***Sanctification

RV67-01***

This is segment number 18 in the letter to Laodicea. The church in the city of Laodicea was made up of born-again people who were out of temporal fellowship with God the Father because of their carnality. It is important to realize that they were born again people. They were a church. This was indicated by the fact that there was a lamp stand. The very thing that the Lord was telling these people, that of which he was warning them, was that they were going to be put out of operation as a church organization. Their lamp stand was going to be removed.

**Revelation 3:20**

So, it is very important to declare here at the beginning that this is a group of Christians we're talking about, because the things that we read about in this letter seem so terrible that you would be surprised how many commentators, in explaining this passage, will take the attitude that these are all a bunch of non-Christians – that they're all a bunch of people who've never been born again. That is not true. That's why, when you get down to Revelation 3:20, you have that verse so abused by so many people, and sometimes Bible teachers who know a great deal – to take verse 20, and say that's Jesus Christ standing at the heart's door, trying to get you to accept Him as Savior. And that verse has nothing whatsoever to do with salvation.

There are printed materials that are designed for Christians to use an evangelistic work in their personal witnessing. They'll use this verse in Revelation 3:20 as the verse to explain to people what Jesus Christ is ready to do for them in bringing to them eternal life if they will open their heart's door, and nothing could be farther from the truth. The door upon which Jesus Christ is knocking in verse 20 is the door of a born-again believer's heart, and we shall get to that in due time.

**Reversionism**

So, we're looking at a church here, which is indeed a church. It is a genuine, bonafide local congregation. It has a lamp stand, representing that it is a group of born again people. The threat to it, as to the others, is that their lamp stand would be removed, and their local church would be closed down if these things are not corrected.

The carnality of which they had been guilty as individual believers led to such disorientation, relative to true spiritual values, that they rapidly went into a backslidden condition of reversionism. The Bible doctrine, which had once led them out of spiritual darkness into eternal life, was now neglected by them in their material affluence and in their intellectual arrogance. This is the story. This is the reading we get on this congregation in Laodicea – that it was one of material affluence and intellectual arrogance.

The Lord Jesus Christ declared that he sees these people as poor because they lack a reservoir of Bible doctrine truth in their human spirits. God had provided them, as he has provided us, with a grace system of learning spiritual things in order to secure the divine viewpoint truth of Bible doctrine for storage in the human spirit. Negligence by the pastor-teacher and the congregation alike in learning, loving, and living Bible doctrine has resulted in their status of spiritual poverty for which they are now condemned. Therefore, it does not matter how much material wealth one possesses. If he lacks doctrine in the human spirit, he is a poor person. That's the main message to get from this letter. No matter how materially well off you are, if you lack a deep reservoir storage of doctrine in your human spirit, you're poor. When you go out into eternity, all of that material wealth that you were so smug about and so pleased with is going to be left behind. The wealth that you will take with you is the wealth in your human spirit.

There's going to be a big difference in the way people *appear* in heaven. Right now, all the fakery and all the Ananias and Sapphira hypocrisy is running rampant, and everybody's getting away with it. And I'm here to tell you that in heaven, we're all going to get the shots and the surprises of our lives as we discover the realities about one another. Without the wealth of Bible doctrine, one is a slave to human viewpoint thinking with all of its painful consequences in one's life. The real gold of the Word of God (the Bible) which has been refined to absolute truth by the holiness of God is the only value that we can take with us into heaven. So, for their poverty, Jesus Christ has said to them at the end of verse 17, "You're poor. You're not rich – the way you think you are. You're poor." He has given them the advice to deal with that by securing the gold of doctrine.

**White Raiment**

The next problem of the Laodiceans with which Jesus Christ deals is their spiritual nakedness. For at the end of verse 17. He also said to them that they were naked. So, we deal, first of all, with the believer's clothing. The Lord says, "And white raiment." The "and" continues the initial statement, "I counsel you to buy of Me." The word "and" is the conjunction "kai." It introduces another item that the Laodiceans are to buy from Jesus Christ. This is an item that they need in order to deal with another problem they have. This is a problem that Jesus Christ sees they have, but which they don't see they have, and that is their nakedness. The money, again, for the purchase of this need is believing the Word of God. That is the coin with which they will purchase the clothing to solve their nakedness problem.

