



Sanctification: Explorations in Theology and Practice

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Kelly M. Kopic is professor of theological studies at Covenant College in Lookout Mountain, Georgia. He earned a PhD in systematic and historical theology at King's College, University of London, and an MDiv at Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, Florida. Kopic is the author or editor of numerous books such as *A Little Book for New Theologians*, *God So Loved He Gave, Communion with God* and *Mapping Modern Theology*. Additionally, he has published articles in various theological journals.

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A Fresh Examination of Sanctification

“Evangelicalism appears to be in a season of struggling with how best to think about sanctification. What is the relationship between ‘faith’ and human responsibility? How might human agency relate not only to questions of God’s saving grace, but also to the way he sustains and preserves us by his grace? Does effort undermine the role of faith? How does all of this relate to our creaturely existence as it is fundamentally empowered by the Spirit? How do we understand the promises of God as we live in the eschatological tension of the now and not yet? . . .

“In recent decades, debates about justification have dominated the attention of many Protestants,” writes editor Kelly Kopic in the introduction to *Sanctification: Explorations in Theology and Practice*. “While at times the cool winds of that season can still blow with great power, there are indications that a new season, with new challenges, is at hand. Evangelicals in particular demonstrate strong signs of a growing need to revisit the topic of sanctification. Fresh concern about this vital theological locus is surfacing, which is wonderful since this is where the church so often lives and breathes.”

Growing out of the Edinburgh Dogmatics Conference, a breadth of scholars from the Reformed tradition discuss in this text the debates surrounding sanctification and how it relates to justification. Providing an outside scholarly perspective, these ecclesial-minded scholars seek to enhance and promote discussion and pastoral reflection on the increasingly important doctrine of sanctification.

Derek Tidball opens this volume with a homily on holiness as the restoration of God’s image, which is threefold: to have a Christlike character, to have a Christ-renewed mind and to belong to a Christ-renewed community.

Richard Lints examines the relationship between sanctification and faith and its similarities to the relationship between sanctification and justification.

Henri Blocher furthers the discussion by looking more closely at obedience and law, and in light of those definitions and complexities, looks at the relationship between faith and human agency.

Brannon Ellis considers the idea of union with Christ by examining it in terms of communion with the saints, arguing that being made new in Christ also means being in Christ and belonging to the Church.

Bruce McCormack looks at sanctification from a historical perspective, comparing Wesley and Barth and looking at their respective contributions to the doctrine.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO SCHEDULE AN INTERVIEW CONTACT:

Krista Carnet, broadcast publicity, at 800.843.4587 ext. 4013 or kkcarnet@ivpress.com

Alisse Wissman, print publicity, at 800.843.4587 ext. 4059 or awissman@ivpress.com

Adrianna Wright, online publicity, at 800.843.4587 ext. 4096 or awright@ivpress.com

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BOOK DETAILS

"Few doctrines today are as unwieldy and ill-defined as sanctification. Vast terrain must be charted, and a path forward must be suggested that honors the wide variety of biblical teachings that impinge on the subject. Kelly Kapic has done us all a great service in gathering these essays that explore the terrain and map out proposals regarding evangelical holiness. On a number of key issues, ranging from sola fide or perfection to union with Christ or suffering, this book draws wisely from the tradition, engages patiently with the scriptural testimony, and tries to think clearly and compellingly for the church today. I commend it."

— **Michael Allen**, Kennedy
Associate Professor of
Systematic Theology, Knox
Theological Seminary

Michael Horton concentrates on agency and ethics in sanctification, explaining how sanctification actually works.

Oliver O'Donovan outlines a framework for interpreting the meaning of sanctification in a practical sense, challenging readers to see how sanctification unfolds from faith, love and hope.

James Eglinton considers the ethics of sanctification as it relates to Herman Bavinck's theology, which examines the relationship between dogmatics and ethics.

Ivor Davidson supplies a dogmatic account of how the theological foundations of sanctification should inform readers' lives, carefully keeping holiness from being misconstrued as stifling or over-realized. He also provides an argument that believers are holy now.

Kelly Kapic reflects on the relationship between sanctification and physical suffering, arguing for the significance of community.

Julie Canlis argues that union with Christ was meant to ensure adoption and to unify the ecclesial community, made real by receiving the person of Jesus through the person of the Holy Spirit.

Peter Moore looks at preaching and sanctification, examining the pedagogical method of John Chrysostom to offer knowledge and wisdom on personal transformation for pastoral leaders concerned with sanctification.