Sanctification

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[0:00] Welcome to Built on God's Word, the preaching and teaching ministry of Highland Park Baptist Church in Bartlesville, Oklahoma.! Pastor Tyler Nabors teaches on sanctification.!

Lord, I pray that the more we grow in our knowledge of You, Lord, that we would just be made more aware of how much we need You. Lord, that the knowledge of You would humble us, would make us more reliant on You, and Lord, that You'd be glorified in the things that we're going to talk about tonight.
Lord, I pray for all these things. In Jesus' name, amen. Just a quick question before we get into our lesson tonight. Who is someone that You have sought to be like, and what measures have You taken to become like that person?
Tonight, we are going to be discussing sanctification. The definition from Wayne Grudem's systematic theology is that sanctification is the progressive work of God and believers that makes us more and more free from sin and like Christ in our actual lives.
So, just to recap a couple of things that we've been talking about the last several weeks. Last week, we talked about conversion, how that is our willful response to Christ, to repent of our sins and follow Him as Lord of our lives.
[1:35] We've talked about the gospel call from Lee and conversion, and also we've talked about predestination and the sovereignty of God involving salvation.

All of these things are important and are impossible without the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Now, sanctification is also something that is impossible without the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, but it is something that requires our participation.
That's what we're going to be talking about tonight as we talk about the different stages of sanctification, the roles, who are the players in our sanctification. And also what we're going to see is that this is meant to be kind of a journey upward.
It's going to be a jagged journey on your way to becoming more like Christ because we still struggle with sin. There's going to be times where we fall. There's going to be times when we fail in our battles.
But the general trajectory of our sanctification should be leaning upward. And we're going to talk more about what that looks like as the night goes on. But first, we're going to look at the three stages of sanctification.
[2:43] Now, the first one is this, is that sanctification has a definite beginning and it begins at regeneration. So we have a lot of scriptures that we're going to be looking at tonight.

So I didn't really have a handout for you all, but this is these are all the scriptures that we're going to cover in each section. So you can write those down, look those up as we go along if you want. But Titus 3.5 speaks of the washing of regeneration of the Holy Spirit.
So regeneration, what we have is a moral and a spiritual change that has worked in our lives. And it's such a change that makes it impossible for a true believer to live in sin without at least having that check in your spirit, without the Holy Spirit convicting you like what you are doing is wrong. That's part of what the Holy Spirit does in our lives. If we are a true born again believer, when you sin, you are going to feel that conviction. To look at a couple of verses regarding that, 1 John 3.9 says that no one born of God makes a practice of sinning.
For God's seed abides in him and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. So this is the initial start of sanctification. Some call it positional sanctification where God moves you from a place of wrath to a place of being an heir with Christ, to being his child.
[4:15] So that's that's called positional sanctification. What we're going to be looking more at tonight is progressive sanctification, that journey to becoming more like Christ. But you are now in a

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position where you're no longer a slave to sin, but a slave to righteousness.

And that's really what 1 John 3.9 is alluding to there. In other words, we don't have just a sinful nature that says it's OK to live however we want. When you are born again, when you are a regenerated believer, you have the Holy Spirit that is going to be convicting you to lead you to righteousness.
Romans 6 verses 11 through 14 says, So you also must consider yourself dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.
Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments of unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life and your members to God as instruments of righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you since you are not under the law, but under grace. So in order to start this journey of growth in the new self that is being made more and more like Christ, there needs to be a freedom from our old self that identifies with sin.
[5:40] Now, there are two things that are equally true about sanctification. And when we talk about these things, it's almost going to sound like a paradox, but these things are true involving sanctification.

