

**SANCTIFICATION**

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1 Thess. 4: 3: "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification."

1 Thess. 5: 23: "And the very God of peace sanctify you WHOLLY."

1 Thess. 4: 7: "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto sanctification."

Rom. 15: 16: "Being sanctified by the Holy Spirit."

Acts 15: 8, 9: "Giving them the Holy Spirit." "Cleansing their hearts by faith."

Multitudes of Christians do not understand that there are TWO WORKS OF GRACE; that God has provided for both in His atonement; and that He no more truly calls us to "REGENERATION" than He calls to "SANCTIFICATION." But nothing is more plainly taught in Scripture.

**I. Notice that There Are Two Works of Grace**

Jesus' disciples had forsaken all to follow Him. Their names were written in heaven. They had preached three years, worked miracles, cast out demons. Jesus said the world hated them because they were not of the world, even as He was not of the world. Yet, mark it well, He prayed, "SANCTIFY THEM" (John 17: 17). They were already converted; He prayed therefore that they might have the SECOND WORK OF GRACE.

Notice the teaching of First Thessalonians. It was a young church, just converted from heathenism. The whole of the first chapter is spent in telling what good Christians they were. They were church members; had "faith, hope and love in our Lord Jesus Christ"; they were "elected," and had "much assurance" of salvation. They were "imitators of the Lord," and "turned from idols to serve the living God," "examples to all that believed." They sounded forth the Word. Few churches of the present time can measure up to that church. In that third chapter we find Timothy reporting to Paul that they had not backslidden (vs. 5-8), and yet the apostle is "praying night and day that their hearts may be established unblamable in holiness" (3: 10 and 13). "For this is the will of God even your sanctification" (4: 3). It is always so in the New Testament. SINNERS are never called to be sanctified, but to be converted. This proves that it is a second work of grace, subsequent to regeneration.

**II. What Is Sanctification?**

The English dictionaries will give us a better notion of it than most preachers have. See what they say.

1. Webster: "Sanctify—To make free from sin, to cleanse from moral corruption and pollution; to purify (John 17: 17)." "Sanctification—The act of God's grace by which the affections of men are purified or alienated from sin and the world, and exalted to a supreme love of God."

2. Century Dictionary: "In theology, the act of God's grace, by which the affections of men are purified and the soul is cleansed from sin, and consecrated to God."

3. Standard Dictionary: "The gracious work of the Holy Spirit whereby the BELIEVER is freed from sin, and exalted to holiness of heart and life."

(1) Two of these dictionaries say that sanctification is produced by an "act of God." Then it is instantaneous.

(2) All of them say that sanctification "purifies" or "frees from sin."

(3) One of them says: "It is the gracious

work of the Holy Spirit whereby the BELIEVER (not the sinner) is cleansed from sin." Then it is a SECOND WORK, subsequent to regeneration, as all Scriptures teach.

(4) All of them teach that it is done by God. So it is NOT of man's "GROWTH" or "STRIVING"; it is NOT produced by "EDUCATION" or "CULTURE" or "SELF-DISCIPLINE" or "DEATH" or "PURGATORY."

We may define sanctification then, AS THE CLEANSING OF THE BELIEVER'S HEART FROM INBRED SIN, OR DEPRAVITY WROUGHT IN US INSTANTANEOUSLY BY THE BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT AND FIRE (Matt. 3: 11 and Acts 15: 8, 9), AND FILLING IT WITH PERFECT LOVE.

**III. Notice What Sanctifies**

"Now the VERY GOD OF PEACE SANCTIFY YOU." You cannot cleanse your own heart yourself. No church committee, or priest, or board of elders, or bishop, or pope can do it. It is done by "GOD HIMSELF."

The verb "SANCTIFY" in the Greek is in the aorist tense. All the Greek grammars and the learned modern commentators tell us so. Bishop Ellicot: "The aorist tense denotes singleness of action, instantaneous perfection in love." Dr. Daniel Steele says, "It means instantaneous sanctification." So say Bishop Westcott and Lightfoot, and Dean Alford, and Dr. Agar Beet, and Augustus Meyer.

But all this rules out forever the favorite "GROWTH THEORY OF SANCTIFICATION." Nobody ever GREW into it or ever will. It is not taught in the Greek Testament. It is not in human experience. IT IS NOT GOD'S WAY.

