

50 POSITIONAL TRUTHS

#25: Sanctified

Positional sanctification and experiential sanctification must always be kept separate and distinct. Generally speaking, both the doctrines of positional sanctification and experiential sanctification suffer much from misunderstanding. One of the most important keys to a healthy spiritual life is balance in the doctrinal life. A common error, even in doctrinal circles, is for believers to get a hold of one truth and proceed to see all revealed truth in the line of that one doctrine—*this always leads to serious error*. Some Christians, although very few, so emphasize positional sanctification that they give little thought to experiential sanctification. Others, on the other hand, so emphasize some experiential sanctification that it becomes the basis for their eternal security. There are even those who get a hold of one sanctification truth that becomes the end-all and the tunnel for which they see all of the Christian life. This is very dangerous.

To understand sanctification—positional or experiential—necessitates understanding the meaning of the words used for sanctification in the Bible. Terms for sanctification are used about 106 times in the Old Testament and 31 times in the New. The basic idea is “to set apart.” It indicates a separateness of position and relationship. Its primary meaning has nothing to do with being saintly, sinless, holy, or pure. It never denotes the *quality* inherent in any person. The concept pure and simple means to be set apart. The idea here is that the believer is set apart *unto* God. A result of this set-apartness will include a certain holiness due to separation from evil. But we must remember the word itself *emphasizes being set apart to Holy God*. In the Bible both things and people are set apart—of course, things cannot be sinless or have virtue. “Sanctified” just means set apart to God, it does not include any idea of what is commonly viewed as sinlessness or holiness. Concepts of holiness are secondary. It is because we are *separated unto God* that purity and holiness is possible. We are holy because we are connected to Him not because of what we are or do. It is not so much what we are separated from but to Whom we are separated. It is connection with God, both positionally and experientially (fellowship) that is the issue—never personal piety.

The believer’s sanctification comes from God through various agencies: 1) Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. 1:2, 30); 2) the death of Jesus Christ, Heb. 13:12; 3) the Word of God, John 17:17; 4) the Holy Spirit, 2 Thess. 2:13; 5) and faith, Acts 26:18.

Experiential sanctification takes place when we are in fellowship with God. Positional sanctification takes place the moment we believe in Jesus Christ. Every believer, at the moment of salvation, is positionally set apart to God and thus becomes a saint regardless of the believer’s experiential status. Because of positional truth, every believer is now said to be sanctified positionally, holy and by so much a saint before God. By their position, all Christians are called “holy brethren” and “saints.” They have all been “sanctified [set apart] through the offering of the body of Jesus once for all” (Heb. 10:10), and are new men, women, and children by reason of now being “created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph. 4:24). In his position in Christ the Christian stands righteous and accepted before God forever. Positional truth has absolutely

nothing to with any merit in the believer. All he does in trust in Christ for salvation and he is positionally set apart to God for a new plan, new power, and a new destiny. That's grace! This must never be confused with experiential sanctification. Even though the Corinthians were experientially carnal, in fact in reversionism, they were nonetheless positionally sanctified *unto God* permanently.

Positional truth #25: Sanctified.

1 Corinthians 1:30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,

1 Corinthians 6:11 And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.

Existing by Esse,

Pastor Don