And the first truth is this, that you are never completely free from sin in this life. There's not going to be a time in this life when we are completely free from sin and its effects.
First John 1, 8 through 10 says, If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
And if we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar and his word is not in us. So we may be free from the wages of our sin and we may have a hope of Christ's righteousness in our life, but we are still in the thick of the fight as long as we are in this life.
Now this is important because there are some veins of theology that believe that you can reach a perfect level of sanctification in this life.
[6:54] And we'll talk more about that here in a minute. But scripture clearly teaches us that our perfection is going to come in the next life. Philippians 3, verses 20 through 21 says, But our citizenship is in heaven and we eagerly await a savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly bodies so that we will be like his glorious body.

Now the second truth of sanctification, and this is important, is that we should never say that sin has defeated us. Now what does that look like practically in the life of a believer?
When you believe that you have battled with something for so long and it doesn't seem to be letting up, so you finally just give up. Basically say, you know, this sin, it just has a permanent place in my life.
God can sanctify everything else in my life, but people are just going to have to get on board with this one thing in my life. I've dealt with anger for so long.
People are just going to have to be patient with me. God will forgive me. It's just going to stay in my life. I've had this one addiction in my life so long. You know, God's grace is sufficient.
[8:06] I'll still indulge in this, but the rest of my life, it's going to become more like Christ. So in other words, what you're doing is you are building boundaries around your life that's saying that God's not allowed to touch these things.

Sin has a foothold in my life and I am okay with that. Now to hold to such a fallacy is to deny the truth of Scripture and its commands. Romans 6.11 says, You also must consider yourself dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.
And we just read this in verse 14 of Romans chapter 6. It says, Sin will have no dominion over you. You don't get to decide when God is done working on you.
He decides that and He will not leave that work incomplete. That's from Philippians 1.6. Now the second part of sanctification is that sanctification increases throughout life.
Sanctification increases throughout life. Scripture points to a definite beginning of sanctification. And according to Philippians 1.6, there's going to be a definite end to our sanctification one day.
[9:20] But until we get to that point, there's going to be this time in between our beginning and the end that's this journey, this upward jagged journey to becoming more and more like Christ.

Romans 6.19 says, For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and the lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, So now present your members as slaves to

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righteousness leading to sanctification.
So what Paul is calling for in this life is a complete change of allegiance in the believer's daily life. Where they once used to present themselves as willing participants in the desires of the flesh. Paul is now saying, take that same devotion, that same initiative, and apply it towards your journey to becoming more like Christ. Because it's only through pursuing Christ and His likeness that we will be transformed more and more day by day.
2 Corinthians 3.18 It says, And we all with unveiled faces, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.
[10:33] So there's kind of that step-by-step transformation that's going to be taking place in our life. For this comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. Colossians 3.10 also talks about being renewed into the image of our Creator and how that should have an impact on our daily lives.

And how we also relate to one another in Christ. As the body of Christ, our sanctification, it's going to affect how we relate to each other in the church. So, sanctification is not something that is going to happen on its own.
While it is the Holy Spirit that gives us the power to pursue sanctification, it is still something that we are supposed to pursue through obedience to God's commands and an intentional shedding off of our old selves.
Hebrews 12.1 It says, Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles us. Believers are all going to struggle with sin to some degree in our lives.
New believers that have come out of a long life of depravity and sin, they're going to struggle with it more in the beginning. More seasoned believers, they are still susceptible to temptation.
[11:48] That's why we see people that have been Christians for a long time fall into sin and get publicly disgraced. We've just had a slew of ministers on the news lately that have fallen into sin and are no longer allowed to be in ministry.

As seasoned believers, we need to guard our sanctification. That's why Proverbs says, Protect your heart above all else, for it is a source of life. So we need to have those boundaries in our lives where we are protecting our sanctification, our growth.
But the best fuel for our sanctification, one of the best things that we can do to further our growth in Christ is to become more in love with Christ, to grow in our love for Him.
Now, I asked you earlier, who is somebody in your life that you wanted to be like? That person for me was my father. And it wasn't because Dad did so many cool things, which he did, but I loved him.
I was fascinated by him. I had a deep love for my father, and I still do to this day. There's still some things about my dad. I want to be more like my dad in some ways. And it was that deep love for my father that inspired obedience, that inspired that mimicking in my daily life.
[13:06] Poor Titus. I see him doing the same thing with me. He will be single for so long. Now, I'm not exactly like my dad, but there are many things from my father that I have adopted.

