Sanctification

We Believe - 3.1.26

Personal Weekly Study Guide

Overview

This week's message introduced one of the most important and personal doctrines in the Christian life: sanctification. It's the slow, Spirit-led process of becoming holy — of being shaped from the inside out into the image of Jesus. It starts the moment you're born again, and it doesn't stop until you step into eternity. Take a few minutes each day to read, reflect, and respond.

A Quick Encouragement

This is not a study to rush through. Sanctification is a topic that has a way of surfacing things we'd rather not look at — old patterns, stubborn habits, areas where we feel stuck. Resist the urge to skip past the uncomfortable moments. Those are often the places where God is doing the most intentional work. Read slowly. Be honest in your journaling. Pray before you begin each day, and ask the Holy Spirit to show you what he wants you to see. You don't have to be further along than you are. You just have to keep showing up.

Day 1 — A New Heart Changes Everything

Read: Ezekiel 36:24-28 | Psalm 51:10-12 | Isaiah 1:18

Reflection: Before transformation can begin, something has to change at the core. God doesn't patch the old heart — he replaces it. Forgiveness is immediate. The new direction is immediate. The shaping of who we're becoming starts right there.

Questions:

- What do you think it means to have a "heart of stone" versus a "heart of flesh"? Which description feels more true to you in different seasons of your life?
- Isaiah 1:18 says God invites us to "settle the matter" together — that even scarlet sins can be made white as snow. What does it stir in you to read that?

- When you reflect on your own life before and after coming to faith, where do you see the clearest evidence that something genuinely changed?

Day 2 — Why the Process Is Slow

Read: Proverbs 30:7-9 | 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 | Philippians 4:11-13

Reflection: If we were made fully new overnight, we'd likely forget our need for God by morning. The slow pace of sanctification isn't a design flaw — it's what keeps us leaning in, depending on his Spirit, returning to his Word, and staying close.

Questions:

- Where in your life right now are you most aware of your need for God's help? How do you tend to respond to that awareness — with frustration, dependence, or something else?
- Paul says in 2 Corinthians 12 that God's power is made perfect in weakness. What would it look like for you to actually lean into that this week rather than trying to push past it?
- Think about a time when a difficult season actually drew you closer to God. What made that possible?

Day 3 — The Holy Spirit Is at Work

Read: Romans 8:5-14 | Galatians 5:16-25 | Ezekiel 36:27

Reflection: Sanctification isn't willpower. It's not trying harder. It is the Holy Spirit working in us — creating new desires, convicting us of sin, moving us to choose differently. Our job is to stay surrendered and keep in step with what he's already doing.

Questions:

- What does it mean practically to "walk by the Spirit" rather than "gratifying the desires of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16)? What does that look like in an average Tuesday?
- Looking at the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23 — where do you see growth in your life? Where do you still feel the most distance?
- Is there an area of your life where you've been relying on willpower instead of depending on the Holy Spirit? What might surrender look like there?

Day 4 — The Refiner's Fire

Read: Malachi 3:2-3 | 1 Peter 1:6-7 | Romans 5:3-5

Reflection: The silversmith doesn't walk away from the fire. He sits there, watching carefully, making sure the heat doesn't go too long. God does the same with us. Difficult seasons are not signs that he's absent — they're evidence that he's close and working with great intention.

Questions:

- Is there a season of difficulty in your past that you can now look back on and see what God was doing in you? What did that refining produce?
- The silversmith knows the silver is finished when he sees his own image reflected back. What do you think it looks like for God to see his image in you?
- Peter says trials produce "genuine faith" that is more valuable than gold. What would it mean for you to hold that truth in a current hard season rather than just enduring it?

Day 5 — He Will Finish What He Started

Read: Philippians 1:6 | Romans 7:21-8:2 | Ezekiel 36:33-36

Reflection: Paul's honesty in Romans 7 is a gift — he describes the internal war between the person he wants to be and the one he sometimes still is. But he doesn't end there. Romans 8:1 is the exhale: there is no condemnation for those in Christ. The work God started will be completed.

Questions:

- Romans 7 describes the frustrating gap between who we want to be and who we sometimes still are. How do you usually respond to that gap — with self-condemnation, grace, avoidance, or something else?
- Philippians 1:6 is a promise: God will complete the work he started in you. What does it do to you emotionally to read that? Do you actually believe it about yourself?
- As you close out this week's study, what is one specific way you want to cooperate with what God is doing in you right now?

Weekly Prayer

God, we worship you as the one who makes all things new. You don't just patch what is broken — you restore, rebuild, and make beautiful from ashes. We are amazed that you would give us new hearts, put your Spirit in us, and commit to finishing the work you've begun. We surrender the parts of ourselves that are still being shaped. We surrender the frustration of slow progress and the weight of our failures. We trust that you are present in the fire, watching closely, working with intention. Thank you for the grace that saves us. Thank you for the Spirit that changes us. Thank you for the promise that you will not quit. Make us more like Jesus — one day, one choice, one season at a time. Amen.