

*This midweek study will explore the doctrine of sanctification. Use the following main points, Scriptures, teaching/discussion ideas, and questions to help students gain a better understanding of the essential doctrine for this session.*

#### Essential Doctrine: Sanctification

After we are justified by faith—declared to be in right standing with God through the righteousness of Christ—we undergo a lifetime of sanctification, meaning we are continually made more like Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:16-26; 2 Thess. 2:13). Scripture speaks of sanctification as a present position (we have already been sanctified) and as a continuing process. Sanctification affects the whole person, transforming the heart, mind, and character to reflect Jesus.

#### 1 Sanctification literally means to be set apart

(2 Cor. 6:17; Isa. 52:11; Lev. 19:19; Rev. 18:4).

- ▶ What do you think when you hear the term sanctification?
- ▶ The original sense of sanctification might also be translated consecration (Josh. 3:5). What does it mean to consecrate something?

#### Read Isaiah 52:11 and 2 Corinthians 6:17.

- ▶ What does God want His people to do here? Why do you think Paul chose to cite the verse from Isaiah? Do you see any significance to Paul using a command originally for the people of Israel with reference to the Corinthians?

#### Read Leviticus 19:19.

- ▶ These commands might seem a bit odd. What purpose might God have behind giving them to Israel? How do they symbolize the way Israel is to be separate (you might say consecrated or sanctified) from the other nations?

#### Read Revelation 18:4.

- ▶ How should we be set apart in our leisure? Work? Schools? Family relations? Romantic relations? Attitudes?

#### 2 Sanctification is not a linear growth (Gal. 2:11-14; 5:17).

- ▶ Have you ever trained for a big event? Like a marathon, or a big hiking trip, or a big test? How did you do it? Was your progression smooth?
- ▶ Think about your growth in the Christian life. If we charted it, what would it look like? Has it been smooth? Easy? Gradual?

#### Read Galatians 2:11-14.

- ▶ Who was the main person doing wrong in these verses? What, particularly, was he doing wrong?
- ▶ Are you surprised that Peter messed up? Why or why not?
- ▶ At the time, what would Peter's position have been within the church? If he backslid in his sanctification, what is the implication for us?
- ▶ Should we be content with backsliding?

#### Read Galatians 5:17.

- ▶ How did Paul describe the Christian life here? In a war, are there temporary defeats as well as victories? What do we do after these defeats?

#### 3 Sanctification means becoming more like Christ, especially in our capacity for greater joy (John 15:11; Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18).

- ▶ Imagine someone asking you, "Why would I want to be sanctified if I'm already going to heaven?" What would you say?

#### Read Romans 8:29.

- ▶ What is the ultimate purpose of our Christian growth?
- ▶ Is being like Jesus an appealing idea or a boring one? Why?
- ▶ Have you ever had to work really hard for something that brought you joy? For example, have you ever accomplished a goal and felt terrific about it? Or do you enjoy sports more because you're trained in it or music more because you yourself are a musician?
- ▶ How do these worked-for joys compare to "easy" joys like a quick snack?

#### Read John 15:11.

- ▶ What is Jesus' goal for us in our sanctification?
- ▶ How is the joy of sanctification like the worked-for joys we discussed a moment ago? Is sanctification ultimately boring or exciting?

#### Read 2 Corinthians 3:18.

- ▶ How do we best become like Jesus? What implications does this verse hold for our lifestyle now?

#### WRAP IT UP

- ▶ How has this lesson inspired you to pursue holiness?