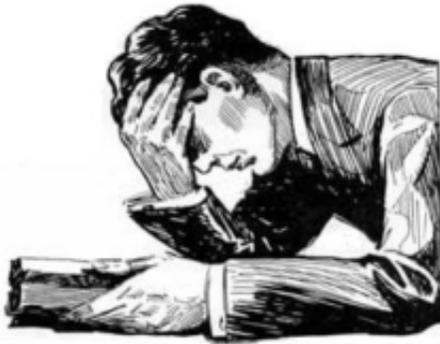


THE NEED OF A SANCTIFIED LIFE



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Whenever the truth is taught or preached, it is very necessary to have the Word of God as the final authority. There is a great need of getting beyond the traditions of men and their books and actually seeing what the Scriptures teach. In times past the brethren were mightily used by the Lord, and many of them had a very deep revelation of truth; but that was in their day. Although they were true to that day, time moves on, and as time moves on, light moves on with it. Brethren of times past taught some things that we have a better understanding of today. We can rejoice in that truth today, just as much as they did in times past.

Sanctification is one of the most controversial subjects found in the Word of God, especially around those who call themselves the Church of God. Differences of opinion over this teaching have caused people to separate. When I was first saved, growing in grace and in truth, I was confused concerning the teaching of sanctification. I did not like to talk about it for I do not like to talk about anything I do not understand, and I certainly did not understand this doctrine.

When I was first saved, I worked at Rockwell International, and I had some friends there who were also Christians, although they did not attend the Church of God. We would gather together some nights and try to go through the Scriptures. One man was a very close friend of mine. While talking to him about this subject, I would turn to the Corinthian letter and say: "You know, brother, you are yet carnal. If you'd just get sanctified, God would show you the true church." I was quite bold with that statement. He said, "Is that right?" and I said, "Yes, some of the brethren at Corinth were carnal."

Then one day he took me to the Bible and said, "The Bible lets us know in the Corinthian letter that those brethren were washed, sanctified, and justified, and yet there were divisions among them." That statement so knocked the wind out of my sails that I just walked away. Thereafter, whenever we discussed the Bible, the subject of sanctification did not come up on my part. The doctrine was confusing to me.

I trust that God will help you open your mind. Sanctification can be difficult to understand. I will try to make it very simple to convey the message to you as God has given it to me. Many people are like the disciples were when Jesus said, "Who do men say that I the Son of Man am?" You can read their reply in Matthew 16:14, which states, "Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets."

Jesus made the next question personal. He went from whom do *they* say to "Whom say ye that I am?" That is the question yet today, What do you say sanctification is? What do you individually feel that sanctification is? In times past I believed that sanctification was a second work of grace, a time when the "old man" was crucified, a removal of inbred sin and the carnal nature. Let us get beyond terminology and actually see what the Bible teaches. These things may sound good, and they may all line up together, but nevertheless, we still have to take the Word of God as the final authority.

"Work of Grace"

We need to start first with the term "work of grace." This needs to be clarified. The child of God needs many works of grace to make it to Heaven. Friend, you are not going to make it to Heaven with just one, two, or maybe three works; it is going to take *many* works of grace. In fact, it is going to take a work of grace every day of your life for you to make it into Heaven.

Let us look at some works of grace mentioned in the Bible. In Ephesians 2:8 Paul wrote, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." We did not earn salvation; it is a gift from God, but it is administered by grace. We cannot buy salvation; we cannot work our way into it, and neither can we get it by heritage. First Corinthians 3:10 says, "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon"

The Apostle Paul said it was given unto him by the "grace of God" to be a "wise masterbuilder," not just a masterbuilder but a *wise* masterbuilder. Grace helped him to lay the foundation of God. In Ephesians 3:7 Paul said, "Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power." Paul was made a minister by the grace of God. We read in 1 Corinthians 15:10, "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." Paul's whole life was centered around the *grace* of God. Also, his ability to labor was given by the *grace* of God.

Sanctification Is a Process

In the Old Testament the word *sanctify* comes from the Hebrew word **quadash**. In Hebrew this word means "to pronounce, observe as clean morally or ceremonially." In the Old Testament, things as well as people were sanctified. You can read it in many places, especially in the Book of Exodus. Exodus 40:10 reads, "And thou shalt anoint the altar of the burnt offering, and all his vessels, and sanctify the altar: and it shall be an altar most holy." In this verse we see that God wanted the altar to be sanctified.

