

**Position Paper # 3**

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**Sanctification** is separation for God, set aside/apart for God and his kingdom. The state that results from it is the appropriate conduct on the part of those that are so separated (Romans 6:19, 1 Thessalonians 4:3, 4, 7; 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 12:14). Thus, sanctification is the state predetermined by God for believers who by grace He calls and in which they commence and persist in their Christian walk. That is why they receive the name of "saints" (*hagioi*).

Sanctification is that relationship with God in which individuals enter by faith in Christ (Acts 26:18; 1 Corinthians 6:11). Sanctification is also used in the New Testament for the separation of the believer from bad things and bad ways. This sanctification is the will of God for the believer (1 Thessalonians 4:3) and his purpose upon calling him by way of the Gospel via his Word (John 17:17, 19; Psalms 17:4; 119:9) and the believer must pursue it seriously and constantly (1 Timothy 2:15, Hebrews 12:14). Seeing that the saintly character, (1 Thessalonians 3:13) is not vicarious, i.e., it cannot be transferred or imputed, it is an individual possession, edified, little by little, as the result of obeying the Word of God and following the example of Christ (Matthew 11:29; John 13:15, Ephesians 4:20; Philippians 2:5) in the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:13; Ephesians 3:16). The Holy Spirit is the agent of the sanctification (Romans 15:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 Corinthians 6:11). The sanctification of the Spirit is associated with the choice of God, it is a divine act which follows the acceptance of the Gospel by the individual. The saintly character denotes the manifestation of holiness in one's personal behavior - Christlikeness. Believers must walk "perfecting holiness in the reverence of God" (2 Corinthians 7:1), i.e., taking holiness to its end, through which they may be found "blameless in holiness" at the appearance of Christ (1 Thessalonians 3:13). In every passage what is under consideration is the perfect character in the case of the Lord Jesus and growing towards perfection/maturity in the case of the Christian. Here it is declared that: The exercise of love is

the means that God uses to develop the likeness of Christ in his children. This can be paraphrased as follows: “May the Lord enable you more and more to spend your lives in the interests of others, so that he can thus establish you now in the Christian character, so that you can be vindicated from any accusation that may be brought against you at the judgment seat of Christ.” Righteousness denotes that quality of holiness that is manifested in those who give grace and truth, it involves a right relationship with God; it is used in Luke 1:75 and Ephesians 4:24 and in both passages it is associated with uprightness. In the Scriptures, in its moral and spiritual sense, to be holy means to be separated from sin and therefore consecrated to God, sacred. It is used for people and things dedicated to God. Certainly, the quality, as attributes of God, is frequently presented in a way that involves divine demands on the conduct of believers. These are called saints, that is, sanctified ones. It is used by believers in Christ and does not apply to already dead people who would have been characterized by exceptional acts of holiness (2Thessalonians 1:10: saints = those that believed = the redeemed). Thus, this holiness is not an achievement, but a state to which God in grace calls individuals; but believers are called to sanctify themselves (consequently to his calling) purifying themselves from all contamination, abandoning sin, living a holy life, and experiencing communion with God in his holiness. Thus, the saints are figuratively pointed out as “a holy temple”, “a holy priesthood”, “a holy nation”. The saint is spiritually upright, as opposed to the crooked or defiled: acts // divine rules of God /His nature - doing works worthy of being called Christian. The saint is reverent in behavior (Titus 2:3), is clean of misconduct and observes the Will of God. The saint does not mix with evil, but separates himself from the world in his conduct, for the Father’s sake through the Word. The saint departs from those things that dishonor God and his Gospel (2 Timothy

2:21). THAT IS WHAT CONVICTS AND CONVINCES THE WORLD: THE POWER AND WORKING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE BELIEVERS/ SAINTS/ SANCTIFIED ONES!

