

**Sanctification:  
Transformed Into the Image of Christ  
Lesson 4**

**I. Introduction**

- a. Thus far we have seen that the Biblical idea of sanctification has **two** significant aspects: a formal or ceremonial consecration to God and the other, ethical, relating to personal holiness.
- b. We have seen that as the conception of God changed from one in which outward conformity to specific rules of conduct was emphasized to the idea of God as a Spiritual Being who desires the **inner** transformation of His people, the usage of the word sanctification gradually changed as well. Ps 51:6 *Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. KJV*
- c. Further, as one understands the significance that God places upon those persons and things which are sanctified unto Him, one realizes that sanctified things are closely connected with God's identity, hence they must **reflect Him**.
- d. This notion of sanctification then imposes upon the thing/person thus sanctified, a degree of separation from the ordinary or profane and places an expectation of holiness upon them commensurate with their identification of **belonging** to God.

**II. Questions of Time and Method**

- a. When we ask when and how this work of sanctification is wrought, there is no **one clear** answer. What we have is, on the one hand, the uncompromising ideal and demand, and on the other absolute confidence in God for its ultimate fulfillment. Heb 12:14 *Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: KJV*
- b. Both from our own experience and from the record of Christian believers seen in the New Testament, it is noteworthy that believers are **far** from the attainment of such Christian perfection. Rom 7:18-19 *For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. 19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. KJV*
- c. Yet, we can know from the teaching of Scripture that without exception, all believers shall arrive in a state of **ultimate** sanctification to serve God eternally. Jude 24 *Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, KJV*
- d. Related to the question of time and method, some have assumed the doctrine that the state of **complete** holiness of life is a special experience in the Christian life wrought in a definite moment of time. John Wesley being the most notable proponent.
- e. To Wesley (1703-1791), an Anglican, **holiness** of heart seemed what every person who is truly saved by faith will long for.
- f. Thus, he set about, over a twenty year period, to develop **methods** by which one might live the sanctified life. Hence, the name of the denomination he founded: Methodist.

**General Rules:** *It is therefore expected of all who continue therein that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation, First: By doing no harm, by avoiding evil of every kind . . . ;*

*Secondly: By . . . doing good of every possible sort, and, as far as possible, to all . . . ;*

*Thirdly: By attending upon all the ordinances of God*

- g. He happened upon this notion in response to his own **experience** of a "lack of inner strength" with which to live the Christian life.
- h. He was also greatly influenced by his exposure to the practical Christianity of **Moravians**, who by Wesley's account, had demonstrated the "fruit of the Spirit" while under great stress.
- i. He was convinced that this "great salvation from sin" would be sent down, as "at the day of **Pentecost**" unto "all generations, into the hearts of all true believers" and that the promise was "to all them that are afar off, even as many as the Lord shall call."
- j. Wesley also believed that real Christians would grow in holiness both before they received the blessing of sanctifying faith and afterwards, not by works of righteousness but by the **grace of God**.
- k. This the Holy Spirit brought to them both by the inspiration of His presence and by the **"means** of grace" — prayer, thanksgiving, obedience, self-denial, studying the Scriptures, and faithful attendance on preaching and upon the sacrament of holy communion.
- l. Wesley thought passages dealing with **"perfection"** demonstrate the believers need for the merits of Christ, because of the acknowledged "prone-ness of believers to mistakes and errors".
- m. He made a **distinction** between actual sin (which would cause one to lose his sanctification) and mistakes and errors. He stated that mistakes and errors were not morally acts of sin but were nevertheless transgressions of the perfect law of Christ.
- n. While many today still adhere to the doctrine of the **second work** sanctification of the believer, such a belief is not without some serious Biblical and rational objections to it. These will be dealt with later in this series.
- o. Objectively, we should note that **no** New Testament passages give a specific answer to these questions of time and method, and that our conclusions must be drawn from the general teaching of the New Testament as to the transformation of the Christian life.

