

This **Positional Sanctification** is very much like Justification and differs from **Practical or Progressive Sanctification** in its nature. The following chart is depicting Grudem’s view of the differences between Justification and Progressive Sanctification.

Justification & Positional Sanctification	Sanctification Practical or Progressive
Legal Standing	Internal Condition
Once for all time	Continuous throughout life
Entirely God’s work	We cooperate with God
Perfect in this life	Not perfect in this life
The same in all Christians	Greater in some than others

In summary, because **Positional Sanctification** has already been completed by Christ, it is therefore **perfect** and **complete**.

However, the Bible also speaks about **Sanctification** as an **ongoing process**. This is the common use of the word sanctification (and doctrine) which speaks of the Practical or Progressive and ongoing process which continues in our life until the resurrection. As we said earlier, **Sanctification is that work of God conforming us into the image of Christ progressively over time**. But as we have said, it is a **cooperative process** where we are also called to exert effort and diligence to see it come to fruition. Concerning the fact that **sanctification** is a **“cooperative”** and/or **“synergistic”** process, consider this quote by JI Packer; *In sanctification, the Holy Spirit “works in you to will and to act” according to God’s purpose; what he does I prompt you to “work out your salvation” (i.e., express it in action) by fulfilling these new desires (Phil. 2:12-13). Sanctification, however, is in one sense synergistic – it is an ongoing cooperative process in which regenerate persons, alive to God and freed from sin’s dominion (Rom. 6:11, 14-18), are required to exert themselves in sustained obedience. God’s method of sanctification is neither activism (self-reliant activity) nor apathy (God-reliant passivity), but God-dependent effort (2 Cor. 7:1; Phil. 3:10-14; Heb. 12:14). Sanctification – Consider how Packer explains how the synergism works. He says that **God prompts us** by the Spirit, having already freed us from the dominion of sin and made alive to God in regeneration, we put forth God-dependent effort. See then that **God is the primary agent** and **our effort is secondary**. John Murray comments about this cooperation with God. “While we are constantly dependent upon the supernatural agency of the Holy Spirit, we must also take account of the fact that **sanctification is a process** that draws within its scope the conscious life of the believer.... Neither is the relation **strictly one of co-operation as if God did his part and we did ours** so that the conjunction or co-ordination of both produced the required result. **God works in us and we also work**. But the relation is that **because God works we work**.” *Redemption Accomplished and Applied page 148*...Now see how both Packer and Murray are very careful to describe **God** as the **primary worker** in this **cooperative process**. The truth is without God first giving us the Spirit and regenerating us, freeing us from sin’s dominion, and Christ having brought about reconciliation through His active and passive obedience, we would be hopelessly lost, remaining dead in our transgression and sin. Let us acknowledge then that God is indeed primary, even in*

sanctification, and because of this fact, He gets the glory for it. In fact all three members of the Godhead play a role in sanctification (1 Thes 5:23-24, Heb 12:5-11, Heb 13:20-12, 1 Cor 1:30, 1 Pet 2:21) although the Holy Spirit has the specific ministry of applying redemption to us in sanctification. This is why we say that **sanctification is wholly the work of God**, because He is the **primary cause** of it and the one who determines to what **degree** we will be practically sanctified in this life (Rom 12:3-6). The Bible explicitly states that God is so sovereignly in control in sanctification that He **“is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.”**

Philippians 2:12-13 - 12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your salvation** with fear and trembling; 13 **for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.** NASB

See then that **God** is the **primary agent** and **our effort** is **secondary** in the cooperative process.

Nevertheless, we are commanded by God to **“work out your salvation”** and in a very ardent and reverent way he says, **“with fear and trembling.”** And when Paul says **“work out your salvation”** he uses the term salvation here not as the initial justification that occurred when we believed, but as the ongoing process of further realizing the blessings and benefits of salvation in our daily lives. We are **to exert God-dependent effort** to press on toward Christlikeness, thus **bearing His image** in greater degree, and experiencing the enjoyment of Christ’s virtue more and more as a result.

2 Corinthians 7:1 - Therefore, having these promises, beloved, **let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness** in the fear of God. NASB

Philippians 3:10-14 - 10 that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; 11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. 12 **Not that I have already obtained it, or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.** 13 Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and **reaching forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.** NASB

Hebrews 12:14 - **Pursue** peace with all men, **and the sanctification** without which no one will see the Lord. NASB

Notice here in these Scriptures that we are to **“cleanse ourselves”** and to **“press on toward the goal”** and to **“pursue...sanctification,”** clearly showing that we are called to exert effort by the Spirit to **“perfect holiness”** in this life. Many passages in the Bible describe different aspects of our role and explain it as an **active role** on our part.

Romans 8:12-13 - 12 So then, brethren, **we are under obligation**, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh — 13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if **by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body**, you will live. NASB

1 Thessalonians 4:3-8 - 3 For **this is the will of God, your sanctification**; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that **each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor**, 5 not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; 6 and that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is the avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you. 7 For **God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification.** 8 Consequently, he who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you. NASB

1 John 3:2-3 - 2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is. 3 And **everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.** NASB

1 Corinthians 6:18-20 - 18 **Flee immorality.** Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. 19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20 For you have been bought with a price: **therefore glorify God in your body.** NASB