Let us look at a few more examples. Leviticus 8:12 says, "And he poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him, to sanctify him." Here we read that the high priest was set apart for the work of God. Deuteronomy 5:12 states, "Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee." Here we can see that a *day* was sanctified. In the New Testament (the dispensation of time we live in) we are under the new covenant, and the word for *sanctification* is **haziazo**. That Greek word means "to purify or consecrate, to make holy, to separate from things profane." This word in the New Testament has a deeper meaning to it.

Sanctification is a process that begins on the soul and mind before one is converted. It is also a work that is part of one's conversion, but it does not stop there. Sanctification continues after conversion. You may ask, "How long does it last?" It lasts until we lay down this robe of flesh and enter into the next phase of God's great plan called eternity.

Jesus, praying in John 17:17-18, said: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." Jesus did not say that they were going to be sanctified but still be worldly; He said that they were going to be sanctified from the spirit of the world but they were going to be in the world. Jesus continued in verse 19, "And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth."

Jesus said in verse 17, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." In other words He was praying: "Set them apart through the truth. Separate them from the world. I'm sending them into the world, but Father, keep them separate from the world." Church, how are we kept separate from the world? Through the truth. What is the truth? "Thy *word* is truth."

Truth will not only set a man apart, but it will also equip him with the heart, the mind, and the character that are needed to carry out the task. God does not just send somebody out into the world without first equipping that man or woman. Sanctification not only sets you apart, but it equips you in your heart, your mind, and your soul so that you can be a witness for Jesus Christ. Just as God set Jesus apart from the world, God's people also are set apart to carry on the work that He has already started.

Sanctification Begins Before Salvation

We know that Jesus had no inbred sin. The Bible lets us know that He did not have any sin, neither did He have the old man to contend with. He was conceived of the Holy Ghost, and when we are born again, we are conceived of the Holy Ghost too. Jesus separated Himself *from* the world, but He also went *into* the world. Truth does a work on the soul before one is saved. Before one is saved, he is sanctified. Dear one, that may be contrary to what you have heard. Sanctification begins before you are saved and continues on to the actual conversion. Also, you are sanctified after you are saved.

How does salvation begin? It begins with a call from God. God opens the door of salvation. It is not a door that we can pull open ourselves and walk through. No! God opens the door of salvation. God chooses us, and brings us to salvation. In 2 Thessalonians 2:13 Paul wrote, "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." Sinners are brought to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, the Spirit sets them apart when they believe the truth.

God speaking to you is what brings you to Jesus. God draws and convinces you of your sin before you are saved. John 6:44 tells us, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." Before people are saved God wants them to know exactly what they are getting into when it comes to following Him. Many people are disappointed, for they come to Jesus expecting everything to turn around in their lives. Friend, there are some things you are going to have to work at to drive out of your life. God will help you, but you are going to have to do it.

You might not know everything before you are saved, but you are going to at least have an idea that there are some things you cannot continue doing. For example, before I was saved, I knew I could not have a tobacco habit and be a Christian. I never read a Scripture that says, "Thou shalt not smoke a cigarette," but it was revealed to me through sanctification of the Spirit and the belief of the truth. Before I got saved, I knew there were some things I could not keep doing if I was going to be a Christian. I knew I could not go to the barrooms. Even before I heard it preached, I knew Christians did not do that. Sanctification of the Spirit to salvation was working. If you are a sinner, there are some things you know you have to give up if you are going to be a Christian.

If you are a backslider, you have to go right back to where you left God. You do not measure up gradually. No, you come right back to all the truth you were measuring up to when you left God. You are not the same as somebody getting saved for the first time. You must be willing to give up sin to follow Jesus Christ. Although you might not know what all that entails, you do know that you are going to have to give up all the sin that you are involved in at the present time. You might not know much about sin, but you do know that you are wrong and God is right. For you to become right, you have to give up the wrong.

You cannot hang onto a little bit of hatred, lying, deceit, backbiting, revenge, or vengeance and get into Heaven. This is why some people do not come to God in the first place. They know they have to lay those things down to be a Christian. They also know they will have to make some things right. Sanctification begins before salvation. You must be willing to give up *all* sin when you start down the path that leads to salvation. Your mind must be made up. Conversion takes away all sin, but you have to be willing to give it up before you are converted. It is very obvious that there are not enough people wanting to give it up. Not everyone who moves to an altar of prayer is willing to serve God with all his heart, his soul, his mind, and his strength. Some people move only out of emotion. There is nothing wrong with emotion, as long as it is based on truth.

