

In his book, “The Hole in our Holiness,” Kevin DeYoung gives these virtue and vice lists and goes on to describe a few other important things that define personal holiness. He adds;

- Clean Conscience
- Obedience to God’s Commands
- Christlikeness

Surely our **conscience guides** us by the prompting of the Holy Spirit to **obey God’s commandments** and be virtuous. And as we have discussed, **becoming like Christ** in our character and practice is what bearing the image of God means. DeYoung makes the contrast of virtue and vice in the Christian life really clear. He writes, “*You can think of holiness, to employ a metaphor, as the sanctification of your body. The mind is filled with the knowledge of God and fixed on what is good. The eyes turn away from sensuality and shudder at the sight of evil. The mouth tells the truth and refuses to gossip, slander, or speak what is coarse or obscene. The spirit is earnest, steadfast, and gentle. The heart is full of joy instead of hopelessness, patience instead of irritability, kindness instead of anger, humility instead of pride, and thankfulness instead of envy. The sexual organs are pure, being reserved for the privacy of marriage between one man and one woman. The feet move toward the lowly and away from senseless conflict, divisions, and wild parties. The hands are quick to help those in need and ready to fold in prayer. This is the anatomy of holiness,*” end quote. This is why the **Bible** is so **specific** about what **virtue** and **vice** really are. This is so we can discern **vice** in our live and **mortify** it or put it to death, or **put it off**. It is also so we can clearly see what **virtue** is and **vivify** or express the life of God which is in us by **putting on** these virtues.

**Colossians 3:5-9** - 5 Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to **immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry**. 6 For it is on account of these things that the wrath of God will come, 7 and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them. 8 But now you also, put them all aside: **anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another**, since you laid aside the old self with its **evil practices**, NASB  
**Colossians 3:12-15** - 12 And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of **compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other**, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. 14 And beyond all these things **put on love**, which is the perfect bond of unity. 15 And **let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts**, to which indeed you were called in one body; and **be thankful**. NASB

Notice the pattern in these letters to New Covenant Christians concerning the practice of Christian life. **Put off the old nature** of vice and sin and **put on the new nature** of virtue and righteousness.

**Ephesians 4:20-24** - 20 But you did not learn Christ in this way, 21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, 22 that, **in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit**, 23 and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and **put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth**. NASB

**Ephesians 4:25-32** - 25 Therefore, **laying aside falsehood, speak truth**, each one of you, with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. 26 Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and do not give the devil an opportunity. 28 **Let him who steals steal no longer; but rather let him labor, performing with his own hands what is good, in order that he may have something to share with him who has need**. 29 **Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear**. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 **Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice**. 32 **And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you**. NASB

Further, these are **moral** issues. A common word used to describe virtue in our culture is **morality**. **Virtue** is by nature **moral** and **vice** by nature **immoral**. So when we speak of morality we speak of that which is consistent with God, His nature and His holy standard in the Bible. The Bible gives the only **objective truth** concerning morality. The culture may seek to define its own standard of morality, either by emotions, feelings or just what is popular. But the only true and proper **standard** for **morality** is of course God and His nature, which defines what virtue and vice, sin and righteousness, right and wrong are. **Good** and **evil** are **defined** by the *holy character and nature of God* who made the world and governs it by His Providence! People in the culture may think what they will, but ultimately they will give an account of their morality in life to God, who **judges** all people impartially, **according** to His own *holy moral standard*. Therefore God desires our lives to be **holy**, reflecting His **holiness** as His own **holy** people. This is why the sanctification process and the Christian life in general is essentially about **personal holiness**, as we seek to both glorify and enjoy God. We **glorify** Him when we put off sin and put on virtue by the prompting of the Spirit and the Word, and we also **enjoy** Him as we take on His nature and begin to bear His image in greater likeness. Living a life of true virtue is in fact glorifying and enjoying God to the fullest.

**1 Peter 1:14-16** - 14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, 15 but **like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; 16 because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."** NASB

Consider then that God has made our ability to discern good from evil, virtue from vice very easy throughout the Bible. The below chart summarizes much of this discussion and clarifies the dichotomy between good and evil and some elements of how it relates to God and to the Christian life.

Virtue	Vice
God's Nature	Violates God's Nature
Good – Moral Righteousness	Sin – Evil – Immoral Wickedness
New Nature	Old Nature
Put on	Put off
Pleases God	God hates it
Vivification	Mortification

As we have learned, **God's great purpose** in **salvation** is to fashion us **in His image**. This He does because He ultimately delights in His own character and nature above all other things and is zealous to see His glory expressed in and through His creation, of whom mankind is the pinnacle. The salvation of mankind from the fall into sin is God's chief way in which He makes His glory known in the course of History, including the eternal state in the New Heavens and Earth. Therefore we are said to be His "**New Creations**" in Christ and "**predestined to be conformed into His image**" and likeness. As God will ultimately accomplish this at **Glorification** finally for us, He has told us to pursue it with our whole heart as we love Him and serve Him because of Christ. This **sanctification** pursuit is the main goal of the Christian life.

