

**Sanctification:
Transformed Into The Image of Christ
Lesson 6**

How well do you know yourself? Suppose you could look into a mirror and discover your “true self”. What do you think you might see?

There are various ways in which we could define our “true self”. For example, we could say that our true self is the sum total of all our life’s experience. Or it is all my unrealized potential or it is all that I am psychologically; or it is all that I am in Christ.

I. An Element in All Christian Life

- a. First, it must be noted that in the New Testament view, sanctification in the ethical sense is an **essential** element and inevitable result of all Christian life and experience. Heb 12:14 *Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. NIV*
- b. Since **Regeneration** is the implanting of a new life in man by the act of the Holy Spirit, it follows that in some sense holiness is an inherent condition of the new nature. Eph 4:24 *And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. KJV*
- c. This is so because by definition, anything that is from God **must be holy** and since this new life is from God it is ipso facto holy. Ps 145:17 *The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. KJV*
- d. By extension, we may apply this same idea of holiness of action to the Holy Spirit as well. The Holy Spirit as **deity** can do nothing that is other than that which is by definition, Holy. Acts 5:3-4 *But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? 4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. KJV*
- e. We may conclude then that there is **no Christian life** from the very beginning that is not the work of the Spirit. Since every one who is born again possesses this work of the Spirit we may say that every believer is holy in some sense. Rom 8:9-10 *Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. 10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. KJV*
- f. Regardless of how the name of the Spirit is phrased, this Spirit is the Holy Spirit, whether with Paul we say Spirit of Christ or Spirit of God, His presence in the believer, therefore, means holiness **of life**.
- g. So, from the standpoints of consecration and personal ethical holiness, any person who calls Jesus “**Lord**” is inescapably, both declared holy and yet demanded to be Holy in all his/her ways. 1 Peter 1:14-16 *As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: 15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; 16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. KJV*
- h. Jesus, Himself builds upon the prophets in making this point: There can be **no religion** without righteousness; clean hands, pure hearts, deeds of mercy, etc. Matt 5:6-8 *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. 7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. 8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. KJV*
- i. These are not mere conditions of worship, but joined to humble hearts are themselves the worship that God **desires**. Mic 6:6-8 *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? 7 Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? 8 He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? KJV*
- j. Jesus deepened the conception of personal holiness of the true worshipers of the Father, but did not, change it, and **Paul** followed suit. Rom 8:4 *That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. KJV*
- k. There is nothing in Paul's teaching to suggest that sanctification is the special event of a unique experience, or that consecration and ethical holiness as qualities of sanctification can be **segregated** from one another within the believer.
- l. **All Christian living** is meant for clean, pure, right living, and that is the heart of the meaning of sanctification. Paul demonstrates this in the simple, practical way in which he attacks the bane of sexual impurity in his pagan congregations. 1 Thess 4:3-4,7 *"This is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye abstain from fornication; that each one of you know how to possess himself of his own vessel in sanctification and honor. For God called us not for uncleanness, but in sanctification"*

II. Sanctification Flows from Fellowship with God:

- a. The sanctification which is a part of all Christian living flows from the very nature of that life as **fellowship** or communion with God. 1 John 1:3 *That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. KJV*
- b. From the very beginning the early Christians experienced a peculiar sense of **unity** or fellowship with one another which bound them together. Christ is at once the center of this unity and the source of every expression of it. 1 John 1:7 *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. KJV*
- c. This fellowship in Christ is essentially an inward experience and as such is difficult to define properly. However, it may be thought of as a **mystical** union (an invisible but active connectedness) with Christ.

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- d. Fundamental here is the fact that the Christian life is **personal**. This is what distinguishes true Christianity from a religious belief system. Therefore, every single true believer has this personal connection with Christ. Rom 8:9 *Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. KJV*
- e. The New Testament plainly teaches in multiple texts that this fellowship we have with God is nothing less than the life of the Godhead in which He graciously gives Himself to **indwell** us. John 14:20 *At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. KJV*; Rom 8:9 *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you KJV*; Eph 4:6 *One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. KJV*
- f. Contrary to the emphasis of many, this gift is not primarily forgiveness, nor victory over sin, nor peace of soul, nor hope of heaven. The practical emphasis ought to be our “fellowship **with Him**” *the Godhead dwelling in me!*
- g. The fruit of this fellowship is holiness in which the will of God is accomplished. This hallowing of the life must come about through personal experience because it can come in no other way. It must be personal and it **must be volitional**. Rom 12:2 *Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will. NIV*
- h. Christian holiness is personal, not something formal or ritual. While its source and power is none other than Christ, that source and power must connect with the individual **will** of the believer in order to make it personal. Phil 2:13 *For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. KJV*
- i. Such is the fellowship into which God graciously lifts the believer. This fellowship is exercised by spiritually **discerning** what the will of God is in any moment of time. Heb 5:14 *But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. KJV*
- j. Because it involves our discerning and choosing, it is ethical; a moral choice we make. Therefore, Christian faith is the **conscious** moral surrender of the life to Him in whom truth and right come to us as His command. Ps 119:173 *Let thine hand help me; for I have chosen thy precepts. KJV*
- k. The impact of that surrender is ethical; we **perceive** in the moment the righteous, godly, (Biblical) thing to do and surrender our will to Him and then do His will. John 14:21 *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. KJV*
- l. It is in the **act** of willingly responding to God's definite moral realities and powers, to love, meekness, gentleness, humility, reverence, purity, the passion for righteousness, that we know true fellowship with the Spirit of Christ. Gal 5:22-25 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. 24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. KJV*
- m. Such a fellowship is the supreme active moral force for the **molding** of the life of the believer and for transforming us into the image of Christ. Rom 8:29 *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. KJV*
- n. To further expand our idea of the profound intimacy and the power of this supreme relationship with the Spirit of Christ we should comprehend the fact that the one we seek to emulate, our Friend, is not another but is our **real self**. Gal 2:20; Col 1:27 *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 Col 1:27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:KJV*

III. Summary

- a. Since all Christian living is meant for clean, pure, right thinking and action, and because the life we now live is empowered by the indwelling Godhead, practical, experiential, holiness ought to be the goal of the believer in **every** transaction.
- b. This is possible in light of the fellowship that we have with the Triune God who **effectively** works within us to conform our will to His as we encounter life's situations and experiences.
- c. This transformation of the will is worked out **experientially** in the life of the believer in each situation in a personal and volitional way, thus rendering the individual believer conformed to the image of Christ.
- d. The goal is that in the end the believer is brought to the place that the life that s/he now lives is in conformity to the **Real Self** which is “Christ in (me) the hope of glory”.

IV. Application

- a. We as believers are both imbued with holiness and yet told to be holy in our living. To what extent are you conscious of the gap between thoughts and actions emanating out of your “real self” and those which derive from your old nature?
- b. What do you find that keeps you from personal holiness both inwardly and outwardly? (IE: specific attitudes; beliefs; self-talk; pressures; etc)
- c. While we are utterly dependent upon the transforming work of the Spirit for our ultimate sanctification, what are some of the things you can do to cooperate with Him in living out your real self in Christ?