Sanctification Before Conversion

Today there is too much worldly sorrow on display. Worldly sorrow almost looks like godly sorrow. Tears will come with worldly sorrow just as tears come with godly sorrow. Remorse will come with worldly sorrow. In fact, there is a little bit of contrition that goes out with worldly sorrow. Sometimes it is hard to discern the

difference, but there is a big difference. Godly sorrow is being sorry that you sinned against God. Worldly sorrow is being sorry that you were caught. If you had not got caught, you would continue right on doing what you were doing. That is worldly sorrow.

Lost soul, you do not want God to deal with you one on one. You would be better off to take the truth of God's Word and get your life straightened out now. Do not wait for God to deal with you one on one, because if you wait until then, you will be in trouble. It is better to get help the way God wants you to—through the preaching of the Gospel, through sanctification of the Spirit bringing you to the truth.

Some people have a rebellious attitude. Young person, you might be very rebellious, but you are still not tough enough and rebellious enough to take on God. You might be able to handle your parents; you might be able to tell them off and deceive them; but you are not getting anywhere with God. You will not deceive God. All God has to do is let just a small affliction hit you. You might have thought you were in perfect health, but when God gets through with you, you will be calling for help. You may say, "I am going to do what I want; I am going to dress the way I want; I am going to live the way I want." You might do that for a time, but remember, God is not mocked. You are just spinning your wheels, and you are going to make a fool of yourself.

God has ways of catching people and bringing their sin out in the open. If you will not do it the Bible way, then God has another way of doing it. God is God. He is not bound with working in one certain way. God can work many different ways. God has put a conscience in all of us, and that conscience will speak out when one turns the wrong way. It is a gnawing conscience. The first time I stole a pack of cigarettes out of my dad's carton, my conscience spoke to me. I had never been in a church and had never heard the Gospel, but conscience has its own pulpit. It is an inward trumpet, and it speaks truth to every man's soul.

Again I say, truth does a work on the soul before one is saved. We read in Titus 1:15-16: "Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate."

Purity begins in the heart. All things are pure to the one whose heart is pure. But if the heart is not pure, but defiled and unclean, then so are the thoughts and the speech defiled and unclean. The one who has a dirty mind makes all things dirty. He will make something dirty out of almost every conversation because his mind is unclean. The sanctifying work, or process, before salvation will reveal the heart's true condition. "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17). The Word of God, under the anointing power of the Holy Spirit, convicts or convinces one of his sins. The Word of God and the Spirit of God call a sinner to repentance and to confess and forsake all sins.

Let us read about the time Paul stood before Felix. "And as he [Paul] reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee" (Acts 24:25).

The convenient season is not when we call for God but, rather, when God calls for us. Felix wanted more time. He wanted to call for Paul when he had a convenient time. He wanted more time to live after the flesh, and he told Paul that he would call for him when he was ready. Nowhere in the Bible do we ever read that Felix had a convenient time.

The first part of the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit is to call one to Jesus Christ. It is the Spirit of God that convinces the sinner that he is guilty. When the Spirit of God calls you while you are in sin, He is going to call you to holiness. First Thessalonians 4:7 states, "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness."

Revelation 22:17 says, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." There is a sanctifying work done on the soul, the heart, and the mind before one is actually converted.

Sanctification During Conversion

There is another sanctification in conversion itself. We read in Ephesians 5:23-27: "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.

"That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." What is Christ going to do? We read that He is going to sanctify and cleanse the church with the washing of water by the Word. Hebrews 10:10 says, "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." When Jesus died on the Cross and offered one sacrifice for sins for all, He purchased and sanctified the church. Acts 20:28 states, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." The Church of God is the only church that Jesus purchased. He did not purchase the Catholic Church, the Lutheran Church, or the Baptist Church; He purchased the Church of God. Also, that is the only church in which the Holy Spirit made overseers; all other churches have overseers that were made in a seminary or theological school.

