

The Image and Glory of God Part 4

Small Group Questions ([audio here](#))¹

I. Define the following

- a. **Regeneration.** *God imparts new life to us through the Holy Spirit.*
- b. **Justification.** *God gives us right legal standing before Him.*
- c. **Sanctification.** *The progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and more like Christ in our every day lives. Growth in holiness or Christ likeness.*

2. Do you view your sanctification (growth in Christ likeness) as an event in time or a process that occurs for the rest of your life? If you view it as a process, honestly evaluate where you think you are in the process.

Sanctification is a progressive work that begins at regeneration (Titus 3:5; 1 John 3:9; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Acts 20:32; Romans 6:11-14, 17-18), increases throughout our lives (Romans 6:11-13, 18-19; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Philippians 3:9-14; Colossians 3:10; Hebrews 12:1, 14; James 1:22; 1 Peter 1:15) and is completed upon our death or the second coming of Christ (Romans 6:12-13, 1 John 1:8; Hebrews 12:23; Revelation 21:27; 2 Corinthians 7:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; 1 Corinthians 15:23, 49; Philippians 3:21); it is never completed in this life (Matthew 5:48, 6:12-13; Romans 6:11-14; 2 Corinthians 7:1; 1 Timothy 4:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; James 3:2; 1 John 1:8, 3:6, 9; 1 Kings 8:46; Proverbs 20:9; Ecclesiastes 7:20; Isaiah 6:5; Job 42:5-6).

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3. According to Romans 6:14, “sin will have no dominion over you” (Romans 6:14 ESV), why then do we still struggle with sin?

When the allies secured of Normandy in WWII, it was only a matter of time before the war was over. This was such a tactical and strategic location that allowed the allies to aggressively retake France and push into Germany. But, there were still battles to fight. In the same sense, we should view Romans 6. The war is over, it just a matter of time, but we must still submit to God and battle against sin in our lives.

4. What are the realities of our state and what does God call us to according to the passages below?
- a. **Romans 6:11 & 18.** *We are dead to sin (set free from its previously unbreakable hold on our lives) and alive to God. This happens at regeneration; the war is over, the victory is ours - now let's fight!*

- b. Romans 6:12. *Don't let sin reign in your bodies or you will obey its passions. The bible commands us to fight against sin and to aggressively eradicate it from our lives. We have a guarantee of victory AND a command to fight. We are going to win, so don't give up - fight!*
 - c. Romans 6:13 & 19. *Don't obey sin, pursue righteousness. We must use the same energy, talent, skill, emotion that we once used to chase sin to now chase after godliness. Remember how you used to chase your sin: stayed up late chasing sin, spent money on sin, spent time thinking about sin. With the same zeal and fervor that you used to chase sin, now chase Jesus.*
 - d. Romans 6:14. *The more that we chase Jesus and His righteousness, the more we will understand the reality that sin has no dominion over us.*
 - e. Romans 6:16. *Sin, just like righteousness, has a progressive nature to it. No one starts with the most deplorable, depraved of sins. It started in a seemingly benign way. Thoughts not held captive which leads to actions that aren't held captive, which leads to more actions, which leads to more, and before you know it you are in a place that you never would have imagined being; Sin begets sin, righteousness begets righteousness. Illustrations: Hard porn, dark, deeper and more wicked than you can fathom. We must make preemptive strikes! Start with the wicked, sinful thoughts. Don't wait for it to come to fruition. Sin begets sin and it goes deeper and deeper and deeper.*
 - f. Romans 6:17. *True believers have a new heart (nature) that desires righteousness and hates sin and causes us to war against it. This is the engine that drives transformation.*
5. What are your thoughts regarding sanctification from these verses?
- a. 2 Corinthians 3:18. *"And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit." (2 Corinthians 3:18 ESV). The more we see Jesus, the more we chase him, the more we behold him as glorious, the more sanctification happens. We are changed from one degree of glory to the next.*
 - b. Philippians 3:13-14. *"Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:13-14 ESV). When we first came to Jesus, we began to chase Him - talking about Him, experiencing Him, and enjoying Him. But then we tend to hear moral messages that have biblical merit - don't do this, do this. And then we turn from chasing and pursuing Christ to trying to manage our behavior. Stop this, stop that, do this. No longer is righteousness begetting righteousness into sanctification, now we are just trying to control the behavior and master the sins that we are stuck in. There is a huge difference! The more you press in to Christ, the more these things lose power over you, but when you try so hard to not do wrong and to do right you fail. This is law, which is what the cross set us free from - this is contrary to the gospel. Don't get stuck in the right and wrong trap. It will derail*

your faith and retard your growth.

- c. Hebrews 12:1. *“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,” (Hebrews 12:1 ESV). Not just sin, anything that hinders. Let us throw off anything that robs of us of our affection and desire for Jesus Christ - sports, politics, news, the next business deal, working out, technology, hobbies, the next project, etc. The majority of things that rob affection for Jesus Christ are morally neutral, not morally wrong. Following sports too closely, watching too much tv, spending too much time online. What robs you of your passion to know and chase Jesus Christ?*
- d. 1 Timothy 4:7-8. *“Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.” (1 Timothy 4:7-8 ESV). - Train yourself for godliness. This is the Greek word for sweat. it involves discipline and work.*
- e. Colossians 4:12. *“always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.” (Colossians 4:12 ESV). - Labor in prayer. Prayer can be labor.*
- f. 1 Corinthians 9:27. *“But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.” (1 Corinthians 9:27 ESV). Beat your body and make it your slave; train yourself for godliness.*

6. Is your faith personal and private or do you have men that you are regularly connecting with around subjects of faith (see Matthew 18:15-20 & 1 Corinthians 12:12-27)?

