

Value the Kindness of God

But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. –Titus 3:4-5

Gratitude may be defined simply as showing that one values the kindness of God. It is a feeling, but it is more than a feeling. Gratitude is also demonstrated by what we do; it may be a sacrifice in that we don't have an overwhelming feeling. Sometimes we feel grateful; sometimes we do not. But we must always be grateful, whether or not we feel like it. We must do it, that is, demonstrate gratitude not only by words but also by deeds.

Gratitude shows that we set a value on God's kindness. "In order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:7).

Sanctification is thus the process by which we are made holy. It is both a process and an experience. It is used in the New Testament, however, in more than one way. Sanctification is something that happens to every Christian.

Sanctification is progressive and is never completed until we are glorified. As Paul said, "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will" (Rom. 12:1-2).

Moreover, sanctification is a never-ending commitment. If we "got it" completely along the way, we could forget about it from then on! But only glorification will mark the end of this life commitment. In the meantime, we demonstrate our gratitude

to God for His sheer grace by holy living, self-denial, and walking in the light. Not in order to make it to heaven, but in thankfulness because heaven is assured.

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