

The process of sanctification

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As stated in the previous article, sanctification is not something that we acquire instantly when choosing Y'shua as our Messiah. It is the process that takes us out of our old nature and brings us into the kingdom of YHVH. It is a process of breaking down the old and building the new. In some cases, He may even break us down completely in order to start rebuilding on a new foundation. This may be a very painful and traumatic process, and may happen more than once during our journey.

Hosea 6:1

“Come, let us return to YHVH. For He has torn *us*, but He will heal us; He has wounded *us*, but He will bandage us.

This is frequently not what we want, or anticipate, as believers, but remember that YHVH has a plan for our wellbeing and His timing for us is perfect. He will take us by the hand and do what is necessary in order to fulfill His plan for us, if we let Him.

Jeremiah 29:11–13

¹¹ ‘For I know the plans that I have for you,’ declares YHVH, ‘plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. ¹² ‘Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. ¹³ ‘You will seek Me and find *Me* when you search for Me with all your heart.

YHVH's plans for us may not appear in the form we anticipate, but He knows best. Here is a poem from an unknown author that beautifully illustrates this concept.

*I asked for strength and God gave me difficulties to make me strong.
I asked for wisdom and God gave me problems to solve.
I asked for prosperity and God gave me brawn and brains to work.
I asked for courage and God gave me dangers to overcome.
I asked for patience and God placed me in situations where I was forced to wait.
I asked for love and God gave me troubled people to help.
I asked for favors and God gave me opportunities.
I asked for everything so I could enjoy life.
Instead, He gave me life so I could enjoy everything.
I received nothing I wanted, I received everything I needed.
– Unknown*

We do not always know what we need, but He, our Creator, knows exactly what it is that we need. If we allow Him to execute His plan through us, we will eventually have all we ever needed. In his letter to the Philippians, Paul mentions that YHVH will perfect His work in us before the return of Messiah.

Philippians 1:6

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 Messiah Y'shua.

Even when we, or others, make wrong choices, YHVH causes it to work together for good for us.

Romans 8:28

²⁸ And we know that Elohim causes all things to work together for good to those who love Elohim, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.

Sanctification is thus a process, not an event. This process may include difficult and/or traumatic experiences. We need to believe and trust that even these difficult times are for our benefit and that YHVH is always in control.

We have a role to play in this process of sanctification. What exactly do we need to do?

Relationship and Obedience

Our first step in the sanctification process is to work on our relationship with YHVH. He wants a relationship with us. That was His purpose in creating humans in the first place. From this love relationship flows a desire to be obedient to Him. He told us in His Word how He wants us to treat Him, and if we care, we will ensure that we do this. However, we do not have to perform in order to receive YHVH's love. He loved and chose us while we were still sinners.

Romans 5:6

⁶ For while we were still helpless, at the right time Messiah died for the ungodly.

Y'shua's death and resurrection is sufficient to cover our past, present and future sins. We are not to use this as a ticket to sin, but we are to strive for perfection in what we do for YHVH.

Choosing perfection instead of excellence

In the business world, “excellence” has become the buzz word. Companies strive for excellence in order to achieve highest profitability. All they have to do is to be slightly better than their competitors. The aim is not to make the best product they can, but a good enough product to outsell the rest. They follow best practice, rather than strive for perfection.

Society has adopted this attitude when it comes to everything in life. Being good enough is not the aim. Rather, the aim should be perfection. What standard is acceptable to you?

We should be moving our standard from good enough to doing our best. Perfection requires our best, while excellence simply needs best practice. In other words, excellence is: “What is the least I have to do in order to get away with it?” We are trained by the world to strive for excellence. Perfection takes too much time, effort and commitment. Also, when we aim for spiritual perfection, we are marked by the world as fanatical. Most expect of us to blend in and not rock the boat. The world teaches us not to make life too difficult for those around us by stirring up their conscience. However, YHVH deserves our best, no matter what the world may think of us.

Please remember, YHVH does not require perfection from us. He loves us and adopted us while we were still sinners. More about this in the next section. However, if we aim for perfection, we will do far better than when we aim for “good enough.” This also helps in setting correct priorities in our lives. Doing His will should be more important than blending in with our friends, or having a good time. We can still do His will and have a good time.

Who am I?

In order for us to be sanctified, we need to understand what it is that YHVH has planned for us. We cannot claim anything we do not know we have the right to. We need to understand how YHVH sees us. The enemy and his worldly systems have done a great job of breaking us down. We are all very aware of our bad side and how that creates a separation between us and YHVH. When we read the Scriptures, we find that YHVH actually sees us in a better light than we see ourselves.

