

Growth: The Journal of the Association for Christians in Student Development

Volume 5 | Number 5

Article 6

2005

Christian World View Integration: "A Believer's Role in Sanctification."

Don Shepson
Gordon College

Follow this and additional works at: https://pillars.taylor.edu/acsd_growth



Part of the [Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Commons](#), [Educational Leadership Commons](#), [Higher Education Commons](#), [Higher Education Administration Commons](#), and the [Teacher Education and Professional Development Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Shepson, Don (2005) "Christian World View Integration: "A Believer's Role in Sanctification.," *Growth: The Journal of the Association for Christians in Student Development*. Vol. 5 : No. 5 , Article 6.
Available at: https://pillars.taylor.edu/acsd_growth/vol5/iss5/6

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Association of Christians in Student Development at Pillars at Taylor University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Growth: The Journal of the Association for Christians in Student Development by an authorized editor of Pillars at Taylor University. For more information, please contact pillars@taylor.edu.

Christian world view integration “A believer’s role in sanctification.”

by Don Shepson

Don Shepson is a Resident Hall Director and Director of Intramurals and Recreation at Gordon College.

Introduction

Student Development Offices around the country seek to develop students holistically into people who are able to move into the world following graduation and live integrated lives in accordance with Biblical practices. The underlying theological foundation beneath these hopes and goals is the doctrine of sanctification. There is a constant tension about how student development professionals can and should assist our students in this process of sanctification.

Willard suggested that the difficulty of entering completely into our sanctification “is due entirely to our failure to understand that ‘the way in’ is the way of pervasive inner transformation and to our failure to take the small steps that quietly and certainly lead to it” (Willard, 2002, p. 10). This paper will seek to discover how the intention of the believer toward that inner transformation called sanctification actually occurs and what things are helpful in bringing it about. After all, the goal of every Christian ought to be that “Christ be formed in you” (Gal 4:19). Bandura extensively studied in the field of social learning theory and his work will give us insight into the impact that self-efficacy has upon various personal and collective outcomes such as sanctification. We will find that a believer’s intention toward sanctification can have significant impact upon the goal actually being reached. We will also discuss a number of practical things the Christian can do to assist in this process of growing in sanctification.

Theological and Biblical Background

Sanctification comes from the word meaning, “to make holy.” The KJV translates the original Greek and Hebrew as “sanctify, holy or hallow,” and the RSV translates as “consecrate or dedicate.” This applies to any “person [Deut 7:6], place [Ps 5:7], occasion [Ex 25 – Num 10], or object ‘set apart’ from common [Jos6:19], secular use as devoted to some divine power” (White, 2001, p. 1051). Devotion to a divine power is the primary concern of Hebrew cultic worship. In addition, “these were never purely ritualistic matters but were concerned with one’s way of life [Ps 24:3f.]” in response to the holiness of God (Seebass, 1999, holy, OT section, ¶ 6). Holiness “lies at the heart of the Biblical doctrine of sanctification” (Lewis & Demarest, 1994, p. 187). In the Old Testament the Israelites were to demonstrate their given holiness (Lev 11:4; cf. 19:2; 20:7-8, 26) through their moral and spiritual obedience to God (Deut 18:9-14; 28:9, 14) (Lewis & Demarest, 1994, p. 188). The poetic literature views sanctification as a

blamelessness, or moral integrity to be sought after (Ps 37:37; 101:2; Job 1:1, 8; 2:3; 12:4; Prov 20:9) (Lewis & Demarest, 1994, p. 189). The prophetic literature shows the failure of people in their efforts of holiness (Isa 6:5; 64:6; Dan 9:4-16) and points toward the time when the Holy Spirit would demonstrate the messianic age (Isa 42:1; 44:3; Ezek 36:27; Joel 2:28; Mal 3:1) (Lewis & Demarest, 1994, p. 189).

