

Introduction

3 Phases of Salvation

"Salvation" means rescue or deliverance. The gospel is that through Christ, God freely delivers us from sin.

Read Phil. 1:6*. For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

This passage implies that salvation is given to us in three distinct stages: "he who began a good work . . . will continue to perfect it . . . until the day of Christ Jesus." The three biblical terms that are most often used to describe these three stages are *justification*, *sanctification*, and *glorification*. Consider the following distinctions between these stages:

Justification	Sanctification	Glorification
(Gal 2:16) Nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified.	Rom 6:22) But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.	(Phil 3:21) Who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.
legal righteousness imputed; deliverance from sin's Penalty	personal righteousness imparted; deliverance from sin's Power	moral perfection & resurrected bodies; deliverance from sin's Presence
establishes Position	transforms Condition	matches Condition with Position
one act of faith	many acts of faith	no act of faith
once-for-all-time	progressive, dynamic, never-ending in this life ("spiritual growth")	once-for-all-time

Note: Each word has a semantic range (e.g. "love" in the English language means many different things depending on who we are saying it to). Therefore, we cannot assume that every time we see the word "sanctification" used in the Bible, that it always refers to spiritual growth. The author of Hebrews uses this term, sanctification, to refer to what we here call "justification" (see Heb. 10:10,14; 12:14). Paul uses the noun form ("saints") to refer to all people who have been justified—not to an elite class of super-mature Christians (see 1 Cor. 1:2). How would we determine the exact meaning of the word? Immediate context and author's normal usage of the word.

See Romans 5:1-5 (and Rom. 8:1-23): Identify the three phases of salvation in these passages.

Unit 1 covered justification and glorification (among many other things!). Units 2 & 3 focus on sanctification. Unit 2 (Dynamics) covers the key biblical concepts that pertain to sanctification. Unit 3 (Provisions) covers the more practical steps involved in sanctification (and bibliology).

Why do we think it is worth spending 15 weeks on sanctification?

- **In a very real sense, this is the most relevant issue for us.** Justification is a done deal, and glorification is assured. Sanctification, however, is an ongoing process—it is "where we are at" as Christians. Many Christians view their conversion as the "end all" to

their Christian lives. They can relate how they came to Christ, but not what has happened since then.

- **It is a very complicated subject because there are many different views of/approaches to sanctification.** Christians differ in their perspectives on things like: our part/God's part; role of the Law/Holy Spirit; spiritual experience; means of growth. You *have* a perspective on these issues whether you realize it or not, and this perspective will dramatically affect the whole tone of your Christian life and the life of the church. Since this is the case, we should consciously examine the biblical material on this subject and choose a biblically consistent approach. That's what we want to do this quarter.
- **Because of the above two, Satan will attack here.** This is an area where Christians are subject to confusion and often lose their way. Once we become Christians Satan knows that he has lost the first battle and then attacks the Christian's quest for growth by confusing them. As a result, we often see aberrant spiritual practices which hurt Christ's witness in the world.
- **Because we cannot effectively reach the lost or disciple without ongoing sanctification.** 2 Tim. 2:20-21 states there is a proportional relationship between our becoming more Christ-like and more effective in his service.

What Does Spiritual Maturity Look Like?

[Teacher note: encourage discussion on this question for a short while]

To the glory of God

Phil. 1:9 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, 10 so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; 11 having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, **to the glory and praise of God.**

Phil. 2:5 **Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,** 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, 11 **and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

1 Cor. 10:31 Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

1 Cor. 6:20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

2 Cor. 4:15 For all things are for your sakes, that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God.

Developing spiritual maturity means that we will be growing in intimacy in our relationship with Christ (John 17:3; Phil 3:8,10; 1 John 2:13,14). This relationship develops in several ways that we will discuss. As teachers, we are committed to helping you understand the process of growth (Eph 4:11-15). What would it look like in your life if you were neglecting this area? For more on cultivating your intimacy with God, check out *For the Love of God* by D.A. Carson, Bruce Wilkinson's *Secrets of the Vine* and the *Sacred Romance Drawing Closer to the Heart of God* by Brent Curtis and John Eldredge.

Spiritual maturity involves "growing up in all aspects into him." What are the different aspects of spiritual maturity? This is the first order of business—to get a clear biblical picture of the **Goal**. If you don't have this, it's going to be pretty difficult to know how you're progressing, and pretty easy to get off track.

(Eph 4:14,15) As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; (15) but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ . . .

In Jesus' teaching on spiritual growth in John 15, he speaks of three different aspects in the context of an intimate personal relationship. We will use this passage as our base text. John elaborates on each of these aspects in 1 John. [Footnote 1A](#) John was concerned to explain what Christian spirituality is in contrast to the false spirituality espoused by the Gnostics. As he does

this, it becomes clear that he stresses three aspects of spirituality. They are woven throughout the epistle. These areas are not airtight categories. They are all interrelated and are pursued in the context of a personal relationship with God...