**III. Sanctification as God's Gift**

- a. If sanctification is the manifestation of true Christian holy living; how does the believer come by it? Both Scripture and personal experience teach us that it is not primarily by our volitional act, but by God's act, it is a **gift**. 2 Peter 1:3-4 *According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. KJV*
- b. Holiness represents the state of heart and life in conformity with God's will, so then, sanctification is the deed or **process** by which that state is wrought by the Holy Spirit working in us.
- c. It is within the act of **regeneration**, which is a monergistic work of the Holy Spirit, that the new life is bestowed upon the believer. It is God's second work of creation. Since it is God's doing, it is by definition a holy thing. 2 Cor 5:17-18 *Therefore, if anyone is in*

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*Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: NIV*

- d. An additional result of the Holy Spirit's ministry by which He works into us true holiness is to create in us an ability to make application of the Word of God. Jesus demonstrates this when He prays that the Father may sanctify His disciples in **truth** John 17:17 *Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. KJV*
- e. In like manner, Paul prays for the **Thessalonians** 1 Thess 2:13 *For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe. KJV*
- f. It is clear from the whole teaching of Scripture that this complete and ultimate sanctification is a defining attribute of all those who are saved because without it there is no other means by which it is possible to share in the **glory** of Christ. 2 Thess 2:13-14 *But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. 14 He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. NIV*
- g. While every part of the Christian life is the gift of God and wrought into the believer by His Spirit for His purposes, it can not be inferred from this that the individual believer has **no** active role in the process of his own sanctification. Eph 2:10 *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. KJV*

**IV. Relation to God Personal: New Testament Idea**

- a. We do not get the full meaning of this thought of sanctification as consecration, or belonging, until we grasp the New Testament thought of our relation to God as **personal** and individual. 1 Thess 2:12 *That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory. KJV*
- b. The danger for the believer of today is that this consecration should be thought of in a passive way. This is not the case. The Christian's surrender is not to an outer authority but to an inner, living fellowship. This living fellowship demands a **response**. John 10:27 *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: KJV*
- c. The sanctified life is thus a life of personal fellowship lived out with the Father in the same spirit of Christ in loving trust and obedient service to whatever His **will** might be regarding any circumstance or experience of the moment. Rom 6:22 *But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. KJV*
- d. This positive and vital meaning of sanctification dominates Paul's thought. Like a diamond revealing its various aspects depending upon the light it reflects, Paul speaks of sanctification in **various terms**:
  - 1. Living **unto** God Rom 6:10 *For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. KJV*
  - 2. Living **to** the Lord Eph 6:7 *With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: KJV*
  - 3. Being **alive** unto God Rom 6:11 *Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. KJV*
- e. So **completely** ought the life of the believer to be filled by this fellowship that he can say along with Paul, "It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me" Gal 2:20 *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. KJV*
- f. From this it should be obvious that this fellowship is not passive, but actively and volitionally, responsive on a moment by moment basis. It is a very rich and active life, this life of fellowship to which we are **surrendered**. 2 Cor 5:9-10 *Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. KJV*
- g. Led by the Holy Spirit, it is a life of **sonship** lived out in trust as we encounter the experiences of this life. Rom 8:14 *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. KJV*
- h. It is a life of unconquerable kindness and good will **in spite** of what is done or said to us. Matt 5:43-45 *Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. 44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; 45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. KJV*
- i. It is a life of faith, faith that the Word of God is true and **applicable** to every situation and relationship of life. Ps 119:9 *Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. KJV*
- j. It assumes that by faith, God will guide, direct and assure the **fulfillment** of His plan and purpose in and through us. 1 Thess 5:23-24 *And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it. KJV*
- k. This life of fellowship is having the mind of Christ in **every** circumstance and about **every** experience Phil 2:5 *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: KJV 2 Cor 10:5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; KJV*
- l. This sanctified life, then, is the life so fully surrendered to fellowship with Christ that day by day and moment by moment one's inner spirit and outward expression are literally **ruled** by His spirit. Gal 5:16-17 *This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. KJV*

**V. Application**

- a. To what extent does the way you are responding to the events and circumstances of your life reveal that you are being ruled by this new spirit?