***Ultimate Sanctification

Colossians 1:21-23

COL-180***

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Hebrews 4:12: "For the Word of God is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing as far as the division of the soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

2 Timothy 2:15: "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the Word of truth."

Acts 20:32: "I commend you to God, and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified."

Mark 4:9: "He who has an ear, let him hear what the spirit says to the churches."

This morning, we direct your attention to Colossians 1:21-23, as we continue on the subject of "Reconciliation of the Colossians," segment number 25.

God, our Creator, demands a quality of holiness equal to His Own, for all who want to spend eternity in heaven with Him. That's what the Bible says, and that's the reality. For those of us who are helpless and hopelessness, that comes as a real bombshell. Nothing less than the holiness of God will be accepted. Nothing less can do the job to get us into heaven. God's holiness is the combination of His absolute righteousness and His perfect justice. Sin violates the divine standard of absolute righteousness. And sin for which the penalty of death has not been paid, violates the perfect justice of God. God never compromises his integrity.

So, His absolute righteousness is never violated by sin, and His perfect justice is always satisfied by the payment of the penalty of death for moral guilt. This divine quality of holiness is demanded by God for all who seek eternal life in heaven. There can be no exceptions.

1 Peter 1:14-16: "As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance. But like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior, because it is written: 'You shall be holy for I am holy.'" That statement and that demand (that imperative – that command) on the part of God: "I want you to be as holy as I am," is beyond human comprehension, and certainly beyond normal human attainment. How is it possible for any human being to be as holy as God?

No lost sinner can ever hope to meet the demand for divine holiness by his own efforts. This is pointed out to us in Romans 3:10-12: "There is none righteous, not even one. There is none who understands. There is none who seeks for God. All have turned aside. Together they have become useless. There is none who does good. There's not even one." The human race is hopelessly lost. It does not have absolute righteousness, and it has not satisfied the demands of God's justice by paying the price for our sins.

God Himself, therefore, must take care of this problem. And He has. He must justify the lost sinner by imputing to the believer in Jesus Christ, His own absolute righteousness.

2 Corinthians 5:21: "He made Him (God the Father made God the Son), who knew no sin, to be sin on our behalf." He carried our moral guilt: "That we, in turn, might become the absolute righteousness of God in Him." So, that problem of becoming holy enough to enter heaven, requiring absolute righteousness, has been solved. God said, "I will give My absolute righteousness (I will credit to your account), if you will accept Christ, My Son, as your Savior. Then God Himself must also satisfy His own justice through the payment of death by the Lord Jesus Christ as a sacrifice for the sins of mankind. And that is what He has done.

1 John 2:2: "And He Himself is the propitiation (or the satisfaction) for our sins (speaking of Christ). And not for ours only (we Christians), but also for those of the whole world (the non-Christians). All mankind is covered by the death of Christ, so that God has no problem with anybody. Sin is no longer an issue between any human being and God. The issue is accepting the gift, and not contaminating it by your own human works. The devil could not fight off the realities of the message of God, that through Christ's dying as the Lamb of God upon the cross, that all mankind's sins are covered. So, God's justice has been met – death paid for our sins. The devil could not do anything about the fact that God said, "Now, out of My kindness, I am free, because of My love for you, to give you absolute righteousness. You are now as good as Jesus Christ. Therefore, with these two qualities of absolute righteousness and justice satisfied, you are a holy person. You are qualified to enter my heaven.

So, by believing the gospel (the good news of the gospel of the grace of God), for receiving holiness of God as a gift through faith in Jesus Christ received as one's personal Savior, we are qualified forever to enter heaven, no matter what the devil does, he cannot change the reality. Now, what he's going to do, you can already suspect, is come along and contaminate the system. If you have something that works to heal a person of a physical ailment, if you come in and contaminate the system, that person will not get healed. The person will die.

So, the devil came along, and as I'll show you in a moment, he can terribly, cleverly contaminate the system of salvation by grace, received as a gift from God, so that you, in turn, become as holy as God Himself, and therefore are qualified to be in heaven with Him.

