV Edition)

Part 11: God Is Not Mocked

Definition

Sanctification requires believers to forsake the sinful nature and live under the Spirit's control. God's moral law of sowing and reaping operates in the believer's life: those who continually nourish sinful desires reap corruption, while those who submit to the Holy Spirit reap spiritual growth and eternal blessings. God lovingly disciplines His children when they persist in sin, but He does not condemn those who truly belong to Christ.

Key Truths

1. **God is not mocked** — believers cannot disregard God's commands without consequences.
 2. **People reap what they sow** — actions and attitudes produce corresponding spiritual results.
 3. **Sowing to the flesh produces corruption** — nurturing sinful desires damages both soul and character.
 4. **Sin progressively corrupts the mind** — continual exposure to sinful influences weakens moral and spiritual discernment.
 5. **Sin affects the whole person** — sinful choices damage both body and soul.
 6. **The pleasures of sin are deceptive and destructive** — they promise satisfaction but produce corruption.
 7. **God sees all human conduct** — no sin is hidden from His knowledge.
 8. **God disciplines His children for persistent sin** — divine correction is part of His fatherly care.
 9. **Believers may lose earthly blessings through disobedience** — spiritual and temporal consequences can result from backsliding.
 10. **God's discipline is temporal, not eternal condemnation** — His children are corrected but not cast away.
 11. **Backsliding believers remain God's children** — discipline does not cancel salvation.
 12. **Worldliness opposes spiritual growth** — affection for sinful worldly values is incompatible with holiness.
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13. **Friendship with the world is hostility toward God** — worldly-mindedness and spiritual-mindedness are mutually opposed.
 14. **Not everything in the world is sinful** — believers may enjoy lawful activities with a clear conscience before God.
 15. **Christian liberty must be governed by God's honour** — legitimate pursuits must never displace devotion to Christ.
 16. **Sanctification demands serious commitment** — believers are God's redeemed possession and must pursue holiness wholeheartedly.
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Biblical Foundations

God Is Not Mocked

1. **Galatians 6:7-8** — people reap what they sow; sowing to the flesh produces corruption, while sowing to the Spirit brings life.

God Disciplines Those Who Sin

2. **Jeremiah 16:17-18** — God sees sin and repays iniquity justly.
3. **Jeremiah 17:4** — persistent rebellion brought loss of earthly blessings and judgment.
4. **Jeremiah 4:18** — sinful conduct brought painful consequences upon God's people.

Disciplined, But Not Condemned

5. **1 Corinthians 11:30-32** (concept referenced) — believers may experience discipline without facing final condemnation.

Worldliness

6. **Colossians 3:1-2** — believers are to set their minds on heavenly things.
7. **James 4:4** — friendship with the world is enmity with God.
8. **1 John 2:15-17** — believers must not love the world or its sinful desires.

Sanctification and Holiness

9. **Romans 13:13-14** (referenced) — believers are called to reject sinful worldly behaviour.
 10. **2 Peter 1:4** and **2 Peter 2:20** (referenced) — believers are called to escape worldly corruption.
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Practical Implications

1. **Take sin seriously** — every sinful choice produces consequences.
 2. **Feed your mind with godly influences** — spiritual growth depends on what you sow into your heart and mind.
 3. **Refuse to normalize sinful behaviour** — repeated indulgence can dull spiritual discernment.
 4. **Respond quickly to God's correction** — discipline is intended to restore, not destroy.
 5. **Guard against worldliness** — identify attitudes and practices that pull your heart away from Christ.
 6. **Use Christian liberty wisely** — lawful activities should never hinder devotion to God.
 7. **Examine your priorities regularly** — ensure that Christ remains central to your life.
 8. **Trust God's fatherly discipline** — His correction is evidence of His love and commitment to your holiness.
 9. **Remember your identity in Christ** — you are God's purchased possession and temple.
 10. **Pursue holiness wholeheartedly** — sanctification requires deliberate cooperation with the Holy Spirit.
-

Summary Sentence

Sanctification requires believers to sow to the Spirit rather than the flesh, recognizing that sin inevitably produces corruption while obedience produces spiritual fruit, and understanding that God lovingly disciplines His children, calls them away from worldliness, and works in them to create lives marked by holiness and devotion to Christ.

