Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

How Do You Measure Up?
Scripture: Romans 7:15; 2 Corinthians 5:14; Hebrews 10:24; 1 Peter 1:13-16; 1 Peter 2:2
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by John MacArthur

We've reached the end of our series on spiritual formation and sanctification, but before we close the discussion, I want to encourage you with some practical ways to evaluate your own spiritual growth.

Yesterday we discussed the true, biblical nature of sanctification—that it's the work of the Lord in the lives of His people.

However, each of us bears some responsibility for our own spiritual growth, as well. I can't tell you what percentage of the responsibility falls on you, or exactly how your disciplined life cooperates with God's work in you (Isaiah 55:9). But I can tell you that faithful Bible study, prayer, and self-discipline play a vital role in your sanctification. As we've seen over the last several weeks, we can't manufacture spiritual growth on our own, but we can certainly hinder it through unchecked sin and spiritual laziness.

With that in mind, I want to help you take accurate, biblical stock of where you are in your spiritual growth. Simply observing and acknowledging where and how the Lord has transformed your life can be a great encouragement. It can also alert you to areas of your spiritual life that demand more focus and discipline.

Just as you might measure a child's height on a wall or a doorpost, use these biblical principles to gauge how much you've grown spiritually, and how much more you still need to grow.

First of all, **people who are being sanctified can clearly remember a time when they weren't**. Look back at your life and the sinful patterns that used to dominate it. What has changed, and why did it change? If you're truly growing spiritually, you ought to see a stark difference between your life now and how you lived before you were saved.

Next, **people who are being sanctified are indwelt by the Holy Spirit**. Is the Spirit living and working in you on a daily basis? That's not a mystical, subjective evaluation—is there practical evidence of God's Spirit at work in your life? Look over Paul's description of the Spirit-filled life in Ephesians 5:15–6:9. Can you find those characteristics, attitudes, and actions in your own life?

Third, **people who are being sanctified have a strong antipathy toward sin**. Do you hate the sin in your life? What about the sin in the world around you—is it attractive or repulsive to you? God is faithful to grant His people a strong aversion to sin. Do you feel the same internal tension Paul described in Romans 7:15?

Fourth, **people who are being sanctified are motivated by a heart of love for God**. In 2 Corinthians 5:14, Paul says that his love for God controls his life—do you see that same control at work in your life? Do you truly love the Lord, and does that love guide and direct your decisions, your actions, your speech, and your relationships?

Fifth, **people who are being sanctified live disciplined lives**. Peter commanded believers to reflect God's holiness in their own lives (1 Peter 1:13-16). To be holy means to be in control of your behavior, and not just in areas of obvious, blatant sin. Are you lazy? Do you love gossip? Is your speech filled with profanity and filthiness? Do you look a lot like the rest of the world, or are you living a disciplined, holy life?

Sixth, **people who are being sanctified have a strong desire to serve Christ**. Part of growing spiritually is presenting yourself as a living sacrifice to the Lord. You're not consumed with your own agendas, interests, or desires. As Paul told Timothy, you've become "a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work" (2 Timothy 2:21). Are you devoted to serving Christ?

Number seven on our spiritual growth checklist: **people who are being sanctified love the Word of God**. Read Psalm 119, paying careful attention to all the times the psalmist professes his love for God's Word. Can you see that same love for Scripture in your life? Are you hungry for the life-transforming truth of God's Word (1 Peter 2:2)?

Finally, **people who are being sanctified associate with other people who are being sanctified**. Rather than wallowing in the world, they seek out and surround themselves with other believers. We can't totally separate ourselves from the world—nor should we try to. But who you choose to spend your time with says a lot about what you love and value, and what matters most to you. People who are growing spiritually don't intentionally open themselves up to worldly, corrupting influences (1 Corinthians 15:33). Instead, they seek out productive, godly fellowship—the kind that "stimulate[s] one another to love and good deeds" (Hebrews 10:24). Who do you spend your time with, and what does it say about where your heart is?

If you truly belong to the Lord, His ongoing work in you will be evident. If you feel like your spiritual growth has stalled out, first carefully examine your life for unchecked sin. Then look back over that checklist and see where you might be falling short. Don't let yourself become spiritually complacent or lazy. Keep the goal of godliness in front of you at all times, and trust the Lord to keep working through

His Word and His Spirit in your life (Philippians 1:6).

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