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If I Am Not Sanctified

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Text: For to be carnally minded is death (Romans 8:6).

What God demands cannot be optional with us. When God said, "Be ye holy," there was placed before the child of God a spiritual imperative from which there could be no escape. God intended from the beginning that holiness of heart should be the norm of Christian experience and conduct. Nothing less could satisfy the stern requirements of Christian discipleship.

Yet too often, and quite strangely so, we find in our midst the attitude that sanctification is optional. To some, at least, entire sanctification is considered to be a spiritual luxury rather than a spiritual necessity. Those having this attitude do not necessarily oppose the doctrine of the second blessing, but when the call goes out for seekers, and for clear-cut witness to the experience, they just are not there.

Failure to press on unto perfection, however, always leaves certain marked conditions and characteristics in the life of the unsanctified. Let us consider some of these at this time.

I. IF I AM NOT SANCTIFIED, I LIVE IN CONFLICT.

Both scripture and experience bear testimony to a conflict that exists in the heart of the unsanctified. Nothing could be more certain to happen, for the new man in Christ could not be expected to dwell in peace and harmony with the old man of sin. Conflict is the normal outcome of two opposing powers, each contending for the mastery of a soul. Man's redeemed self is spiritually minded and seeks to be governed by the law of the Spirit. On the other hand, man's old self is carnally minded and refuses to be governed by any law, except the law of sin.

Some would deny that this conflict exists, but denial does not change the fact. The data of experience bear adequate witness to this civil war in the soul. No amount of external polish can disguise it.

WITH GOD

When God says, "Do this," the old man begins to argue by saying that to obey will mean sacrifice and difficulty. To obey, he says, will mean unpopularity and poverty, separation and loneliness. While the new man says, "Yes, I delight in doing the will of God," the old man says, "No." Thus the first area of conflict is with God and His will.

WITH OTHERS

Not only do I find myself at odds with the will of God, but I find that my unsanctified self gives me trouble with my fellow man. Selfishness manifests itself when I do not get my share. Stubbornness manifests itself when

things do not go my way. Covetousness manifests itself when my neighbor does better than I. Jealousy manifests itself when someone else gets moved ahead of me. Pride manifests itself when the call of Christian duty lays upon me a humbling demand.

The sincere Christian cannot have feelings like these without sensing that something is wrong. Such manifestations are contrary to the clear call of the Scriptures to be forgiving and humble, long-suffering, generous, and kind. Though I should wish it otherwise, these carnal traits are recognizable by others, and they erect a barrier between us. Our fellowship loses its sweetness. Even our testimony loses its ring.

WITH MYSELF

I am in conflict with God and with others because I am in conflict with myself. The external manifestation simply demonstrates the inner condition. I have a divided will, a divided loyalty, and a divided love. Only the grace of God can help me.

The tension resulting from such a conflict has a devastating effect upon the soul's peace of mind. Sooner or later one of two things will happen. Either the new man in Christ cries with St. Paul, "Who shall deliver?" or else he succumbs to the power of the old man and surrenders his soul to Satan.

II. IF I AM NOT SANCTIFIED, I FALL SHORT OF GOD'S WHOLE WILL.

God's alternative to the carnal heart is the pure heart. The change is effected by the sanctifying grace of God. And it is within the will of God for such an event to happen. "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification ..." (1 Thessalonians 4:3).

Some at this point would encourage argument, saying that a little sin in the heart of a Christian has the wholesome effect of keeping him humble; that sin in the heart must continue until death; and that sin in thought, word, and deed, every day, is the normal expression of the Christian life.

Satan glories in the proclamation of such a hopeless theology, a theology which exalts neither God nor man, and which offers to the Christian nothing but defeat and despair. In its broader implications it discourages the attainment of the highest goal in Christian living, that of perfect love coming from a pure heart.

Dr. H. E. Jessop says: "The 'must sin' theory has no place in the New Testament. There is no Scripture anywhere within the covers of the Sacred Book which can be rightly interpreted as sanctioning such teaching."

The doctrine of holiness is not a heresy, though it has been placed at times in that category. If holiness teaching through the years has been heretical, then among the

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