PART 12

Putting On the New Nature

Practical Examples

The new nature is that nature, which we have received at regeneration or the new birth, and which is being moulded after the likeness of Christ in righteousness and true holiness. Everyone who has been truly born again possesses this new nature; and everyone who possesses this new nature must produce in his or her life the fruit of the Spirit.

The Fruit of The Spirit

God's Word says:

Galatians 5:22-23

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.
(See vv.24-26)

In the pages that follow, the nine distinct elements of the fruit of the Spirit, are set out individually in the left-hand column.

The Fruit of The Spirit Listed

1. Love

Gk. ἀγάπη **agapē**

- *Love to God* involves unremitting devotion, loyalty, and faithfulness to God; complete trust in God, and unreserved obedience to all his Word and will in all things.
- *Love to our fellow-believer* involves caring for that person as one who is united to us in Christ Jesus.
- *Love to our neighbour* involves showing concern for him, and providing assistance where there is need. Love does no wrong to our neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilment of the law.

Love

Romans 13:8-10 ESV

(Scripture References)

⁸Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet", and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." ¹⁰Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

1 Corinthians 13:1 ESV

¹ If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

1 Corinthians 13:13 ESV

¹³ So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Galatians 5:13-15 ESV

¹³ For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. ¹⁴ For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." ¹⁵ But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.

2. Joy

Gk. χαρά **chara**

- Heartfelt joy. This is not the same thing as exuberance. Rather, it is inward, deep, lasting spiritual joy. This joy comes to us as a direct consequence of our salvation in Christ, and of our union with our risen and glorified Redeemer. We associate this spiritual joy with all the blessings that we receive in Christ. However, we also associate this deep inward joy with the sufferings that God calls us to endure for Christ; i.e. for the sake of his name.

Joy

(Scripture References)

Philippians 4:4-5 ESV

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵ Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand;

1 Peter 1:5-9 ESV

⁵ who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy

that is inexpressible and filled with glory, ⁹obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

1 Peter 4:12-16 ESV

¹² Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴ If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. ¹⁵ But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. ¹⁶ Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.

3. **Peace**

Gk. εἰρήνη **eirēnē**

- Peace with God, and peace with oneself (although not necessarily to the exclusion of all inward conflicts and tensions; especially those that attend spiritual warfare). This inner calmness includes peace or tranquillity in the midst of spiritual strife, and in the everyday conflicts of life. This heart-peace comes from the Lord himself. The Holy Spirit makes this peace fully effective in our lives when we are living in line with God's will for us. This means, of course, that we are fulfilling the desires of the Holy Spirit, and not the desires of our old sinful nature.

Peace

(Scripture References)

John 14:27 ESV

²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

John 16:33 ESV

³³ I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

Philippians 4:6-7 ESV

⁶do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Colossians 3:12-15 ESV

¹²Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.

4. Patience

Gk. μακροθυμία **makrothymia**

- A child of God demonstrates patience (an essential element of perseverance) by exhibiting a longsuffering disposition or attitude of mind. Patience of this type prevails even under the most adverse of circumstances or the most severe provocation. The Lord calls upon us to exercise patience (and to persevere) in all the trials and difficulties of our faith. Similarly, he enjoins us to exercise perseverance in our conflict against the powers of evil, and patience or longsuffering in all our dealings with our fellow men and women. Patient endurance and perseverance are virtues required of all the people of God. Patience does not imply passivity or inactivity in the things of God, but rather forbearance united with a steadfast endurance and determination to hold firmly to the course set before us.

Patience

(Scripture References)

Hebrews 12:1-4 ESV

¹Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ²looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

³ Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or faint-hearted. ⁴ In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.