In New Testament understanding however there is a shift in definition away from the cultic towards the prophetic, “The sacred no longer belongs to things, places or rites, but to the manifestations of life produced by the Spirit” (Seebass, 1999, Holy, NT section, ¶ 2). For example Jesus is called “the Holy One of God” (Mk 1:24; Lk 4:34), because he operates in the power of the Spirit of holiness (Rom 1:4) (Seebass, 1999, Holy, NT section, ¶ 4, 7). For God’s people there is also a necessary association with the Holy Spirit as they follow Christ (1 Co 1:30; 6:11; 2 Thess 2:13-14; 1 Pet 1:1f.). Finally,

Holiness is a condition of acceptance at the parousia and of entering upon the inheritance of God’s people (Col 1:12; Acts 20:32; 26:18). In all these cases holiness implies a relationship with God which is expressed not primarily through the cultus but through the fact that believers are “led” by the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:14). As in the OT, holiness is a pre-ethical term. At the same time, as in the OT, it demands behavior which rightly responds to the Holy Spirit (Seebass, 1999, Holy, NT section, ¶ 7).

The New Testament demonstrates that there are a number of emphases found regarding sanctification. In the Gospels and Acts there is a stark portrayal of significant differences that are necessary to be a disciple (i.e. one who is sanctified) of God (Matt 5:48; 22:37; Mark 16:17-18; Acts 10:44-48). The Johannine language seems to insist upon holiness in this lifetime (Jn 1:29; 1 John 3:2f; 5:4f, 18) (Muller, 1979, p. 323-4).

Hebrews and 1 Peter offer a different perspective. “These writings emphasized the objective establishment of believers in holiness rather than subjective form of the sanctified life” (Muller, 1979, p. 324). Believers are sanctified by God (Heb 2:11; 9:13-14; 10:10, 14, 29; 13:12) through the Holy Spirit (1 Pet 1:2, 18f.) (Mullen, 1996, p. 712) in order that they may grow in holiness. Believers are to “throw off everything that hinders” and “run with perseverance,” “fixing our eyes on Jesus” (Heb 12:1-3). In the end, believers are responsible for certain things, even though God fills/empowers to do this work.

The Pauline literature seems the most thorough on this issue. The book of Romans is filled with various actions to attend to regarding the believer’s sanctification (Rom 6:1-11, 13, 19-22; 8:13; 12:1-3). Galatians 5:16-26 gives a list of actions that is necessary for the believer to avoid and practice. All of these things occur because God commands believers to sanctify themselves. Scripture is littered with statements of things that the believer ought to focus on in order to grow in sanctification, even though complete holiness is not something that believers will be given in this lifetime as Paul indicates (Muller, 1979, p. 323).

Sanctification is the working out of holiness in the life of each believer through the power of the Holy Spirit, which ultimately results in eternal life (Rom 6:19-22; 1 Thess 4:3-7). Because God is holy and expects holiness, the believer spends his life and energy making himself holy as well (Lev 19:2; 20:26; 1 Pet 1:15-16) through obedience to God (Lev 22:32; Isa 8:13; 1 Pet 3:15). Erickson (1998) defines sanctification as “a process by

which one's moral condition is brought into conformity with one's legal status before God.... In particular, sanctification is the Holy Spirit's applying to the life of the believer the work done by Jesus Christ" (p. 980). He sees a dual aspect of sanctification as related to holiness, first as a "formal characteristic of particular objects, persons, and places" and then as "moral goodness or spiritual worth" (pp. 980-981).

The nature of sanctification needs to be understood in relation to justification. The differences will assist in understanding the believer's role and responsibility in sanctification. Justification, simply stated, is God pardoning and accepting believing sinners (Packer, 2001, p. 643). Justification is considered to be an instantaneous event, complete in a moment, which occurs as a result of faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Rom 4:23-15; 10:8-12). Furthermore, it is a "forensic or declarative matter" (Eph 1:7-8) and an "objective work affecting our standing before God, our relationship to him" (Rom 5:16f.; Jn 1:12) (Erickson, 1998, p. 982).