My informed clinical identity and practice is first the biblical principle. I want to share that all humans are sinful, and we need grace. Romans 3:23 says for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. I know that I cannot say that I am better than anyone else because I have sinned and fall short as all humans do. This leads me to the fact that no human has lived a perfect life. Other than Jesus, and when the people try to test Jesus by their desire to stone a woman caught in adultery in John 8:7, Jesus says if anyone of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her, and slowly the crowd fades away as the people recognize their sin. Jesus teaches us in this message to empathize with the least of these as referenced in Matthew 25:34 through 46. He tells us that whatever we have done to the least, the lowest and the farthest outcasts of society we have also done for him. This is a great reminder to empathize with and serve others, and in doing so we serve Jesus. Jesus is an example in the New Testament, consistently showing his empathy for people in the scripture. References from Matthews he heals the sick, heals those with leprosy, heals men who are demon possessed and continues to heal people despite the Pharisees' opposition. Jesus' healings were significant because they were sick people aware of his time, where those who were looked down on and were hard for people to empathize with, Jesus sets the example of breaking barriers between the people, by empathizing with those who are most difficult to empathize with. In Luke 22:49 through 52, Jesus is getting arrested when one of his followers cuts off one of the arresters, ear verse 51, says, but Jesus answered no more of this, and he touched the man's ear and healed him, even as Jesus was being taken away to be killed, he shows his captors empathy and care by healing, and being empathetic, such as where the father shows empathy to his son who had gone astray.

Current, and similarly in the lost sheep in the lost sheep. The shepherd goes out to find the one lost sheep because he cares deeply for his entire flock of sheep. In the example of Ananias from acts Chapter 9, Saul, who will later become Paul and write most of the New Testament, is persecuting Christians violently. God appears to him on the road, and he's blinded. Then God calls in Ananias to restore the site. Ananias is fearful because he knows how Saul is persecuting Christians. Yet he obeys the Lord and shows kindness to solve by restoring his sight. Ananias shows empathy to Saul despite his fear and despite the negative reputation that Saul all has gained for persecuting Christians. This must have been very challenging to offer empathy to someone he knew was murdering his brothers and sisters in Christ. But he did it anyway, and so Paul begins his ministry to the Gentiles as a result. In an example of a lack of empathy in the parable of the unmerciful servant in Matthew 18, the master shows grace and forgiveness to his servant who turns around and does not show grace or forgiveness to his fellow servant. In this example, Jesus tells us to forgive others, as God has forgiven us. He teaches us that we can empathize with people who owe a debt that they cannot repay because we also have a debt that we cannot repay. In the example of Saul and David from the Old Testament in first Samuel, Saul is consistently pursuing David in attempt to murder him. Saul shows David no empathy or mercy. Even time after time again. David shows Saul empathy by not murdering him even when given the opportunity in first Samuel 24:16 and 17, we see Saul's response when David finished saying this Saul asked, is that your voice, David, my son, and he wept out loud you are more righteous than I. He said, you have treated me well. But I have treated you badly, so David could rightfully and justifiably have murdered Saul. Yet he chooses to show him kindness despite the lack of kindness that he has been shown. In the story of Stephen, while they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, Lord Jesus receive my spirit, then he fell on his knees and cried

out, Lord, do not hold this sin against them. When he said this, he fell asleep, prior to this verse in Acts 7, Stephen proclaims Jesus is the Messiah before the same hatred because of his message they became angry with him, dragged him out of the city and stoned him. While Stephen was dying, he prayed for his murders and showed empathy and compassion. As a Christian I choose to live my life differently. It is essential and imperative to show the world how to live because of God's mercy and forgiveness. I can show mercy and forgiveness to others as an outpouring. I can humble myself knowing that I am a sinner who has lived an imperfect life and I am in no position to judge or look down on others for their sins. The Bible teaches me to empathize with those outside of my group of people, such as the poor, disabled elderly or those of a different race or culture for my own. At the base of all our differences, we are all humans in need of a savior. Jesus gives the best example to follow on how to live and empathize with all groups of people in the gospel recordings of his life. He associates with the sick, prostitutes, tax collectors and others at the time of Jesus who were seen as unworthy of social connection or who were considered unclean. Lastly, prayer is a huge part of empathy. As noted in Stephen's story, prayer can help us have compassion on our enemies. God can open my heart and mind and fill me with love for his beloved people through prayer. When empathizing is difficult, prayer will be my route to take. When we empathize with others, certain centers of our brain will activate. These same brain neuro cells activate when we ourselves feel pain. The mirror neuron system is responsible for how we understand others' emotions. When someone is sad, I might mirror a sad facial expression or posture. In this way, I showed him that I care about what they are going through. I am empathizing with their situation because of my mirror neuron system. In the brain that chemical oxytocin is responsible for trust and bonding. These are major elements of empathy, especially in a parent child relationship. As a mother bonds with her baby, oxytocin is