In true Bible conversion, there is a separation that takes place. When one is separated from sin, he is cleansed, saved, justified, and made a member of the Church of God. There is no one around to take his name down and say that he is now a member of the church. He does not have to sign a card or shake the preacher's hand; he is already a full-fledged member of the Church of God. He became a member of the Church of God when he got saved. You might have gotten saved in your bedroom, with nobody around, not even a preacher; but when you got saved, God made you a member of the Church of God. You cannot live in sin and be a child of God or a member of the Church of God. There has to be a change that takes place. Before you are saved, you know that you are not fit for Heaven. If your sins are not covered by the blood of Jesus Christ, then you are lost now and in grave danger of being lost forever.

Sanctification After Conversion

There is a sanctification before conversion, a sanctification during conversion, and a sanctification after we are converted. Does that mean there is a second work of grace? No. Again, there are many works of grace. Your soul, your body, and your spirit continue to be sanctified. The whole man is being sanctified. First Thessalonians 5:23 reads, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Notice the word *wholly* in that verse. It is not the word that means severed from sin, but that word simply means "complete or to the end."

Here the Apostle Paul was dealing with the whole man. Man is a compound being and God wants every faculty of man consecrated to Him. He does not save your soul while letting your body do whatever it wants to do, by letting you show forth an old nasty spirit. No! God deals with the whole man: body, soul, and spirit. You might ask, "How is this possible?" According to false religion it is not possible. False religion will tell you that your soul can be saved, but you still have a body that sins.

You still do have a body, but there are Scriptures that tell us to keep the body under and mortify (kill or bring to an end) the deeds of the body. How do we mortify the deeds of the body? John 17:17 tells us, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." Now, when you or I read, study, or hear the Word of God and obey it, it will set us apart a little here and a little there. Maybe nobody but you as an individual knows about it. God deals with you individually; He deals with your spirit, your soul, and your body.

As the Word of God goes forth, you are cut back (read John, Chapter 15). There is a purging process going on; that is the sanctifying process. Maybe your spirit or your attitude is wrong, maybe you are doing

some fleshly things that you should not be doing. What does God do? He sanctifies you, sets you apart just a little bit more, and as you come apart from the thing that is wrong, you become more like Jesus Christ. I trust you can understand this.

God is called "the very God of peace," the Author of peace, the Giver of peace, and the Prince of Peace." The more you are sanctified, the more of the peace of God you have. Again, 1 Thessalonians 5:23 states, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body [there is the whole man] be preserved [not only made, but preserved] blameless until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The Ephesian letter tells us why God gave teachers and pastors. Ephesians 4:12 tells us, "For the perfecting [or we could use the word *sanctifying*] of the saints . . ." You might be perfect now, but God wants to perfect you. God deals with individuals differently. That is why you measure yourself with Christ, not with others. It could be that something is affecting your soul or you are doing something that is just plain fleshly or there is some tainting going on in your spirit. However, God will set you apart from that, and you can be "preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Psalm 119:9 says, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? [here is your answer] by taking heed thereto according to thy word." How are you going to get cleansed, sanctified, and perfected? By taking heed to God's Word.

I repeat, before one is converted there is a sanctification. The Holy Spirit will convince one that he is guilty and that he needs to separate himself from all sin. Child of God, you know that is true. Before you were saved, God showed you that you were a sinner. He showed me. I did not know everything I needed to give up or quit, but God revealed to me some things, and He dealt with me over those things.

Next, there is a sanctifying work during conversion. A separation from all sin takes place. You are cleansed and you are no longer a sinner. When I was converted and God forgave me of my sins, I was separated from the things that I knew were wrong at that time; but as I moved along and grew in grace and knowledge, God sanctified me more. He cut me back more. He just kept purging a little here, a little there, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little. God will perfect you—your spirit, your soul, and even your body. That is the sanctifying work which continues after you are converted.

After conversion, as you sit under the preaching of God's Word, you are set apart and perfected. Friend, you need a pastor. You need to sit under someone who declares the Gospel. Maybe you have been talking too much; maybe you have been getting a little too hot under the collar; maybe your spirit or attitude is wrong. As the message is preached, God will check that. He will perfect you. Why? He wants to preserve you blameless. How long? Until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Then when you stand before God, Jesus Christ can present you holy, without spot, without blame, and you can stand up and be counted as one of the brethren, a brother to Jesus Christ. Dear one, as you are reading this message, there is a sanctifying work going on.

Lost soul, what is God telling you? "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). Please allow God to do a sanctifying work in your soul that you might come to Christ. Come to Christ while it is a convenient time, while God is calling for you. Dear one, it is time to seek the Lord.

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