

Definitive Sanctification and Adoption

I. Definitive Sanctification

- When the Spirit indwells us, we become “in Christ.” The Spirit unites us to Jesus and gives us extraordinary blessings.
 - The treasury of all saving benefits is not deposited with anyone on earth, but solely in Jesus Christ. Christ gives these benefits through his holy Spirit, keeping none for himself (Bavinck).
- One of the greatest benefits is definitive sanctification: God the Holy Spirit overcomes the power of sin in our hearts and makes us his holy servants, who are able to obey.
 - Progressive sanctification (which we’ll talk about next week) is about us increasing in holiness throughout our lives. But it all starts with definitive sanctification, when God changes what is the dominant power in our lives: no longer sin, but the Spirit.
- Scriptures that speak of sanctification as a one-off event:
 - Ezek 36:25–26: notice how cleansing from our idols is joined to the new heart.
 - 1 Cor 6:11: “you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”
 - 1 Cor 1:2: “To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints...”
 - 1 Pet 1:1-2: “To those who are elect exiles of the dispersion ... in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood.”
 - Heb 10:22: “... let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, *with our hearts sprinkled clean* from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.”
 - See also 2 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 2:21; Tit 3:5
- Other scriptural names for definitive sanctification:
 - Writing the law on our hearts (Jer 31:33–34)
 - Circumcision of the heart (Deut 30:6; Rom 2:29)
 - Freedom:
 - Rom 8:2: we are set from the law of sin and death.
 - 2 Cor 3:18: where the Spirit is, there is freedom (to obey)
 - Gal 5:18: no longer under law (i.e., the old covenant and its inability to give us power to obey).
 - Purification: we have been purified in your conscience from dead works to serve the living God (Heb 9:14).
- Dimensions of our definitive sanctification:
 1. We are now objectively holy, set apart as God’s unique people: 1 Pet 2:9; 39x Paul uses the word “saints” (literally, “holy ones”) to describe the church. If the Holy Spirit is in you, *you* are holy. Not perfect in our love for God, but distinguished from the world as an object of God’s love.
 2. There is a decisive breach with sin and its power over us (Murray).
 - We are no longer in the service of sin as slaves (Rom 6:18)
 - “The old self has been crucified” (Rom 6:6).
 - We are no longer “in the flesh.” (i.e., in the old creation’s sin nature) (Rom 8:9).

3. We have received an awesome influx of spiritual power.
 - We have the immeasurable power which God exercised when he raised Christ from the dead *presently at work in us* (Eph 1:19–20; cf. Eph 3:20).
 - We are strong and have overcome the evil one (1 John 2:13–14).
4. The Spirit's renewal affects our whole self: our intellect (1 Cor 2:14–15; 2 Cor 4:6; Eph 1:18; Col 3:10); our will (Ps 110:3; Phil 2:13; 2 Thess 3:5; Heb 13:21); our feelings/emotions (Ps 42:1–2; Matt 5:4; 1 Pet 1:8) (Berkhof)
 - Regeneration is as all-pervasive as depravity (Ferguson).
 - Result: we do not need to keep on sinning (1 Cor 10:13; 1 Pet 4:3).
- This is all by union with Christ:
 - Rom 6:9 “We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him.”
 - For a time, Jesus was subject to the power of death (while he was dead). But in his resurrection, that power has been forever broken. We now share in Jesus' victory over sin and death.
- Application questions:
 - How would you respond to the believer who says, “I cannot repent” or “I'm waiting for God to change me” or “I'll never change”?
 - Or, how should you think about a fellow Christian who is caught in sin?

II. Adoption

- The Spirit brings many other objective benefits when he unites us to Christ. Another is our adoption:
- Rom 8:14–15: “all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’” (see also Gal 4:6)
- By the Spirit, we now enjoy all the blessings of adoption:
 - We are the object of God's special care (1 Pet 5:7).
 - We have access to his throne and can approach him as our father with our requests (Rom 5:2; Eph 2:18; Phil 4:6).
 - We can enter God's presence boldly (Eph 3:12).
 - Our Father loves to hear our requests (Matt 7:11).
 - Our Father loves us so much that he will certainly discipline us as his child (Heb 12:5–10).
 - We now have innumerable brothers and sisters and mothers and fathers in the family of God (Phil 4:1).
- Application question: do you relate to God in the confidence of a beloved child, or in the fear of a guilty slave?