The clothing they are to buy is white. That's the Greek word "leukos." White is the color of purity and holiness in the Bible. They Laodiceans are to secure something which is holy, and that is a raiment. That's the Greek word "himation." "Himation" is a noun, and it refers to the outer garment which is worn like a mantle or a cloak which is thrown over the shoulders or over the undergarments. The "himation" is the outer garment, and it is put over the undergarments. The Laodiceans are to buy from Jesus Christ a white outer garment of some kind – a garment that represents something that is holy.

The reason is introduced with the word "that," which is the Greek conjunction "hina." This indicates why they need this particular white raiment. It is that they may be clothed. "May be clothed" is the Greek word "periballo." "Periballo" literally means "to cast around oneself." This is an outer garment that you just fling over your shoulders covering the underwear. Jesus Christ declared that the Laodiceans were naked, though they thought that they were regular fashion plates. The Lord Jesus saw the Laodiceans in their true condition of spiritual nakedness.

**Sanctification**

What is this white garment that they are to purchase to cover their nakedness? We get a clue of that in Revelation 19:8. In describing the church, we read, "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints." The garment of white is something that he calls "The righteousnesses (plural) of the saints, and that refers to a lifestyle of godliness. This is the subject of sanctification. This is referring to the divine good works which Ephesians 2:10 says that God has designed in a specific way for every believer to produce – a life of sanctification, and a life set apart to godliness that produces holy living and divine good work production.

Remember that Laodicea in the ancient world was famed for the manufacture of a special shiny black wool cloth that was highly esteemed as an item of clothing. It came from a special breed of sheep. This black cloth was, in effect, symbolic of the carnal lifestyle of the congregation. Undoubtedly, many of them, as fashion plates in that local church, wore this particular type of material. Yet, the Laodicean believers, whom Jesus Christ said were naked, viewed themselves as being dressed in a very fashionable way. They saw themselves as clothed rather than naked, because they were viewing themselves as good Christians. Instead of the white raiment of divine righteousness in their daily living, they wore the black garments of their smug self-righteousness.

It's a terrible thing for a Christian to be insensitive or indifferent to his own evil ways. That is what clothed these people. In the eyes of Jesus Christ, they were dressed in the filthy rags of which Isaiah 64:6 speaks: All of your righteousnesses are as filthy rags. The Laodicean believers are to repent of their reversionism, which has clothed them in their self-righteousness and their human good. They are to clothe themselves in a sanctified life of service to God.

It is in the aorist tense, which means that at the point of their buying sanctification from Jesus Christ: "That you may be clothed at the point where you purchase sanctification." It is middle voice. Middle voice in the Greek says that they will benefit if they do this: "You yourself personally will greatly benefit if you secure this garment of sanctification." It is in the subjunctive mood, which means that it's a potential purchase for them to deal with their spiritual nakedness. They can do it. Some of them will, but, apparently, a lot of them didn't.

Then he adds another "and" ("kai"): "I counsel you to buy of Me white raiment that you may be clothed, and that the shame of your nakedness." The word "shame" is "aischune." "Aischune" connotes humiliation. The Laodiceans were proud in the arrogance of their carnality, when, in fact, they stood in a position of humiliation. That humiliation was the shame of their nakedness (their "gumnos"). This is a word for "no clothing." Public nudity, by God's standard is a shameful thing.

You may note the example in Genesis 9:20-23, where Noah, after coming off the ark, produced wine; became drunk; and, lay sprawled in his tent in his nakedness. His son Ham came in and made fun of him. The other two sons recognized that their father had put himself into a shameful condition in his public nudity, and they, in a respectful way, walked in backwards and covered him in that condition. Public nudity, by God's standard, is a shameful thing. Nakedness, after the fall in the Garden of Eden, became a major factor, leading to the serious violation of God's moral system against illicit sex. That's why public nudity is promoted by Satan – because Satan wants to promote violations against God's moral code.