James 1:2-4 ESV

² Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

James 1:12-15 ESV

¹² Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. ¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God”, for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. ¹⁴ But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. ¹⁵ Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

James 5:10-11 ESV

¹⁰ As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹ Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

5. Kindness

Gk. χρηστότης **chrēstotēs**

- Care, thoughtfulness, consideration and generosity toward our fellow-believers, and particularly toward those in need. We exemplify kindness by taking practical measures to alleviate suffering and hardship, or by comforting and supporting the sorrowing in their distress and grief. Kindness does not speak out of turn, or without due thought for the consequences of idle or careless remarks. One wrong word can pierce like a sword. A word fitly spoken can be like a healing balm to a wounded soul.

Kindness

Proverbs 19:17 ESV

(Scripture References)

¹⁷ Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will repay him for his deed.

Proverbs 25:11 ESV

¹¹ A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver.

2 Corinthians 9:6-8 ESV

⁶ The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷ Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. (See vv.9-15)

Ephesians 4:32 ESV

³² Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Colossians 3:12 ESV

¹² Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,

6. GoodnessGk. ἀγαθωσύνη **agathōsynē**

- Goodness includes all manner of good, right, and benevolent attitudes and actions toward our neighbour, and for the sake of Christ's name. True goodness originates spontaneously from a person's heart. A person exemplifies goodness by the good, helpful or beneficial things he does for others in the name of Christ. Inasmuch as we have done it unto one of the least of these, his brethren, we have done it unto Christ.

Goodness

1 Corinthians 10:23-24 ESV

(Scripture References)

²³“All things are lawful”, but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful”, but not all things build up. ²⁴Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbour.

James 4:17 ESV

¹⁷So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.

2 Peter 1:5-11 ESV

⁵For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, ⁶and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, ⁷and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. ⁸For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹For whoever lacks these qualities is so short-sighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. ¹⁰Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you practise these qualities you will never fall. ¹¹For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

7. Faithfulness

Gk. πίστις **pistis**

- Faithfulness is absolute and unwavering love and loyalty to a person. Faithfulness to God must come first, for we are bound to the Lord by covenant loyalty. Faithfulness to God's people (the church) accompanies faithfulness to God. Faithfulness to our husband or wife parallels faithfulness to God, and involves the same kind of love as Christ has for the church. Faithfulness to other members of our family and friends comes next. Then, faithfulness to the wider sphere of man's civil relationships, and to society more generally. This is because God has set civil government in place, together with its lawful institutions.

Faithfulness

(Scripture References)

Mark 12:28-31 ESV

²⁸ And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, "Which commandment is the most important of all?" ²⁹ Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.' ³⁰ And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' {Deut. 6:4,5} ³¹ The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' {Lev. 19:18} There is no other commandment greater than these."

Luke 20:21-25 ESV

²¹ So they asked him, "Teacher, we know that you speak and teach rightly, and show no partiality, but truly teach the way of God. ²² Is it lawful for us to give tribute to Caesar, or not?" ²³ But he perceived their craftiness, and said to them, ²⁴ "Show me a denarius. Whose likeness and inscription does it have?" They said, "Caesar's." ²⁵ He said to them, "Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

Ephesians 5:22-25,28 ESV

²² Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Saviour. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her...

²⁸ In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. (See also v.33)

Revelation 2:10 ESV

¹⁰ Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.

8. **Gentleness**

Gk. πραύτης *prautēs*

- Gentleness (or meekness or humility) is not weakness. It requires great strength of character, and courage, to be gentle in the midst of an antagonistic world. Gentleness is the opposite of a hard, selfish, arrogant and proud disposition (these attitudes being typical examples of the sins of the flesh). We must stand firmly and uncompromisingly by the principles of our faith. However, in doing so, we must not impose our convictions or principles on other people. Rather, in a Christ-like spirit of love, compassion and tenderness, we must gently instruct those who err. We must exhort those who need encouragement. We must give hope to those in despair, and comfort those who are enduring sorrow or grief.

Gentleness

(Scripture References)

Ephesians 4:1-3 ESV

¹ I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ²with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Philippians 4:5 ESV

⁵ Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand;

1 Peter 3:15-16 ESV

¹⁵ but in your hearts honour Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defence to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it

with gentleness and respect,¹⁶ having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behaviour in Christ may be put to shame.

