

## SANCTIFICATION

**"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."** (Hebrews 12:14) Holiness, God likeness, or sanctification, is the central theme of the gospel. Some persons feel that sanctification is received instantly upon accepting Christ as their saviour. Others feel it is the work of a lifetime. We will look at the Bible and see what it has to say. Whatever sanctification is, it is a must for the believer. **"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification."** (1 Thessalonians 4:3)

We all need to be sanctified, we must realize that sin has made us unfit for communion with God, and disqualified us for God's service and his kingdom. This is why Christ stated: **"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."** (John 3:6,7) The sinful mind cannot understand the things of the Spirit, we must be transformed. Without this transformation we are not even able to understand the providence of God in the events of this world. **"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."** (1 Corinthians 2:14) **"But we are all as an unclean thing, and our righteousnesses are as a filthy rags."** (Isaiah 64:6) A transformation (sanctification) is imperative for all of us.

## SANCTIFICATION

In the Bible "sanctify" has several meanings (a) to set apart for holy use: **"And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it."** (Genesis 2:3) (b) To purify or cleanse: **"And the Lord said unto Moses, go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to morrow, and let them wash their cloths."** (Exodus 19:10) Notice between Christ and the church, **"That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word."** (Ephesians 5:26) (c) To make whole or complete: **"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."** (Ephesians 5:27) Notice that what is implied is a cleansing to be made pure.

There are some that have and hold very personal ideas about the meaning of sanctification, but this does not change its Biblical meaning. To some sanctification is a passing feeling, which tugs at their heart. But let them see God and they will see themselves as they are and will cry, **"Woe is me! For I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, The Lord of hosts."** (Isaiah 6:5)

To others sanctification is what happens when a person repents and is washed in baptism. **"Then Peter said unto them, repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."** (Acts 2:38) It is this gift of the Holy Ghost that performs the work of sanctification.

Others feel sanctification is a process over their lifetime. **"Abstain from all appearance of evil. 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.” (1 Thessalonians 5:22,23) Notice that sanctification includes all we are, spirit, soul, and body. Thus the Bible indicates that sanctification is not a passing feeling, but a work of reformation which affects our whole being.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.” (Romans 12:1,2) This is true Bible sanctification and anything less does not produce the necessary results. Bible sanctification includes deliverance from sin, is in harmony with the Ten Commandments and the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

## PHASES OF SANCTIFICATION

Bible Sanctification has three phases.

- (1) It will clean our conscience from dead works. “For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purification of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Hebrews 9:13,14) “Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.” (Hebrews 10:22) With this sanctifying influence in us, we will never be satisfied until we can say “I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience.” (2 Timothy 1:3) Knowing that our thoughts and actions do not condemn us gives us strength to face the accusations and persecutions to come. It will give us the assurance of ultimate victory. Stephen lost his life as a result of preaching the truth. They stoned him, yet all the while he had this assurance. “But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.” (Acts 7:55,56) His life was a living testimony to a clear conscience and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.
- (2) It will separate from evil habits. “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” (2 Corinthians 7:1) There are those who think sanctification an emotion, some happy feeling. Joy in the service of God is not excluded, but Bible sanctification is more inclusive than feelings. Sanctification is a life-long experience separating us from the old life of sin, and enabling us to break with all evil habits. “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield (sell) yourselves servants (slaves) to obey, his servants (slaves) ye are to whom, ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked; that ye were the slaves of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the (bond) servants of righteousness.” (Romans 6:16-18) The price of sin is all we have. The price of freedom from sin is all Christ had, He paid for us. When Paul saw the Lord and was called to the ministry he said, “Who are thou, Lord? And He said, “I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But arise, and stand



upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and those things in the which I will appear unto thee; . . . To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.” (Acts 26:15,16,18) Keep it in mind that freedom from evil habits is one of the greatest arguments for the gospel of Jesus. Unless we know that Christ has set us free body and soul, we have no assurance that we are sanctified or that Christ lives in us. Our lives must come under the control of the Holy Spirit. Our bodies are to be the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, and need to be holy and without blemish. “What know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” (1 Corinthians 6:19,20)

- (3) It will lead us to dedicate our lives to the Lord, to be His (bond) servant, is the third phase in Bible sanctification. “But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8) When the old life of sin is removed, we enter the final phase of Bible sanctification, dedicating the sanctified life as a witness for the Lord, who loves us and gave Himself for us. Daily in every way we can testify to the sanctifying power of the gospel of Jesus. Our lives (the gospel in action) are the most convincing argument of the gospel. This living gospel will get results where theory fails. We owe it to the Lord and to the unsaved to testify to the power of Jesus Christ. It is this power that makes sinners free and gives them entrance into the kingdom of God. Let us never shun an opportunity to tell others of this power and show its works.

## TOOLS OF SANTIFICATION

The tools God uses to perform this work of sanctification are the agencies used in changing us into useful servants. The Bible tells of three agencies used in this work.

- (1) We are sanctified through the blood of Christ our Lord. “Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate.” (Hebrews 13:12) The blood of Christ is God’s fountain against all uncleanness in our lives and covers the sins upon the record books in heaven. “In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.” (Zechariah 13:1) Christ symbolizes this fountain. It was His sacrifice on the cross that opened the floodgate to water the earth. We only need to go to the fountain and be washed and made white and clean! “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood.” (Revelation 1:5) “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” (1 Peter 1:18,19) When we confess our sins to God, the blood of Christ is applied to our life and all our



sins are covered. "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in Himself." (Ephesians 1:7-9) We are justified by His blood. "Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him." (Romans 5:9) "Being justified freely by His grace through . . . faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." (Romans 3:24,25)

- (2) We are sanctified by His word. "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth." (John 17:17) James tells us to look to Christ as the Author and Finisher of our faith. "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures." (James 1:18) Understand that to be sanctified by the word of God, we must hear and know His truth before it can sanctify us. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing the word of God." (Romans 10:17) As we gain knowledge of God's word and function is his service, we grow in faith and live up to the light we have received, and it is able to sanctify our lives. This growing in faith and knowledge shows that the theory of sanctification being instantaneous is in error. "But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." (Proverbs 4:18) Thus sanctification is the process of a lifetime and requires submission to the will of the Lord. As we yield self, the transformation of our lives and sinful nature will shine with the light of God within us.
- (3) We are sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit and without His functioning in our lives we would be unchanged. "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself: but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come. (John 16:13) "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." (John 15:8-11) "Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost." (Romans 15:15,16) "But we are bound to give thanks always 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." (2 Thessalonians 2:13) "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God in the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied." (1 Peter 1:2)

## EFFECTS OF SANCTIFICATION

Bible sanctification will have the following effect. "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him." (1 John 2:4-5) If we are keeping His commandments, we are not deceived, for we are under the influence of His Spirit. "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous." (1 John 5:3) "To the law and the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." (Isaiah 8:20) "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within my heart." (Psalms 40:8) "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man." (Romans 7:22) "But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." (Psalms 1:2) Ask earnestly for the Holy Spirit, whose work it is to take the things of Jesus and show and give them to us. Only then will we have a future. Our creator knows that in our weaker moments we need the leverage of hope that only His Spirit can supply.

The connection between Truth and Sanctification is not theory, but experience. "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." (Galatians 2:20) "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith." (Romans 1:17) "So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." (Matthew 24:33,34)

All Christians should be careful of their conduct. Others are watching us. We cannot afford to say one thing and do another. We cannot mislead those who look to us for a right example. "The Lord of hosts shall be exalted in judgement, and God that is Holy shall be sanctified in righteousness." (Isaiah 5:16)