(John 15:7-14) "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you. (8) "By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. (9) "Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. (10) "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love. (11) "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full. (12) "This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. (13) "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. (14) "You are My friends, if you do what I command you.

1) The Love of Christ

Matt. 22:37-40; Jn. 13:34,35; Rom. 8:4; 13:8-10; 1 Cor. 13:1-3; 1 Tim. 1:5; 1 Peter 1:22; 4:8; 1 Jn. 4:20, 21

(John 15:12) "This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you."

In our culture, spirituality is for self: self development, self progress, self healing. (See overhead promoting Deepak Chopra & Wayne Dyer's audio tape series.)

Biblical love is different. It is directed *outside* ourselves toward other people (1 Cor. 13:1-3; 1 John 4:20,21). *Biblical love is a commitment to give of one's self in every area for the good of the other* (Phil. 2:3,4). It is the central ethic in the Bible (Matt 22:37-40; 1 Tim 1:5; 1 Peter 4:8). We can think of practicing biblical love along two axes, How we love & Who we love:

How we love:

- *sacrificial* rather than conditional
- *disciplining* rather than mushy sentimentalism or compromise of Biblical principles just to "keep the peace".
- *forgiving* rather than resenting or reserving the right to retaliate.
- *emotional* rather than defining love as only functional things we do for the other.

The father's actions in the parable of the Lost Son illustrate these aspects of love (Luke 15).

Whom we love:

- Existing relationships (1 Thes 3:12)

Depth- increasing the intimacy of existing relationships whether within the church or outside the church.

- Developing friendships with new people (1 Thes 3:12; Matt. 5:46; Luke 10:25-37; Matt. 28:19)

Breadth- extending ourselves beyond the scope of our existing relationships. This includes evangelism, follow-up, hospitality, serving the poor, missions, etc. This is very different than how we used to pick our friends, based on natural affinity.

What happens to those who neglect this area?

- "Dead Sea" Christians: all inflow through Bible study, etc.—but no outflow in active love. They become stagnant spiritually.

Any spirituality that does not evidence itself in biblical love toward other people is deficient or false (see 1 Cor. 13:1-3). A self-centered spirituality, no matter how knowledgeable, moral or experiential, is a contradiction in terms! Christians who know lots of Bible, never cuss, etc.—but have little use for anyone else.

- You will be seduced by the world system. The pre-career aged people move into hedonism and after that into materialism.

This is the "Y in the road" for most Christians in our affluent culture. Is your Christianity only for you or is it primarily for others? Will you pursue God's purposes in the world while living out your career, etc., or will your career, pursuit of money, and hobbies exclude your "usefulness to the Master for every good work" (2 Tim. 2:20,21).

How does God help us to develop in this area?

- He provides us with models of the loving lifestyle in the Body of Christ and opportunities to serve and reach out with others.

This is the reason for our home group membership requirement for taking this class.

- Blesses us deeply when we do choose to love others biblically (John 13:17; Acts 20:35). This was Jesus' repeated teaching and modeling to the disciples.
- He gradually shows us our unique role/gifts as we begin to serve others—which is very motivating because we see the true purpose for our lives.
- He brings people into our lives that expose and help develop our weak areas.

The Holy Spirit prompts us to love all people in all ways as Christ has loved us. We naturally want to love only certain people, and in certain ways. If you are growing spiritually, you will be seeing him revealing how he loves you, uncovering the weaknesses in your love life, and providing concrete situations for you to develop in these areas.

Some personalities/temperaments tend to just "rub us the wrong way" or we just don't feel like there is a natural affinity for them. What are we going to do? Ask God, "What do you want me to learn about how to love this person?" OR try to figure out "How can I get away from this person?" (Examples: outreach for introverts; close friendships for extroverts; confrontation for a fearful person; compassion for aggressive people; emotional and personal intimacy for impersonal functioners).

What happens to those who focus only on this area?

- We provide only shallow, superficial love. Unless our acts of love are being directed by biblical discernment we can't really help others grow spiritually (truth sets us free - Jn. 8:31,32).

Illustration: Love is like a flowing river. The water signifies the love, but it must be contained by the banks of truth. Otherwise it is diffused and shallow. When the river is contained and directed, it embodies power.

- Those who ignore their own moral transformation by their preoccupation with serving others wind up disqualifying themselves.

2) The Mind of Christ

See these verses: Jn. 17:17; Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:17:23; Col. 1:9, 10

(John 15: 7) "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you.

