

God's Mechanism for Sanctification

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[0 : 0 0] I should introduce myself. It's been a while since I've been up here. My name is John Juan! I'm also one of the pastors here. I was talking with somebody recently. So Tim Duffing and I serve! in a bi-vocational capacity. So we've got day jobs, but Pastor John, we hired him as a full-time pastor.

Okay, so just kind of FYI, in case you're kind of wondering about that. I don't know if that's public or if that's real obvious, but it should be obvious. Anyway, awesome. So I did, before I get started, I did want to just say thank you to somebody who had given some envelopes with some money in it for a friend of ours. And I was anonymous, and this friend just wanted to let you know that it is very much appreciated. They talked about the community that they are experiencing here as well, and they just love the community. So thank you guys. Thank you so much. Thank you for your love. Very much appreciate it. All right, so how's it going? You know, we launched our mission in our values. We've been talking about that. How's that going? You know, we really do exist to glorify God. Hopefully, we're all learning what it means to walk more closely with him, right? Hopefully, we're learning that. Today, we're going to be talking about the third part of this, essentially, the striving together to become more like Jesus every day. So how do we do this? I got to tell you, it's not automatic. It doesn't just happen because we're Christians, because God lives inside us in the personal Holy Spirit. It doesn't just happen. The problem is we have a problem. We each have a problem. It's called sin. We're all sinners. We're not like Jesus, obviously. And God wants us to become more like Jesus. So how do we solve this problem? What do we do? How do we overcome it? The Bible actually gives us some very clear instructions on how to become more like Jesus. We're going to talk about that today. So why don't we read, excuse me, read the scriptures together. Excuse me, this is from

Ephesians chapter 4, verses 17 through 32. Now this I say and testify in the Lord that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. But that is not the way you learned Christ, assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him as the truth is in Christ, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. Be angry and do not sin.

Do not let the sun go down on your anger and give no opportunity to the devil. Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. Let's pray together.

Father, dear Father, we come before you and we thank you that you love us so much, God. We thank you that you died for us. Thank you that you live inside us in the person of the Holy Spirit. We thank you for your word that you've given us, the powerful word of God. Thank you for our brothers and sisters, Lord. Thank you for these resources that help us to grow, to get to know you better, to become more like you. We ask that you speak to us today, Lord. I ask that you speak to me and speak through me. Help us to learn something new, something different, something that'll change

us, that'll make us more like you. We lift up all the other churches in town, God, places where your people are gathered here in Dubuque, Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois, United States, the whole world, God. We ask that you impact lives, that people would be more like you because of today. Thank you in Jesus' name. Amen. So, what is the problem? We're sinners. We're not like Jesus. God wants us to become like Jesus. Theologians have a word for this. The word is sanctification. We talked about it a little bit last week, Pastor John, his message. Sanctification means set apart for holy use. We've been sanctified. We've been set apart for his use, for holy use.

[6 : 07] And then we're also being sanctified. We're being changed for his use. We're being made more like him for his use. Sanctification. So, what is the solution? How does sanctification work?

I just want to tell you, God provides a mechanism for sanctification in his word. He gives instructions, specific instructions on how this happens. Someone once said, we are who we are by the choices we make.

Anyone know who said that? Pastor Jack said that. Pastor Jack still says that. We are who we are by the choices we make. There are certain choices, certain decisions, certain decisions that we need to make, that we can make on a regular basis, attitudes that we need to adopt, commands we need to follow.

And we can't do this on our own. We need the power of God. We need God's help. I'm going to, we're going to look at an outline. This is where we're going today. First of all, what is God's mechanism for sanctification? Then we're going to talk about the power behind God's mechanism. And then five examples that God gives us from his word of how this works. And then we're going to talk about how to implement, how to implement God's mechanism for sanctification.

All right. What is God's mechanism? So, we read this passage and right in the passage, verses 22, 24, it says, put off your old self.

[7 : 52] And then it says, put on the new self. All right. Put off your new, put off your old self, put on the new self. That's it. That's it. That's the mechanism. Stop doing bad habits. Start doing good ones, right?

That's simple, right? We got it. We can all go home now. Well, I think we know it's more to it than that, right? Is that all there is to it? Stopping bad habits, starting good ones. It's easy to think this. And really, most of my Christian life, my younger years, I thought that's what the Christian life was about.