John 3:16, therefore, says, "For God so loved the world (the unsaved world) that He gave His Only Begotten Son (Begotten means Preeminent One), that whosoever believes in Him (trusts in Him alone, with nothing added, and no human doing, and no effort) should not perish, but have eternal life."

John 3:36: "He who believes in the Son has eternal life. But He who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." Salvation is a matter of accepting what God has done. It's an appropriation to your benefit – what He's already done for you.

The people who are in Hades this morning, awaiting their transfer eventually into the lake of fire, refused to appropriate what God has already done for them. They're in Hades with all their sins paid for. They're in Hades without any wrath of God on them because His justice was satisfied by the death of Christ. They are only there because they wouldn't accept salvation through Jesus Christ – by faith alone in Him, with no works added.

Ephesians 2:8-9 makes it even more explicit. And I read these verses to you to remind you once again that salvation is no mystery. The Bible is very clear. All you have to do is read it. It was written in ordinary, everyday English, and all we have to do is read it, and there's no problem of understanding it. All of you understand Ephesians 2:8-9: "For by grace (God's kind, undeserved favor toward us, you have been saved through faith (faith alone), and that (the word "that" refers to the consequences of that faith in Christ; that is, 'that salvation') is not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not as a result of works, so that no one should boast." Now, that's pretty clear. I can get the holiness I need to go to heaven by simply believing in Christ as My Savior (and "by believing" means that I'm going to depend upon Him to take me in, on the basis of God's promise to me that all my sins have been covered), and I will become holy through the absolute righteousness and justice of God being satisfied. And all I have to do is accept it. And I do not add works.

Not only do not I not add works, but that is very dangerous. To add work to believing in Christ as Savior is to undo the grace basis. So you won't go to heaven if you say, "I trust in Christ as my Savior, but here's my water baptism, and I take the Lord's Supper, and I do these good works."

Also see 1 Timothy 1:8-10. Please remember that any Scripture is much more meaningful if you can read it yourself. That's why we tell you, "Bring your Bibles to church." This is the kind of a place you should have your Bibles, and your spectacles – whatever you need to be able to enjoy it.

When I was in Dallas seminary as a student, I made extra money at the games in the Cotton Bowl (the SMU games) by selling programs. And I'd get 100 programs; sell them for a dollar apiece; And I'd get 50 cents on each one. I would stand there and yell at people: "You can't enjoy the game without a program. And a lot of them believed me, and bought a program. And I was selling these things left and right. And I had some friends who said, "Hey, I already have my ticket to go see the game. . . I don't want the program. You can take it." I said, "I'll take them." So, I'd sell 200. I'd get 200 guys out there who thought they couldn't enjoy the game without reading this program. But, of course, that was true. There was a lot of information in it. Then I'd go inside, and I'd check in with the next booth, where they sold the peanuts, and I'd get my big tray with all the peanuts, and I'd walk up and down selling peanuts: "You can't enjoy the game without peanuts." And people all over the place, believed me, and bought the peanuts. So, usually, it was a pretty good day.

However, it's true that you can't enjoy the service without a Bible. These verses mean more when you can read them for yourself. Otherwise, you'll think I'm making it up.

2 Timothy 1:8-10: "Therefore, do not be ashamed, of the testimony of our Lord, of me, His prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God Who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior, Jesus Christ, . . . Who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

**Lordship Salvation**

Paul is saying here that back when the Godhead met to set the decrees (the plan of God), I was chosen to be saved. That's when my name came up. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit looked at Jim, and said, "We'll take him." They looked at Sam, and said, "We're going to leave him in the mass of the lost." The looked at Susie and said, "We'll take her." They looked at Jane and said, "We will not call her." And they went down the line. And we didn't do anything. We didn't do anything, but had the grace of God kindness to be selected. Then He told us how to get in – an act of acceptance, and not a deal with God, and not an act of a commitment. Salvation is not a commitment. You do not get saved by committing to God that you're going to be a good person; that you're going to serve Him; that you're going to live a decent life; or, that you're going to do anything. You don't get saved (you don't get that holiness) by a commitment – a deal with God. You get it by an appropriation. Lordship's salvation, which has a subtle contamination of Satan, is preached by some of the best preachers in America: "You are saved when you commit yourself to serve God, and to live a good life. And if you become a Christian, and you don't live a good life, you are not saved." That's the idea: "Christ is not your Lord."