So, this is what is behind this condemnation of these people. It isn't just that they were naked. It is that they were guilty of a very serious breach of morality with God. Public nudity is a very grave sin, even though you and I become acclimated to it, because it is thrust at us from so many areas in our society today, and it is treated with such indifference. God does not look at it with indifference.

This word "gumnos," however, is also used in another way to describe one who is wearing only his undergarments. Someone who is dressed in his undergarments was described as being naked when he was in public. You have an example of this in John 21:7, speaking of Peter: "Therefore, that disciple whom Jesus loved said unto Peter, 'It is the Lord.' Now when Simon heard that it was the Lord, he gird his fisher's coat unto him, for he was naked, and did cast himself into the sea." This is after the Lord's crucifixion. Peter and his associates are out working at their fishing trade, and Peter is working in his underwear. He is described here by the word "gumnos" as not having his outer clothing on. Therefore, he was described as being naked. The word is used in that sense.

So, that's a very interesting observation. The Laodicean Christians are walking around in their spiritual underwear. So, they are being described as naked. They did have the covering of positional sanctification. They were set apart by their salvation, so they did have that covering, but they did not have the outer garment covering of their godly living – their experiential sanctification. Consequently, they are described here as walking around in their underwear.

It's almost humorous as you stop and think about that, because here are these people who are walking around the church in Laodicea. Some of them had this lovely, black, very expensive cloth which was manufactured in this town, and they're viewing themselves as the ladies who know what's going on in Vogue and Harper's Bazaar and all the latest fashion styles. Jesus Christ says, "Girls, you're walking around in your underwear in church." That is very embarrassing. That is very shameful. And that is the point that he's getting across here. It is a shameful sight to see a Christian walking about without the clothing of experiential sanctification. It is a shameful thing in God's eyes, and in the eyes of the angels, for you to be walking around without the godliness in your experience – the white garments that should be clothing you as an individual believer.

All of those who pretend to believe in Christian principles are hypocrites, and nobody respects them. Ananias and Sapphira were the underwear-in-public type. They walked around pretending to be something, and the Lord looked at them and said, "You don't have the white garments of experiential sanctification. You're a hypocrite, and you're walking around in your spiritual underwear. I can see it," the Lord says. "The angels can see it. Everyone who has spiritual eyes can see it."

So, they are told here in Revelation to buy for themselves this white raiment so they could be clothed with an outer garment which would hide the shame of their nakedness: "So that your nakedness does not appear." The word "appear" is the Greek word "phaneroo." This is aorist passive subjunctive. The word means "to be made manifest to public view" in terms of one's true spiritual character. The Laodiceans are warned that their spiritual nakedness will be exposed: "Cover yourself so that your nakedness does not appear." It will be "phaneroo." This is true of all believers. Your spiritual condition, be it well-clothed or unclothed, is going to be revealed. It's time that a lot of us woke up to that fact, and started believing it. We are warned that our spiritual nakedness is going to be exposed.

This is aorist tense – at some point in time, particularly in heaven at the Judgment Seat of Christ, your spiritual nakedness is going to be exposed. There you will not be able to pretend. It is passive. You won't have a thing to say about it. It's going to be done to you. Your status will be exposed. It'll be beyond your control to hide it like you can hide it now. It is subjunctive, meaning that it's potential exposure. That exposure comes to some degree here on earth, and, very often, to a large degree. In the early church, Ananias and Sapphira again were examples of how that exposure came in a very definitive, open degree. Throughout the centuries, and right down to our day, in one way or another, the Lord exposes our lack of the white garment of sanctification here on earth. Sooner or later, if you just hang around people long enough, and if you just go far enough, people who have any spiritual discernment will get your number. They begin seeing; they begin analyzing; they begin putting two and two together; and, they begin spotting you for the fake that you are. They begin seeing you as one of the underwear crowd in the local church. The Lord says that is a shameful sight for a member of the royal family of God to be seen in.