Because I loved him, and because I loved him, I wanted to be just like him. So, my question for you is, do you find yourself struggling to be more like Christ? Or even desiring to push through this journey of sanctification whenever you find yourself maybe failing with sin again or struggling with the temptation?
Well, my next question would be for you is, what are you doing to grow in your love for Jesus Christ? What are the things that you are doing in your life that stir your affections for your Savior? Do you cherish and spend time in His Word? Are you actively loving being involved with His bride, the church? Are you surrounding yourself with people that are going to push and encourage you in your sanctification?
All these things go into building our love for Christ. The next phase of sanctification is this. Yes, sanctification is completed at death for our souls and when the Lord returns for our bodies.
[14:26] Romans 6, 12-13 clearly paints this picture that there is still sin that is present in our lives even after we are reborn. Now, with that truth in mind, we're never going to be completely sanctified in this life.

We can't do it by our own efforts alone. Now, this is important for a couple of reasons. The first is this. One of the things that we want you to do as a believer is we want you to look forward to the day when Jesus Christ is going to perfect you and He is going to glorify you.

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We want you to look forward to that finished work that only Christ can do. I can't tell you how many times I've gotten to walk through death with a church member that is about to go on the other side and you know what?
I've never heard one of them beg God for more time. They're looking forward to getting to the other side. They're looking forward to that time when sin is no longer going to be a part of their life, when they don't struggle with temptation, when their bodies aren't afflicted by the effects of sinful decay. I mean, they want to be glorified. And that's what we have to look forward to one day. So we want you all as believers to look forward to that finished work that Jesus Christ is going to do in your life and to love Him more because of that hope.
[15:48] Now, the second reason we want you to know this, that we want you to have a correct view of sanctification, is we want you to be able to sniff out bad doctrine when you hear it. And I said earlier that there are some doctrines that teach that you can be perfected in this life.

That's called Christian perfectionism. They believe that it is possible to not struggle with sin anymore, to not sin at all. They take the command of God to be holy as He is holy to mean that you can actually achieve an end to your progressive sanctification on this side of heaven.
Now, there's two responses to that. My first response is, uh-uh. The second one that holds a little bit more weight is probably Scripture. I want to point out a couple of those texts to you that talk about how Jesus is going to be the finisher of our sanctification.
The first is this, 1 John 1, verses 8-10. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Now, if we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.
[17:06] We kind of looked at that text a little bit earlier, but remember, when 1 John was written, he was writing this to believers. This was an established church that he was writing this to, and these were believers that were still struggling with their sin.

And John makes this absolute statement here. You can't say that you don't have sin in your life. You can't say that you don't struggle with sin anymore to some degree. Now, it's going to look different in everyone's life, but we're all going to struggle with it in some way, shape, or form, and we're all going to be in need of God's grace.
And that's really the biggest truth I want you all to understand here is that there's never going to be a time in this life when we are less reliant on the grace of Christ. We are always going to be in need of His grace.
And as a matter of fact, I believe that the more you realize your need for grace, the more you are going to be sanctified. 2 Corinthians 12, 9, But He said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.
Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. Now, all that to say, it is important to understand that God is going to perfect us one day.
[18:23] Because we look at passages like Revelation 21, 27, where it says, Clearly nothing unclean is going to enter God's presence. So something has to happen for us to be able to enter His presence.

And I'm grateful that God is going to complete that work. I'm grateful that one day I'm not going to get to heaven and God's going to say, there was a standard that you could have achieved on your own, but you didn't.
Instead, what we have is we have a good, faithful high priest that gives us His righteousness, that glorifies us like Himself one day so that we can stand in the presence of God, so that we can approach the throne of grace with boldness.
I want to read and close out this first half of our talk with just three more passages here. 1 Thessalonians 5, 23, says, Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely.
Not you sanctify yourself, may the God of peace sanctify you completely. And may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
[19:32] Philippians 3, 21, says, He will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body by the power that enables Him even to subject all things to Himself.