Do yourself a favor and read the Scriptures to get a true view. You will be pleasantly surprised to see how much YHVH loves you, what great plans He has for you, how much he wants you to return to Him, no matter where you are. You can start by looking at our past article on this topic – [It is time for us to get out of slavery and return to YHVH!](#) Once you have done this, go one step further and [memorize some of your favorite passages](#) to use when the enemy comes against you. Renewing your mind with Scripture is essential in preparing for all forms of spiritual battle. We will focus more on this later.

Healing from our past

In [the previous article](#), we have mentioned the need to be healed. This is not only speaking of physical healing, but more specifically speaks of emotional and spiritual healing. Before you can be healed you need to be aware of your wounds and hurts. This may require you

to have a hard look at all the things in your life that are contrary to what the Scriptures say you need to be like. Is this what you are experiencing in your life?

Galatians 5:22–23

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Or are you still experiencing some of this?

Galatians 5:19–21

¹⁹ Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, ²¹ envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of YHVH.

These “symptoms” indicates that there is still a need for healing in your life. Why are you having so many anger issues? Why are you constantly fighting with your husband/wife, kids, co-workers or other believers online? How is the envy you have for what the neighbours have impacting your self image? If you are honest with yourself and take the time to answer these difficult questions, you may find some unresolved hurts in your past.

These unresolved hurts could be hurting you via inner vows you had made at the time, or you un-forgiveness towards a perpetrator could be keeping you from receiving healing. In your past you may find a number of spiritual problems you need to pay attention to. These include:

- Generational curses
- Soul ties
- Strongholds
- Ungodly habits

Please note – if you are struggling with addictions like compulsive shopping, over-working, tobacco, alcohol, gambling, sex or pornography, it may be a symptom of an unresolved emotional or spiritual wound. In recent years those active in pastoral care, have come to realize that the impact of early childhood trauma, abandonment and lack of bonding to the primary caregiver, could lead to addictions and attachment issues in later life.

Two great resources in dealing with this are Journey2Freedom and Journey2 Wholeness from Kanaan Ministries. These are two in-depth courses that will help you identify, work through and find healing for unresolved issues.

Flee from sin

The most effective way not to sin is to avoid it, or anything that can lead to it. This includes avoiding places and situations that could lead to temptation. A married woman should avoid being alone with a man that is not her husband. In this way, she not only avoids any possible temptation for herself or the man, but she also upholds modesty and strives towards moral perfection. This action also safeguards her reputation by avoiding the

perception of evil. This is also applicable to married men. Another example would be not allowing your teenage son or daughter to go out dating without any supervision. Also, if you know you are weak in a certain area, you will have to be super vigilant to avoid any possible temptation. For example: an alcoholic will not meet with friends in a bar and a person prone to be tempted by gambling will not go to a casino or racetrack.

We are taught in scripture:

2 Timothy 2:22

Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on YHVH from a pure heart.

2 Timothy 2:19

Nevertheless, the firm foundation of Elohim stands, having this seal, "YHVH knows those who are His," and, "Everyone who names the name of YHVH is to abstain from wickedness."

1 Corinthians 6:18

¹⁸Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body.

We are not to think we are strong enough to resist all temptation. This is arrogance and may lead us to fall into sin.

1 Corinthians 10:12

Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.

Another area that is very important in the sanctification process is mind renewal.

Renewal of the mind

Renewal of the mind is essential in the sanctification process. We need to replace the faulty thinking patterns and strongholds in our minds with YHVH's truth. When we memorize scripture, we do that, we change our neuro-pathways, which means our default way of thinking is changed. Paul instructed the believers in Rome to do this.

Romans 12:2

² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of Elohim is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Y'shua is a great example for us in that when He was tested in the wilderness, He fought the temptation with the truth of YHVH's Word. As we encounter spiritual attacks and temptations every day, we are to do the same. We must therefore get into the daily habit of memorizing scripture. This does not mean that you must be able to exactly quote reference and verse before quoting scripture. Recalling correctly what the scripture says and how to apply it is sufficient. Having the knowledge that YHVH makes all things work together for good for all who love Him, is more important than knowing it is written in Romans 8:28.

In our article on scripture memorization, we share some tips on how to do this effectively.

A part of mind renewal is also developing the ability to control our thoughts. We are told that we need to take all our thoughts captive.

2 Corinthians 10:5

We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of Elohim, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Messiah,

Taking these thoughts captive ensures that we can react from the front part of our brain, where we make deliberate decisions. If we do not do this, we respond from the lower part of the brain, which is where our “past pain” type reactions originate from. Making deliberate decisions, before taking action, allows us to alter the way we react. This will result in a change of habits and can also assist us in breaking some of our addictions.