What would you think if Prince Charles and Lady Diana were to appear in court in their underwear? You would say, "That is a shocking, humiliating, shameful thing. They are wrong. They shouldn't walk around like that." Why should you and I, who are also royalty, be guilty of the same thing? We may not see it, but forget how man looks upon things. Do you remember what the Lord had to say to Samuel when he was trying to pick a king to replace Saul? "You look on the outward appearance. That doesn't mean a thing. God looks on the heart." All of the creative universe; all the elected angels; and, all of the members of the Trinity: they look upon us, and they see us for what we are really wearing. Without those white garments, we are a pathetic and shameful sight. At the "bema" (at the Judgment Seat of Christ), we will stand there just like that. Then you aren't going to be able to pretend like you can here, within a local congregation, to be wearing something other than what you are. Up there, you're going to be seen for what you really are.

Personal sanctification was the clothing that the Laodiceans lacked, to their shame, and which the Lord was calling upon them to buy from Him.

**The Doctrine of Sanctification**

So, let us pause to look at the doctrine of sanctification, the white outer garment that a believer must wear if he is to walk in dignity before the Lord, and before all of mankind as a member of the royal family of God.

1. **Set Apart**

The concept of sanctification is found in two root words. The Old Testament word is "kathash." The New Testament word is "hagiazo." These root words make up parts of many other words which are used in both the Old and New Testaments, and are translated by a variety of English words. "Kathash" and "hagiazo" come into the English as "holy;" "hallow;" "holiness;" "consecrate;" "saint;" "sanctify;" or, "sanctification." All of these basic words deal with the idea of sanctification. The white garment of godliness comes from these words. The basic meaning of these words, related to the concept of sanctification, is "to set apart." That is very important. When you talk about sanctification, remember the definition. It means "to set apart:" to set apart from a secular and sinful purpose to a sacred purpose – to God's use.

**Not Sinlessness**

The basic meaning of these two words, either in the Hebrew or in the Greek, is never sinlessness. Sanctification does not mean sinlessness. The devil has got his grubby little hands on this word, and has converted the idea of the white garments of sanctification into the concept of sinlessness. There are a lot of believers who are running around today trying to become people who never sin again and who never do another evil thing. Boy, that is misery. That is hell on earth when you fall into that error. There are thousands upon thousands of Christians who are trapped in that delusion, trying to develop a spiritual life where they don't sin again. The Greek and Hebrew words for "sanctification" never mean sinlessness. They only mean to be set apart.

1. **Set Apart to God**

Sanctification means something or someone is set apart to God. So, the Bible speaks about a holy nation, Israel, set apart to God (from other nations). It speaks about holy priests. These are a group of men who were set apart as God's priests from the pagan priests. Holy prophets, men who spoke of the future, were set apart by God to that particular ministry. The holy apostles, again, were men upon whom the Christian church was built, who were set apart to that special purpose. There were holy men set apart to God in one way or another. The Bible speaks of holy women who were set apart by God, as well as holy brethren.

None of these people, though they were called "holy," were actually people who were sinless. They were holy, yet they were not sinless. Exodus 19:10: "The Lord said to Moses, 'Go unto the people and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes.'" This meant to sanctify them and set them aside: "And be ready on the third day, for the third day, the Lord will come down in the sight of the people upon Mount Sinai, and you shall set bounds onto the people roundabout saying, 'Take heed to yourselves, that you don't go up into the mount or touch the border of it. Whoever touches the mount shall be surely put to death. A hand shall not touch it but he shall surely be stoned or shot-through. Whether it be beast or man, it shall not live. When the trumpet sounds long, they shall come up to the mount.' And Moses went down from the mount, unto the people, and sanctified the people, and they washed their clothes."

Now, you know that these people that he's describing, the people of Israel, who were sanctified so they could come into the presence of the mount upon which God was going to speak to Moses – these people were not sinless. They were anything but sinless. Yet God tells them that they were to sanctify themselves. Moses goes down and sanctifies the people. What does he mean? It means that he set them apart to a certain divine purpose. But it did not mean that they were sinless people.

You may add to that Exodus 28:41: "And you shall put them upon Aaron, your brother, and his sons with him, and shall anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister unto Me in the priest's office." Here, the priestly garments are being set upon Aaron and the priests, and they are spoken of as being sanctified. This is quite clear to us. We know the history of Aaron, and he was anything but a sinless person. So, again, sinlessness is not associated with the idea of being sanctified – being set apart to a godly purpose.

