

# DAY 5

## SANCTIFICATION

I love the story that my South African friend, Mark, shared with me about a season of his life in which he was dead broke. At the time, he was given a Christmas card from an aunt, who wasn't really known for her great generosity. Thinking it was just a Christmas card, he chucked it in the back seat of his car and drove around with it in his pile of junk for weeks. Meanwhile, he was really struggling to make ends meet and had a very hard several weeks trying to piece his life together, trying to figure out which meal—lunch or dinner—he would eat that day.

Finally, he was cleaning out the back seat of his car one day, and he found this unopened Christmas card. When he opened it at last, he found a significant amount of money that his aunt had given to him to help him get through his financial ordeal. All along, he had been sitting on a gift of financial freedom but still living in financial bondage. The gift had been there, but he didn't receive it. He didn't open it and live out the freedom that the gift provided.

It is possible to have the full gift of our sins forgiven and the full restoration of our identity through Jesus's sacrifice and still not live in freedom. Don't hear me wrong: Jesus has done all the hard work for you! But until you open the gift and live out the freedom that the gift provides, you will stay in a sort of bondage. Jesus didn't give you absolution and restoration so that you wouldn't do anything with it.

He gave you absolution and restoration so that you would enjoy those gifts. Not just eternally, but here, right now. Freedom isn't only available in heaven. It's available for you to experience now.

You do not experience freedom in this world until you step into a life of sanctification.

Sanctification, by definition, is the process of being freed from sin, or being purified or made holy. Sanctification is, by the way, a lifelong process. While absolution and restoration will never be things that we can do, sanctification is a process that we work on, in conjunction with God, for the rest of our lives. It's never perfect and never complete, but when we participate with God in this process, freedom truly is experienced.

While each one of us is called and restored back into a life of purpose through God's grace, the path of sanctification often gives us a second chance in an area in which we previously failed. From an eternal perspective, we'll never right our wrongs because Jesus did that for us, but I am most fascinated by how God oftentimes will bring meaning and purpose into our lives from some of the worst parts of our stories.

Our greatest stumbles produce our greatest stories.

That's why some of the most successful addiction counselors were at one point addicted to drugs themselves. In fact, a key part of recovery through Alcoholics Anonymous is the 12th and final step. Check it out: "Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs."<sup>13</sup> The final step to full freedom is taking the thing that was against you and using it to help bring freedom to others.

God rescued you so that you could help rescue others!

Are there any sins, any scars from those sins, that God wants to use through you to help free others?

Sin is the most powerful weapon that the devil throws at us in this world. But when we walk in true freedom, God can take the weapon that was meant to destroy you and turn it into a weapon that not only brings purpose to your life, but brings freedom and salvation to others.

The body of Jesus was nailed onto an instrument of death called a cross. The cross, which the enemy used to kill Jesus, would eventually become the symbol of our victory. Jesus used the enemy's weapon to destroy the enemy and bring freedom to all of us!

God has a degree in bringing deliverance out of destruction.

This is what Jesus did for us, and this is the opportunity we are offered today! Total freedom comes when we take the former sins that have been against us, oppressing us and slowing us down, and give them over to God. Not only do we experience God's forgiveness, but He then puts us in a place to use our lives and tell our stories. We are able to do this with and through the power of Jesus!

The SCARS process is not always simple. It's usually ugly, and it will leave a mark. But your scars can help tell the beautiful story of Jesus. Mike Foster writes, "Too many of us believe the lie that we need to sanitize our scandals, brush away our grief, and cover up our scars."<sup>14</sup> Sanctification is an opportunity for God to work through your scars to help bring freedom to others.

Every scar tells a story. When you tell your story of how Jesus brought grace into your life, you end up bringing freedom to others. This is what the apostle John reminds us in Revelation 12:11a: **"They triumphed over him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony."**

The “blood of the Lamb” is the blood that Jesus shed for us on the cross. He is known as “The Lamb of God” all throughout the Bible. John reminds us that the power of our stories, rooted in THE story of Jesus, will bring ultimate freedom and victory over our enemy.

## THE BLOOD OF JESUS + OUR STORY > THE DEVIL

I want you to know that God has chosen you and filled you with His Spirit to make a difference in this world. In a world filled with division, unforgiveness, and bitterness, we are the forgiven sons and daughters of God, and we have the opportunity to bring freedom to others just as God has brought freedom to us.

Imagine how the world might change if we truly walked in the power of God’s freedom.

Sanctification is the opportunity for you to be fully free. Be free and tell your story!

On Days 34 to 40, you will be given the opportunity, like Peter, to be completely free from your sin, and in response, to live a holy life pursuing Jesus and bringing the freedom you’ve experienced to others.