1 Corinthians 15, 49, Just as we have borne the image of man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven. So the sanctification journey, there's going to be three levels that we're going to look at.

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The first one is down here. That is death. The Bible says that you are dead in your sins before coming to Christ.
Something has to happen in your life that is going to move you from death to here, which this is going to be our middle section here. We're just going to say this is our life on earth, which is also going to be our journey of sanctification.
And then up here is glorification. This is the final stage of our sanctification. This is where Christ completes His work in us like we've heard about from Philippians 1, 6, that He's going to complete the good work in you.
[20:46] So, we all start out here, death, dead in our sins, children of wrath as Ephesians describes us, and then all of a sudden when the Holy Spirit works His regenerative work in our life, this positional sanctification happens where we are now here in our sanctification journey.

And all through this time, like I said, the goal is to get to here, to Jesus Christ. You're just going to kind of have this upward trajectory. It's going to have its bumps. It's going to have its dips. Eventually, though, as you become more like Christ, as you are growing in your faith, those dips are going to be less frequent. They're going to be shallower. You're going to be becoming more like Christ until finally one day you've reached glorification where Christ completes the work in you.
And that is the artistic version of what sanctification looks like. The next part, we're going to talk about the roles involved in sanctification.
And this is where we're really going to hit on how believers cooperate with God in the sanctification process. Now, the first role that we're going to look at is God the Father's role.
[21:57] What we're going to see from Scripture is that there's really a Trinitarian role in our sanctification. We see different members of the Godhead playing a role in our journey to becoming more like Christ.

So this first passage here, 1 Thessalonians 5.23, Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
1 Thessalonians 4.3 says, For this is the will of God, which is your sanctification. Philippians 2.13, For it is God who works in you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.
So sanctification is God's will for our whole person. And he is the one working that within us to accomplish that sanctification. So God is not on the sideline hoping that we get it together.
Thank goodness he is not on the sideline hoping that we get it together. He is working in your lives for your sanctification. Some of us he may have to work a little overtime on, but he is working in your life to make you more like Christ.
[23:13] And I'm so grateful for that. But God is the primary agent of our spiritual growth. Next as we go on to the Son's role, Jesus' role in our sanctification.

1 Corinthians 1.30 says that Christ is the wisdom from God. Christ has also earned our sanctification. We've been talking about how Christ has activated a better covenant.
We're talking about that this morning in the sermon. Christ is the one that has made our sanctification possible. So not only is Christ the wisdom of God in our life, but in 1 Peter 2.21 and 1 John 2.6 we also see that Christ is our role model from God.
If we want to know what the goal is, who we are supposed to be looking to in our lives, yes, having these role models in our earthly lives is important, but ultimately the person that we're striving for is Jesus.
He is the ultimate role model that we should be looking towards for our sanctification. He is the goal of it and He is the one that is going to finish it for us one day. As we go on to the third person, the Holy Spirit's role.
[24:29] 1 Peter 1.2 says, According to the foreknowledge of God the Father in the sanctification of the Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with His blood may grace and peace be multiplied to you.

So that phrase in there, for obedience, it's the Holy Spirit that is going to lead us to obedience to God, to follow His commands. Galatians 5 verses 22 and 23, the Holy Spirit produces fruit within us. John 16 verses 5 through 15 when Jesus is about to depart this earth, He is trying to pass on comforting words to His disciples.
So what does He do? He tells them about the Holy Spirit that is going to come and convict them of judgment and of righteousness. So it's the Holy Spirit that is going to convict us and lead us to

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righteousness in our Christian journey.
Now I said that we cooperate with God. Let's look at our role in the sanctification journey. First of all, there is a passive role that we play in our journey of sanctification and that passive role is our dependence on God's work within us.
[25:54] Our dependence on the Holy Spirit to convict us. Romans 12 1 says to present your bodies as a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God.