9. Self-control

Gk. ἐγκράτεια **enkrateia**

Self-control

(Scripture References)

- Self-control is the exercise of self-discipline or restraint; i.e. the willingness to govern all our attitudes and actions according to the teaching of God's Word. Self-control involves the exercise of moderation in all things; the avoidance of all excesses, and the steadfast refusal to indulge the desires of the sinful nature. We ought to apply self-control to every area of our lives: in thought, speech, and act.

Proverbs 16:32 ESV

³² Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.

Titus 2:11-12 ESV

¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, ¹² training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, (See vv.13-14)

James 1:26 ESV

²⁶ If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless.

The above represents the kind of fruit that we must exhibit in our lives in ever-increasing measure. This fruit is the evidence that we possess a new nature. It is the only tangible proof that a person has been born again by the Spirit of God.

Increasing Fruit is Proof of Spiritual Life

The production of this fruit in a person's life is evidence that that person belongs to Christ. It demonstrates that the Holy Spirit is sanctifying his inner life. In the process, the Spirit of God is transforming him from one degree of glory to another.

The amount of fruit produced will be in proportion to the spiritual maturity of the believer, and to his growth in grace. To a certain extent also, it will depend on the progress he has made in understanding spiritual truths. Again, the increasing production of spiritual fruit will depend on the degree of his commitment to the Lord. As the believer grows in grace, he will produce an ever-increasing amount of spiritual fruit: fruit of increasingly greater quality. This is further evidence of his new life in Christ.

If a person does not produce any spiritual fruit, then this may indicate that this individual is not being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. It, however, a person is not being sanctified, then this suggests strongly that he has not experienced the Holy Spirit's regenerating power. This, in turns, means God has not justified him. There can be no new birth without clear signs of new life.

Summary below

Part 12 Summary

BTE12 Summary — Sanctification (ESV Edition)

Part 12: Putting On the New Nature

Definition

Putting on the New Nature is the positive aspect of sanctification whereby believers increasingly display the character of Christ through the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Received at regeneration and progressively developed through sanctification, the new nature produces godly attitudes, virtues, and conduct that provide visible evidence of spiritual life and growth in grace.

Key Truths

1. **The new nature is received at regeneration** — every born-again believer possesses a new spiritual nature.
 2. **Sanctification shapes believers into Christ's likeness** — the Spirit progressively forms Christlike character.
 3. **The fruit of the Spirit is evidence of the new nature** — spiritual fruit reveals the Spirit's transforming work.
 4. **Love is the supreme Christian virtue** — it governs devotion to God and care for others.
 5. **True joy is rooted in salvation and union with Christ** — it remains even amid trials and suffering.
 6. **Peace is an inward gift from Christ** — it steadies believers through life's struggles and spiritual conflicts.
 7. **Patience produces steadfast endurance** — believers persevere through trials without losing hope.
 8. **Kindness expresses practical compassion** — it seeks the good of others through thoughtful and loving actions.
 9. **Goodness produces beneficial actions** — believers actively pursue what is right and helpful.
 10. **Faithfulness reflects covenant loyalty** — believers remain devoted to God and trustworthy in relationships.
 11. **Gentleness combines strength with humility** — it deals with others graciously while standing firmly for truth.
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12. **Self-control restrains sinful desires** — believers govern thoughts, words, and actions according to God's Word.
 13. **Spiritual fruit grows progressively** — maturity develops over time through the Spirit's work.
 14. **Growth in fruit accompanies growth in grace** — increasing holiness produces increasing spiritual fruitfulness.
 15. **Fruit demonstrates genuine sanctification** — visible Christlike qualities provide evidence of spiritual life.
 16. **The absence of spiritual fruit raises serious concerns** — sanctification and regeneration are evidenced by transformed living.
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Biblical Foundations

The Fruit of the Spirit

1. **Galatians 5:22-23** — the Spirit produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Love

2. **Romans 13:8-10** — love fulfills God's law.
3. **1 Corinthians 13:1** — gifts without love are worthless.
4. **1 Corinthians 13:13** — love is the greatest Christian virtue.
5. **Galatians 5:13-15** — believers serve one another through love.