However, the Bible says, "No. Without anything on your part, you have been selected. You believe the gospel. And you become holy in the sight of God." It is an acceptance of what God has done.

Now, the concept of holiness, as you may remember – the word "holiness" means "to be set apart for God." This is the quality of sanctification provided by God to the believer by faith alone in Christ. The Reformers used the Latin words, "sola fide." It's commonplace to us. How do I get to heaven? Well, by faith alone (just faith – "sola fide"). But they were coming against the medieval church that said, "No, no, no, you're wrong. You're wrong. You get saved by faith in Christ, but not by faith alone. You get saved by faith alone plus the sacraments of the church, and all the dispensations of the church, who ultimately will give you salvation to take you into heaven, even cleansing you out of purgatory. No, no, no. It is not by faith alone. It is by faith in Christ, plus the ministrations of the church, and the priesthood.

That's a big difference. And these people (the Reformers) spoke in Latin. They came from different countries. The only way they could communicate with each other was in Latin. So, they said our position is "sola fide" – faith alone, and we will not compromise on that, no matter what the Catholic Church does to try to get us back in. Nothing less than sanctification, so received from God by faith alone in Christ will qualify one for heaven.

Now, Satan, from the beginning, has sought to compromise this basis of sanctification through faith alone in Christ, by interjecting human works, so that grace sanctification is impossible. Romans 11:6. It would be nice if somebody made us a banner. We have one for "Sola Scriptura" and "Sola Christos" (Christ alone). It'd be nice if somebody made a banner that said "Sola Fide" – by faith alone. In Romans 11:6, Paul closes this dissertation on salvation. It comes near the end. And he makes a very dramatic statement in Romans 11:6, when he says, "But if it is by grace (salvation), it is no longer on the basis of works. Otherwise, grace is no longer grace."

He says a similar thing in Romans 4 in speaking about Abraham. Now, what this verse says is that you cannot mix works and grace. You'll get to heaven by grace. But God Himself cannot help you, if you mix in sacraments; human doing; baptism; the Lord's Supper; behaving yourself; or, anything at all that is works. When human works comes in, then Ephesians 2:8-9 cannot kick in because that says that you are saved by grace: "By grace are you saved," and grace alone. So, if it is by grace, it's no longer on the basis of works. Otherwise, grace is no longer grace. The two are mutually exclusive.

**The Promise Keepers**

Now, how important this is, and how the devil likes to contaminate this is being currently demonstrated by para-church organization called the Promise Keepers. It's a movement that has a statement of faith, and as an objective, it has seven basic promises that men are to keep. All of them are good, and biblical, and desirable. Yet it didn't take very long for anybody with a little biblical discernment, and some doctrinal moxie, to realize that the Promise Keepers had a built-in weakness. They wanted to be an outreach to all men. They wanted nobody excluded. And they wanted to be able to bring everybody under that umbrella. And they actually were asking men to do things that are right; things that they should keep; and, behavior that should characterize men, and especially Christian men. And they broke it down into these seven principles.

The first problem that was quite apparent to me was, after the hoopla and hullabaloo of the stadium rallies, nobody told them how to do it. Nobody told them how to get these seven things in their lives operational. Nobody told them about storing doctrine in the human spirit, and the grace system of perception by which that's done. For one reason, they probably hated to do it, because most of those men wouldn't have churches to go back to where that's being done for them. Nobody told them about the power of the Spirit of God, that would take that doctrine now, and govern their lives, so that they could keep the seven promises. And nobody told them that if you don't have this system, which Jesus Christ Himself in His humanity had to have, you won't keep these promises.