A growing understanding of God's perspective of the world, man, how to relate to him, etc. as revealed in his word and to be able to find the major doctrines in the Bible.

(Isaiah 55:8,9) "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Neither are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. 9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.

This is the growing understanding of the biblical worldview, God's perspective on reality as taught in scripture—especially the doctrine of grace. There can be no true spirituality which is not rooted in and constantly fed by objective, biblical truth. To the extent that your view of spirituality denigrates this, it is deficient.

Be careful to avoid the FALSE dichotomy between "head knowledge" (intellectual understanding) and "heart knowledge" (experiential apprehension). God does want us to experience his truth on an experiential level, but this must be preceded by intellectual understanding. Therefore it's never heart knowledge instead of head knowledge, but experience flowing from head knowledge.

What happens to those who neglect this area?

- *We will be conformed to the world.* (Rom. 12:2 is an either/or proposition) We will be influenced by our culture which promotes spiritual hostility to propositional assertions about God and the biblical world view in particular. There is little or nothing in the world system around us that encourages people to maintain a biblical world view.

E.G. There are no billboards reminding us that all we are and own belongs to God and therefore we should give generously to his work.

E.G. Secular radio does not encourage us to "consider others more important than ourselves." (Phil. 2:3,4) The constant influence of our culture will direct us away from God's perspective without deep and growing knowledge of the major doctrines of the Bible and their application.

- *We will be a prime candidate for spiritual deception by errant teaching.* Many of Paul's letters (e.g., Colossians) are written to counter deception—what does Paul emphasize? Doctrine!
- *We will adapt the tendency to feel like we "have it down"* and therefore don't need this kind of constant exposure.

(Hebrews 5:12-14) For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. (13) For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. (14) But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

Contrasted to: Psalms 119:18 Open my eyes, that I may behold Wonderful things from Your law. AND 2 Peter 1:12 Therefore, I shall always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you.

We need constant reminder, deeper insight and appreciation, and fresh application of scriptural truth in our lives. When this is "old hat," something is wrong. BILLY GRAHAM & OSWALD SANDERS: "If I had it to do over again, I would have spent more time studying the Bible as a younger Christian."

How does God help us to develop in this area?

- The Holy Spirit helps us to develop in this area by illuminating our minds to understand the meaning, significance and personal application of biblical truth (2 Tim. 2:7 - EXAMPLES; Eph. 3:14-21).
- God will show us our need for growth in this area by sending us people we don't know how to help because we don't know the Word.
- He also works in our lives to give us opportunities to apply the truth we're learning. Sometimes we will learn it in from study or a teaching, and then get a real-life opportunity to put it into practice (STUDENTS IN THIS CLASS), and sometimes vice-versa.
- He provides us with teachers to help us make sense of the Bible and learn how to study it for ourselves. Are we taking advantage of these opportunities?

What happens to those who focus only on this area?

(J. I. Packer) "You know the sort of person I mean—one who is always reading, always exploring questions of truth, poking half the time into esoteric aspects of typology, unfulfilled prophecy, the millennium, the symbolic chapters of Revelation, and the problems of Bible harmony. He or she is not much concerned about experience, not very active in obedience and service of others, and not distinguished for a radically changed life. But the head is always busy with theological questions, and is full to overflowing with doctrine. In an anti-intellectual age like ours, such love of truth, and such devotion to the task of determining it, are rare and precious; and as we saw earlier, interest in the truth about God is natural to all the born-again. But is that interest, in and of itself, a token of good spiritual health? . . . No, it is not!" (J. I. Packer, *Rediscovering Holiness*, p. 168.)

- They're not interested in serving others or sharing their faith.
- They will be proud (1 Cor. 8:1) and prone to deception unless they also pursue moral transformation and service as directed by the Bible.
- They may become filled with doubt. This is a natural result of not seeing God working in their and other peoples' lives through ministry

3) The Character of Christ

See: Rom. 13:8-14; Eph. 4:17-6:9; Col. 3:5-4:1; 1 Tim 4:12; 2 Tim. 2:19-22; James 1:26,27

(John 15:10) "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love.

This is the deep-seated change in our character, behavior, values and attitudes that God works to gradually effect. Because God is a moral Being, true spirituality has moral content. Any view of spirituality that does not emphasize this is deficient at best, and heretical at worst. Contemporary spirituality does not evaluate behavior on the basis of an objective moral standard. Instead, introducing a moral component to spirituality is seen as Victorian and repressive. God wants to eliminate and replace. Negatively, he exposes sinful areas he wants to eliminate. Positively, he wants to cultivate character qualities like self-discipline, courage, patience, kindness, etc. (Gal. 5; 1 Cor. 13).

He also wants to both mow the field and get at the roots!

