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# BASIC CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

## A Study of the Articles of Faith



Fort Washington Baptist Church  
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## BASIC CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE A Study of the Articles of Faith



### SESSION 50

#### X. Sanctification

We believe that **sanctification** is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are made partakers of his holiness; that it is a progressive work; that it is begun in regeneration; and that it is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the Sealer and Comforter, in the continual use of the appointed means, especially the Word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness, and prayer.<sup>1</sup>

#### According to Article IX:

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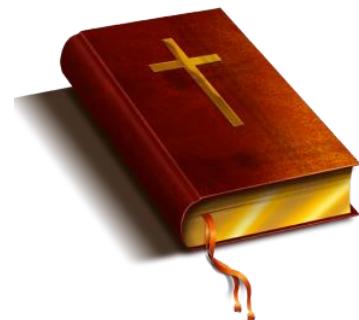
<sup>1</sup> [Articles-of-Faith.pdf \(nationalbaptist.com\)](https://nationalbaptist.com/Articles-of-Faith.pdf)

1. **Baptists believe** that the Scriptures teach that **sanctification** is the process by which, according to the **will of God**, we are made partakers of **His holiness**.
2. **Baptists believe** that the Scriptures teach that **sanctification** is a progressive work; that is is begun in regeneration.
3. **Baptists believe** that the Scriptures teach that **sanctification** is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the Sealer and Comforter.
4. **Baptists believe** that the Scriptures teach that **sanctification happens in the life of a believer** in the continual use of the appointed means, especially the Word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness, and prayer.

## The Purpose of this Study

In this study participants will learn about the Doctrine of Sanctification. We'll discuss what is **Sanctification**, the reason **Sanctification** is important in the life of a believer, and how **Sanctification** occurs in a believer's life.

## The Doctrine of Sanctification



**First: Baptists believe** that the Scriptures teach that **sanctification** is the process by which, according to the **will of God**, we are made partakers of **His holiness**.

In this first statement concerning **sanctification**, we learn three things:

- 1) Sanctification is a \_\_\_\_\_,
- 2) Sanctification is the \_\_\_\_\_, and
- 3) Sanctification enables us to be made \_\_\_\_\_.

## Sanctification is a Process



According to Millard J. Erickson, in his work *Christian Theology*, John Calvin, “believed in and taught total depravity.”<sup>2</sup>

“This means that the whole of human nature, including reason, has been adversely affected by the fall. Man in the natural state is unable to recognize and respond to divine truth. When regeneration takes place, however, the “spectacles of faith” vastly improve one’s spiritual eyesight.

Even after regeneration, however there is need for **continuing progressive growth, which we usually call sanctification**. In addition, the Holy Spirit works internally in the life of the believer, witnessing to the truth and countering the effects of sin so

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<sup>2</sup> Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1985; pg. 256

the inherent meaning of the Bible can be seen. This view of illumination seems most in harmony with the biblical teachings, and therefore is advocated here.”<sup>3</sup>

Humanity, because of sin, has been rendered unable to comprehend God, to come to God, or to choose God. If any will be saved, it’s because of God, because of His divine election! God comes to us! God chooses us! God reveals Himself to us! God gives us the ability to express faith! God opens our eyes to see our sin and the need for Christ, our Savior, causing us to confess our sin and turn to the Lord with faith! Through this faith and the power of the Holy Spirit, God changes our heart in regeneration and saves us from the wages of sin! However, this is not the end of what God desires to do with us in this life. It is the beginning. God desires for us to discern more truth from His Word and to sin less in life. This a progressive work, a continuing work in the life of the believer through the power of the Holy Spirit and is rightfully understood to be **sanctification**. Millard Erickson explained further,

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.,

“The Holy Spirit also works sanctification in the life of the believer. By sanctification is meant the **continued transformation of moral and spiritual character** so that the life of the believer actually comes to mirror the standing which he or she already has in God’s sight. While **justification** is an instantaneous act giving the individual a righteous standing before God, **sanctification is a process making the person holy or good.** Henceforth believers do not walk and live according to the flesh, their old nature, but according to the Spirit (**Rom. 8:4**), having their minds set on the Spirit (**Rom. 8:5**).

