

INSTANTANEOUS AND PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION

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Paul stated to the Christians at Corinth that they were babes/infants in their walk with Christ, 1 Corinthians 3:1, *"Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere **infants** in Christ."* (NIV); **"Babes"** in New King James Version. However, they were not to stay that way. They were to grow in their *"new world."* They were to be *"progressing"* to a more mature way of living their lives reflective of Jesus' teaching (being more like Jesus).

With this in mind, let's look at the difference between instantaneous and progressive sanctification.

Instantaneous or Positional Sanctification:

- Occurs at the moment of belief,

- Involves the believer being set apart from the world to follow Christ,
- Is symbolized by baptism (Col. 2:11-12),
- Occurs because we are united with Christ and given new life (1 Cor. 1:30),
- Puts us in perfect relationship with God,
- Sets Christians free to do God's will,
- Is based on the finished work of Christ.

Progressive Sanctification:

Progressive sanctification is not in the Scriptures. It's a word to show an ongoing process of sanctification.

In other words we are to grow in sanctification as we:

1. Grow in conversion
2. Grow in the love of God
3. Grow into the very fruits of the Spirit

1-Peter 1:14: *"As obedient children, do not conform yourselves to the former lusts, as you did in your ignorance. But according as He Who has called you is Holy, you yourselves also be Holy in all your conduct; for it is written, 'You be Holy because I am Holy'" (vs. 14-16).*

Christians don't always measure up to their positional sanctification.

The Corinthian Christians, despite being called sanctified in 1 Cor. 6:11, were still addressed as "infants" in 1 Cor. 3:1 (Scripture in 1st paragraph).

1 Corinthians 6:11, *"And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God."*

1 Corinthians 3:1, *"Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ."* (NIV)

Other passages indicate that self-control needs to be learned (1 Thes. 4:3-4), and that old habits, like lying, must be renounced (Col. 3:5-10).

1 Thessalonians 4:3-4, *"It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; 4 that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable..."*

Colossians 3:5-10, "Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. 7 You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. 8 But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. 9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator."

The blood of Christ cleanses us from our sin in an ongoing way. Christ died "Once and for all. "It covered our sin...completely. Yet...we are expected to progress toward a mature relationship with Christ Jesus. He is faithful! He will not fail us! Our faith and trust must grow and mature as we "strive toward the mark of the high calling."

What does progressive sanctification look like?

Christians moving forward in this process:

- Regularly put God's will into practice,
- Demonstrate the fruits of obedience,
- Exhibit a selfless willingness to do whatever God asks them to do.
- Walk in the Truth,
- We can obey the commandments of God more perfectly by following His very example that He gave to us in the Gospels.

Sanctify yourselves daily by studying God's Word.