Joy

6. **Philippians 4:4-5** — Christians are commanded to rejoice in the Lord.
7. **1 Peter 1:5-9** — believers rejoice even through trials.
8. **1 Peter 4:12-16** — suffering for Christ is accompanied by spiritual joy.

Peace

9. **John 14:27** — Christ gives His peace to His people.
10. **John 16:33** — believers have peace in Christ despite tribulation.
11. **Philippians 4:6-7** — God's peace guards hearts and minds.
12. **Colossians 3:12-15** — Christ's peace is to rule in believers' hearts.

Patience

- 13. **Hebrews 12:1-4** — believers are called to endurance.
- 14. **James 1:2-4** — trials produce steadfastness.
- 15. **James 1:12-15** — perseverance under trial is blessed.
- 16. **James 5:10-11** — God's people are examples of patient endurance.

Kindness

- 17. **Proverbs 19:17** — kindness to the needy honours God.
- 18. **Proverbs 25:11** — wise words bring blessing.
- 19. **2 Corinthians 9:6-8** — generosity flows from God's grace.
- 20. **Ephesians 4:32** — believers are to be kind and forgiving.
- 21. **Colossians 3:12** — kindness characterizes God's chosen people.

Goodness

- 22. **1 Corinthians 10:23-24** — believers should seek their neighbour's good.
- 23. **James 4:17** — failing to do known good is sin.
- 24. **2 Peter 1:5-11** — spiritual virtues should continually increase.

Faithfulness

- 25. **Mark 12:28-31** — faithful love toward God and neighbour fulfills God's commands.
- 26. **Luke 20:21-25** — faithfulness includes honouring proper responsibilities.
- 27. **Ephesians 5:22-25, 28** — marital faithfulness reflects Christ's love for the church.
- 28. **Revelation 2:10** — believers are called to faithfulness even unto death.

Gentleness

- 29. **Ephesians 4:1-3** — gentleness preserves unity in the church.
- 30. **Philippians 4:5** — gentleness should be evident to all.
- 31. **1 Peter 3:15-16** — believers defend their faith with gentleness and respect.

Self-Control

- 32. **Proverbs 16:32** — self-mastery is greater than military conquest.
- 33. **Titus 2:11-12** — grace teaches self-controlled living.
- 34. **James 1:26** — self-control includes governing the tongue.

Practical Implications

1. **Examine your life for spiritual fruit** — fruit reveals the Spirit's work within.
 2. **Cultivate love as the foundation of Christian living** — all other virtues flourish through love.
 3. **Maintain joy in Christ during trials** — spiritual joy rests on God's unchanging promises.
 4. **Seek Christ's peace through prayer and trust** — do not be ruled by anxiety.
 5. **Persevere through hardship patiently** — trials are instruments of spiritual growth.
 6. **Practice kindness intentionally** — look for opportunities to encourage and help others.
 7. **Pursue goodness actively** — seek your neighbour's welfare and God's glory.
 8. **Remain faithful in every relationship** — loyalty reflects God's covenant faithfulness.
 9. **Demonstrate gentleness in dealings with others** — combine conviction with humility.
 10. **Exercise self-control in every area of life** — holiness requires disciplined obedience.
 11. **Expect fruit to increase gradually** — spiritual maturity develops progressively.
 12. **Remember that fruit is evidence, not the cause, of salvation** — transformed living flows from God's work in the heart.
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Summary Sentence

Sanctification produces the fruit of the Spirit in the lives of believers, progressively transforming them into the likeness of Christ through increasing love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, thereby providing visible evidence of genuine spiritual life and growth in grace.