You may also add to that Ezekiel 37:28: "The nations shall know that I, the Lord, do sanctify Israel when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them forever." Israel was never a sinless nation, though they were a nation that indeed was sanctified by God.

In the New Testament, one of the examples of this point that is most forcibly brought to our attention is the letter that the apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians church. In 1 Corinthians 1:2, Paul says, "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints, with all, that in every place, call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." He is addressing this congregation, and he has called them saints, and he has called them sanctified. He is using this New Testament word "hagiazo," in its related ways, to describe the saints in Corinth.

As you read through the book of 1 Corinthians, you discover some very startling things about this congregation. You discover that these people were very, very sinful. They had a case of immorality going on in the congregation that was public knowledge which would shock the pagans who lived round about them. That's what the apostle Paul said. He says, "You've got a situation going on in the congregation that the *pagans* would not tolerate. The pagans would be shamed and humiliated to tolerate this, and yet you permit it to exist among you as Christians. These people were not sinless, and yet they were sanctified. They were saints. They were set apart to a purpose that God had for them, but it didn't mean that they were sinless.

In 1 Corinthians 6:11, Paul says, "And such were some of you: but you are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified in the name of our Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." Again, he declares to these people that they are sanctified.

Now let's go back to 1 Corinthians 5. Here you have that incident referred to that I mentioned: "It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the gentiles; that one should have his father's wife. And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that has done this deed might be taken away from among you." Here was a blatant case of immorality, as Paul says, that the pagan gentiles couldn't stomach. But you do it. Yet these are sanctified people. These are saints who were guilty of that kind of life.

So, the word "sanctify" means to be set apart. It does not mean sinlessness. Inanimate objects, in this way, are also said to be sanctified in the Bible. We have a holy mountain; we have a holy temple; we have holy days; we have holy feasts; and, we have holy wars. All these mean that these are set apart by God to a specific purpose. There are several Scriptures that you can pursue: Joel 1:14; Joel 2:15-16; Joel 3:9; Exodus 19:23; Deuteronomy 5:12; Exodus 30:29; 2 Chronicles 7:16; and, Leviticus 27:14ff. All of these show how inanimate objects can also be called holy.

In Israel, the first born of man and animal was sanctified, or was set apart to God (Exodus 13:2, Numbers 8:17).

1. **God is Sanctified**

Because of infinite holiness, God himself is eternally sanctified. He is set apart from sin (Leviticus 21:8, John 17:19). God is set apart because of His Infinite Holiness.

1. **All Three Members of the Trinity**

We are told that God the Father sanctifies in 1 Thessalonians 5:20:3; God the Son sanctifies in Ephesians 5:26; and, God the Holy Spirit sanctifies in Romans 15:16. So, all members of the Trinity have a part in the act of sanctification.

1. **God the Father Sanctified God the Son**

John 10:36 tells us that God the Father sanctified God the Son. The Lord Jesus was set apart to a certain mission.

1. **Man May Sanctify Himself**

Man may sanctify himself by separating from sinful practices and thoughts. We have this illustrated in 2 Timothy 2:21: "If a man, therefore, purges himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified and fit for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work." The context speaks about evil things. This was the problem for the people in Laodicea. They had not sanctified themselves from evil, and thus they lacked the garment of white of which the Lord speaks. You and I are able to sanctify ourselves in setting ourselves apart from evil unto righteousness. 2 Corinthians 6:17 and 2 Corinthians 7:1 add to that – sanctifying ourselves by separating ourselves from sinful practices.

1. **Man May Sanctify Persons and Things**

Man may sanctify persons and things (1 Corinthians 7:14, Exodus 19:14, 2 Chronicles 29:17). So, the idea of sanctification is not just something that God does. You and I, as human beings, can also set people and things apart. Sometimes parents do that with their children. They sanctify their children. When the children are born, they say, "I am taking this child, and I'm setting him aside for God's purpose. I'm devoting him to the Lord's plans for his life." They make an act of sanctification, so that father doesn't say, "Hey, I'm a big business man, and my son is going to go to business college, and learn to be a big business man, just as I am." Or, "I'm a medical doctor. My son is going to learn to be a medical doctor. He will follow in my steps." Instead, they have sanctified those children to God's plans and purposes for them, not to their own. So, man may sanctify persons and things.