Sanctification begins the moment when the believer has faith in Jesus as Savior and Redeemer. Similar to justification, it is also something that has been given to the believer by God (Heb. 10:10, 14; 9:13-14), through Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 6:11, 1:30); it "is a supernatural work" (Erickson, 1998, p. 982). But sanctification is also a process that requires all of our earthly lives. It is something that "is an actual transformation of the character and condition of the person" and which is a "subjective work affecting our character" (p. 982). Grudem defines sanctification as "a progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and like Christ in our actual lives" (1994, p. 746). The primary interest is the way in which sanctification increases throughout the life of the believer.

Philippians 2:12-18

Murray (1955) identifies perhaps the most important text relating to the role and responsibility each believer has in their own sanctification (Phil 2:12-13),

... We must also take account of the fact that sanctification is a process that draws within its scope the conscious life of the believer. The sanctified are not passive or quiescent in this process. Nothing shows this more clearly than the exhortation of the apostle... (Phil 2:12-13). And no text sets forth more succinctly and clearly the relation of God's working to our working (p. 148).

This Biblical text clarifies this process as the Apostle Paul appeals to the Philippian church to work out their salvation as obedient believers with a common mindset for the sake of Christ and the gospel regardless of their circumstances (Fee, 1995, p. 229). Paul's unit of thought (1:27-2:18) is designed as a chiasm with this passage as the concluding piece, and with an application and final appeal to the church in Philippi based on the pericope. What is in view for Paul is the Gospel, first for the believers in Philippi and their obedience resulting in unity and a witness to the world (p. 229). This passage must also be viewed in light of suffering that was occurring in Paul's life (Phil 1:12-30; 2:17; 3:8) and in the Philippian church (Phil 2:18) (Bockmuehl, 1998, p. 162). This is an application and appeal:

First in the call to a serious common pursuit of the Christian life, empowered by God and marked by the obedience that also characterized the life of Jesus (vv. 12-13).

This obedience is then concretely applied in a threefold exhortation to the Philippians: to be faithful without complaint in their relations with each other (v. 14); to show integrity in their witness to the outside world (vv. 15-16); to rejoice in the sacrificial offering of their faith to God, of which Paul's own life and ministry form a part (vv. 17-18) (Bockmuehl, 1998, pp. 148-149).

Historically, this letter was written to "all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons" (1:1). Philippi was a "leading city of the district of Macedonia, and a Roman colony" (Acts 16:12) and one in which Paul was imprisoned (Acts 16:23). This imprisonment was most likely around A.D. 60-61 (Silva, 1988, pp. 4-5) which fits with his house arrest in Acts 28:14-31 following his appeal to Caesar. There is a sense of intimacy and friendship throughout this letter as Paul communicates his thankfulness for support in his ministry by sending someone to him (2:25-30) as well as financial support (4:14-18). Even at the cost of their own affliction (2 Cor 8:1-5). Similarly, the literary context of the passage demonstrates a close affection for the Philippians. Philippians 2:12-18 actually completes a larger unit of thought (Phil 1:27-2:18) in which the overall letter to the Philippians was meant "to encourage a spirit of unity among them [the believers]" (Bruce, 1983, p. 19). Paul simultaneously encourages the church in Philippi to work out their salvation corporately and individually, even as they suffer.

Paul starts this passage reminding the Philippian church about their obedience. For him "faith in Christ is ultimately expressed as obedience to Christ" (Fee, 1995, p. 233). Paul is working off of what has just been said (2:8) about the obedience that Christ demonstrated. He is encouraging them to remain obedient, "Christ-like obedience to God, and by extension to the gospel of Christ" (Bockmuehl, 1998, p. 150). But what does this look like? Paul gives an imperative, which describes their obedience, "work out your salvation." This constitutes the main thought of the paragraph (2:12-18). The understanding of the phrase has been hotly debated and numerous commentators fall on either side of the issue; whether or not Paul is speaking about "salvation" of the corporate life of the community or addressing individual believers. In either case, there is an admonishment to work out this salvation. Additionally, there is a conceptual tension between v. 12 and v. 13; it is God who works in this process (Silva, 1988, p. 135).