PART 13

Forsaking the Way of Holiness

Concerning those who are not experiencing the sanctifying power of the Spirit in their lives, God's Word says:

Ephesians 4:18

¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. (See v.17)

The same Scripture continues:

Ephesians 4:19-20

¹⁹ They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practise every kind of impurity. ²⁰ But that is not the way you learned Christ!—

Those who seek to satisfy the lusts of the flesh either have never known Christ, or they have professed conversion and followed the Lord only for a time. Ultimately, however, their manner of life has proved that their 'conversion' experience was not genuine. This is evidenced by the fact that they have no real desire to continue following Christ. They have forsaken the way of righteousness to return to the sinful pleasures of the world. It would indeed have been better for these individuals had they never heard about the Lord Jesus, than—having heard—to have rejected the only way of salvation and life. Thus, the Word of God solemnly warns:

2 Peter 2:20-22

²⁰ For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. ²¹ For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. ²² What the true proverb says has happened to them: "The dog returns to its own vomit, {*Prov. 26:11*} and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire." (See vv.1-19; cf. Jude 4,18-19)

Proverbs 26:11

¹¹ Like a dog that returns to his vomit is a fool who repeats his folly.

All who belong to Christ must depart from iniquity. (2 Tim. 2:19b.) If they do not, then inevitably they will reap what they sow. If they sow to the flesh, then they will *of the flesh* reap a corrupt manner of life.

Treating God's Spirit with Contempt

The triune God is one God in three divine Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are co-equal in eternity, power and glory. The infinite power and majestic glory that belongs inherently to the Father, also belongs inherently to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. It is therefore a fearful thing to treat the Holy Spirit of God with contempt. By doing so, a person is treating with contempt the Almighty God himself.

In what way, however, can we treat God with contempt? The God of infinite holiness indwells each believer in the Person of his Spirit. By that Spirit—the Spirit of grace, of glory, and of absolute holiness—the glory of the Lord fills the temple. *That temple is our body.* If we despise the dwelling place of God by degrading the temple of the Lord, then we are treating the Spirit of God—and therefore God himself—with contempt. If we so sin wilfully and repeatedly against the Lord, then we are proving that we do not in fact belong to Christ. Those who are Christ's cannot despise the temple of God. Regarding those who claim to know Christ, yet who deny him by their life and conduct, the Scripture solemnly declares:

Hebrews 10:26-27

²⁶ For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷ but a fearful expectation of judgement, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.

Our body is the temple of God—and the temple of God is holy. We should consecrate it to God as his hallowed dwelling place. God will surely judge those who commit sacrilege by defiling his holy temple.

Treading Underfoot The Blood of Christ

To tread underfoot the blood of Christ is to treat the blood of the covenant (i.e., the Person and the redeeming work of Christ) as an unholy thing. Those who thus despise the vicarious and atoning work of Christ, or who thus abuse his holy Person, are heaping up God's wrath against themselves for the last day. There will be no escaping the fire and the fury of the wrath of God. All those who have disdained the Son of God; who have despised the blood of the Lamb, and who have neglected or rejected the Lamb of God as their Saviour, face the terrible prospect of judgment and eternal torment. Their Judge will be the same holy Lamb of God. (Cf. Rev. 6:16-17) To this end, God's Word says:

Hebrews 10:28-29

²⁸ Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. ²⁹ How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has spurned the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?

On the Day of Judgment, people will seek by every conceivable means to hide from the Lamb of God: for his wrath will burn like fire. No one, however, will escape the searching judgment of the all-holy God, and of his Son Jesus Christ. Thus, the Scripture says:

Revelation 6:15-17

¹⁵ Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, ¹⁶ calling to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb,
{*Cf. Hosea 10:8; Luke 23:30*}

¹⁷ for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?”
{*Cf. Zeph. 1:14-18; Ps. 76:7*} {See Rev. 6:12-14}

The Lord Will Judge His People

Judgment, however, will begin at the house of God, and among the people of God. Thus, the apostle Peter says:

1 Peter 4:17-18

¹⁷ For it is time for judgement to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸ And

“If the righteous is scarcely saved,
what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?”
{*Prov. 11:31*} {See 1 Pet. 4:14-19}

Again, God’s Word says:

Hebrews 10:30

³⁰ For we know him who said, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay.” {*Deut 32:35*} And again, “The Lord will judge his people.” {*Deut. 32:36; Ps. 135:14*}

The same Scripture continues:

Hebrews 10:31

³¹ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. (Cf. Luke 12:5)

If judgment begins with those who are being sanctified, what will be the outcome for those who have never known the regenerating and sanctifying power of the Spirit of holiness.

