

## True Maturity in a Changing World: Contemporary Issues in Sanctification

How do we actually grow in spiritual maturity (the process we call sanctification)? How does this process of growth as outlined in the Bible relate to the behavioral challenges people face in the modern world, especially addiction and homosexuality? Are modern behavioral treatment methods such as psychiatric therapy and mood-altering drugs compatible with the biblical model of sanctification? This session overviews various models of sanctification, presents and defends our model, and then applies this model to contemporary issues and controversies.

### **Anthropology: A Brief Overview**

Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground (*hadamah*), and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life (*nishmah*); and man became a living being (*nephesh*). —Genesis 2:7

### **The Nature of Man**

***hadamah*** - dust of the earth

***nishmah*** - the breath of life or consciousness; resides within God and is His gift to man (John 5:26; Acts 17:28); shared with God before the Fall

***nephesh*** - a living being or soul, individual personality; created by the union of the physical body with the breath of life, and once created it is eternal.

1. Material
2. Immaterial or spiritual
3. Joined together, they become "man"
4. Material and immaterial separated = death

### **Descriptive/functional terms for the components of human nature**

A. Material – "Body"; Ps. 104:29-30; Job 27:3-4

B. Immaterial

1. Soul
2. Spirit
3. Heart

“The soul...is ‘me’ because it is my life. The heart is ‘me’ because it is the central organ of my being. The spirit is ‘me’ because it is my breath and that which moves me.” —Robert Pyne, 117

4. Mind
5. Conscience
6. Will

### **Effects of the "fall"**

1. Spiritual – separation/independence
2. Physical – disease, decay, death (separation of material and immaterial)  
Divisibility is a result of the fall
3. Psychological – "disorders" (e.g. "bi-polar"); personality traits
4. Relational – conflict, anger, etc.

### **Implications for Sanctification**

All of the following must be addressed:

1. Man in relationship to God (beliefs, worship, repentance, forgiveness)
2. Man in relationship to immaterial self (thinking, feeling, choosing)
3. Man in relationship to material self (sickness/health; emotional/physiological; behaviors)
4. Man in relationship to others (friends, family, fellowship; face to face and "virtual")
5. Cause/effect relationships may be impossible to determine

E.g. depression

- God-less beliefs => self-destructive choices => guilt => physiological change (e.g. David's lack of sleep)
- Physiological deficiency (from trauma or genetic predisposition) => foolish thinking and beliefs => self-destructive choices