## Sanctification

### 1 Peter 1:15-16

but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." NASB

In the “*ordo salutis*” or **order of salvation**, **sanctification** is that part of **salvation** that begins at **regeneration** and continues until the resurrection, being terminated by **glorification**. It follows **conversion** (faith and repentance), **justification**, and **adoption**, all of which are birthed by regeneration and happened apparently simultaneously. Sanctification then issues forth until death. **Sanctification is that work of God conforming us into the image of Christ progressively over time.** In this process God by the Word and the Spirit, molds us more and more in our whole person so that we take on His very character in greater degree over time. We are said to “*become partakers of the divine nature*” by “*His magnificent and precious promises.*” Through this divinely ordered process, God “*multiplies His grace and peace*” to us “*through the true knowledge of God.*” God **increases His virtue** in us as we come to truly know Him.

2 Peter 1:2-4 - 2 **Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus** our Lord; 3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us **everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him** who called us by His own glory and excellence. 4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, **in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. NASB

Not only this, but as a result of God working by the Word and the Spirit in us, He calls us to “*work out our salvation,*” making every **effort** by faith, or “*applying all diligence in your faith,*” because God is at work in you to do His will and 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

2 Peter 1:5-8 - 5 Now for this very reason also, **applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence**, and in your moral excellence, knowledge; 6 and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness; 7 and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. 8 For **if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.** NASB

And this sanctification affects the **whole person** throughout our life, until when we die, when we are ultimately **glorified** in His presence (see page 12). John Murray comments; “*When we speak of sanctification we generally think of it as that process by which the believer is gradually transformed in heart, mind, will, and conduct and conformed more and more to the will of God and to the image of Christ until at death the disembodied spirit is made perfect in holiness and at the resurrection his body likewise will be conformed to the likeness of the body of Christ’s glory. It is biblical to apply the term “sanctification” to this process of transformation and conformation.*” **John Murray – Definitive Sanctification**

<http://reformedaudio.org/audio/murray/Murray%20-%20Definitive%20Sanctification.pdf>

**Sanctification** has at its core the idea of purity or **holiness**. The root idea of the words for holiness and holy is, to be **set apart** for God’s own special use. God’s people are therefore called **holy**. The biblical term [GK. haggios]“*saint*” by which Christians are called in Scripture, means “**holy ones.**” Christians are God’s holy people set apart for His own special use.

I repeat Kevin DeYoung's statement here; *"There is no question that holiness is one of the central themes in the Bible. The word "holy" occurs more than 600 times in the Bible, more than 700 when you include derivative words like holiness, sanctify and sanctification. You can't make sense of the Bible without understanding that God is holy and that this holy God is intent on making a holy people to live with Him forever in a holy heaven. The whole system of Israel's worship revolves around holiness. That's why you have a holy people (the priests), with holy clothes, in a holy land (Canaan), at a holy place (tabernacle/temple), using holy utensils and holy objects, celebrating holy days, living by a holy law, so that they might be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."* end quote ... In the Old Testament the language of holiness is typically reserved for religious and ceremonial practice, although it is used in a moral sense as well. But in the New Testament, it is strictly moral and ethical. Bruce Demarest comments; *"Holiness...In everyday living, inner freedom from evil thoughts and attitudes (Eph 5:27, Heb 3:1), abstinence from immoral acts (1 Thes 4:3-4, 1 Pet 1:15), and a positive commitment to good and neighbor (Col 3:12-14, Tit 1:8). Following Pentecost, holiness manifests itself in the fruit of the Spirit in redeemed lives. Holiness, in a word, is Christlikeness daily manifested in the midst of a godless world."* The Cross and Salvation by Bruce Demarest – Crossway

**Holiness** in the New Testament concerns our **position** before God based on the finished work of Christ (**Positional Sanctification**), AND how we behave in the practice of the Christian life (**Practical Sanctification**). When we speak about **holiness** we speak about **sanctification**.

### Positional and Practical Sanctification

*"Sanctification,"* writes Wayne Grudem, *"is a progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and like Christ in our actual lives."* This of course is a biblically accurate definition of the part of salvation we call **sanctification**. Much of the language of the New Testament speaks of **sanctification** as this **progressive process**. However, it also speaks of sanctification, in certain texts, as a **completed work** which has **already taken place**. This is what we call the **"Positional"** aspect of sanctification, or **Positional Sanctification**. This is because God's people have been cleansed **in the sight of God** or **before Him**, having been made **holy** or **sanctified** by the work of Christ. In other words, we hold a **position before God**, which is **"in Christ"** and therefore we have been cleansed, washed, made holy, and purified by the work of Christ alone, and this has been appropriated to us by faith in Him. The New Testament makes reference to this **Positional Sanctification** in several places.

**Hebrews 10:10, 14** - 10 By this will **we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all**..... 14 For by one offering **He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified**. NASB

**1 Corinthians 1:30-31** - 30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, **who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption**, 31 that, just as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord." NASB

**Colossians 1:21-22** - 22 But now he has reconciled you **by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation** NASB

**1 Corinthians 6:11** - 11 And such were some of you; **but you were washed, but you were sanctified**, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God. NASB

See in these Scriptures that there is an **aspect** of **sanctification** which is **already accomplished**. In fact, what Christ accomplished for us was a **perfect righteousness** before God by His perfect life and death, which is applied to us **by faith** when we believe. We were in fact completely **purified** and **cleansed** from our sins, **past, present** and **future** by what Christ accomplished.