

Who Will You Be In 2026?

Nathanael Whisman – Romans 12:1-2, 1 Tim4:7-10, 2 Cor.
3:12-18
12/28/2025

* There will be a kids' moment near the end of the message. It would be awesome if you could join your kids for this special moment, just for them in the message! *

*At the end of this message you will say something like, "I wish he would have said..." Great! Talk about it with others! Here is my prayer for myself first, then all of us today. That through the gathering of the body of Christ today, the Holy Spirit would be at work to convict our hearts of sin, encourage us in our endeavors, and stir us up to love God and others better. Cool?

What are your new year resolutions?

- Keto // Paleo // Carnivore?
- Eat more sweets?
- Run a marathon?
- Go to the gym every week?
- Build your savings account?
- Pay off debt?
- Hit your first home run?!?!?
 - - psssst – I hope you do!
- Read 20 books?
- Read the Bible in a year?¹



What if your only goal was _____?

1. Make 2026 a year where God becomes **BIGGER** and you become **SMALLER**.

- "He must increase, but I must decrease."²
- "Aslan, Aslan. Dear Aslan," sobbed Lucy. "At Last..." "Welcome, child," he said. "Aslan," said Lucy, "you're bigger." "That is because you are older, little one," answered he. "Not because you are?" "I am not. But every year you grow, you will find me bigger."³

What if 2026 was not so much about what we will be **PHYSICALLY**, but who we are **SPIRITUALLY**?

- "7 Have nothing to do with silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; 8 for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the

present life and also for the life to come. 9 The saying is trustworthy and deserving full acceptance. For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe."⁴

- What would it look like for every Grace Fellowshiper to have the #1 goal of **SANCTIFICATION** in 2026?
- Nathanael's #1 goal for 2026: **BECOME** more like Jesus.

2.What is Sanctification?

- "ἁγιασμός" (*hagiasmos*) – Sanctification, Holiness, Consecration
- If you do a "word search" for "Sanctification" in scripture, you will find 10 occurrences in the New Testament of this form in the Greek. Here are 3 that are translated, "sanctification" in the NT.
 - Romans 6:19: "For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification."
 - Romans 6:22: "But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life."
 - 1 Corinthians 1:30: "And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption,"
- All these verses communicate life change from the moment of salvation onward. This comes from the root word for "holy one" or "saint." There is Saint, sanctify, and sanctification. These three words all communicate one message and make up 271 occurrences in the NT.
- *SANCTIFICATION is the ongoing process of becoming Holy. *

¹ Obviously, this does not apply to Grace Fellowship, we love Leviticus.

² Jn. 3:30, ESV

³ C.S. Lewis, *The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Children's Book, 2005), 148.

⁴ 1 Tim. 4:7-10, ESV

- “If atonement⁵ is the basis of the Christian life, ἁγιασμός (sanctification) is the moral form which develops out of it and without which there can be no vision of Christ.”⁶
- Sanctification begins with **JUSTIFICATION**.
- “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, **by the mercies of God**, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. **Do not be conformed** to this world, but **be transformed by the renewal of your mind**, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”⁷
- “God became man to turn creatures into sons; not simply to produce a better men of the old kind but to produce a new kind of man. It’s not like teaching a horse to jump better and better but like turning a horse into a winged creature.”⁸
- Sanctification is the process that begins at salvation. Once you are saved by God’s grace (Jesus), through faith (our response), God works in you by His Spirit to mold you into his likeness more and more every day.
- We are free from the punishment and penalty of sin, yet we still live in the presence of sin. So, what’s next?
 - “I trust God to save me, but do I trust him to sustain and shape me?” This is sanctification, becoming more holy. Becoming holy means become set apart from the world because we are set in God’s love.
- **Skit Guys Video⁹ - 05:05**
 - “You can take this mess of a life and do with it what you want...I love you too much to leave you were you are at.”

⁶ Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964), 113.

⁷ Rom. 12:1-2, ESV

⁸ C.S. Lewis, *The Complete C.S. Lewis Signature Classics: Mere Christianity* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publisher, 2007), 170.

⁹ Skit Guys, God’s-Chisel-Abridged. View video:

<https://skitguys.com/videos/gods-chisel-abridged>

¹⁰ 1 Pt. 1:15-16, Lev.11:44

Sanctification is becoming **HOLY** as God is **HOLY**.

- “as he who called you is holy, you also be holy...” You shall be holy, for I am holy.”¹⁰
- Holy = “set apart”

Being sanctified is the **PROCESS** of God taking away **SIN** and **BROKENNESS** inside you, so that we would look more like Jesus.

3. Why is Sanctification Important?

1. Sanctification is important because God wants you to **GROW!**
 - “And I am sure of this, he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.”¹¹
- C.S. Lewis continues his analogy from earlier,
- “But there may be a period, while the wings are just beginning to grow, when it cannot do so: at that stage the lumps on the shoulders—no one could tell by looking at them that they are going to be wings—may even give it an awkward appearance...I used this extreme example in order to emphasize the point that it is not mere improvement but Transformation.”¹²
 - Paul puts it into two categories, “spiritual milk and spiritual meat.”
2. Sanctification is part of your **WITNESS!**
 - “And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”¹³
 - “Yes, says Paul: we gaze at the glory of the Lord as in a mirror; but, instead of being dazzled and needing to use a veil, we find ourselves, each one of us, being changed like Moses from one degree of glory to another, because of the Lord, the spirit, at work within us.”¹⁴

“I think His plan all along has been for us to meet the people He made and feel like we just met Him.”¹⁵

¹¹ Phil. 1:6

¹² C.S. Lewis, *The Complete C.S. Lewis Signature Classics: Mere Christianity* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publisher, 2007), 170-171.