1. **Buying Things and Sanctifying Them**

You may buy something, and you may sanctify that something to the Lord's use. Sometimes Christians use this particular principle as an excuse to buy things that they shouldn't buy. Somebody wants something, and doesn't feel he really should spend the money on it, but he does, and he says, "I'm going to buy this, and I'm sanctifying this for the Lord's use. I don't really need this nice object. Here is this big boat. I've always wanted this big boat. This boat will go from the Gulf of Mexico all the way across the ocean to France. I know the Berean youth clubs would have a lot of use for that sort of thing, so I'm buying it, and I'm sanctifying it to the Lord's use." So they justify spending the money on something that they really shouldn't be spending their money on. They're sanctifying it by setting it apart to God's use, knowing that the Berean youth clubs are never going to get their hands on that boat to do anything with it.

However, you can sanctify in a genuine way. You can indeed spend your money on something and say, "I'm doing this, in part, to make this available for the Lord's use. I am spending the money on this to make this object set apart for the promotion and the forward-going of the Lord's work. A lot of you have indeed done that very thing.

1. **One Thing May Sanctify Another Thing**

One thing may sanctify another thing (Matthew 23:17-19). Lot was sanctified (set apart) for divine blessing. Why? Because he was associated with Abraham. There are a lot of people that come under blessing of God because they happen to be associated with someone who is set apart to the Lord, and who is under God's divine blessing. Therefore, as that person is blessed, it splashes over, the way super grace does, to those who are around that individual. And the closer you are to that individual, the more you benefit by the blessing that splashes over from him. So, you have this condition where one thing may sanctify another thing.

1. **The Aspects of Sanctification**

There are three aspects of sanctification that are important to recognize.

* 1. **Positional Sanctification**

First of all, there is positional sanctification (1 Corinthians 1:2). We've already looked at that. We are sanctified, by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and placed in Christ. 1 Corinthians 1:30, 1 Corinthians 6:11, and 1 Peter 1:2 all speak about an eternal relationship to God. It refers to our being set apart to eternal life through the work of Jesus Christ on the cross (Hebrews 10:10). We are set apart to eternal life. A Christian is a saint because he is permanently in Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:13 tells us about being baptized into Christ. That's positional sanctification. You have that kind of white garment. This position in Christ bears no relationship to how you live as a Christian. It is the same whether you are a weak Christian or a strong Christian – you are still secure in Christ. Positional sanctification is being as perfect as Jesus Christ is perfect. Positional sanctification never means that you have become sinless. So, the first kind of sanctification that every believer has is positional.

* 1. **Experiential Sanctification**

The second kind of sanctification is what we call experiential sanctification. This is the one that was the problem in Laodicea. 1 Thessalonians 4:3 and Romans 6 tell us about that. This refers to the setting apart to God of the Christian, in his daily life, from sin and from human good. This is when a Christian learns to be free of the two evils of: human goodness; and, acts or sins. This is determined by the degree of one's yieldedness to God: through the confession of sin; through the use of the grace system of learning doctrine; and, through the consequent development of the spiritual maturity structure. Experiential sanctification is not a matter of your feelings or your emotions, any more than justification or forgiveness is. Experiential sanctification is not something you feel. You don't go around saying, Oh, I just feel so sanctified." It is something that is your lifestyle. It is demonstrated by what you do now.

Progress in experientially sanctification is determined by the divine provisions that God has made for preventing us from committing evil. This is the intake of doctrine through the grace system (Psalm 119:11). This is based upon the intercession of Jesus Christ in Heaven (Romans 8:34, Hebrews 7:25, Luke 22:31-32, John 17:1-26). All of these verses tell us how the Lord Jesus Christ is interceding for us to keep us from sinning. Then we have the tremendous power of the indwelling Holy Spirit to keep us from sinning (Galatians 5:16, Romans 8:4). God the Holy Spirit is there to keep us from sinning. So, progress in our sanctification is determined, again, by our involvement in the Word of God. That was the problem with Laodicea – by our positive volition to the Word. That was the problem in Laodicea. This is by the application of the guidance of the Spirit of God so that our service is divine good production.

