

EVERY TRACK EVERY WEEK

WEEK 24: Leader Study Guide

The Struggle is Real

-Welcome!

-Intro: Thanks for being here! Revisit last week's points

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INTRO:

Hi, and welcome to Every Track Every Week. My name is _____ and I am involved with Texas FCA Motocross through _____. I've been involved with FCA MX for _____ years and my favorite thing about the ministry is _____.

This week's discussion is based upon episode #90 of our podcast "The Gospel Driven Athlete" titled, "The Struggle is Real." This week we are going to look at the process of Christian growth. What should it look like? What should it feel like? Will it happen at the same rate for all Christians? The term for this is "sanctification" and the Bible gives a clear recipe for our sanctification, but we regularly ignore God's recipe and throw one together ourselves, to our own detriment. The good news is that the good news (the gospel) is what sanctifies us! The message of our redemption accomplished in the person and work of Jesus Christ is what actually drives our Christian growth! God promises to use the proclamation (telling) of the message of undeserved redemption, accomplished in Christ, when we were dead in our sins, to actually shape us more and more into His image and likeness. Like our justification (being made right with God), our sanctification, and one day our glorification, are all undeserved gifts of God! All of our salvation (including our growth as Christians between the time of our justification and our ultimate glorification one day) is found in Christ alone! This truly is good news!

-Ice Breaker Question: Have you ever lost your keys or locked them in your car and had to call a tow truck or break into your own car to get them out?

-Question 1: What is sanctification?

***Answer**

1) Sanctification is part of God's saving work and a promise of the gospel



message. As believers who have been filled with the Holy Spirit, God promises to change us from the inside out. When we place our faith in the finished work of Christ God imparts his Spirit to us and we are united to Christ and his life death and resurrection. In that Union God turns our heart of stone into a heart of flesh. The practical result of that is that God's spirit gives us new affections.

2) Ezekiel 36:26 says, *“And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.”* This is God's promise to sanctify us and replace our dead lifeless hearts (hearts that cannot and do not desire to please Him) with hearts that long to uphold God's Law and to glorify Him. These things are gifts given by God, not produced by us.

3) The Westminster Shorter Catechism Question 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.” Historically, the Church has always acknowledged what Hebrews 12:2 says about Jesus as “the founder and perfecter of our faith”.

-Question 2: Is Sanctification Subjective or Objective? Is there a certain “level” of behavior that a Christian must achieve to ensures they are “truly sanctified” or, is sanctification primarily a work of God in the heart of individual believers?

***ANSWER:**

1) Sanctification is primarily a work of the heart. However, a heart change results in tangible changes in behavior and is marked primarily by a real “struggle” against the flesh.

2) The Westminster Confession of Faith Ch13.2 says, *“This sanctification is throughout, in the whole man; yet imperfect in this life, there abiding still some remnants of corruption in every part; whence arises a continual and irreconcilable war, the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh”*

3) The new spirit that God gives to a believer causes an inward affection towards the law of God and an agreement that his nature (which is embodied in the law) is the greatest good to be pursued and desired. Psalms 119:97 *“Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day.”*

4) Illustrating the subjective nature (or varying degree) of sanctification, we



read in 2 Cor 3:18, “*And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.*” This verse is telling us that ALL Christians ARE being transformed. It absolutely IS happening. BUT, it is happening at varying degrees... in varying measures. Some grow quicker than others, some grow slower than others... but it is happening.

Question 3: What happens when we try to make our Sanctification Objective? Or, to say it another way, what happens when we try to make our growth as Christians the same for everyone where all Christians are supposed to reach a certain level of maturity at a specified point?

***ANSWER:**

1) Sanctification is not how we justify ourselves before God, but when we make sanctification objective, we turn our growth as Christians into the means by which we are seen as right in Gods eyes, rather than Christ and His objective work. Sanctification is a result of true justification. That is extremely important because many people get this backwards, to their own detriment. When we look to our performance as Christians for our right standing with God we will end up either depressed (because we realize that we are not pulling it off) or arrogant (because we have lied to ourselves and told ourselves that we are actually pulling it off). Many pastors will preach sanctification as a condition to salvation and constantly encourage introspection to “make sure” one is saved. While introspection is a critical part of the Christian life, we should not be looking inward for objective righteousness. Christ is the only One who was ever objectively righteous. For every 1 time we look inwards to evaluate ourselves, we should look to Christ 10 times!

2) Here is an example of Objective righteousness. Jesus lived every day for God. With every ounce of his being he loved God. He was in perfect relationship to him. He was selfless and loved his neighbor perfectly. He was objectively perfect in every way and always pleased God by what he did. This is not true of us.

3) The problem is that we are not objectively righteous and even our best days are very imperfect and subjective accomplishments. This means that we cannot rest in them as our confidence because then we can never find true rest. God requires perfection. Sanctification does not mean we are



able to please God by how we perform. He doesn't grade on a curve. Thanks be to God that He GIVES us Christ's righteousness. He gives us Christ's perfection, so that we are seen as if we are objectively righteous... perfectly righteous, when in and of ourselves, we are the farthest thing from that.

-Question 4: So then how does Sanctification happen? What, or who, causes it?

ANSWER:

1) Titus 2:11-14 says, *"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people,¹² training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,¹³ waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,¹⁴ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works."* We are trained to be Godly by "the grace of God that has appeared". Titus 2 is talking about the Gospel. Through hearing and believing the gospel (Romans 10:16) God sanctifies our hearts through the holy spirit. Most practically this happens in the context of the local church where we hear the preaching of the word weekly and experience the gospel with our senses through baptism and the Lords supper. Sanctification is a gift from God that we get to receive as a blessing.

2) 2 Cor 3:18 (the same verse we looked at earlier) says, *"And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord,^[e] are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.^[f] For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit."* Paul is teaching us here that the SOURCE of our growth (sanctification) is God. God is the source of our growth and He uses "the glory of the Lord" to accomplish this growth. What Paul means by "the glory of the Lord" is "the gospel". The gospel is "the glory of the Lord." So, transformation happens... sanctification happens... "as we behold (look to) the gospel". As Romans 1:16 says, *"the gospel is the power of God unto salvation"* and this salvation includes justification, sanctification, and ultimate glorification. The gospel is the power of God unto sanctification.

3) As we focus intently on the objective work of Christ, God begins conforming our wayward hearts to his law. Despite how subjective our performance and obedience is, as we rest in the concrete work of Christ, that is when we begin to conform to the Law of God as our hearts are reformed slowly but surely. Romans 10:17 says, *"So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ."* The word of Christ here is



specifically referring to the gospel of Jesus Christ, not necessarily the entirety of scripture. Paul is specifying that faith comes from hearing the gospel (ie the word of Christ).

-Question 5: How should these things drive our attitudes, actions and lives?

ANSWER:

1) We should be encouraged and provoked to rest on and focus on what Jesus accomplished for us. After all, sanctification flows from this type of Rest. Jesus told all who were weary and heavy laden to come to him for rest. He washes our feet and accomplishes all righteousness and gifts it to all who believe.

2) The Westminster Confession of faith ch13.3 says, “In which war, although the remaining corruption, for a time, may much prevail; yet, through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part does overcome; and so, the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

-Lets pray.