Romans 8 13 says if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live. So there is this crucial element of just presenting ourselves to God.
We are depending on Him to do the work in our lives that only He can do. we are trusting our souls to His care to will and to work as Philippians 2 13 says.
But there is a tendency in evangelical circles to completely neglect the other side of this. So we talked about the passive role and the active role but a lot of times people want to do away with the active role in our sanctification which is our willful obedience to the Lord.
people can pray we can cry out to God for our sanctification and a lot of times we accuse people of working hard to be obedient as being legalistic.
[27:02] You say well you're just trying to earn righteousness well you're just trying to earn your salvation. This is a huge distortion of this doctrine because true faith in God is going to lead to true obedience to God.

My children they beg me all the time for things that they want they want to stay up late they want to watch funny videos with me on my phone they want to eat their favorite food as a treat and rightfully they ask Nicole and I for those blessings because they know that we're the ones that can provide it but if they willfully choose to ignore our instructions if they willfully choose to disobey us they're not going to receive the blessings that they want and the same is true of us with God in our sanctification we are not going to become more like Christ if all we do is just cry out to God and not try to be obedient to his commands we are called to live out our faith we're not called just to profess it we are called to live out our faith to God because if we truly love him we will seek to follow his commands just like John 14 15 says if you love me you will keep my commands that's a response of true love to God it will be a response of loving obedience and God will use that loving obedience to sanctify us and make us more like his son so we're living in the spirit the fruit of the spirit is being produced in our lives and doing this
Romans 8 13 again says if by the spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live so as we're living by the spirit and I say living by the spirit because we can't pursue sanctification just out of our own sheer will it takes the spirit's work in our life to do that by and by more and more we're going to do what's called mortifying the flesh sin is going to have less and less of a hold in our life will it still be present yes we're still going to deal with temptation yes we're still going to fail from time to time but as we are obedient to the commands of Christ and following the leadership of the spirit in our lives that sinful nature is going to become less and less prevalent in our daily lives that's why Paul told his church to work out their salvation with fear and trembling we don't produce our salvation we don't produce righteousness but we are working to lead a life that reflects the salvation we have received from Christ now I mentioned earlier that we can run the risk of leaning too much into the passive role of our sanctification but the opposite is also true as well we can bridge into legalism we can bridge into this mindset of where we are trying to just white knuckle our way through our sanctification without love for God
I think that the church has plenty of rule followers that really don't have a desire to know and love the Lord that's what we see Jesus confronting the Pharisees on all the time if anyone was good at keeping rules and knowing the law it was the Pharisees but still that love for the author of the law was missing there was no love for God there was no love for his people they were just rule followers seeking to better themselves through their own efforts so we need to be careful not to bridge into that extreme where we are trying to become children of God just by simply following the rules one of the things that I was thinking about we have a lot of kids at our house outside of our own children we have a lot of kids from our neighborhood they'll come into our house they'll play in our front yard they'll use up our water bill by playing with our water hose they'll do all sorts of stuff but these kids they're obviously not our kids now while they are at our house they're going to abide by our rules they're going to follow the rules of our household or they need to go home period now does them following the same rules that our kids have to follow does that make them my children no does that mean that they love me because they're following our household rules no as a matter of fact we've

