

**Sanctification: Transformed into  
The Image of Christ  
Lesson 12**

THE WORLD'S SHORTEST FAIRYTALE ... Once upon a time, a guy asked a girl, "Will you marry me?" The girl said, "NO!" And the girl lived happily ever-after and went shopping, dancing, camping, always had a clean house, never had to cook, did whatever she wanted any time she wanted, never argued, didn't get fat, traveled more, had friends of her own choosing, didn't save money, and had all the hot water to herself. She went to the theatre, never watched sports, had high self esteem, never cried or yelled, felt and looked fabulous in sweat pants and was pleasant all the time. The End

Our study of sanctification has for the most part focused on the academic aspects of this doctrine, but there remains another aspect which is of more practical import to the believer: Experiential sanctification. What do we mean by experiential sanctification?

I. Experiential Sanctification is required by God

- a. Among God's purposes in leaving the believer on the earth after the moment of conversion is His requirement for the **personal** sanctification of those who will enter into His presence. 1 Thess 4:3 *This is the will of God, even your sanctification*
- b. The effect of sanctification appears to be that it works into the **character** of the believer a willingness to obey the will of the Father. This produces a total submission of one's will to the will of the Father. Heb 5:7-9 *Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him NIV*
- c. From this we may see that the process of being experientially sanctified renders the believer to a state of **true holiness** in perfect submission to the Father.. Eph 4:24 *And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness . KJV*
- d. Thus, personal experiential sanctification is a **requirement** of the Christian life. Heb 12:14 *Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord KJV*

II. Experiential sanctification is man's task because we have a personal **relationship** with God

- a. The difference between merely having a religion and having a spiritual relationship with the God of the Bible is that having a religion requires no personal, objectively identifiable **interaction** between man and his god.
- b. However, having a personal, spiritual, relationship with the God of the Bible requires interaction in a real and objectively identifiable way. God **objectively** speaks to those with whom He has a personal relationship and they respond to Him. John 10:27 *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: KJV*
- c. While this interaction with the God of the Bible is a gift bestowed, it also carries with it responsibilities to perform according to His commands. Therefore all of Christian life is both gift and **task** alike. Phil 2:12-13 *Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. 13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. KJV*

III. Experiential Sanctification is continuously **active** and progressive

- a. All is from God; we can only live in accordance with the grace that God gives. But there is a converse to this: **only** as we live it out can God give to us His greater promises. This is the meaning of living a life of faith. James 2:17-18 *Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. 18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. KJV*
- b. This **living faith** principle, where the saints of God obey the specific command of God **before** He does a supernatural work is seen throughout scripture. This is experiential sanctification in action.
  1. **Abraham** Gen 22:11-13 *And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. 12 And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. 13 And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. KJV*
  2. **The Jordan** crossing. Josh 3:15 *And as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest,) KJV*
  3. **Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego** Dan 3:16-18 *Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. 17 If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. 18 But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up." NIV*
  4. **The Centurion** Matt 8:13 *And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour. KJV*
  5. Those who **refuse** the mark of the beast Rev 14:9-10; 12 *A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: "If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, 10 he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, Rev 14:12 This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus .NIV*

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- c. This living faith principle, reflected in the experiential life, **produces** spiritual growth and maturity in the believer and is progressive. 2 Cor 7:1 *Having therefore these promises .... let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness (hagiosune) in the fear of God"*
- d. Both the continuously active and progressive aspects of sanctification are evident in Paul's use of the word "walk"
1. We are to "walk in **newness** of life. Rom 6:4 *Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. KJV*
  2. We are to walk by or in the **Spirit** Gal 5:16 *This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. KJV*
  3. We are to walk in **love**. Eph 5:2 *And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour. KJV*
  4. We are to walk "**worthy** of the Lord" Col 1:10 *That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; KJV*
- e. The gift of grace we receive as we encounter each circumstance becomes the task. Grace only becomes real and effective when we **actively** obey. It is only as we walk by the Spirit that we appropriate the power to overcome the lusts of the flesh. Gal 5:16 *This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. KJV*
- f. Likewise, being dead to sin is not merely some fixed, static fact, but is true experientially only as one **refuses** the lower nature and yields his members to a higher obedience. Rom 6:11-14 *In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. 13 Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. 14 For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace. NIV*
- g. If God gives only as we live, then He cannot give **all at once**. Experiential sanctification is then the matter of a lifetime and not of a moment and is different from positional sanctification.
- h. One's life may be consecrated in a **moment**, the right positional relation to God may be possessed and one may stand in saving fellowship with Him. This is sanctification in a positional sense.
- i. However, the real making holy of the person is intertwined with the whole life span. Experiential sanctification is nothing less than the **constant** in-forming of the life of the inner spirit as we manifest the outer deed of the Spirit of Christ. Eph 4:15 *"speaking truth in love, may grow up in all things into him, who is the head"*

- IV. Experiential sanctification is a **conscious** activity on the part of the believer
- a. While it is certainly true that in many cases we have very little to do with the events and circumstances that come into our lives, we have everything to do with our **responses** to those events and circumstances.
  - b. Our basis of our responsibility is rooted in the fact that we consciously chose how we will respond to those events and circumstances. This choosing activity is a function of the **will**.
  - c. Thus personal responsibility is bound up in the philosophical notion of the **free will** of man and is a fundamental necessity if man is to be judged as being morally responsible for his own acts.
  - d. In the absence of free will there can be no moral responsibility for ones' choices and actions. Further, without free will there would be **no basis** for the awarding of rewards or the judgment of any attitudinal or behavioral deficiency. Rom 14:12 *So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. KJV*
  - e. That said however, man's free will is not without **limits**. Man may only exercise free will within certain parameters and constraints. For example:
    1. Man may not exercise his free will in such a way as to limit or negate the decrees and purposes of **God**.
    2. Man may not exercise his free will to overcome **higher laws** which govern the created universe.
  - f. Therefore, one's will may only truly be exercised when the individual is **conscious** of a moral choice to be made. 1 Tim 1:13 *Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. KJV*
  - g. This conscious moral choice is dependent upon our recognition of the **distinction** between that which God proscribes and that which is natural to the old nature. Rom 6:19 *I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness NIV*

V. Application

- a. Experiential sanctifying is not mechanical or magical. It is worked out by God's Spirit in a daily fellowship to which we give ourselves in trust and obedience, receiving His grace with open heart and then living out an obedient life.
- b. It is not negative, I.E. the mere separation from sin; but it is the progressive hallowing of a life that grows constantly in capacity, and in character, into the stature of full manhood as it is in Christ.
- c. From its very nature it is not momentary, but the deed, the privilege and the purpose of a whole life.
- d. To what extent are you conscious of God's sanctifying purpose moment by moment and day by day?
- e. To what extent do you observe your own maturation into the stature of full manhood as it is in Christ?