**IV. How Completely Does God Sanctify?**

The very God of peace sanctify you "WHOLLY." The German Bible translates it "THROUGH AND THROUGH." "And I pray God your whole SPIRIT, SOUL AND BODY be preserved" (1 Thess. 5: 23). This means that we are to be cleansed and sanctified, NOT at death, nor after death, but NOW, in this life, while still in the body. "The oath which he swore unto Abraham our father to grant us that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, should serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him ALL OUR DAYS." This means that our BODIES are to be sanctified, cleansed from all unholy appetites and abnormal passions, like the passion for whisky, tobacco, morphine, cocaine, opium, and the like; and that all the innocent natural appetites will be purged of the EXCESSIVE and ABNORMAL, and made obedient to reason. The body will then be the temple of the Holy Ghost. The "SOUL"—all that we have in common with the lower animals, but in a higher degree—can be sanctified—our thought power, and desires and emotions, and the "SPIRIT" can be sanctified. The lower animals do not have this faculty. It is that by which we know God, and our obligation to love and adore Him. This puts us in touch with angels and the spirit realm. These three—SPIRIT, SOUL, and BODY—are all there is of us. All may be sanctified and be "preserved blameless."

**V. Notice the Promise**

"Faithful is he that calleth you who also will do it" (1 Thess. 5: 24). Do what? SANCTIFY YOU WHOLLY—what St. Paul prayed about in the previous verse. Here then is the promise that Jesus will sanctify. We know He will do it, if we are willing, because:

1. Jesus prayed for it (John 17: 17).
2. He died for it. "Christ loved THE

CHURCH and gave HIMSELF FOR IT, that He might SANCTIFY IT, having cleansed it."

3. It is His will. "This is the will of God, even your sanctification."

4. He calls us to it (1 Thess. 4: 7).

5. He chose us unto salvation through sanctification (2 Thess. 2: 13).

6. He baptizes with the Holy Ghost for it (Matt. 3: 11).

7. He is able to save to the uttermost (Heb. 7: 25). "His blood cleanseth from all sin (1 John 1: 7).

**VI. How Do We Obtain This Blessing?**

1. We feel our need. "Blessed are the poor in spirit" (Matt. 5: 3).

2. We hunger and thirst. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst" (Matt. 5: 6).

3. We pray for it. "The Holy Spirit to them that ask" (Luke 11: 13).

4. We obey in absolute surrender. "The Holy Spirit to them that obey" (Acts 5: 32).

5. We consecrate all. "Present yourselves unto God" (Rom. 6: 13).

6. Last of all BELIEVE. "Sanctified by faith" (Acts 26: 18; Acts 15: 8, 9). BELIEVE that Jesus accepts our consecration and sanctifies us. God warns us not to reject sanctification (1 Thess. 4: 8).

**WHEN REPENTANCE IS REAL**

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life will pivot from one direction to another—I have this one soul-searching question: Will you have faith in God and His Word? God is trustable and He loves to be trusted!

Yet we treat Him with such fear and hesitation. We are like the little boy who once made an appeal to Mr. Sam Hadley as that Great-heart of the Bowery sat outside the Water Street Mission in New York. The little fellow asked for a piece of cloth and a needle and thread. He wanted, he said, to mend his trousers. Hadley looked him over. The ragged clothes seemed hardly worth mending. Suddenly the little chap began crying, and with that he turned and ran down the street. Hadley gave chase and soon overtook him. His kindness disarmed the boy and the two walked back together to the Hadley apartment, where Mrs. Hadley mended the trousers. The right moment having come, Mr. Hadley said, "Son, what is your story?"

From that instant the boy was all tears. He had stolen twenty dollars from his father in Philadelphia and had run off to New York. "I've spent all the money," said he, "and I'm afraid to go home."

"Go back," said Hadley, "and your father will take you in."

"No, he won't," said the boy, and nothing could convince him otherwise.

So, off went a note from Sam Hadley to the father: "Dear Sir: Your boy is very, very sorry for his sin. He is in my Mission here and he wants to come home. What shall I tell him?"

The note reached Philadelphia in the morning. Before noon a telegram was in Hadley's hand. It read: "Tell the dear boy he is forgiven and I want him to come home at once."

And Jesus assures us that God is like that. Swifter than any telegram comes this word to you now: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

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