Many commentators think that Paul is talking to the church as a corporate body in a sociological sense rather than a strictly theological understanding (Michael, Martin, Hawthorne and others). They all point to Michael's (1924) pivotal article (see reference list). The wider context of this passage (1:27 - 2:18) seems to demand a corporate understanding. Paul is "endeavoring to impress upon the Philippians the duty of their forming one compact, harmonious body free from all disputes and dissensions, each member sacrificing personal desires and ambitions in order to promote the good of the whole" (Michael, 1924, p. 442). This comes in light of Paul's admonition against caring for personal interests (2:4); therefore the corporate emphasis should be noted (Martin, 1987, p. 115). Furthermore it is possible, as Silva (1988) explains the other side, that "in you" (2:13) can also be translated "among you" (p.135). Similarly, the verb "work out" and the reflexive pronoun "in you" are both plural, which would indicate that the action is to be corporate in nature. Finally "with fear and trembling" is to be understood in light of fellow man and not in light of God (1 Cor 2:3; 2 Cor 7:15; Eph 6:5) (Peterlin, 1995, pp. 70-71).

Opposed to the corporate view above commentators equally assemble (O'Brien, Silva, I. H. Marshal), stating that Paul is speaking of an individual understanding of salvation in this passage. They argue the word "salvation" is not used in Philippians as in a corporate salvation (1:19, 28). So why would Paul all of a sudden switch from his apparently corporate perspective (2:1-4)? If this term were used in the corporate sense it would mean "preservation of danger, deliverance of impending death" (Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, 1979, p. 801). This verb can be defined "of that which is accomplished by one's activity," indicating an individualistic sense (Balz & Schneider, 1981, p. 271). Even though the verb "work out" and the reflexive pronoun "your own" are plural they are not reason enough to say this proves the corporate nature in which Paul was intending, "They simply indicate that all the believers at Philippi are to heed this apostolic admonition" (O'Brien, 1991, p. 279). O'Brien argues that the pronoun is best understood in its customary reflexive sense rather than in a reciprocal manner (p. 279). Finally the individuals named in this letter indicate "the group would have had difficulty changing without the individuals devoting themselves to the task of personal change as well" (Melick, 1991, p. 110).

It seems best to conclude this evaluation by observing that "The context [of this verse] makes it clear that this is not a soteriological text per se, dealing with 'people getting saved' or 'saved people persevering.' Rather it is an ethical text, dealing with 'how saved people live out their salvation' in the context of the believing community and the world" (Fee, 1988, p. 235). Similarly, regarding salvation, this issue must be viewed as being both/and; a corporate and individual aspect, as well as a present experience and a future reality (Bockmuehl, 1998, p. 151). "The corporate dimension is clear from the exhortations to unity and steadfastness in 1:27ff. and again in 2:14-16. The individual concern is safeguarded by the reciprocal 'each other' of 2:3-4, the reflexive pronoun here in 2:12 ('your own salvation'; cf. 2.3-4)" (Bockmuehl, 1998, p. 151).

The attitude with which the Philippians are to work out their salvation is with 'fear and trembling' (Bockmuehl, 1998, p. 153; Fee, 1995, p. 237). These are the specifics of humility reflected earlier (2:3-4) in which Paul identifies Christ as the ultimate example (2:5-8) (Hooker, 2000, p. 512).

"Using a play on words, Paul said they were to 'work out' because God 'works in.' God's work provided both the motivation and the ability to do his good pleasure" (Melick, 1991, p. 111). God is the one who makes spiritual progress possible even though believers have a role. It is apparent that God's work is what prompts any response or obedience from us first. Verse 13 is *the end*, or the reason for verse 12, which is *the means*. "Because salvation in its entire scope necessarily includes the manifestation of righteousness in our lives, it follows that our activity is integral to the process of salvation" (Silva, 1988, p. 138).

Paul is not telling the Philippian church that they are responsible for their own salvation. The aspect of salvation that is in focus in this section of Philippians (2:12-13) is the idea of sanctification. "The point is that, while sanctification requires conscious effort and concentration, our activity takes place, not in a legalistic spirit, with a view to gaining God's favor, but rather in a spirit of humility and thanksgiving, recognizing that without Christ we can do nothing (Jn 15:5)" (Silva, 1988, p. 140). "Thus Paul exhorts the Philippians to work out their salvation (Phil 2:12), and to move forward in holiness, upon the ground established for them by the grace of Christ, toward the goal of being

utterly refashioned according to Christ's image (Rom 8:29)" (Muller, 1979, p. 323). The Philippians are able to work out their salvation "precisely because God himself is 'at work' (*energôn*) in and among them" (Fee, 1995, p. 237).