Okay. I got saved. I've got eternity taken care of. Now I've got to just start fighting to trying to overcome sin and stop these bad habits. And I got to try to do the things that God wants me to do, start good habits. I got to put off the old self and put on the new self. And it's easy to think that. I just, if I'm not successful, I just need to try harder. I just need to try harder. I need to try. It's about me trying. Problem is, we're never going to be successful.

And then what happens a lot of times is Christians learn to fake it. We see the Christians, we kind of see how they act, and you can kind of learn, this is kind of how I should talk as a Christian, or these are the things I should say, these are the things I shouldn't say. And so we kind of fake it when we're in church, we're in the public life, but when we're by ourselves, we're still the same person.

[9 : 34] Our life is not changing. Sanctification isn't necessarily happening. Transformation is not happening. Life change is not just a matter of stopping bad habits and starting good ones.

Don't forget, we've got God living inside us. We've got the Holy Spirit living inside us. And he literally is there to help us, to change us, to make us different.

So there's a spiritual component. So you might look at the put off and put on as kind of a physical, it's kind of, okay, I just got to stop doing this. There's a spiritual component to it. And it's right here, right in the middle. It says, be renewed in the spirit of your minds. Be renewed in the spirit of your minds. Christianity, the Christian life, it's about mind renewal. It's about changing the way we think, changing how we think about things. It starts there. So it says, be renewed in the spirit of your minds. I think we know what our minds are. We know what renewal means. What does he mean by the spirit of your minds? Be renewed in the spirit of your minds. The original language of the word that's translated spirit here is wind or breeze or breath. It also means rational soul or mental disposition. It could even mean attitude. In fact, one translation puts it this way, to be made new in the attitude of your minds. And there are similar thoughts and other passages. So I want to look at this one from Colossians. And it says kind of the same thing there, doesn't it? Put off the old self with its practices, put on the new self. And what does it say? Which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Kind of the same thing. Renewal. Renewal. Talking about renewal.

Romans 12, very famous verse, kind of says the same thing. Do not be conformed to this world. Put off the old self. But be transformed. Put on the new self. And what does he say again? By the renewal of your mind.

It's renewal of our minds. That's the key. That's what we need to do. And that's a spiritual thing. This is something that God does. God does. So we're going to look at the power behind God's mechanism.

[12:21] You'll recall the fruit of the Spirit. We talk about that sometimes from Galatians. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, generous self-control. Fruit of the Spirit. Fruit of the Spirit is not guaranteed just because you're a Christian.

I think sometimes we think that, oh, God is going to be working this in our lives. It's not a guarantee. Let's look at that. Galatians 5. We're not going to read all this, but the lower part there is where the fruit of the Spirit is. In the context here, there's a condition.

What does he say at the very beginning? He says, but I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. Walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify. Walk by the Spirit, and then the fruit of the Spirit will be manifest. This is a choice. This is a decision. We need to walk by the Spirit, and we will not gratify the desires of the flesh. What are the desires of the flesh? That section in red there. We're not going to read that, but it says, walk by the Spirit, and these things won't be happening. It's a promise. You walk by the Spirit. The key is, we need to walk by the Spirit. So we're going to go back to Ephesians, and I just want to give you a little background about Ephesians. Now, I know Pastor John did this so well last week. He kind of talked about chapter 1, chapter 2, chapter 3. We're not going to—I don't have to go into that. I appreciate that. Thank you. We actually talked about this. He's kind of setting the table for for me, so to speak. Just suffice it to say, first three chapters, it's all about doctrine.

You know, it's all about who God is and what He's done for us, and then who we are as a result of who He is and what He's done for us. It's all doctrine. It's all about that, about who we are. And then in chapter 4, He makes a change. And He says, essentially, there's the idea, the picture of a scale. Because of this, I want you to do this. So essentially what He says, therefore I apprise the Lord and implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you've been called. All right. So He gives us a command. He gives us commands to follow.

But by the power of the Holy Spirit, we can have success following those commands. So this is a picture of a steering wheel. I don't know if you've ever driven a car that doesn't have power steering.

[15:00] Anyone ever drive a car or a truck without power steering? Remember that? You young people aren't raising your hands. What's going on? Gaitlin? Or power brakes? You know, it's all you can do.