The Test of a Sanctified Life

In this present life, the ultimate test of a sanctified life is the ability to allow the Lord full possession of our body and soul. We ought to permit the Lord unrestricted access to every part of our lives. This

is his right as our Sovereign and Redeemer. Does this right of access exist, however? Does the Lord dwell in every part of our lives? Or are there parts of our lives unfit for the hallowed presence of the Lord? Should not the glory of the LORD fill the whole temple?

Our body is the temple of the Lord, and the temple of the Lord is holy. Can we defile God's temple, or refuse him entry to his sanctified dwelling? Let us think carefully on the Scripture that says:

1 Corinthians 3:16-17

¹⁶Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? ¹⁷If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple. (Cf. 1 Cor. 6:19-20; 2 Cor. 6:16)

Those who belong to Christ must walk as Jesus walked. By God's grace, we ought to be making real progress in sanctification—including putting to death the thoughts and acts of our sinful nature. If we are not making progress, then something may be amiss with our spiritual lives.

A Life Acceptable to God

Let us consider carefully these solemn injunctions from the Word of God:

Romans 12:1-2

¹I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ²Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (See vv.3-8)

Titus 2:11-14

¹¹For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, ¹²training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, ¹³waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, ¹⁴who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

Total consecration of body and soul is the only acceptable sacrifice we can yield to God. If we have not yielded *all* to God, then we have not yielded *at all* to God.

Summary below

Part 13 Summary

BTE12 Summary — Sanctification (ESV Edition)

Part 13: Forsaking the Way of Holiness

Definition

Forsaking the Way of Holiness occurs when a person abandons the path of sanctification and returns to a life characterized by sin, worldliness, and rebellion against God. True sanctification produces increasing holiness and submission to the Holy Spirit, while persistent, deliberate sin demonstrates either a false profession of faith or a serious departure from God's revealed will. Sanctification requires total consecration of body and soul to God.

Key Truths

1. **Those who reject sanctification remain in spiritual darkness** — hardness of heart alienates people from the life of God.
 2. **Persistent indulgence in sin opposes the way of Christ** — sensuality and impurity are incompatible with genuine discipleship.
 3. **A false profession of faith is exposed by an ungodly lifestyle** — conduct ultimately reveals the reality of the heart.
 4. **Returning permanently to sin demonstrates spiritual danger** — turning away from the path of righteousness brings severe consequences.
 5. **God's people must depart from iniquity** — sanctification requires ongoing separation from sin.
 6. **A person reaps what he sows** — sowing to the flesh produces corruption and spiritual ruin.
 7. **The Holy Spirit is fully God** — to treat the Spirit with contempt is to treat God Himself with contempt.
 8. **The believer's body is God's temple** — it must not be defiled by deliberate and ongoing sin.
 9. **Persistent, willful sin dishonours God's dwelling place** — it treats sacred things as common and profane.
 10. **To despise Christ's sacrifice is a fearful sin** — rejecting the Son and His atoning work invites divine judgment.
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11. **Judgment belongs to the Lord** — no one will escape His righteous assessment.
 12. **The wrath of the Lamb is real** — those who reject Christ will face Him as Judge.
 13. **God disciplines and judges His people** — judgment begins with the household of God.
 14. **A sanctified life gives God unrestricted access to every area of life** — holiness involves total surrender.
 15. **Spiritual progress should be evident** — genuine believers progressively put sin to death and grow in holiness.
 16. **Total consecration is God's requirement** — believers are called to offer themselves wholly to Him.
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Biblical Foundations

Forsaking the Way of Holiness

1. **Ephesians 4:18-20** — those outside Christ are darkened in understanding and given over to impurity.
2. **2 Peter 2:20-22** — turning back from the way of righteousness places a person in a worse condition than before.
3. **Proverbs 26:11** — a fool returns to his folly like a dog returning to its vomit.

