

Paul's closing words

1 Thessalonians 5:23-28

Sanctification

- *There are four phases of sanctification in the NT - pre-conversion, positional, practical or progressive, and perfect. - William Macdonald Believer's Bible Commentary*

Pre-conversion

- Even before a person is saved, he is set apart in a position of external privilege. Thus we read in 1 Corinthians 7:14 that an unbelieving husband is sanctified by his believing wife. This is *pre-conversion sanctification*.

Positional

- Whenever a person is born again, he is *positionally sanctified* by virtue of his union with Christ. This means that he is set apart to God from the world. It is referred to in such passages as Acts 26:18, 1 Corinthians 1:2; 6:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 10:10,14.

Progressive or Practical

- But then there is *progressive sanctification*. This is a present setting apart of the believer to God from the world, sin, and self. It is the process by which he becomes more Christlike. This is the sanctification which Paul prays for the Thessalonians here. It is also found in 1 Thessalonians 4:3,4; 2 Timothy 2:21. It is brought about by the Holy Spirit when we are obedient to the word of God (John 17:17; 2 For. 3:18). Such practical sanctification is a process that should continue as long as the believer is on earth. He will never achieve perfection or sinlessness on earth, but he should ever be pressing toward that goal.

Perfect

- *Perfect sanctification* refers to the believer's final condition in heaven. When he goes to be with the Lord, he will be morally like the Lord, completely and finally set apart from sin. (1 John 3:1-3) - William Macdonld, Believer's Bible Commentary