So the way that power steering works is there's a hydraulic system. The pump takes energy from the engine, transfers it to the steering system. So all you have to do, you start that process and all of a sudden you've got help. And the Holy Spirit is kind of like that. We walk in the ways of His commands, trusting in the Spirit, and He helps us to be successful. Now, it doesn't mean it's without difficulty, like power steering, but He helps us. He helps us to be successful.

This passage here, you may have your own ideas about what it means to walk with God. He gives us some specific things. Again, this is how chapter 4 opens up. So chapter 3, doctrine, chapter 4. Okay, because of this, here's what I want you to do. And Pastor John covered this last week. He lays out five commands, five essential choices, decisions, attitudes to be adopted. Humility, gentleness, patience, tolerance, and unity, preserving unity. Of course, ultimately it comes down to unity. It points to unity.

unity. It's about unity. These are commands. These are choices. These are decisions, attitudes to be adopted. So He says, because of this, here's what I want you to do. And again, by the power of Holy Spirit, He wants us to do these. Don't move on from here until you decide to adopt these, essentially what He says.

This is where I want you to start, church. Okay, Ephesians was the last, I think most scholars believe it was the last letter that Paul wrote before he wrote Timothy and Titus. So it was kind of the last letter of the church, kind of a summary about what the Christian life is about. And here's how to live. It starts here. It starts here. Foundation of anything we do in the Christian life, it starts here. Why? Why are these things important? It's because it's about relationships.

[17:15] All right? The Christian life is about relationships. All right? So why these things? Why is that important? Because we're all sinners. We heard about it last week. We are all sinners. You

guys are sinners. I need to adopt these things so that I can get along with you guys. You need them so you can get along with me, because I'm a sinner. We need to know how to deal with sinners. So just want to review them briefly.

Just real quick, humility. This is essentially, I think of Philippians chapter 2, the verse that says, consider others more important than yourselves. That's what humility is. Regarding one another is more important than yourselves. Gentleness, also known as meekness, the old translation. This is, as we heard last week, strength under control. All right? This is a fruit of the Spirit. And I like to say it's a forgotten fruit, because we skip this one oftentimes. We forget about it. Gentleness.

Our strengths under God's control. So men, we're physically strong, stronger than women, but under God's control. We may have strong opinions under the control of the Holy Spirit. We may have a strong personality under God's control, under the control of the Holy Spirit. Gentleness. Jesus said, I am gentle and humble in heart. Apostle Paul wrote to the Philippians. He said, let your gentleness be evident to all. Apostle Paul wrote to his young pastors, to Titus. He said this in Titus chapter 3, remind the people to always be gentle toward everyone. This is what he said to Timothy. 2 Timothy chapter 2, he said, the Lord's servant must be kind, correcting his opponents with gentleness.

Correcting his opponents with gentleness. Gentleness is extremely important. Strength under the control of the Holy Spirit. And it's primarily with regard to our communication, to how we talk, is obviously physical gentleness, but how we communicate, how we talk. All right. Patience. The old world word, some of your translations say long-suffering. Kind of like that. Long-suffering. It's having a long fuse. Patience. Tolerance. Forbearance is another word. It's kindness. In this case, it's kindness toward a wrong suffered. It's being kind toward somebody who has wronged you. Tolerance. Forbearance.

Kindness toward somebody who's wronged you. And then unity. You know, we've talked about that last week. I encourage you to go back and listen to John's message last week. Preserve unity, the unity of the Holy Spirit in the bond of peace. Oneness in spirit. Once again, this is where it starts, Christians. This is where God wants us to start, with these commands, these attitudes. Recall God's mechanism. Put off your old self. Put on the new self. Put on the old self. Be renewed by the spirit of your mind. Be in the spirit of your mind. And then remember these. This is a part of that as well. [20 : 40] By the power of the Holy Spirit, adopting. We're talking about mind renewal. Deciding these things, but by the power of the spirit. Renewing our minds. Mind renewal. How does it all work? How do we put this all together? God gives us five examples of this mechanism. Sanctification. So, you might be wondering, why am I using all these colors? All right? That's going to become evident now because we're going to dissect the rest of the passage. And we're going to look at the specifics of this.

All right? It's very technical stuff. I'm an engineer. I like technical things. All right? So, you have to bear with me. I like solving problems. We're solving problems. Also, my spiritual gift, my primary gift is exhortation. It's encouragement. Again, I like solving problems. Encouraging. So, how do we do this? What's this about? All right. So, we're going to kind of dissect it. And so, practical examples put off, put on renewal from the scriptures, from these verses. Verses 25 through 32.