Treating God's Spirit with Contempt

4. **Hebrews 10:26-27** — deliberate, persistent sin after receiving the truth invites fearful judgment.
5. **1 Corinthians 3:16-17** — believers are God's temple and must not defile it.
6. **1 Corinthians 6:19-20** (referenced) — the body belongs to God as His holy dwelling place.

Treading Underfoot the Blood of Christ

7. **Hebrews 10:28-29** — despising Christ and profaning His sacrifice brings severe judgment.
8. **Revelation 6:15-17** — the unrepentant will face the wrath of the Lamb.

The Lord Will Judge His People

9. **1 Peter 4:17-18** — judgment begins with the household of God.
10. **Hebrews 10:30-31** — it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

A Life Acceptable to God

11. **Romans 12:1-2** — believers must present themselves as living sacrifices and be transformed by renewed minds.
 12. **Titus 2:11-14** — God's grace trains believers to reject ungodliness and pursue godly lives.
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Practical Implications

1. **Take sanctification seriously** — holiness is not optional for God's people.
 2. **Examine your life honestly** — conduct should reflect genuine spiritual transformation.
 3. **Do not become comfortable with deliberate sin** — persistent rebellion hardens the heart.
 4. **Honour the Holy Spirit's presence within you** — your body and life belong to God.
 5. **Guard against spiritual drift** — continually pursue holiness rather than worldly pleasures.
 6. **Remember the seriousness of Christ's sacrifice** — never treat His grace carelessly.
 7. **Allow God access to every area of your life** — partial surrender is not true consecration.
 8. **Seek continual progress in holiness** — sanctification should produce visible growth.
 9. **Live in reverent fear of God** — His holiness and judgment are real.
 10. **Present yourself wholly to God** — body, mind, heart, and will should all be devoted to His service.
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Summary Sentence

Sanctification demands a wholehearted commitment to holiness, requiring believers to forsake sin, honour the indwelling Holy Spirit, treasure Christ's redeeming work, and yield every part of their lives to God, for genuine spiritual life is evidenced by continual growth in holiness and total consecration to the Lord.

Final Summary of entire study follows below

Final Summary

Sanctification

1. Purpose of the Doctrine

The doctrine of **sanctification** explains how believers are progressively transformed into Christ's likeness after being justified and adopted. It shows how God's grace continues to work in the Christian life, producing holiness, obedience, and spiritual maturity.

2. Key Biblical Foundations

Scripture teaches that sanctification is God's will for every believer (1 Thess. 4:3) and that the Spirit works within them to produce Christlike character (Gal. 5:22–23). Jesus prays that His people would be sanctified by the truth (John 17:17), and Paul describes believers as being transformed from one degree of glory to another (2 Cor. 3:18). These passages establish sanctification as a lifelong, Spirit-empowered work grounded in God's Word.

3. How the Parts Fit Together

The study begins by defining sanctification as both a definitive setting apart and a progressive work of renewal. It then explains the believer's new identity in Christ, showing how union with Him forms the basis for growth in holiness. Further Parts explore the role of the Spirit, the Word, prayer, and obedience in the sanctifying process. The study also clarifies the believer's ongoing conflict with sin and the necessity of daily repentance. The final sections show how sanctification is certain yet incomplete in this life, reaching its fullness only in glory. Together these Parts form a coherent doctrinal flow: new identity, spiritual renewal, daily conflict, ongoing growth, and final perfection.

4. Doctrinal Conclusion

Sanctification is the Spirit's ongoing work of making believers holy in heart and life. It is rooted in union with Christ, empowered by the Spirit, and shaped by the Word. Sanctification is progressive — increasing throughout the Christian life — yet never perfect until the believer is glorified. It is a cooperative work: God works in the believer, and the believer actively pursues holiness through obedience, prayer, and reliance on grace.

5. Practical Implications

This doctrine encourages believers to pursue holiness with confidence, knowing God is at work within them. It strengthens perseverance, reminding Christians that growth is gradual but certain. It shapes discipleship by emphasising daily obedience, repentance, and dependence on the Spirit. And it fuels hope, assuring believers that the God who began the good work will bring it to completion in the day of Christ.

END