You and I, as Christians, can never eradicate the sin nature, so we never arrive at sinlessness. Several Scriptures make that clear: Romans 7:21; 2 Corinthians 4:7; and 1 John 1:8. These make it clear that we do not come to sinless perfection, but we do secure victory over the sin nature through the Spirit of God. Galatians 5:16-23 tell us about that. The sin nature has been judged on the cross. It doesn't have absolute power. Romans 6:14 told us that. Experiential sanctification is directly related to how much you grow spiritually. So, it's progressive. You cannot gain more positional sanctification. But every day, you can gain more experiential sanctification. Every day, you can get a better and more improved version of the white garment of experientially sanctification nation. This depends on your progress in spiritual maturity. 2 Peter 3:18 and 2 Corinthians 3:18 both speak about growth in experiential sanctification.

* 1. **Ultimate Sanctification**

Then there is our ultimate sanctification (1 John 3:1-2, 1 Corinthians 15:51-57, Philippians 3:21). Those passages speak about a sanctification that is completed. This refers to the time when you have been set apart as a believer from not only the presence of sin, but the actual practice of sin. This happens in eternity. The sin nature is removed. This is the final goal of our salvation. 1 Thessalonians 5:22-23 tell us that. Ultimate sanctification *is* the state of sinless perfection. Positional sanctification is not sinless perfection. You can't increase your positional sanctification. Experiential sanctification is not sinless perfection, but you can increase your sanctification there. Ultimate sanctification is sinless perfection. You cannot increase that. You have the complete ultimate degree of that sanctification.

So, this is what the apostle John is telling this church in Laodicea: This experiential sanctification is the white garment that they didn't have, because that is how we live. That is our lifestyle as believers. The Christians in Laodicea were walking around with positional sanctification, so they had their underwear on. They were headed for ultimate sanctification. That was sure. But they didn't have any outer garments on. They were naked as far as the Lord was concerned, because of the carnality that characterized them, and, consequently, the human good that they were producing.

1. **Sanctification is not a Feeling**

The doctrine of sanctification cannot be interpreted by one's personal experience, but only by the Word of God. You cannot say, "I feel I am more sanctified today.

1. **Sanctification is Strictly a Position**

Sainthood is strictly a position and is not subject to progression, but spiritual maturity is subject to progression.

1. **The Will of God**

Number 13, our sanctification is the will of God (1 Thessalonians 4:3-7). Our sanctification is the will of God. In the Old Testament, Leviticus 20:26 indicates that sanctification (the outer garment) is the will of God.

1. **A Personal Choice**

Our sanctification is a matter of personal choice. Hebrews 12:14 and 2 Timothy 2:21-22 make it clear that you can have experiential sanctification if you want.

1. **Believers are Sanctified by the Word of God and by the Holy Spirit**

Believers are sanctified by the Word of God (John 17:17, 1 Timothy 4:5), and by the Holy Spirit (1 Peter 1:2).

1. **Believers are Sanctified through Faith**

Christians are sanctified through faith in Christ (Acts 26:18).

1. **Believer's Minds are Sanctified by Knowing Doctrine**

Believers are just sanctified by God in their minds by knowing and explaining doctrine (1 Peter 3:15).

This is the great thing that the Lord has provided for us: sanctification. It is His will. He has made it possible for us to develop it. It is a shameful thing for a Christian to go around without developing a high degree of sanctification in our experience. The fakes and the pretenders and the hypocrites are readily among Christians everywhere, but the Lord Jesus Christ sees right through that on us, as he did with the Laodiceans. He says, "You're walking around naked instead of clothed as royalty should properly be clothed."

So, the Lord says, "Come to Me. As you get doctrine from Me, and you use that doctrine, from that, you may also now develop your personal sanctification – your experiential clothing of the white garment, so that you walk with dignity before God; before angels; and, before the local assembly through which you move. This is the will of God for us.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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[**Back to the Bible Questions index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/allarticles.htm)