Mind renewal is essential because we are often tempted in our minds and sin originates in the mind. If we do not renew our minds, we have to rely a lot more on self-control and willpower. You can read our earlier article: [How to learn self-control and why we need to](#) This strategy can fail us when we are tired, emotional, or during times when our defences are low. Mind renewal will help prevent us from getting into situations where we need to stop sin with willpower or self control. It creates a fence for us in our minds.

Perception vs reality

Part of mind renewal is dealing with perceptions. Our view of the world might not always be a reality. We see the world through our unique set of filters, which are our perceptions. These include the trauma we went through, our family setup, our religious upbringing and the society we live in. If we were emotionally wounded and the wounds are really deep, we may end up like a radar dish looking for trouble. Psychology calls this “hyper vigilance.” This will influence our default behaviour unless we are healed. If a woman experienced sexual abuse at a young age, she may end up perceiving all men as bad. Any man that shows any interest in her will be perceived as a threat. YHVH may also be perceived by her in the same way. Unless she receives healing from this early trauma, she will have difficulty sustaining meaningful relationships with men and with YHVH.

In order to bring our perception closer to reality, we need to do two things: Firstly, we need to build a support network that can help us see the real world. Solomon told us how friends could be a mirror, helping us see our wrong perceptions. It may not always be easy or fun, but sure to help us heal. Loving confrontation from a true friend may hurt, but it will bring healing in the long run.

Proverbs 27:6

Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.

The friends we interact with can help us identify our filters. Also, a mentor or counsellor who has experience with this specific problem could be beneficial to help us see the world more realistically. They can help us distinguish between our past hurts and real threats.

Secondly, we need to seek healing of our wounds. These wounds will make us react in a certain way. This might not always be the best way of dealing with a specific situation. It could even lead us to sinful behaviours. A person who suffered trauma because of neglect

by his mother and/or father needs to seek counselling on how to properly form bonds. Not being able to bond may cause him/her to form an addiction. These addictions are what stills the pain of not being able to properly bond and receive love.

Once the pain is removed, it will allow us to clear out our perceptions and see the real world. The more we heal, the closer we will come to reality. If we understand our perceptions, and we seek healing from our wounds, the process of maturation will begin.

A great help in this maturation process is to lead with our spirit instead of with our emotions.

Reawakening of the spirit-man

Most of us run around making the majority of our decisions based on our emotions. What we should be aiming at is to make all our decisions in the spirit. We know that the heart and the mind can be deceiving.

Jeremiah 17:9

“The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?”

What does this actually mean? Due to experiences in our past, we have created perceptions, inner vows and defence mechanisms to protect ourselves from repeated exposure to the same hurt. Thoughts like “you cannot trust men”, “I do not need other people in my life” and “people do not like me” are all indicators of a past hurt that will impact the decisions we make today. It will impact the relations we create and how capable we are about maintaining those relationships.

This mechanism has most likely served us well for a large part of our lives, but it is holding us back from receiving all that YHVH has bestowed upon us. YHVH is spirit and He speaks to our spirit. Thus, we need to put our spirit, led by YHVH’s Spirit, back in charge.

Galatians 5:16

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

The spirit is the one that should be leading, not the emotions. It is a deliberate choice we must make to put the spirit back in charge. You need to move your “spirit man” to the front. In prayer, if possible aloud, thank your “emotional man” for protecting you for so long, but kindly ask it to step aside. Now call your “spirit-man” forward and tell him to lead you through YHVH’s Spirit. If you allow your spirit to lead, you will experience more of YHVH in your daily life.

1 Corinthians 6:17

But the one who joins himself to YHVH is one spirit with Him.

You need to feed your spirit-man by spending quality time in the spirit with YHVH. Do not confuse Bible study time with spending time in the presence of YHVH. Spending time in His presence is being still and waiting to hear His voice. Develop this crucial habit if you want to stop your emotions from running the show.

Baptism/ Mikvah

We have written a series of articles on baptism and mikvah. This external cleansing has great spiritual significance to us. You can read more about it in the following articles: [Mikvah Part 1 Spiritual cleansing](#), [Mikvah Part 2 How to](#) and [The significance of Baptism](#)

Conclusion

We are called to be sanctified, it is YHVH's will for us. This sanctification is not something that happens at conversion, it is a process. A process we work on together with YHVH. He wants to help us and to heal us. Y'shua came to set the captives free and after He ascended to heaven, the Ruach was given to all believers as Helper. Through YHVH's set apart Spirit, we can become sanctified if we allow Him to lead us in this process.

We have a responsibility too and YHVH has given us the tools to work at our sanctification through a relationship with Him and obedience to His Word.

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