

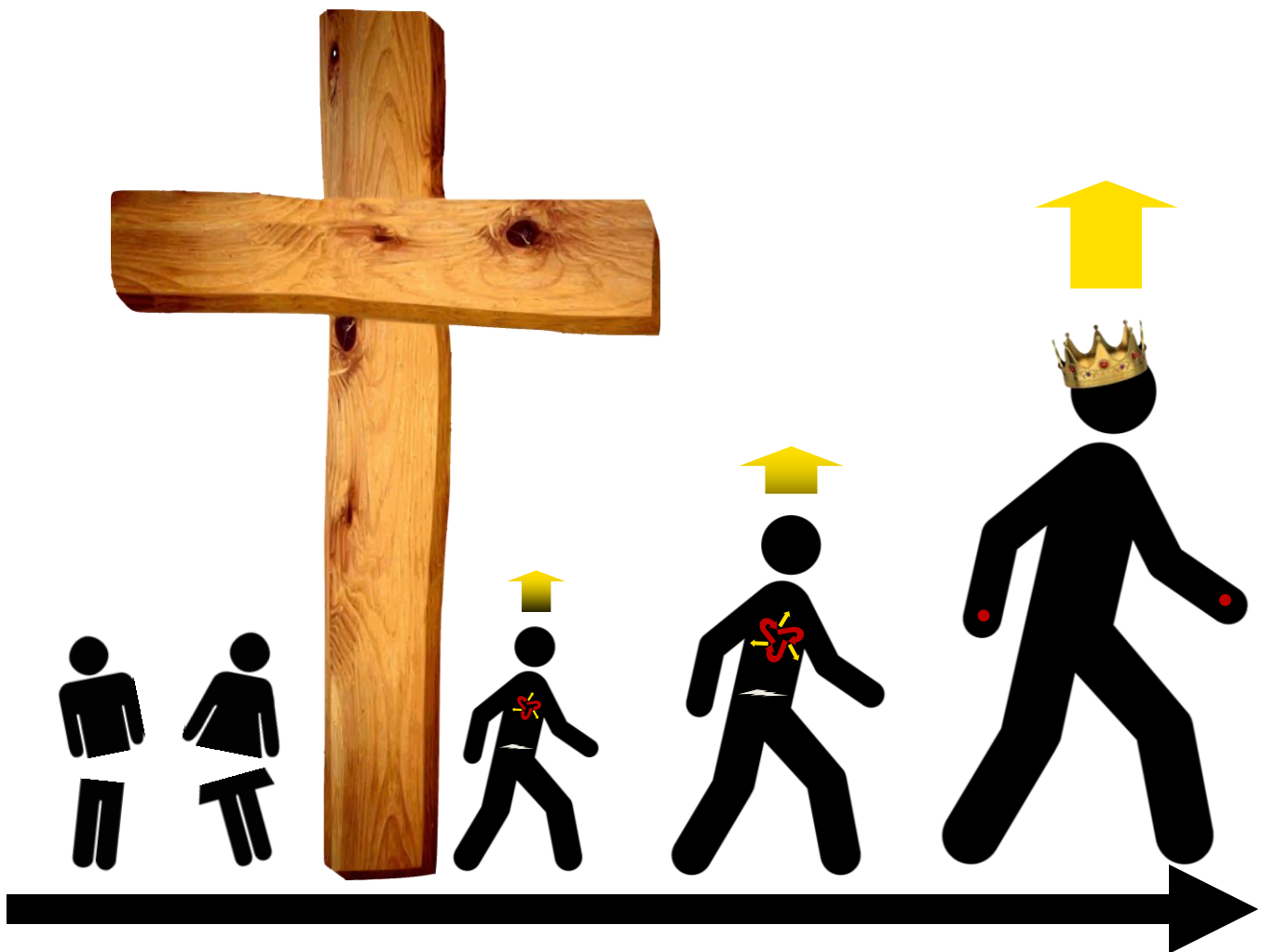
PICTURE THIS!

The Big Picture of Our Faith in Pictures!

*A study for all ages @ Gorrie Bible Fellowship!
September – December 2016*

Week #8 - Sanctification

Picture It!



Caption It!

Sanctification is the ongoing process of growth in which God transforms saved sinners into the likeness of Jesus and draws them more and more into 'the dance' of His being.

Save It!

Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. Philippians 1:6

Picture It!

1. The Meaning of Sanctification

- a. The word 'sanctification' means to set something apart or to make something holy. This word is used in at least two ways in the Bible:
 - i. Most often the Bible speaks of sanctification as something that was accomplished, once and for all, for every believer when they were saved. In other words, because of the cross of Jesus, salvation 'sanctifies' every person who repents and trusts in Jesus Christ. They are no longer viewed by God as sinners, but as saints (1 Cor. 1:2, 6:11).
 - ii. However the Bible also describes sanctification as a process of transformation that occurs over time. An example can be seen in 1 Thessalonians 5:23: *May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Here Paul is writing to believers who were already sanctified in the first sense, but in this verse he is expressing his desire for them to be sanctified in an increasing and ongoing way. This means that sanctification is also a way of describing the ongoing process of growth in the Christian life.