¹³ 2 Cor. 3:18, ESV

¹⁴ N. T. Wright, *Paul For Everyone: 2 Corinthians* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 38.

¹⁵ Bob Goff, *Everybody Always: Becoming Love in a World Full of Setbacks and Difficult People* (Colorado Springs, CO: Nelson Books, 2018), 5.

3. Sanctification is learning to **LOVE** like Jesus
- “Knowing and doing are two different things.”¹⁶
 - “I love Jesus, but I can't love _____.”
 - “I love Jesus, but I can't forgive _____.”
 - “I love Jesus, but I need to control _____.”
 - The greatest interruption in all of scripture comes in Ephesian 2:

“And you were **k**dead in the trespasses and sins **2**in which you once walked, following the course **l** of this world, following **u**the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in **a**the sons of disobedience — **3**among whom we all once lived in **a**the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the flesh and the mind, and **w**were by nature **a**children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.**2** **4** **But³ God, being rich in mercy,** **s**because of the great love with which he loved us, **5**even **l**when we were dead in our trespasses, **u**made us alive together with Christ— by **g**race you have been saved”
 - God's love is seen most clearly in His mercy and grace. One of the greatest acts of sanctification will be calling to mind the necessity of your need for a savior when you don't want to show mercy and grace to someone else (Say again).

4.) How does Sanctification work?

God, “**WHAT** do you want me to **LEARN?**”

God's imparted holiness is given to you by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

- Sanctification is every day saying, “Your Kingdom come, your will be done.”¹⁷ There is a reason Jesus taught us to pray this way. We can never earn any aspect of our salvation. Sanctification is the process of becoming like Jesus day after day after day.

*SET UP WHERE YOU ARE PICKING UP IN THE BOOK. Who are the Whemicks? What are dots? What are stars? Who is Punchinello?

- **“You Are Special”** By Max Lucado (Kids moment, kids can head to the front of the stage with your parents.)
- “The maker spoke softly. “Because she has decided that what I think is more important than what they think. The stickers only stick if you let them.” “What?” “The stickers only stick if

they matter to you. The more you trust my love, the less you care about their stickers.” “I'm not sure I understand.”¹⁸

- Sanctification is steadily learning to see our salvation (justification) work itself out in both the mundane and extraordinary moments in our lives. Sanctification is saying, “God, what are you teaching me?” In every aspect of our lives.

Application

1. **BELIEVE** in the Gospel of Jesus, The Christ.

- a. “The Gospel is summarized many ways throughout the New Testament, but can be expressed with the simple phrase, “Christ has Died; Christ has Risen! ... Jesus is God's way of redeeming and restoring everything that was lost to sin and death... This is the full gospel which can be summed up in one Word: Jesus!”¹⁹
- b. Find a member on the prayer team, pastor, parents, friend, or the random person next to you. Anyone! Here is an example from my testimony:
 - i. Jesus, I confess my sin and separation from you.
 - ii. Jesus, I believe you in your birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension, and promised return.
 - iii. Jesus, I believe that through you, and only you, I can receive eternal life.
 - iv. Jesus, would you be the Savior and Lord of my life.
 - v. Jesus, I believe the Holy Spirit will work within me to make me more like you every day as I give my life to the proclamation of the Kingdom of Heaven.

2. **Ask, “God, what are you revealing in me through _____?”**

- a. This could be our own brokenness we haven't realized.
- b. This could also be God getting your attention through His Holy Spirit.

3. **What “DOTS AND STARS” have become idols?**

¹⁶ Daron Whisman, Dad, Father, Pops, Old Man, etc...

¹⁷ Mt. 6:10, ESV

¹⁸ Max Lucado, *You Are Special* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1997), 29.

¹⁹ Israel Steinmetz, *Living Into The Bible's Grand Story: A Weekly Devotional* (Katy, TX: Nehemiah Press, 2025), 109-111.

- a. What in your life needs to be cut out, so that you are becoming more like Jesus?
- b. Honest response from Nathanael. "Wow, he can handle a lot." "He's forgetful." "I wonder if they talk about me. How do they talk about me?"
- Write down one thing you want to turn from, so that you can take one step in caring more about what God thinks, than what others think.

God, I repent of _____ . I fully surrender that to you, make me more like your Son.

4. Commitment to S.O.A.P. Journaling with someone.

- a. Ps. 19:7-14; 2 Tm. 3:16; Heb. 4:12

I propose an amendment to the title of the sermon. The question for 2026 is not who I will be. We are all actively being molded and shaped. The correct question, for every day, until Christ Calls or comes is, "**Who am I becoming?**"

Who are you becoming in 2026?

The prayer altar is open.