Not only the obvious and most destructive areas God goes after from the beginning (SUBSTANCE ABUSE, PHYSICAL VIOLENCE, THEFT, SEXUAL IMMORALITY)...

...but also deeper attitudinal issues (BITTERNESS, NEGATIVITY, PRIDE, COVETING, MATERIALISM, LOVE DEMANDS ON OTHERS, SELF-PITY, etc.). His ability to prioritize certain moral changes is evidence of God's personal knowledge of each of us and his love for us.

What happens to those who neglect this area?

- If we ignore God's moral correction, we will harden our hearts against his voice (Heb. 3:7ff; Psalm 32:8-10; 1 Tim. 4:2; Eph. 4:17-19).
- You won't be able to build deep relationships (marriage, discipleship) unless you allow God to sanctify you in-depth in this area. I.E. You will be hard to live with because of your sin issues!

You will also tend to be intolerant of others' sins because you are unwilling to come to grips with your own imperfections.

A conspiracy of silence may develop in a relationship or a group. When we are in sin and unrepentant, we are unwilling to admonish others who are in similar circumstances.

- No matter how gifted we are, we will be disqualified from significant ministry. E.G. "Since I'm involved in ministry, it doesn't really matter whether I allow God to sanctify my anger problem with my spouse." E.G. "I'm really working hard at my ministry so I don't need to apply myself in my secular job."

2 Tim 2:20 Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor. 21 Therefore, if a man cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.

Paul points out the direct relationship between our cooperation in moral transformation and our ability to be useful "to the Master...for every good work."

Test: Are you able to take God's correction in moral areas? Psa. 32:8 was probably written after David committed adultery.

(Ps.32:8) "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you. Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you. Many are the woes of the wicked, but the Lord's unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in him."

If we reserve the right to reject God's moral correction we "pull the plug" on our spiritual vitality. Unrepentant sin is a prevalent reason for spiritual depression.

How does God help us to develop in this area?

- God personally prioritizes what he wants to work on at this time, and leads us accordingly. This frees us from the overwhelming chore of trying to change ourselves on our own timetable. (Ps. 139:23,24)
- God motivates us to turn away from destructive sinful attitudes by providing positive experiences and convinces us that his ways are better than our old ways. We also see that our sinful ways are destructive to ourselves and others.
- God provides positive and negative models of our needed character change.

- God brings people and situations into our lives that expose the areas he wants to work on (SPOUSES; ROOMMATES; BOSSES; etc.; Rom. 5:3-5; Jm. 1:2-4).

He also supplies us with models who give us hope that we can be changed, and who supply us with practical steps to progress.

What happens to those who focus only on this area?

- You will become self-centered, judgmental, and a superficial moralist — I.E. a Pharisee (Mt. 23:23-27). A commitment to love (above) is what *exposes need* for moral transformation. Therefore, ironically, although claiming to focus on moral transformation, unless you are ALSO investing in biblical love relationships you won't experience in-depth moral transformation.
- You will also tend to set up a system of rules that aren't moral (biblical) and treat them as important as biblical imperatives (Mark 7:6-8,13).
- This can lead to despair. If we are honest about our moral shortcomings when focusing on them, AND don't have a clear understanding of the grace of Christ and how it applies to that sin, we will despair.

Conclusion

2 Peter 1:3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. 4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. 5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge; 6 and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness; 7 and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. 8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks these qualities is blind or shortsighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. 10 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; 11 for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

vv. 3,4: God supplies the resources we need to progress toward maturity (Phil. 1:6*).

vv. 5-7: Can you find the 3 aspects of spiritual maturity?

vv. 8-11: What tremendous benefits! Useful and fruitful in God's service; guaranteed to not live a wasted or shattered life; and a rich welcome and reward at the BEMA.

As you have listened to God's description of spiritual maturity, he has undoubtedly shone his light on some areas in which he wants to develop in you. What is your response going to be? Some of you will feel guilty, others will feel impotent to change, others will be gung-ho. (NOTE TO INSTRUCTOR: You may take time here to explain the difference between conviction and accusation... more on this in unit 4.)

Don't rationalize your weaknesses, or judge those who are imbalanced in ways different from you. The purpose of these next two units is to teach you how to cooperate with God in these areas so that you grow into the kind of balanced and mature Christian workers he desires you to be. Ask God to grow you into full-orbed maturity, and trust that he will reveal both areas of imbalance/deficiency and opportunities to grow in those areas. (NOTE TO INSTRUCTOR: Remind students of attack because they are taking this class. Persevere!)

Memory Verses

Phil. 1:6* - speaks of three stages of salvation, and emphasizes God's faithfulness in each of these stages

Jn. 15:7-12** - speaks of all three aspects of spiritual maturity