So, we've got verse 25. We've got falsehood there. So, the put off is falsehood. The put on is speak the truth. And the mind renewal is preserve unity. So, look at the passage. Therefore, having put away falsehood, having put away falsehood, let each of you speak the truth with his neighbor. Put off the old self, put on the new self. Why is this important? For we are members one of another. We are members one of another. It's about oneness. It's about unity. That's our motivation. Because I'm embracing unity, valuing unity, I'm going to be truthful. Because if I'm lying, if I'm deceitful, I'm lying to myself, right? Because we're one. It's all of us. We're one. It's a renewal of the mind. It's a renewal of the way we think about things. Okay. The next verse is verse 26 and 27.

The put off is anger. The put on is self-control. And then the mind renewal is patience. One of those five. Patience. All right. Utilizing patience by the power of the Holy Spirit. This one's a little harder to pick out, but we'll go through it. Be angry and do not sin. Do not let the sun go down on your anger and give no opportunity to the devil. Interesting passage. Be angry, but don't sin.

Right? Be angry, but don't sin. Do not let the sun go down. What's he saying there? He's saying, essentially, resolve your anger in a healthy way. Don't let it go. Don't let it sit out there.

[23 : 52] Resolve it. Don't let the sun go down. If you don't do this, what does it say? And give no opportunity to the devil. Essentially, what we were saying is if we allow our anger to hang out there

and we allow it to do damage, we're literally inviting demonic activity into our lives, into our relationships. That's serious stuff. We need to exercise patience.

all right patience self-control long suffering um there are different ways that anger comes out just briefly so you could be spewing they call it spewing spewing a spewer just explodes right anger all right but it's just as destructive if you're a leaker if you know maybe your anger comes out in passive aggression you you did that to me i'll get you back i'll find a way i'll get you back passive aggression it can be equally destructive and then a third way that anger can come out is if we if we stuff it if we don't we don't uh address it in some way and we just stuff it and what can happen is we can we can get depressed or anxious and and god doesn't want that we need to deal with anger in a healthy way we need to first of all trust the lord and put it to prayer and exercise patience exercise health control okay verse 28 put off is the stealing put on is the labor and why this is humility this we're choosing humility so what's the verse let the thief no longer steal put off the stealing but rather let him labor doing honest work with his own hands put on hard work why is this important so that we may have something to share with anyone in need that's that's the heart behind it it's humility it's consider others more important than yourselves yes i'm working hard i'm working late hours i want to have money so that i can share with my brothers and sisters it's mind renewal it's mind renewal it's going to change us okay verse 29 um put off i've got harmful speech put on building speech okay this is the quality of gentleness look at the passage let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths but only such as is good for building up others that it may give grace to those who hear okay so this translation uses the term corrupting talk put off corrupting talk let no corrupting talk a lot of your translations say unwholesome speech right um it's true that it's unwholesome but it's actually worse than that it's not just like a candy bar or something you know candy bars are unwholesome um it's corrupting speech the the original language the word had to do with rotting food it's rottenness something that's detrimental to our health um maybe even toxic so he's talking about let no corrupting talk harmful talk come out of your mouths but only such as is good for building as fits the occasion that it may give grace to those who hear and it's the giving grace and this is like a definition of gentleness basically this verse is because because lack of gentleness is is harmful speech all right okay next one um verses 30 through 32 bitterness put off bitterness put on forgiveness and tolerance okay tolerance is is the decision the choice the command to obey all right this one may be the most important of all these why do i say that look at the way god prefaces this one and do not grieve the holy spirit of god by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you along with all malice be kind one be kind to one another tenderhearted forgiving one another as god in christ forgave you okay so this one is more than just anger okay we talked about anger just a little bit ago this is bitterness this is a desire to get revenge this is a desire to cause harm to somebody unforgiveness bitterness and we all experience this sometimes don't we a legitimate harm and we desire that something happened to them because of it god says let it go but you don't know what they did to me you have no idea what happened to me what they caused they did something i want to see them suffer god says let it go why is this important why does god emphasize this right at the end what does he say forgiving one another as god in christ forgave you it doesn't make sense for me to hold on to things wrong suffered when jesus forgave me for everything and anything anything anything and everything and i'm going to heaven and he's with me he lives in me doesn't make sense tolerance or forbearing it's it's it's a a uh kindness towards somebody who's legitimately wronged you all right and only god can do that only god can do that through us um we taught a message a while back called victory over bitterness i think it was it was september of of 2023 uh if you struggle with that if you have a hard time with that if you you know somebody came to mind as soon as i mentioned that if you can think of somebody that's harmed you encourage you to go back find that message and listen to it because romans 12 the end of romans 12 kind of gives great uh truth great wisdom to help with that i encourage you to find that uh september 2023 you can go back and find it on our website or on our youtube page um encourage you to deal with that all right so how do we implement god's mechanism how do we do this what do we do first of all we need to identify the obstacle identify the sin to be put off all right so notice i said identify the obstacle and identify the sin separately the hebrews 12 it says throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles and let us run with perseverance the rakes worked out for us it's another one that's kind of saying something similar but he distinguishes everything that hinders and the sin which so easily entangles so there are things that hinder that aren't necessarily sin identify those