Verse fourteen is practical in nature as Paul addresses specific issues in order for the Philippians to be people who are obedient, working out their salvation. Paul does this by pulling together all that has gone before in the pericope (1:27-2:13) into a final appeal (Fee, 1995, pp. 240-241). Specifically they are to live life void of two negative attitudes: grumbling and questioning. "The purpose and result of laying aside such grumblings and bickering are that you may become blameless and pure" (Bockmuehl, 1998, p. 156).

This is a reminder of what Paul has already prayed for the Philippian church (1:9-11) and "focuses on the completion of the sanctifying process (though with the clear implication that the Philippians' spiritual progress must manifest itself in the present experience)" (Silva, 1988, pp. 145-146). Paul wants them to "hold fast the word of life." "By their lives, the Philippians were actually holding fast to the gospel [through moral conduct]. By doing so, their lives also became the measuring rod and illumination of the world around them" (Melick, 1991, p. 113). As believers obediently live their lives out in such a way so as to demonstrate the salvation that God has worked in them, which is necessarily done through unity in the church regardless of any suffering they may experience, they will shine the truth of their salvation into a lost world. Salvation is worked out as believers allow God into every area of their lives to transform them. Believers need to be obedient to Him. This obedience takes on a practical aspect when looking at the community. It is in Christian community that believers demonstrate what their lives are really about and it is in community that the outside world is able to see authentic faith.

Sanctification is accomplished through the cooperative effort of the believer. It is obvious now that Christians have been given positional holiness by God as they believe in Jesus Christ (Justification) and that they have a responsibility to strive toward or "work out" their experiential holiness (Sanctification) in order to receive their final heavenly reward (Glorification). It is also obvious that this process is one in which God has given his people the grace to do this work, for he has established it and empowers it (Lewis & Demarest, 1994, pp. 209-213). "The initiative in the process is always God's, and we would in fact do nothing without his initiative. However, that initiative is not something we are waiting upon. The ball is, as it were, in our court. ... The issue now concerns what we will do" (Willard, 2002, p. 82). It is therefore the responsibility of the believer to actually bring these changes about. Modern psychology can assist in clarifying and strategizing the ways in which this may occur.

Empirical Integration

Bandura (1994) has developed a concept called "perceived self-efficacy" within social learning theory that is of help. Simply put, this is "a belief in one's personal capabilities" (Bandura, 1997, p. 4). They are "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations. Efficacy beliefs influence how people think, feel, motivate themselves, and act" (Bandura, 1995, p. 2). Self-efficacy, therefore, plays a direct role for the believer in "working out your salvation" (Phil 2:12). As the believer grows and develops a proper self-efficacy toward a particular outcome (holiness) they will become more successful in their efforts to grow in their

sanctification.

Willard (2002) writing on this process of spiritual formation and growth in sanctification has a three-part model for spiritual change (VIM - Vision, Intention, Means) (pp. 85-91). He says “If we – through well-directed and unrelenting action – effectually receive the grace of God in salvation and transformation, we certainly will be incrementally changed toward inward Christlikeness” (p. 82). It is our “well-directed and unrelenting action,” or intention that will bring about our sanctification. If “intention” is to have the desired effect upon the believer it must first come about as the result of a proper vision of life in the kingdom.

The vision that underlies spiritual (trans)formation into Christlikeness is, then, the vision of life now and forever in the range of God's effective will – that is, partaking of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 3:1-2) through a birth “from above” and participating by our actions in what God is doing now in our lifetime on earth (p. 87).

