

## Sanctification: Transformed Into the Image of Christ

### Lesson 18

#### Five Things You Need to Know About the Doctrine of Sanctification

##### 1. The doctrine of sanctification must first be understood from the perspective of God.

- a. Sanctification is first and foremost about the **Holiness** of God. When man fails to sanctify Yahweh, his failure lies in the fact that he has failed to declare the glory and power of Yahweh.
- b. This was the undoing of Moses in the miracle of the waters of Meribah-Kadesh in which he **struck** the rock instead of speaking to it as he was instructed. Deut 32:51 *Because ye trespassed against me among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah-Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin; because ye sanctified me not in the midst of the children of Israel. KJV*
- c. There is little distinction to be made between sanctifying God and **glorifying** God. They go hand in hand. The story of Nadab and Abihu points this out. Lev 10:1-3 *And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. 2 And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord. 3 Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace. KJV*
- d. This is so because God is reflected by His people. When, because of Israel's sins, it was defeated and taken into captivity, the nations thought it was because of Yahweh's **weakness**. Hence, Yahweh was profaned in the eyes of the nations. Ezek 36:22-23 *Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. 23 And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. KJV*
- e. As Jehovah is ethical, pure, separate and unique from the pagan gods He **requires** His own people to be sanctified and separate ethically from a pagan lifestyle and from every form of evil. 2 Cor 6:16-17 *"As God has said: 'I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people. Therefore come out from among them and be separate, KJV*

##### 2. God requires sanctification because of the believer's position and relationship to Him

- a. We do not get the full meaning 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. This personal belonging is granted to the believer based on the unique relationship he has to God; that of **sonship**. John 1:12-13 *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. KJV*
- c. For the Jews of Jesus' day, sonship meant obedience on the one hand and a privilege on the other. Jesus, by contrast however, declares that belonging to God means **likeness** to Him. Matt 5:44-45 *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*
- d. Sonship with the Father and kinship with Jesus is manifest by those who do God's **will** Mark 3:35 *For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother. KJV*
- e. The sanctified life as manifest by the believer is a life lived out in obedience to the Father, doing 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*
- f. So **completely** ought the life of the believer to be submitted to the Father 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*
- g. This is Paul's constant and compelling moral appeal: You belong to Christ; live with Him, live unto Him, live **like Him** Col 3:1-2 *If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth KJV*

##### 3. Positional sanctification is accomplished solely by God on our behalf

- a. Since the Fall of Adam, man has been spiritually dead; **unable** to respond to God's will because he is unable to respond to God's Spirit. 1 Cor 2:11-14 *For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. 12 We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. 13 This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. 14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. NIV*
- b. God resolves this inability by causing men to become **born-again** spiritually and thus believers are regenerated. John 3:5-6 *Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. KJV*
- c. The idea that regeneration results in a **true knowledge** of Christ and a new spiritual ability to respond to the Spirit of God is clearly seen from the epistles. Eph 3:16-20 *That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; 17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. 20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Col 3:10 10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: KJV*
- d. God's purpose in regeneration is not merely to give man a true knowledge of Christ; this is but a by-product. His real design is to impart **His nature** to believers. James 1:18 *Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. KJV*

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- e. For it is when His nature is manifest in His creation that He is glorified. Nothing glorifies Him more than to behold His own perfect nature **reflected** back to Him in the creatures of His creation. Gen 1:31 *And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day. KJV*
  - f. God's act of regeneration produces the "new man". That is, man as he becomes under the **transforming** power of the Holy Spirit, this is contrasted with man as he is by nature. Eph 4:24 *And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. KJV*
  - g. The body of the new man is indeed the same; the intellectual structure of his mind the same; but there has been a **fundamental** change in his principles and responses to spiritual matters. Regeneration is not a trifling change.
  - h. The idea is, evidently, that man is so renewed as to become "like" God, or, said another way, the divine **image** is restored to his being. Col 3:10 *And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: KJV*
  - i. The renewed man (the believer's true self) is made to resemble God in righteousness. The object of the work of redemption is to restore to man the condition in which he was before he fell; in **true holiness**. Eph 4:24 *And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. KJV*
- 4. Experiential sanctification emanates from the believer himself and reflects his regeneration**
- a. Apart from God's Spirit man fails to live out his new true identity. This is so because our spiritual nature is constituted as **dependent** upon the indwelling Spirit of God for the enablement to live in harmony with the will of God. John 15:5 *I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing KJV*
  - b. 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*
  - 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 in the fear of God" KJV*
- 5. Sanctification is the purpose of this life for the believer**
- a. This process of sanctification is the core experience of the Christian life. It is the **purpose** of this life and for the most part answers the question of "Why?" that we often ask when we are at the receiving end of some trial or misfortune. 1 Thess 4:3-4 *For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication; 4 That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; KJV*
  - b. It is into His image and **likeness** that we are being transformed, thus sanctified. 1 John 3:2-3 *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. 3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. KJV*
  - c. Knowing that God is all good, all knowing, all wise, all powerful and all sovereign, we can trust that our lives are not some **strange** random sequence of unrelated events to be endured. All things believers undergo are for His good purposes. Rom 8:28 *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. KJV*
  - d. Every experience and circumstance is presented to us by our Father who has designed us to look like Christ. Thus, He has specifically **chosen** the events and circumstance that will bring us to that ultimate end point. 1 Peter 4:13 *But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. KJV*
  - e. What is needed therefore is that we see **all** experience that we as believers have, as a progressive step toward achieving God's ultimate purposes in and through us. This will be achieved in our ultimate sanctification. Rom 8:29 *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, KJV*
  - f. So, whether it is through joy or sorrow, whether through sin or victory, whether the circumstance is psychological or physical, financial or social; virtually everything we experience serves the **purposes** of God in our sanctification journey.

#### Application

- a. It is clear from our study of sanctification that God commands me to be holy; He indwells me and has made me a son; He has regenerated me to enable my personal holiness and yet I still volitionally choose sin at times. Why?
- b. How should I respond to what I know to be true about my sanctification?