released, and she can empathize with her baby. And the baby learns that they will get their needs met. When this relationship bonds, the young baby is healthy. God designed our brains to connect with each other through empathy and 1 Corinthians 12 describes the unity of the body of Christ. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it. If one part is honored, every part rejoices with it as a body of Christ. We empathize with one another and build each other up. We suffer and rejoice together. In summary, God calls us to empathize with each other and designed us to do so. Jesus is an example, among others. And teaches us how to live in empathize with each other. Stephen's example shows us how to pray for enemies. Those who are the hardest for us to love Christian faith send us apart as we empathize with others showing God's great love and mercy. Neuroscience shows us how God perfectly designed our brains for connection with him and with others. As believers, we share one body of Christ and unified through faith and made us strong through our powerful ability to empathize and have a special fragrance because God and Christ are in us. That scent separates us from this world. As competent, professional clinicians of mental health and spirituality I believe it is something that is such an important part of people's lives and in part and of the people's mental health, and a person in psychological distress. Some turn to their church or their clergy before they ever step foot to a mental health professional, and in a way that is understandable. It is very familial in a lot of ways that can maybe be easier to navigate the mental health care system, I am passionate about bridging that conversation. So, that there is holistic healing but also meeting people where they are from their worldview because of cultural conferences, variance of a competent to healing and recovery as well. So, I believe having conversations with clients in mental health sessions and those with lived experience about the faith, culture, and mental health conversation. Professional counselors that are committed to diversity-informed will bring racial and ethnic concerns into

focus as marginalized clients explore issues of life. Some clients like when health care providers ask about their faith. Maybe, you say a prayer together. If you do not have a religious background, learn so much in terms of what gives them strength. And it is also surprising, it is almost like if you do not take that as part of your history and it is one of the first things, I ask is there a kind of religious or ethical kind of set of values you ascribe to I should know about? To take care of the spiritual self is guidance from that kind of notion of spirituality in their life, or if they do not have it and they want to start experiencing it, like how? I came from a church background, so I will just be honest and say that is kind of where my strength is, but I am sure that this can be universally relatable when it comes to a safe community. mental health in general is having a bunch of tools in a tool belt, right? So, it is a system of support like you may have your psychiatrist or your therapist who is helping you work with the cognitive side or even the nutritional side, which is very important. And then you have your faith community which is very familial. That is where some get that social support which is so important for healthy attachments and healthy bonding. I always talk about how you know we literally have neurochemicals like dopamine and oxytocin that are released upon intimacy and that are wired trust to have healthy attachments for one another and so that social aspect that social support is a huge tool in the tool belt. It is phenomenal in our mental health. They are not in your everyday world, but those who are walking within your faith community can hold you accountable and check in with you and say, how are you doing? It is interesting, because historically speaking the church was always this place of care, like around 480 AD before there was instant institutionalized healthcare. The monasteries were converted into places of care for those who are feeling afflicted both mentally and physically, and for travelers passing by. So, there has always been this foundation of community support there that can maybe extend. In office in a

way, and so I think having all of that together where we are approaching the biological, the psychological, this social spiritual is really going to optimize our recovery and our healing for sure.

We learn first and foremost that Jesus is taken away in such a manner as to leave clear in the minds of observers that he has gone to be with the Father in heaven (Michael F. Bird p.162) First, Jesus ascends to heaven so that he can send the Holy Spirit to his followers.

References

Bird, M. (2016). *What Christians ought to Believe: An introduction to Christin doctrine through the apostle's creed*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan (*p. 162*).