Now our suspicions have, unfortunately, been confirmed about Promise Keepers. And when I originally had some reservations and expressed it, you'd be surprised how some Christians jumped on me as somebody who doesn't like any outside groups. But that's not true. Anybody who is true to the Word of God, and anybody who is a pastor-teacher who is an expository teacher, I want to know what he has to say. I check his tapes. I check his writings. I learn from him. But I also know the clowns that are out there. And I know that the people of God need to understand what the church is all about, because it's all been covered over by Satan. So, the deception is enormous. Most Christians cannot sit from one church to another, and realize that they're being robbed. They can't tell the difference, until the system has been explained to them.

**Roman Catholicism**

Promise Keepers had a statement of faith. Here's what it was. . . In their statement of faith, they had this statement. . . : "We believe that man was created in the image of God. That alienation can be removed only by accepting through faith alone . . . God's gift of salvation, which was made possible by Christ's death." Well, Bill McCartney found out that the Roman Catholics said, "We're not going to attend your meetings. We're not going to come into the Promise Keepers. We're not going to help you put a million men on the ball, because of your doctrinal statement – this statement here."

Well, these guys are not all that great theologians, so they said, "Well, what's the problem?" And the Catholic says, "This violates our statement in the Council of Trent: 'through faith alone.' That is not Catholic teaching." So, they had it revised: "How should we state it so that it is compatible with the Catholic doctrine of salvation and would be acceptable, so that they would come in on the Promise Keepers?" So, the revised statement says, "Only through faith, trusting in Christ alone for salvation, which was made possible by His death and resurrection, can that alienation be removed."

Do you see the difference between "through faith alone" and "only through faith?" Plus, what? The priesthood, and the sacraments: "Only through faith in Christ, plus." But not: "only through faith alone, plus nothing." That's the difference. What is salvation? It is believing in Christ plus nothing. This is what they fought out in the Reformation. And finally, the Reformers said, "The split is permanent. We cannot get together. It is 'sola fide.' That's it. It is faith alone, plus nothing." The Catholics said, "No, it’s faith in Christ, plus paying for your temporal punishments."

Now what the change says is that at salvation, and thus sanctification, which is what we're interested in, is secured not by faith alone, but by faith in Christ alone, so as to leave the door open for all of the good works, and the merit which the priest tells you is necessary for you to complete your temporal punishment for your sins, as the priest assigns those punishments, fulfilled ultimately in purgatory. "Only through faith in Christ" leaves the door open for purgatory to finish the job. But "through faith alone" – that's it.

**Lordship Salvation**

Now, here is where some of your relatives, who are not Catholics, fall. They think, "Yes, it's by faith in Christ. But, boy, I have to behave myself. Boy, I have to live a good life. Boy, I have to be sinless." And, of course, that's pretty tough, so they categorize sins such that they only count the really bad sins, which is not the way God counts sin. But many of your relatives are here: "only through faith in Christ," but they leave the door open such that they also have to earn their salvation by how they act. That's Lordship Salvation.

**The Council of Trent**

The official doctrinal statement of the Roman Catholic Church, which came down from the Council of Trent, which was held after the Reformation, to settle what Roman Catholics believed, in contrast to the Reformers. At the Council of Trent, following the Reformation, defining the basis of salvation, canon 9 states: "If anyone says that the sinner is justified through faith alone" (meaning that nothing else is required to cooperate in order to obtain the grace of justification), let him be anathema." Did Vatican II change that? No. The Pope made it clear that everything that the Council of Trent concluded is Catholic normative doctrine: "If anyone says that the sinner is justified by faith alone (meaning that nothing else is required to cooperate in order to obtain the grace of justification), let him be anathema."

Now, this clearly contradicts the biblical doctrine of justification through faith alone, apart from human works, in order to enable the Roman Catholics to join the Promise Keepers movement. And it is a great tragedy that Satan was able to be victorious. But you could have expected it. These para-church groups are a secondary thing. Usually, they're made up because the local church fails in its duty. The preacher in the local church is not practicing expository preaching, and most of them can't do it. They don't have the training or the means, and probably not the divine gift, to be a pastor-teacher-elder. Consequently, these people have no understanding of what it is that the devil has snuck up on them, and perverted the very good thing they want to do.

