Sanctification

The Main Point: Sanctification is the process by which God makes us holy. The confusing thing is knowing what is God’s part in the process, and what is ours. That is the goal and objective in this lesson: to understand our role and God’s role in sanctification. It is a partnership, where roles need clarifying.

**Ask**: Have you ever heard of sanctification? What do you think it means?

1. To sanctify means to set apart to God, or to make holy. Sanctification is the process of us being made holy.

**Ask**: What do you think God’s role is in your spiritual growth? What do you think your role is?

1. Most likely, your disciple will not have a robust answer for this question. If they do, great! If not, what a great time to dive into scripture to see what God says!

**Read**: Philippians 2:12-13 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed - not only in my presence, but no much more in my absence - continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

**Ask**: According to this passage, what is God’s job in your spiritual growth?

1. God’s job is to “work in us to will and to act according to His good purposes.” Try to get your disciple to explain what they think this really means.

**Follow up**: In what ways have you seen God do this in your life? or How have you seen God change your attitudes and desires?

**Ask**: Is there anything we can do in this sanctification process to better experience God’s

 direction and leading in our attitudes and desires?

1. Yes.

**Ask**: What things can we do or what things are you doing to cultivate God’s presence and

 influence in your life?

1. Tons of things. But will be answered more in depth after the illustration.

**Illustrate**: Imagine a stereotypical college party. Picture its atmosphere. It's dark, loud music, late at night, maybe dancing, drinking, potentially drugs, suggestive clothing. All of those things help to create an atmosphere conducive to sin. The atmosphere *increases* sin’s influence. It makes us more susceptible to sin and bad choices. In the same way, we set an atmosphere for our hearts and minds day by day. This determines the degree of influence that God has over our “willing and acting according to His good purpose”. The atmosphere of our hearts and minds aids, or mitigates, the Holy Spirit’s influence.

**Ask**: What are some of those things that we can do to create the right atmosphere in our heart?

1. Plenty of right answers. Thanksgiving, giving thanks to God throughout the day; time in prayer, time in scripture, listening to or singing Christian music; Christian fellowship, engaging in ministry, doing evangelism or other activities that help you to actively rely on God.

**Note**: An important thing to see here is not that we do all these things *for* God, but so that we can *experience* God’s *presence* and increase his influence in our lives.

All the way back to Philippians 2:12-13

**Ask**: What is our part in this passage? What does that mean?

1. Working out our salvation. Paul is essentially saying make good choices. In so doing, you take what God is doing “willing and acting according to His good purpose” and form it into habit. Habits create our character.

**Some questions you could ask here**: What kind of choices have you made since becoming a Christian? In what ways have you begun to see these choices become habits? Where do you feel you need to make consistent good choices?

*It could be helpful for you to share some victories* (For instance the choice to pray regularly during the day, or the choice to start every morning in the Word, or the choice to faithfully attend Cru and Church as opportunities to engage in Christian fellowship).

**Other areas to make godly choices**: Choosing to confess sin to a fellow believer, choosing to avoid sin, choosing to avoid tempting situations, choosing to get good sleep and exercise so as to be less vulnerable to spiritual attacks, choosing to be involved in fellowship and ministry. Good choices go beyond simply saying no to sin.

**Ask**: Even though making these choices is our responsibility, how does God help us to make good choices?

1. God can protect us at times from temptation (Matt 6:13), empower us (1 Corinthians 10:13), provide helpful relationships (Prov. 18:24), and in various other ways come alongside us and help us to make good choices that lead to godly character.

**Summary**: Our spiritual growth is a partnership. God works in us to will and to act, and we, for our part, cultivate His presence, which makes His influence more powerful, and clear. We also make right choices which confirm into our character what God is doing in us. God on His part, empowers and encourages us in these choices.