Christians are in the Spirit (**Rom. 8:9**) and the Spirit dwells in them, a truth that is repeated three times (**Rom. 8:9, 11**). As the Spirit indwells believers, He guides and leads them, and the deeds of the flesh, are according, put to death (**8:13**). All those who are thus “led by the Spirit are sons of God” (**8:14**). The Spirit is now at work giving them life, witnessing that they are sons rather than slaves, and thus supplying indisputable evidence that they are truly in Christ” (**8:15-17**).<sup>4</sup>

The process of sanctification continues throughout a believer’s life while in this life. The process begins at regeneration, at the time when one is born again. **Sanctification is the**

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 875

**work of the Holy Spirit in the believer enabling the believer grow and mature morally and spiritually.** Numerous passages highlight the work of the Spirit in a believer's life.

**I. The Spirit of God enables the believer to \_\_\_\_\_**

**(I Cor. 2:6-16).**

Yet we do speak **wisdom** among those who are mature; **a wisdom**, however, **not of this age** nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; **7** but we speak **God's wisdom** in a mystery, the **hidden wisdom** which God predestined before the ages to our glory; **8** *the wisdom* which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; **9** but just as it is written,

“**THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND *which* HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN, ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM.**”

**10** For to us **God revealed *them* through the Spirit**; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.

**11** For who among men knows the *thoughts* of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the ***thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.***

**12** Now we **have received**, not the spirit of the world, but **the Spirit** who is from God, so **that we may know** the things freely given to us by God,

**13** which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but **in those taught by the Spirit**, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words*.

**14** But a **natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God**, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

**15** But **he who is spiritual** appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one. **16** For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ.

**Point:** The Spirit of God does His work in believers, enabling believers **to know** and **comprehend** the things freely given to them by God through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. **This is sanctification...**growing spiritually to discern truth about God and Christ. These truths are **revealed** by the indwelling Holy Spirit, truths not ascertained through the flesh or human effort. The Holy Spirit enables believers to understand the thoughts of God...**not all in one instance**, but progressively in a believer's life.

### Let's Share



**Question:** Since the Holy Spirit enables us to understand God's mind and heart, can you give an example of a time that the Holy Spirit helped you to understand some truth about

God or about God's Word or God's will for your life or some action or reaction you should have in accordance with God's will?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**II. The Spirit of God enables believers to \_\_\_\_\_**  
\_\_\_\_\_**(Gal. 5:16-26).**

For you were called to freedom, brethren; only *do not turn* your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. **14** For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the *statement*, “YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.” **15** But if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.

**16** But I say, **walk by the Spirit, and you will not** carry out the desire of the flesh. **17** For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. **18** But **if you are led by the Spirit**, you are not under the Law.

**19** Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality,

**20** idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions,

**21** envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

**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. **24** Now 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 boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.**

**Point:**

The Spirit of God enables believers to live morally in the will of God. The Spirit of God leads us to live contrary to the desires of the flesh, producing fruits of the spirit in our life. **As opposed** to engaging in immorality, impurity, and sensuality, through the Spirit of God, we have **self-control** and can resist sexual sin.

**As opposed** to engaging in idolatry and sorcery – false worship, the Spirit of God enables us to walk in **faithfulness to God**.

**As opposed** to engaging in enmities-hatred, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions and envying in our relationship with others, the

Spirit of God enables us to walk in **love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and goodness** towards others.

**As opposed** to engaging in drunkenness and carousing – all night drinking from one place to another, and the misuse of drugs and other mind-altering substances, the Spirit of God enables us to have **self-control**.

**Point:**

The Spirit of God helps us to live morally in the will of God, to grow in His will, day by day. The Spirit of God gives us the strength to make changes in line with the will of God in our personal life, spiritual life, and in our relationship with others. This is an ongoing process of change and growth that begins at regeneration and continues for as long as we are on this side of heaven. **This is Sanctification.**

## Discussion Question



**Question:** The Spirit of God enables believers to live morally in the will of God. While this is true, some believers struggle to live morally in the will of God – still engaging in some sexual sin, in factions, in disputes, having outbursts of anger and jealousy, engaging in the use of mind-altering substances in an unhealthy way, not having any joy or peace or kindness or self-control. What are some reasons you think Holy Spirit filled believers struggle to allow the fruits of the Spirit to be seen in their life?

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