If a man is not saved, he's not going to keep those seven promises. And if he is saved, and doesn't have the understanding of how the grace system of perception works, to gather doctrine and to the build a spiritual maturity structure in his soul, he's not going to keep those promises. That's all human effort.

Isn't it amazing how many biblical groups fall back into works to make it with God, as if they had never read a single Scripture? Titus 3:4-8 say, "But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared (with the appearance of Jesus Christ), He saved us; not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, Whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ, our Savior. That being justified by His grace (and we've already shown you that grace cannot be mixed with any single bit of work), we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy statement. And concerning these things, I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God may be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men."

Do we Christians, who believe in salvation through faith alone ("sola fide") want to perform good work? You betcha. That's our life. We all have a mission of good works. Ephesians 2:10 says that God has preordained a set of good works ministry for us to perform. All of that was settled with the decrees at the council of the Godhead. And this will be the great tragedy of the Judgment Seat of Christ – for Christians who have not used their spiritual gifts in the daily pursuit of the fulfillment of their mission in life for which they were born.

You may have a very good life here, and you may enjoy all the care, and security, and everything else. But you're going to have a lousy life in heaven if you have not fulfilled your mission. What good is it for you to gain the whole world? What profit, the Scripture says, does man make to gain the whole world, and lose his own life? The benefit is his life in Christian service; and, thus accumulation of rewards. Otherwise, it's no benefit at all.

So, the Council of Trent, to this day, is in contradiction of Scripture Itself. Let me just read it Ephesians 2:9-10 for you: "Not as a result of works, so that no one should boast." Then, to make it clear that, while salvation is through faith alone, plus nothing, he says in verse 10: "For we are His workmanship." We are the workmanship of God, one by one, brought into salvation: "Created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." That is why you were saved. You were saved, as the old slogan says, "Saved to Serve."

Now, grace allows you to be saved through faith alone. Grace also allows you to bug out – to your great loss, and to your great eternal impoverishment, but you can bug out. That's what grace is. You're free. But God help you if you lose your freedom in the wrong way, as a believer, in terms of failing to rise to your capacities and your abilities (your spiritual gifts in Christ). God's only way for receiving sanctification is clearly revealed in Scripture as by grace alone, by faith alone, not "only through faith, plus whatever the church adds to it." It is through faith alone. Period.

So, this is another tragic example of the fact that the Promise Keepers movement does not have at its core a sound basis of doctrine. And on the issue of salvation, they've now gone completely astray. They cannot secure the power of God the Holy Spirit in blessing upon their effort now. They will never achieve the seven noble ideals, because they've gone wrong at the key feature of salvation itself.

Now, if you don't think the devil is clever; competent; and smart, and even more clever; more confident; and, smarter than you are, you might want to think about this a moment. They have some of the best people in Promise Keepers. And the devil has hit them on their blind side, without their even realizing what they were doing. But the next time they meet on the mall, the Roman Catholics are going to be there – who are not going to heaven, and who have no indwelling Holy Spirit, and who cannot possibly keep the seven promises. But it's show, not the substance.

God's word, the Bible, declares that justification by faith results in the instant imputation of Christ's absolute righteousness to the believers. Canon 9 of the Council of Trent says, "Anybody who believes that you are instantly justified (that you are instantly sanctified) through faith alone in Christ is to be anathema." Do you know what that means? That means that the church has declared that you have been condemned to hell. Anathema means to be condemned to the lake of fire. And the Roman Catholic Church says that anybody who believes that he can be saved instantly; sanctified instantly; and, justified instantly, by no human effort, but simply faith alone in Christ, is condemned by the church, which thinks that it has the power to do this, to the lake of fire.

**Infant Baptism**

The Roman Catholic view declares that justification by faith in Christ alone results merely in the beginning of the process, wherein one gradually receives more and more absolute righteousness. It's imparted to the lost. This is done, first of all, through infant baptism. That's why any infant who is not baptized as was taught in Nimrod's religion from Babylon – that child goes out into a place called limbo. And he just floats around there, in what is a kind of a living hell. And a Catholic will do anything – at a kitchen sink from the faucet, to sprinkle that baby three times in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for the sole purpose of keeping that child out of the lost limbo of unbaptized infants. Do you read anything like that in Scripture?