A believer's intention then, is actually deciding to participate in this work of taking on the divine nature because “an intention is brought to completion only by a decision to fulfill or carry through with an intention” (p. 88). This is only accomplished as the believer recognizes that they actually have the aptitude and means to follow through on this course of action, what Bandura calls perceived self-efficacy. “We must intend the vision if it is to be realized. That is, we must initiate, bring into being those factors that would bring the vision to reality” (Willard, 2002, p. 84).

Three Bandura (1982, 1993, and 1995) studies shed light on the theological concept of sanctification as stated above. All three address the way in which people believe they can develop in some way. While Bandura does not view these theories with an eye toward spiritual formation there does seem to be significant areas of interplay between them, specifically as the Christian seeks spiritual growth in experiential holiness, or sanctification.

Bandura (1995) suggests that there are four main ways to develop a strong sense of efficacy, accomplishing this growth as people engage in the process of self-regulative change (such as spiritual formation or sanctification). These are through mastery experiences, social modeling, social persuasion and identifying their physiological and emotional states (pp. 3-5). The first is simply the idea that success builds a belief in one's efficacy through “acquiring the cognitive, behavioral, and self-regulatory tools for creating and executing appropriate courses of action” (p. 3). Social modeling can come through vicarious experiences, “seeing similar others perform successfully can raise efficacy expectations in observers who then judge that they too possess the capabilities to master comparable activities” (Bandura, 1982, pp. 126-127). Third, social persuasion is when others verbally encourage another regarding ability for a particular task. Additionally, they construct circumstances that will bring about the desired result in others (Bandura, 1995, p. 4). Finally, self-efficacy comes as people rely on their physiological state to judge capabilities as they strive toward a goal (pp. 4-5).

All the studies related to self-efficacy show that the “higher the level of perceived self-efficacy, the greater the performance accomplishments. ... The stronger the perceived efficacy, the more likely are people to persist in their efforts until they succeed” (Bandura, 1982, pp. 127-128). The first three of these sources of self-efficacy can be

seen in Paul's letter to the Philippians. The sacrificial giving that the church did for Paul (2:25-30; 4:14-18) can be understood as performing a mastery experience. Second, Paul clearly models what he wants them to do and become, he says (Phil 3:17) “Brethren, join in imitating me, and mark those who so live as you have an example in us” referring to Timothy and Epaphroditus (Phil 2:19-30). Timothy and Epaphroditus are presented as further models (Fee, 1995, p. 261). Finally, Paul is writing to them, socially persuading them to work out their salvation.

These things, however, only make up sources of self-efficacy. More importantly are those ways in which self-efficacy regulates human functioning. They can be thought of as strategies for attaining various goals. For the Christian these will assist the believer in bringing about his or her own sanctification and to use Paul's term will “work out your salvation” (Phil 2:12). Bandura identified four major means and all of them have been studied and tested in great detail independent of one another; they include cognitive, motivational, affective, and selection process (1995, pp. 5-11). The “self influences thus operate as important proximal determinants at the very heart of causal processes” (Bandura, 1993, p. 118). In other words, these four determinants play a significant role in establishing and directing the way in which people go about performing certain actions or even what or who they will become.

“Most courses of action are initially organized in thought” (Bandura, 1993, p. 118), therefore, it is in the *cognitive processes* where any conception of ability or vision first takes place. As an individual thinks about what they want to become, or how they would like to live and act, they will first need to develop ideas about those things. The goal will need to be cognitively developed and thought through. Additionally, they will need to think strategically about how to bring those things about and they will need to determine if they have the ability in the first place (Bandura, 1993, p. 120). We can see this in Paul's letter to the Philippians. In chapter two, he sets out the vision for the way in which the Philippian church is to live and act, as Christ is their example (Phil 2:5-11). He sets the goal for them and provides them with hope and encouragement to achieve that goal since “God works in you” (Phil 2:13). “People of high efficacy set challenges for themselves and visualize success scenarios that provide positive guides for performance” (Bandura, 2000, p. 212). The opposite is true as well for those who doubt their cognitive efficacy.

