**Kingdom Disciples Series September 26, 2021**

*A Disciple Matures*

Sanctification

* Being separate from sin and toward **God’s holiness** (MacArthur)
* Growth in likeness to Christ; a progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and like Christ in our actual lives (Grudem)
* Increasing conformity to God and His desires for His people
* Increasing holiness in the life of a believer

A Disciple Matures to **Please God** 1 Thessalonians 4:1-2

* **Spiritual growth** is one area of our lives which causes our heavenly Father delight
  + “Excel still more” is to continue to press on to new growth in relationship to God
  + It is a discipline to be purposeful
    - It is not automatic for any Christian
    - It occurs over a lifetime of intentional effort

A Disciple Matures **to Follow God’s Will** 1 Thessalonians 4:3-6

* “This is God’s will for your life, your sanctification”
  + God’s desire is that every Christian is growing in maturity, continuously
  + All Christians submit to the will of God for their lives
  + “Your kingdom come, your will be done  
    On earth, as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10)
* God’s will is for every believer to grow in increasing likeness to Jesus
  + This is the definition of “sanctification” that Paul intends here

Three Phases of Sanctification

* **Salvation** – positional sanctification
  + Occurs once for all Christians
  + It happens when God the Holy Spirit causes a person to be born again
    - See John 3 for Jesus illustrating it with Nicodemus

Three Phases of Sanctification

* Spiritual Growth – **progressive** sanctification
  + Designed to occur from the time of salvation until physical death
  + Is meant to move the believer on to new breadth and depth of faith with a deeper understanding of walking with Christ over a lifetime
* **Glorification** – permanent sanctification
  + Happens only one time
  + Occurs at death as the believer’s spirit leaves his or her body and unites with Christ and other believers in the current heaven

How does a believer grow spiritually?

* J. T. English (Deep Discipleship) suggests
  + By learning doctrine
  + By studying all 66 books of the Bible
  + By practicing spiritual habits (disciplines)

A Disciple Matures to Follow God’s Will

* “that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor”
  + The goal is to use our bodies and spirits in such as way as the **pursue holiness**
    - Actions
    - Words
    - Intentions
    - Thoughts

A Disciple Matures **Intentionally** 1 Thessalonians 4:7-8

* We must set aside the impure thoughts, words, and actions that characterized our lives before trusting in Christ
  + To reject personal growth is not rejecting your small group, friends, or pastor
  + To reject this is to reject the Holy Spirit!

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