I've even spoken to Lutherans who are in Christian ministry. And we talk about theological matters. And when I've asked them about their concept of infant baptism, they say, "Oh, yes (we believe in infant baptism)." Mrs. Danish will tell you how, when she was in Lutheran confirmation class, all the kids were taught. "If you're in the presence of a child who is about to die, you rush that baby to that kitchen sink, and you baptize them (sprinkle them three times, in the name of the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit, or that infant is going to go to hell. And all these kids are listening to their confirmation class training, and they believe that. And I've asked people who are in Lutheran ministry: what is the basis of that for securing salvation through a human work? And they say, "Well, Jesus said, 'Suffer the little children to come unto Me.'" And I said, "But you're interpreting that passage to mean water baptism. It was like one lady who looked at me coolly, and said, "Well, we just have a difference of opinion with you on that." No, the only opinions I have in spiritual things are the opinions of God. What you have a difference of opinion with is Scripture.

However, the Roman Catholics, with their conference at the Council of Trent said: "The whole church will collapse if we allow the Reformers' position that salvation is through faith alone, without any ministrations of the church. The church will collapse. We will be out of business." And they said, "We must not allow that. And we will condemn anybody who says that. And we will teach that it's only through faith in Christ, plus the ministrations of the church that one is saved." And that's the Catholic position. But nobody gets to heaven on that.

The Catholics, through infant baptism; sacraments; purgatory; and, good works, gradually you become more and more justified – not instantly. That's why the Canon 9 says that it can't be "instant." It has to be "progressive" so that you can't get away from the priesthood all of your life. You're never your own priest. You can't get away from the church's ministrations all of your life. You're totally dependent upon them to get into heaven. And even after you die, they have to take you out of purgatory.

So, these two views on securing sanctification to qualify for heaven are in total conflict, obviously. And what does that mean? Well, it means that either you people or the Catholics are not going to make it to heaven. Do you understand that? Those of you who believe "through faith alone," the Catholics say, "That's wrong. You will not get to heaven." You who say that "only through faith in Christ, plus administration of the church is wrong," you're saying that *they* will not get to heaven? That is quite right. So, do you see how important this is? What Promise Keepers has done is a brilliant move of Satan, and it is a horrendous tragedy.

**Sanctification**

Now, there are certain aspects of sanctification.

**Positional Sanctification**

Aspect number one that we have reviewed is positional sanctification. Believers are eternally set apart to God in heaven by redemption (Hebrews 10:10). The justified believer is instantly and permanently placed in Christ. 1 Corinthians 6:11, 1 Corinthians 12:13, and Philippians 1:1 all declare that. This person is set apart from the condemnation of sin with full status of being a saint of God – a holy one of God, apart from his daily conduct. That first aspect of positional sanctification is something we all possess at the moment we trust in Christ as Savior. Through faith alone, we get positional sanctification. You are as holy in God's sight now as you will ever be. You cannot improve one bit on that sanctification, because it is the very setting apart to holiness that constitutes the character of God Himself.

**Experiential Sanctification**

The second aspect was experiential sanctification. Believers are set apart to God in their daily conduct, mentally and overtly. This aspect of sanctification *is* progressive. In experiential sanctification, you can improve, and should. You can increase your separation from mental and overt sins – from your personal sins, and from your evil of human good. You do this by learning the Word of God; storing the doctrine in your human spirit; and, maintaining your temporal fellowship. You do this by thereby building a spiritual maturity structure in your soul, and you go to super grace maturity level.

God has provided the local church with the grace system of perception. It doesn't matter what your IQ is, on a human plane – you can learn the deep things (the phenomena) of the Word of God. When you store this in your human spirit, then some very wonderful things happen. You get to be a better person.

