

Living Differently from the World By Rick Ezell

“Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. . . For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified” (John 17:17, 19 NIV)

Believers in Christ do not live like the world. Jesus introduces the concept of sanctification. There are four aspects to the word *sanctify* that we need to understand.

Power. Power is embodied in a sanctified life. The word *sanctify*, or in some translations *consecrate*, comes from the Greek word *hagios*, usually translated holy. Its basic meaning is different or separate. To be sanctified means to be holy and set apart, completely dedicated to God, even while surrounded by a godless and hostile world.

Process. Once we understand the power of different life, next we need to understand the process of that gets us there. Sanctification refers to the process of being set apart or dedicated to God. It is the process of spiritual maturity and the corresponding growth in believers' lives to where they become saints. It goes without saying that the sanctified person stands in sharp contrast with the world as he does not live like the world.

Pathway. In the process, the main tool to bring about sanctification is the Bible—Gods' Holy Word. Therefore, we can call the Bible the pathway to sanctification. True sanctification comes through the ministry of the Word of God in our lives. The Bible is the homing beacon that draws us continually back into right relationship with God. And, when we step outside the boundaries that God has established the Bible becomes the cleansing agent of our lives, removing the sin and stain of a dirty world while pointing us to the life that is pleasing and honoring to God. The Bible is the line of defense. The only way to stay pure and not fold under the pressure of the surrounding world is by being conversant in and subject to God's written revelation. The Bible becomes the essential GPS system for direction and for survival in a hostile world. We must read it, understand it, apply it, and then do what it says. The Word must so inundate our lives that we will know instinctively not only the right thing to do but the upright thing to do at all time.

The Word is the pathway to spiritual power. Reading the Bible is not optional for believers who desire not to live like the world. When we follow the path: God's workers, who are full of God's Word, do God's work in the world. Interestingly, every time we read, study, meditate, and most importantly, appropriate God's Word we are answering the prayer of Jesus.

Practice. Sanctification is practical holy living to the glory of God. Sanctification is not for our personal fulfillment or benefit alone. We chose not to be like the world not only for God's sake; but for man's sake, too. We are set apart for a special task. We are separated from the world to be of service to the world. A Christianity that does not come down from the mountain top to live in the real world is a weak Christianity. Prayer that is isolated from the hurts, pains, and fears of this world is impotent. God sets us apart to, to send us out, to serve other people.

As Jesus works on our attitudes, our thoughts, our mindset, eventually we begin to look at the people around us differently. We see ways we can help; we can serve; we can assist. We become the hands of Jesus to a hurting world; the voice of God to people who are desperate for hope; the feet of God bring the good news of salvation.

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