The second manner in which self-efficacy regulates human functioning is through one's *motivational processes* and which is derived from the cognitive processes. That is, self-efficacy “determine[s] the goals people set for themselves, how much effort they expend, how long they persevere in the face of difficulties, and their resilience to failures” (Bandura, 1995, p. 8). Clearly the Philippian church was motivated to serve Paul as they sent him financial and relational support regardless of the cost to their church (Phil 2:25-30; 4:14-18; 2 Cor 8:1-5). Paul wanted this to continue (Phil 2:12). He understood that proper motivation leads to “performance accomplishments” (Bandura, 1995, p. 8).

The third influence upon a person's self-efficacy comes through *affective processes*. Like the motivational processes growing out of the cognitive processes, the affective processes stem from the motivational processes. “People's beliefs in their capabilities affect how much stress and depression they experience in threatening or difficult situations, as well as their level of motivation (A. Bandura, in press). This is the emotional mediator

of self-efficacy beliefs” (Bandura, 1993, p. 132). When people are positive and have a high sense of self-efficacy emotionally they are able to take on more stressful situations in order to attain their goals. They are able to go through more difficulty as they seek to attain those goals (Bandura, 1995, pp. 8-10). Similarly, Paul wrote the letter to the Philippians from a prison cell (Phil 1:7, 13-14) to encourage the small church to be faithful to their calling regardless of their circumstances (3:12-17, 4:8-9, 12-14). The theme of suffering weaves its way throughout the letter (1:5-7, 27-30, 3, 4:11-13).

The church is to maintain certain characteristics that will help them in their witness as they work out their salvation; steadfastness (1:27-30), unity (2:1-2), humility (2:3-11), obedience and purity (2:12-18). Additionally, Paul is an example to them as someone who can rejoice (Phil 1:18, 19; 2:17-18; 4:4-6) having a positive affect that will bring about the desired result.

Finally, Bandura says that “people are partly the products of their environments. Therefore, beliefs of personal efficacy can shape the course lives take. ...Any factor that influences choice behavior can profoundly affect the direction of personal development” (Bandura, 1993, p. 135). This is called *selection processes* where people are able to exert influence upon themselves based on the choices they make about the environment they decide to engage in (Bandura, 1995, p. 10). Paul encourages his church to work together as a whole to maintain Godly character (Phil 4:2-3).

Each of these processes is interrelated and affects one another holistically (Bandura, 1982, p. 124). Willard (2002) also recognizes the importance of viewing independent aspects of the individual (thoughts, feelings, choices, body, social context and soul) as a complete whole when seeking to understand the process of sanctification in spiritual formation (pp. 27-44). There should be obvious connections between Willard’s six aspects of a human life and Bandura’s four ways in which self-efficacy regulates human functioning (cognitive, motivational, affective, and selection process). They relate directly to one another and in addition fit with Willard’s VIM model of spiritual change. Bandura recognizes that each of these areas, while studied separately for individual evaluation and testing, contain a sense in which they all play a part in developing an over-all self-efficacy. This is especially true when viewing the concept of self-efficacy from a corporate standpoint in what is called “collective efficacy” (Bandura, 1982, p. 143). “Perceived collective efficacy will influence what people choose to do as a group, how much effort they put into it, and their staying power when group efforts fail to produce results” (Bandura, 1982, p. 143). This is additionally noted in Paul’s letter as he encourages the church to be unified (Phil 2:2-4).

While Bandura has not directly studied self-efficacy as related to spiritual formation, there do seem to be some connections as well as implications for Christian education and student development. It is crucial that believers do the things necessary to maximize their self-efficacy related to sanctification. This means thinking about the goal of sanctification and how to accomplish it. It means learning how to motivate one’s self toward the goal. It means learning about those affective things in one’s life so as to minimize the negative and maximize the positive. Finally it means placing yourself into an environment that will help in the process, such as a committed residential community. Additionally Christians need to take note of their successes in order to continue them and draw additional efficacy from them, looking to those saints (Biblical, historical and current) who are ahead in the process as examples. Believers also need to

do this work within the context of the church, allowing others to encourage and support this process and effort. As a result it seems that the physiological and emotional states will be judged correctly by the individual seeking to grow in their sanctification.