2. The Process of Sanctification

- a. As we have seen, every human being (other than Jesus) is broken by sin. Sin is **failed conduct** but it is also a **fallen condition**. Notice the arrow along the bottom of the sanctification picture. This arrow reminds us that everyone is on a spiritual journey. At salvation, which is represented in the picture by the cross, sinners are forgiven and the power of sin is defeated in their lives, but that doesn't mean that the struggle with sin is over. Followers of Jesus find that a battle wages within them between their old sinful nature (notice the scars of former brokenness in the picture) and the Holy Spirit who now lives within them (Galatians 5:16). Sanctification is the ongoing aspect of salvation whereby sin has less and less hold on a believer and the Spirit has more and more. It does not

make a believer more 'saved' in their standing before God, but it does make the reality of their salvation more apparent as they grow and mature in their faith day by day.

- b. The ultimate goal of sanctification is that every true believer will be brought into the full likeness of the character of Christ (Romans 8:29). This will ultimately take place when we stand before Christ in eternity (1 John 3:2), but God intends that this process would be in full swing as believers live out their lives on earth.

3. How Believers are Sanctified

- a. Since sanctification is an aspect of salvation, it is very much a work of God in the believer's life. As our memory verse for this week says, "*he [God] who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion...*" (Philippians 1:6).
- b. Just as God brings about salvation through the illuminating truth of His Word (John 17:17) and through the work of the Holy Spirit (John 6:63), the process of sanctification is also produced in the believer through the Word of God and the Spirit of God.
- c. Sanctification is so much a work of God that all the glory for any good in a believer's life goes to God and God alone! (1 Corinthians 15:10).
- d. As we have seen, a believer experiences salvation through repentance and faith. It is important to remember that repentance and faith are not a person's contribution to salvation, but a humble surrendering to the God who alone can save. Just as repentance and faith are necessary for a sinner to be saved, they are also necessary for the process of sanctification. Believers must continually repent of sin and trust God to continue His work in them, not because they need to be saved again, but because they need to be transformed into the image of Christ.

4. The Call to Sanctification

- a. The Bible uses several metaphors to describe the process of sanctification. Notice in each metaphor that God is the source and that repentance and faith are required by the believer.

- i. **Discipleship** (Matthew 28:18-20): The Great Commission demonstrates that Christianity is a discipleship faith. True believers are followers of Jesus. This means that Jesus is the pattern; the source of truth and life. Notice in the picture how the believers to the right of the cross are following Jesus. Followers of Jesus must repent, turning from their old way of life and trusting the One they now follow.
- ii. **Working Out Your Salvation** (Philippians 2:12-13): The Bible calls us to work out what God has worked in. Like miners who dig up precious metals that God has placed in the earth, believers live out the reality of salvation that God has produced in them. They do this by dying to self and becoming channels of faith, allowing the beauty of Christ to flow through them.
- iii. **Abiding in the Vine** (John 15:1-8): Jesus described true believers like branches on a grape vine. They can only produce the fruit of salvation when they recognize that they are not the life source. Instead they cling tightly to Christ, trusting Him to be the source of life and godly character.
- iv. **Put on the New Man** (Ephesians 4:22-23): Believers are called to recognize that, through salvation, God has produced a new creation in them. They must reject the old version of themselves and, by faith, live out the reality of the new identity that God has given them.
- v. **Changing Masters** (Romans 6:16-22): Before salvation sin actually rules over you like a slave-master, but through salvation the power and authority of sin has been overthrown in our lives. Now we have a choice to make. Who will be our master? God provides His Word, His Spirit and His righteousness to guide us. We must repent from following our old master and show our faith in God through obedience.
- vi. **Living Out Your Identity** (Ephesians 5:8): Much of the New Testament provides a new definition for followers of Jesus and urges us to live, not based on what we used to be, but based on

who we are in Christ. God provides us with our new name and identity. We repent of our old way of life and trust that God's new definition of us is true. The more we embrace our God given identity by faith, the more we will live like it!

- vii. **Walking in the Spirit** (Galatians 5:16-25): Believers have been given the incredible resource of the Holy Spirit, the very presence of God within us. But believers only live in the power of this life-giving resource when they repent of walking to the beat of their own drum and choose to "keep in step with the Spirit" by faith.

Panorama!

God created people in His image. Although sin destroyed their ability to reflect His glory God had a plan to save and restore all who would repent and trust in Him. Salvation is not just God's way of forgiving sinners, it is also His means of transforming sinners into the very likeness and glory of Jesus and drawing them back into 'the dance' of His being.

Selfie!

Though my life has been thoroughly infected by sin, through salvation I can be fully restored into the image of God. God's end goal for me is to be like Jesus. I will be increasingly transformed into the likeness of Jesus as I die to my old self and yield myself to the life of Jesus within me.

Instagram!

If we are honest, we all have deep inadequacies and brokenness. We are not the people that others want us to be. We are not the people that we want ourselves to be! But we can be the people that God created us to be! We can become like the greatest person who ever lived; Jesus! But first we must abandon our self-reliance and trust God.

Key Story!

Saul's conversion – Acts 9:1-19

- From Saul to Paul
- From murderer to martyr

Key Questions!

1. Why is it so important for believers to understand that in one sense, sanctification has already been accomplished?
2. Why is it so important to understand that sanctification is an ongoing process in the Christian life?
3. Why do the two followers of Jesus (to the right of the cross in the picture) have scars where they once were broken? Why is the glory arrow above them not perfectly golden?
4. Why do you think the two followers of Jesus in the sanctification picture are not the same size?
5. What part does God play in the process of sanctification in a believer?
6. What part does the believer play in their sanctification?
7. Which metaphor of sanctification is most meaningful for you? Why?
8. What stage are you at in your spiritual journey? Is there anything holding you back from moving forward? If so, what is it?
9. What could you be doing to move forward in your journey toward Christ-likeness?