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been accused of being too strict with the kids that are at our house also because they follow our rules that doesn't mean that one day when I kick the bucket that they're going to get some of my kids inheritance no because they're not my children no matter how much they follow the same rules as my kids they are not my kids my kids are my kids they have my name they have love for me they are part of my family and unfortunately
I think there's a lot of people in the church that are trying to pursue sanctification in the very same way they think well if I can just live enough like a Christian if I can just follow enough rules then I'll be a Christian I'll finally be accepted I'll be a part of a community I will be saved unfortunately that's not how it works actually fortunately that is not how that works so for those of us that are saved for those of us that are born again believers how do we pursue sanctification what is our active pursuit our active role in sanctification well Hebrews 12 14 says we pursue holiness we're supposed to pursue the holiness of God the Bible says to be holy as God is holy and that's something that we're supposed to be actively pursuing in our lives other commands from scriptures we abstain from sexual immorality that's 1st
[33:00] Thessalonians 4 3 we are to cleanse ourselves from physical defilement 2nd Corinthians 7 1 we are to put forth the effort in good works 2nd Peter 1 5 we are also sanctified through God's word John 17 17 says sanctify them in the truth your word is truth this was Jesus's prayer regarding his disciples to sanctify them in the truth of God's word this is something that there is no replacement for in the life of a Christian which is regular time in God's word do we want the wisdom of God go to his word do we want to know how God wants us to live for him go to his word if we want to know what Jesus is like what we're supposed to be pursuing as with him as our role model go to his word read the gospels know who

Jesus is see how he lived how he loved how he followed the father in perfect obedience that's what we're supposed to be pursuing you can't be like someone that you never read about and that you know nothing about that's why God has given us his word now I want to read this passage from Psalm 19 verses 7 through 11 says the law of the Lord is perfect reviving the testimony of the Lord is sure making wise the simple the precepts of the Lord are right rejoicing the heart the commandment of the Lord is pure enlightening the eyes the fear of the Lord is clean enduring forever the rules of the Lord are true and righteous altogether more to be desired are they than gold even much fine gold sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb moreover by them is your servant warned in keeping them there is great reward so we are sanctified through our time in
God's word the more that we know and believe correctly about God the Father God the Son and the Holy Spirit the more we are going to know how to live in their likeness which is what we are called to do we're also sanctified through our time in prayer James 1 5 clearly says that if anyone lacks wisdom he just needs to ask God for it so we're sanctified by the time that we spend with God in prayer we are are also sanctified by our fellowship with other believers Hebrews 10 24 through 25 says let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds not giving up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing but encouraging one another and all the more as you see the day approaching!
1 Thessalonians 5 11 says to encourage one another and build each other up just as in fact you are doing so we're sanctified by our fellowship with the body of Christ so anyone that says that well I don't need the church to be a Christian they have bad doctrine they have bad theology and I would venture to say that if they say they have a hatred of the church and no desire to be a part of I would question the genuineness of their faith even going so far to do that because what does Jesus say they will know us by our love says we're to love as God first loved us so the beauty and joy of sanctification it's really just summed up in this it's growing to be more like Christ the more we grow to be like Christ the more that we're going to experience the joy and the peace that are produced by the
Holy Spirit within us Galatians 5 22 talking again about the fruit of the spirit the closer closer that we draw to Christ should also draw our affections more to the life that we are going to have with him one day because that's what we're aiming at that's the goal that we're shooting for that's glorification that's what we're all looking towards one day and every step of sanctification is one step closer to that finished work that!
[37:50] Christ will complete in us one day that's the joy of the Christian life to be more like Christ that's the abundant life that he wants us to have as his children let's pray and then we will be

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dismissed father thank you for just the gift of sanctification lord just the goal that you've given us in your son Jesus Christ and lord I also am just so grateful for the fact that you are the one that is going to complete that one day that it's not a task that it's left completely up to me so lord I pray that just in our daily lives lord that we would always look to Christ the author and the perfecter of our faith as our role model lord I pray that we would seek to mirror our lives to be more like him lord that our journey to our sin the temptation lord

I pray that we would flee lord that we would look to you lord I pray that we would also grow just in our love for your word lord the greatest tool in this life that you have given us for our sanctification and our spiritual growth is your word because through it we have access to your truth lord we can learn what Jesus is like we can learn what you are like everything that you want us to know about you is in your word and lord I pray that we would devote ourselves to studying it to knowing it and to applying it in our lives lord I pray for all these things in Jesus name amen

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