

“Sanctification and Holiness”

Deeply Rooted week #8

Celebrate those qualities you see already evident and discuss how you can create space in your life that allows God to grow those less evident. That might be by eliminating things that compete for your love, practicing habits that draw you closer to God, finding ways to involve God in new areas of your life, (hobbies, relationships, work) where He hasn't been before. These are the ways you can prepare the soil where God will grow the fruit of the Spirit.

The Problem of Sin

Being holy means being pure. The problem is that, even though we are forgiven, we still sin. What do we do about that? The answer is found in Galatians 5:24-25.

24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. 25 Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives.

The penalty for our sins was paid at the cross. But we are still given choices to make every day either to follow the leading of the Spirit or the old sinful nature. For many of us the moment of our decision to follow Jesus was filled with joy and celebration as we accepted the gift of God's grace. We were ready to leave our sin behind, to pick up our cross to follow Jesus. But over the course of time, we discovered that putting the old nature to death is a process. God makes us aware of our shortcomings, sin and brokenness, and we confess, repent and surrender to Him.

Gal 5:25 says to follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. That process can occur a little like peeling back an onion, one layer at a time. What has the process been like in your experience? Slow and steady, big jumps forward and little steps back, imperceptible?

Scripture tells us to be holy because God is holy. So let's not give up. In fact, Hebrews 10:24 encourages us to help one another in this:
24 Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works.

What are some ways you can encourage others in your group so that together you grow in your love of God and others, and demonstrate that love in what you do?

INTRODUCTION

When asked what the greatest commandment was, Jesus said, “You shall love the Lord with all your heart, all your soul and all your mind.” God asks us to be all in, sold out, unmixed in our love and devotion to Him. In the bible the concept of being sanctified comes from the word *hagiazō* which means to be separated from other things and dedicated to God alone. The process whereby God transforms us into the likeness of His Son is sanctification. And although it is God's power that transforms us, we are called to cooperate with the Holy Spirit as He cleans up our hearts and empowers us to live for Him.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH – HOLINESS & SANCTIFICATION

We believe that sanctification is the work of God which transforms believers into the likeness of Christ... It is wrought by the baptism with or infilling of the Holy Spirit, and comprehends in one experience the cleansing of the heart from sin and the abiding, indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, empowering the believer for life and service...

We believe that there is a marked distinction between a pure heart and a mature character. The former is obtained in an instant, the result of entire sanctification; the latter is the result of growth in grace. ... However, this impulse must be consciously nurtured, and careful attention given to the requisites and processes of spiritual development and improvement in Christlikeness of character and personality. ...

MEMORY VERSES

Galatians 5:22-25 NLT - 22 But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things! 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. 25 Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives.

MEDITATE ON GOD'S WORD

We read the bible to be formed and transformed, not merely to gather information. Reading of the scripture in this way requires unhurried time and an open heart. Only God's Spirit can fully interpret God's Word, and as you meditate on His Word in *the memory verse above* the Spirit has the opportunity to give you personal insight. We can break it down into four parts:

- reading - This is a reflective, gently paced, one-bite-at-a-time kind of reading. As you read, ask God, "What are you saying to me just now?"
- meditate- Let's be clear, this is not an Eastern religious practice, it is our taking time to reflect on the passage and repeat it in our minds, and throughout our day. Speak it out loud, find ways to incorporate it into the thoughts, feelings and experiences of your life
- pray – a natural product of meditating on God's Word will be to communicate with God. As we find God addressing us directly through His Word, our hearts cry out to Him. Perhaps we feel joy and gratitude, or repentance and pain. But as God's Word penetrates our lives, our response will be heartfelt prayer.
- Rest – as a result of spending time reading, meditating and praying through God's Word, you can come to a place of sabbath-time rest in God's presence. Simply receive from Him by being with and near to Him.

Share with the group what God has shown you in this week's passage.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS –

Sanctification- Are You All In?

Matthew 22:37-39 NLT - 37 Jesus replied, "You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind." 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

Matthew 19:20-22 NLT - 20 "I've obeyed all these commandments," the young man replied. "What else must I do?" 21 Jesus told him, "If you want to be perfect, go and sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." 22 But when the young man heard this, he went away sad, for he had many possessions.

Sometimes we can mistakenly believe that our faith is merely about what we know, and what we understand. But it is not about the information we gather; it is about the transformation of our lives. We don't just "buy in" to God we must be "all in". Like the rich young ruler, we know we are supposed to love God with all our heart and our neighbor as ourselves, but do we find that true in how we live?

Consider the rhythms of a typical week in your life. What space does God occupy? What other "loves" in your life that are crowding Him out? Are there any spiritual practices God has been nudging you to incorporate but you haven't yet done so? Could that be one way to draw you closer and develop your love for God even deeper?

Holiness- How do we get there?

As God's Holy Spirit transforms us into the image of Jesus, we become increasingly holy. The word holy, *qadowsh* in the Old Testament, refers to something that was set apart for God; something pure and untainted. The more our lives are changed to reflect the character of Christ, the more holy we become. As the Holy Spirit does His work, the evidence of our pure and unmixed love is seen in the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-25)

Look at the fruit of the Spirit in Gal 5:22 -25. How would you put them in order of the most evident to the least evident in your life?