Conclusion

This study sought to understand the role and responsibility that believer’s have in their sanctification. In order to reach a conclusion, it was necessary to discover the definition of sanctification theologically and biblically. Additionally, a specific evaluation of Philippians 2:12-18 showed that indeed Christians do have a role in their sanctification. Further support came from Bandura’s understandings and studies of self-efficacy within social learning theory which offered conclusive evidence toward that end. If believers are to grow in their sanctification they must make use of a number of strategies to be successful in pursuit of their goal. This will be done by carefully regulating their human functioning through proper self-efficacy as well as increasing their levels of self-efficacy related to sanctification. As the believer maintains a proper vision of Christlikeness, living intentionally through active engagement towards that end they will be on the way toward growth in their sanctification. As student development offices continue to focus their efforts on these implications, greater success will come as we are able to increase the levels of assistance in our students toward this end.

References

- Balz, H. & Schneider, G. (Eds.). (1981). *Exegetical dictionary of the New Testament*, 2. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Bandura, A. (1982). Self-efficacy mechanism in human agency. *American Psychologist*, 37(2), 122-147.
- Bandura, A. (1993). Perceived self-efficacy in cognitive development and functioning *Educational Psychologist*, 28(2), 117-148.
- Bandura, A. (1995). Exercise of personal and collective efficacy in changing societies. In A. Bandura (Ed.), *Self-efficacy in changing societies* (pp. 1-45). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bandura, A. (2000). Self-efficacy. In A. E. Kazdin (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of psychology* (Vol. 7, pp. 212-213). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bauer, W., Arndt, W. F., & Gingrich, F. W. (1979). *A Greek-English lexicon on the New Testament* (pp. 800-802). Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Bockmuehl, M. (1998). The epistle to the Philippians. In *Black’s New Testament commentary*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers.
- Bruce, F. F. (1983). Philippians. In *New international biblical commentary* Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers.
- Erickson, M. J. (1998). *Christian Theology* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- Fee, G. (1995). Paul’s letter to the Philippians. In *The new international commentary on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Grudem, W. (1994). *Systematic theology*. Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press & Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

- Hooker, M. D. (2000). The letter to the Philippians. In *New interpreters bible commentary* (Vol.11, pp. 467-550). Nashville, TN: Abington Press.
- Lewis, G. R. & Demarest, B. A. (1994). *Integrative theology* (Vol. 3). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Martin, R. P. (1987). Philippians. In *Tyndale New Testament commentaries* Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Melick, Jr., R. R. (1991). Philippians, Colosians & Philemon. In *The new American commentary*, 32 Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.
- Michael, J.H. (1924). Work out your own salvation. In *The expositor* (Vol. 2, pp. 439-450) London: Hodder & Stoughton, Limited.
- Mullen, B. A. (1996). Sanctification. In W. A. Elwell (Ed.), *Baker theological dictionary of the Bible* (pp. 708-713). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- Muller, R. A. (1979). Sanctification. In G. W. Bromiley (Ed.), *The international standard Bible encyclopedia* (Vol. 4, pp. 321-331). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
- Murray, J. (1955). *Redemption accomplished and applied*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
- O' Brien, P. T. (1991). The epistle to the Philippians: A commentary on the Greek text. In *New international Greek Testament commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Packer, J. I. (2001). Justification. In W. A. Elwell (Ed.), *Evangelical dictionary of theology* (2nd ed., pp. 643-646). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House.
- Peterlin, D. (1995). *Paul's letter to the Philippians in the light of disunity in the church* Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill.
- Seebass, H. (1999). Holy. In C. Brown (Ed.), *New international dictionary of New Testament theology* (OT section, ¶2, 6; NT section ¶2, 4, 7). Zondervan Reference Software, version 2.7 Grand Rapids, MI: The Zondervan Corporation.
- Silva, M. (1988). Philippians. In *The Wycliffe exegetical commentary*. Chicago: Moody Press.
- Willard, D. (2002). *Renovation of the heart*. Colorado Spring: NavPress.
- White, R. E. O. (2001). Sanctification. In W. A. Elwell (Ed.), *Evangelical dictionary of theology* (pp. 1051-1054). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House.