



[Hebrews 12:14](#)

(14) Pursue peace with all *people*, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:

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[Holiness](#) starts in one's relationship with the Father and our Lord [Jesus Christ](#). Justification through God's [merciful](#) act of [grace](#) opens the door of access to Him, as well as the door to the [Kingdom of God](#). Justification is entirely an act of [God](#), a legal action on our behalf that we accept by [faith](#) because He does not lie. Others do not easily discern our justification, since in most cases it has no outward manifestation.

While sanctification unto holiness begins at the same moment as justification, it is a progressive, creative, time-consuming work of God within us. Unlike justification, sanctification cannot be hidden because it appears in our godly conduct. By it, a witness is made that God dwells in us. Where there is no holiness, there is no witness to glorify God.

So we see that justification and sanctification are two separate matters. They are related - indeed, they cannot be separated - but we should never confuse them. If one partakes in either, he is a partaker of both, but we should not overlook the distinctions between them.

Christians cannot take sanctification for granted. We must pursue it until we are assured that we are sanctified. Our course is clear: We must go to Christ as forgiven sinners, offering our lives to Him by faith, crying out to Him for the grace we need to enable us to overcome all the flaws in our characters.

The apostle Paul writes in [Philippians 4:19](#), "And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." The same apostle adds in [Ephesians 4:15-16](#):

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. . . but, speaking the [truth](#) in [love](#), [we] may grow up in all things into Him who is the head - Christ - from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

Close communication with Christ is the source of the perception, motivation, and energy to discern flaws and overcome them. It is a biblical principle that whatever God requires, He provides what we need to accomplish it. Thus, we are to draw from this inexhaustible well and be renewed every day in the spirit of our minds (verses 23-24). In [John 17:17](#), on the night before His crucifixion, Jesus asked the Father to sanctify us by His truth. Will God not answer that [prayer](#), especially when we desire to be sanctified to be like His Son? He most certainly will answer it so that our sanctification will continue.

Perhaps a word of caution is in order, and with it an admonishment that we also ask for [patience](#). Growth does not always come quickly. In addition, as we grow in knowledge, at the same time we become more perceptive of our flaws. The more we know, the more flaws we see, and this can become humiliating and discouraging. The humility it produces is good, but the discouragement is not so good if it halts our growth.

Paul faced this, writing of it in Romans 7, but he most certainly did not let it stop him. By the time he finishes his discourse, he declares resoundingly that he knows he will be delivered by Jesus Christ. Sinners we are when we begin, and sinners we find ourselves to be as we continue - we will be sinners to the very end. [Salvation](#) is by grace, is it not? Our absolute perfection will not occur until we are changed "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet" ([I Corinthians 15:52](#)).

While reaching for God's holiness, we should not let our goals ever be anything but the highest. We should never let [Satan](#) convince us that we can be satisfied with what we are right now.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[Is the Christian Required To Do Works? \(Part Six\)](#)

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