identify those all right identify the fruit or the character to be put on okay so put off the old self put on the new self what is that um and then ask trust the holy spirit for mind renewal again verses two and three so we're talking about implementing this putting off putting on being renewed in the spirit of our minds we're talking about choosing these attitudes these commands and trusting the spirit to make us different to implement these to put them into practice okay next one is find a bible passage that directly applies now i i didn't put these in numbers because you can kind of do these in any any order necessarily or not necessarily any order um but find a bible passage that relates okay so these are just examples from the bible of of areas of sin and then put off put on renewal work on these if you need to trust the lord to help you with these if there's something else identify it find it um the word of god is powerful hebrews of four says it's living inactive sharper than any double sword it penetrates to dividing soul and spirit joints and marrow what does that mean is the bible really going to divide soul and spirit is it really dividing our joints and our marrow no the word of god is powerful to change lives it's powerful to do a work in our lives find a verse memorize it uh psalm 119 11 says i've hidden your word in my heart that i might not sin against you the word of god is powerful find a verse find a passage all right um so kind of a similar situation pastor john taught back in um uh uh just before thanksgiving taught on thanksgiving it was kind of interesting he was talking about joy joy and gratefulness all right thanksgiving gratefulness a lot of people say we've got the joy of the lord we need to be grateful all right and pastor john brought out and learned that now it's it's the the choosing the decision to be grateful that builds joy in our lives it's the choice to be grateful remember the passage philippians 4 8 whatever is true whatever is noble whatever is right whatever is pure you know think about these things so so that's a similar application i i'm struggling with joyfulfulness um i'm gonna give thanks and god's gonna change my heart again through the power of the holy spirit encourage you to listen to that one again if you would um if you need to uh pastor tim you remember at the end of the gospel of mark he talked about how jesus sang a hymn with his disciples he sang a hymn with his disciples pastor tim had an opportunity to to deal to do just that just a week or two ago didn't he i think everyone knows that he was struggling he had a heart condition they were running tests and i had a phone call with him a couple days before that and he said john i'm not gonna lie i'm struggling with this he didn't know what the outcome was gonna be and um and i talked to him like the next day and he he said that he had taken it to the lord you know he was singing in his heart to the lord and god had turned him around he still had it in front of him but he was trusting god just a great application all right so the next thing would be involve your brothers and sisters okay so we looked at the first few verses of ephesians 4 then we looked at the last half of ephesians 4 everything in between we looked at that with the mission statement and especially starting from verse 7 on down to 16 it was about our gifting our giftedness and how it's there to help us to help each other all right so involve each other involve each other in the process make sure that's a part of it all right it's discipleship you've seen this before have you seen this before john yeah you know it's about us a relationship with the living god it's about becoming more like him it's a relationship and it involves all these things we've talked about prayer talked about the bible worship community mission involve all this amen and then watch your life change it's gonna happen watch your life change all right um by the way god can change us through other means as well i mean it doesn't have to be this but this is something god literally gave us put off the old self put on the new self be renewed and we can put it into practice and we can be different so it's about again striving together to become more like jesus every day let's pray god we thank you so much for your power and love and mercy your grace thank you for your awesome resources thank you for your word thank you that you live in us the personal holy spirit i thank you for my brothers and sisters here lord god we thank you for all that you put us through all that you let us go through thank you that you love us we ask you to again change us make us different in jesus name amen thank you for your interest