



## Sermon Reflection Guide; John 17:17-19

1. Read WSC 35 (in bold below). What sticks out to you in the question and answer. What does this mean for followers of Christ?
2. What means does the Holy Spirit use to sanctify us? How does the word of God sanctify us?
3. Since God uses his word to make us holier what does this mean about how we approach the Bible? In light of this what should we be doing with God's Word?
4. According to John 17:18 for what purpose are we being made holier? How do we accomplish the mission of being sent into the world?
5. What does it mean for Jesus to be "sanctified"? What difference does his work on the cross make for our sanctification?
6. What do these three truths mean in light of John 17:17-19 1. Effort is required. 2. Provision is supplied. 3. It is who you are in Christ.

### Sermon Summary

Jesus is continuing to pray for his disciples on the night of his betrayal and in this section, we find Jesus praying for the *sanctification* of his disciples. These few verses are about our growing up and maturing in Christ and ministering to the world while not being of the world. As we walk through this text it will be helpful to keep in mind three truths. 1. Effort is required 2. Provision is supplied 3. It is who you are in Christ.

First, Jesus begins by praying that his disciples would be sanctified in the truth. In order to understand this, we must ask what does "sanctify" mean? This word means "to make holy", "to purify" or "to be set apart". In other words, to be sanctified is to be made holy, to be made more and more like Christ. As WSC 35 says, "Sanctification is the work of God's free grace whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness."

One way to understand this is to say that we should bear the family resemblance. Just like children grow to look more and more like their earthly parents so too should followers of Christ bear the resemblance of the Lord Jesus with each passing year. We find what this family resemblance looks like in Galatians 5:22. "...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control..." The Holy Spirit grows fruit in increasing measure in the life of Christians. Paul also writes in 1 Thessalonians 4:3. "For this is the will of God, your sanctification..." If you are ever wondering what God has called you to, or what you should do, or how you should behave, you can always be one hundred percent certain that it is God's will that you be sanctified, that you more and more die unto sin and live unto righteousness.

Peter writes in 1 Peter 1:14, "As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written you shall be holy for I am holy." The New Testament is abundantly clear that followers of Christ will bear the

family resemblance, making great effort to kill all our sin. Not just the sins we consider to be big and embarrassing, but all our sin, all the “pet sins” we like to hide and keep for ourselves. Followers of Christ understand that God’s law is given to us in love for our good and therefore we strive to obey it. Just as Hebrews 12:14 says, “Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.” We understand that we could never earn or achieve our salvation by good works, rather, we are saved by Christ’s works and having been justified we strive after sanctification. The question is never are you perfect, the question is are we growing in Christlikeness, perhaps even, do we desire to grow in Christlikeness?

The second question we should ask is how are we sanctified? We may answer this by saying the Holy Spirit sanctifies us but does the Holy Spirit use any particular means to sanctify us? Yes, as Jesus tells us, the Holy Spirit uses the word of God. Jesus says, “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.” Calvin writes, “Christ expressly says that the truth, by which God sanctifies his children, is not to be found anywhere else than in the Word.” Moses tells us the God’s words are not mere words they are our life, David tells us that it is more precious than much fine gold and Jesus tells us man does not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. Is this how we think of the Bible, as precious, our food and our very life?

Psalm 119:9-11 shows us how God’s word sanctifies us, “How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.” The Spirit of God moves through the word of God to sanctify us. There is nothing more powerful in the local church than the Spirit of God moving through the word of God in the hearts of the people of God. The way to be holy is to read, study and apply God’s word. This is why each and every Lord’s day our goal is very simple; we want as much of the Bible as we can get in our worship service. We read, pray, sing and preach the Bible.

Second, Jesus shows us that our sanctification has a purpose, we have a mission, we are sent into the world. Jesus says, “As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.” The only way we can reach the world without being of the world is if we are being sanctified? How do we make the greatest impact on culture? It is not by embracing the world’s wisdom and methods rather we win others to Christ by being more and more different from the world and more and more like Christ. D.M. Lloyd Jones writes, “When the Church is absolutely different from the world, she invariably attracts it. It is when that the world is made to listen to her message, though it may hate it at first...It should not be our ambition to be as much like everybody else as we can, though we happen to be Christian...Our ambition should be to be like Christ, the more like Him the better, and the more like Him we become, the more we shall be unlike everybody who is not a Christian.”

Finally, Jesus says in verse 19, “And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.” Here in verse 19 Jesus reminds us that as we are committed to grow in holiness through the word of God and go on mission, all of this is only possible because of Christ’s work on the cross. This word consecrate can also be translated as “sanctify”. So, we must ask, in what sense does Jesus sanctify himself? Jesus did not need to die unto sin and grow in holiness so what does Jesus mean? Jesus is speaking of his being set apart to atone for sin. This language harkens back to the priest and the sacrifices that were set apart in the Old Testament. This is exactly what Christ our, great high priest and the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world is doing. He set himself apart in order to make atonement for our sin and provide all that we would ever need for both our justification and sanctification.