We need a band of brothers to walk this walk. We need others to preempt our sinful propensities; we need brothers to go to when the thoughts begin to enter our minds that lead to sin. We need others to be the presence of Christ. We need the body of Christ. Our faith is personal, but is not private. Preemptive strikes, not after it happens. Do you have guys that help you battle sin? Accountability works when you engage before it happens. The power of Christ is present when you aren't so arrogant as to think you've got things under control on your own. Don't be a loner. I'm angry, I'm feeling apathetic, I'm _____; if I don't cut it off now then it is going to lead to something else. It takes humility to bear it all and say “here's where I am.” Don't be fine - don't be fine afterwards, be preemptive before it happens! Men who struggle with secret sins have privatized their sins and when they fall, they might tell some guys afterwards. That is not humility or accountability.

7. The Bible encourages us to be watchful or alert, what is it telling us to do (see Matthew 24:42-43, 25:13; Mark 13:34-35, 37; Luke 12:37; Acts 20:31; 1 Corinthians 16:13; Colossians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:6, 1 Peter 5:8)?

This is talking about knowing where it is coming from and building defenses. We should be well aware of what haunts us and build barriers around those things. We should know our weaknesses and train them out. Watch the life of your mind - what fantasies are you feeding? Know your weaknesses and be honest about them. Seek out help. We must be alert and engaged, having a consciousness of the eternal things that are to come.

8. What type of actions does the bible call us to in dealing with sins in our lives (See Colossians 3:1-17; Matthew 5:27-30, 18:7-9; Mark 9:43-49)?

We are called to murder the sins in our lives. These passages reveal an aggressiveness with which we should be battling our sin. Are you comfortable with your sin? Colossians 3 tells us to put our sin to death - we are to kill it. It is unfortunate, that we are all too often contented to manage our sins - walking them like they are a pet. What we don't realize is that they will devour us, like keeping a pet tiger on a leash and being surprised that it would turn on us and attack us.

9. Hebrews 12:1 tells us to "throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles," what can hinder our pursuit of Christ other than sin?

Not just sin, anything that hinders. Let us throw off anything that robs of us of our affection and desire for Jesus Christ - sports, politics, news, the next business deal, working out, technology, hobbies, the next project, etc. The majority of things that rob affection for Jesus Christ are morally neutral, not morally wrong. Following sports too closely, watching too much tv, spending too much time online. What robs you of your passion to know and chase Jesus Christ? We have a tendency to make good things God things, ultimate things.

10. What things do you dwell upon, fantasize about? Are these eternal and ultimate or are they temporal and trivial?

Dwell on realities at the deepest levels. Set your minds on things above. We still live in the broken, temporary, but we need to strive to dwell on things to come. People who are unmoved or apathetic toward God or His Word have filled their thoughts, lives and minds with the trivial. So much so that anything of true depth (or richness) is too much for them, it's just easier to watch TV. Do you know more about your favorite sports team, hobby or trend than you do about God? You can follow sports, but if you are following a thousand trivial things at the expense of ultimate reality then you will always struggle spiritually; trivial, breeds trivial until you lack the ability to see anything but kindergarden spirituality. You are going to have to make some changes and give up some of the things that keep you trivial. You miss out on ultimate reality in work, marriage, family, etc because you are stuck in stupid, trivial things. Deep calls to deep, there are times to turn off the radio in your car. You're going to have to carve out some time to get alone with God and meditate on the scriptures - this is not hard, but it does require discipline.

11. Name one thing that you enjoy that is not “morally wrong,” but tends to occupy too much of your time, energy and effort (at least in your mind)? Discuss how this thing can tend to produce competing affections with Christ.

This can be morally neutral or even moral. Spend time thinking deeply about this. There are a million things that tug and pull at our hearts - we have to be proactive to reduce and eliminate some of these. Even good things can produce competing affections in our hearts.

12. What does your devotional life look like? Is it a regular part of your routine?

We have to be intentional about setting your mind on things above. If we aren't intentional and disciplined in our pursuit of Christ then other things will fill our time and lives.

13. Why did God call you to Himself (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24)?

“Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.” (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 ESV). He who began the work is faithful to complete it. He called, he rescued, He saved you - HE IS FAITHFUL TO COMPLETE THE WORK!

14. How do these verses encourage you in your sanctification process? (1 Thessalonians 4:7; 2 Timothy 1:9; Ephesians 1:3-4, 5:25-26; Romans 8:29-30; 2 Thessalonians 2:13)?

God has called us to holiness, to sanctification. This is God's purpose in calling you to sanctify you to holiness. God won't fail, quit feeling sorry for yourself. Hear this personally today. He called you. He is sanctifying you. God is for you! This is why He called you! This is why He saved you! Don't loose heart, today is all you need to be concerned about today - righteousness begets righteousness. Let's be obedient today.

15. According to Philippians 1:6, Who began the work in you? Who will bring it to completion? How does this encourage you?

God began the work, He will complete it. Take heart, the war is won - now fight!

Recommended Resources:

Colossians, Part 13 ([here](#))

¹http://fm.thevillagechurch.net/resource_files/audio/200808280630HWC21ATAAB_MattChandler_MBS2008bPt4-TheImageAndGloryOfGod.mp3