We should look at a few Scriptures, just to remind ourselves again that this is all biblical. Romans 6:12-13: "Therefore, do not let sin (singular – the sin nature) reign in your mortal body, that you should obey its lusts. And do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin, as instruments of unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. That is experiential sanctification. You are increasing your holiness in your conduct.

1 John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." That is a third-class condition: maybe you will; and, maybe you won't. But if you do, God is faithful. Every time you confess it, He'll do it. You don't have to wonder. You don't have to hope. Every time you confess the sin (sins of commission and of omission), He is faithful and He is righteous to forgive; that is, He's not just blowing it off. His son already died for that sin. He can do this without violating his own holiness. He will forgive you your sins. And He will furthermore, not only take care of that one that you spoke of, and that you were aware of, but He will cleanse you from all unrighteousness – all the sins that maybe broke your temporal fellowship that you're not aware of. He will take care of those when you demonstrate your faithfulness for those that you know. What does that do? That increases your experiential sanctification.

John 17:17: "Sanctify them in the truth. Your Word is truth." Set them apart in their life and their conduct. How do you do it? Through the Word of God.

So, don't be telling your kids how they should behave themselves, and how they should act, unless you also see to it that they learn that the seeking to put first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and their learning the principles of the Word of God, so that they have a basis for understanding why they must conduct themselves in certain moral ways, and why what other people may do in great immoral ways should not be winked at, and is a great insult to God. You have to speak to them from the Word of God, not just because of your good opinion, or because you think it's good, because sooner or later, they're going to meet somebody that they think is smarter than you (their parents) or their friends. And they will go with the world's gang.

2 Corinthians 3:18 we add to that also: "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding, as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image, from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. As the Spirit of God works in our lives, we get to be better people. None of us will ever be perfect, but the more you walk with the Lord, your experience becomes more sanctified.

Experiential sanctification, of course, is under constant attack by Satan, through the sin nature, seeking to bring the believer into a status of reversionism. Ephesians 6:11 points this out – the danger of falling back: "Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil." That means that you don't sin. The full armor of God is then described, and that's a magnificent passage of Scripture, which we have gone into previously, and you may find on tapes. It explains to you what the armor is. And it's not what most people think.

1 Peter 5:8: "Be of sober spirit." "Sober" means "dignity." There it is again – our Latin word "gravitas:" "Be of sober spirit." Be on the alert: "Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." For what reason? To mess up your experiential sanctification, so that you're out of the blessing of God. You will never arrive at sinless perfection in experiential sanctification because you will always have the sin nature. But you may gain the victory with the full knowledge of doctrine and the power of the Holy Spirit, bringing that enablement into your life.

Ephesians 6:12-13: "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers (the demonic spirits), against the powers (against the world forces) of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness, in the heavenly places where Satan operates. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand. You will never be perfect, but in experiential sanctification, you can make progress.

**Ultimate Sanctification**

Then there's one more aspect of sanctification, which is ultimate sanctification. Ultimate sanctification refers to the believer being set apart from the presence and the practice of sin – where you cannot sin, with the sin nature wrenched out of your soul. This is the final goal of salvation. This is the ultimate experience when we are in God's presence in heaven.

1 John 3:1-2: "See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God, and such we are. For this reason, the world does not know us because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is." Isn't that something? When we see Christ, we will be just like Him. We will have absolute freedom from sin – ultimate sanctification.

In the meantime, verse 3 says, "Everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself just as He is pure." In the meantime, we say, "OK, that's where I'm going. That's what I'm going to be. I'm going to live a life as much like Christ as I can. And when I know the Word of God, and I have the principle of temporal fellowship, I can come a long way toward living like Christ, which means that I think like Him. Wouldn't that be nice? How much foolishness we would escape with that alone?

1 Corinthians 15:51-57 add to this ultimate sanctification: "Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." All Christians will not be dead at the rapture. Some will be living: "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet, for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable; this mortal must put on immortality. But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O, death, where is your sting. The sting of death is sin. But the power of sin is the Law. But thanks be to God, Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." And because of our ultimate sanctification (our total holiness), death will be a thing forever passed, and it can never touch us again for all eternity.

Philippians 3:21: "Who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has, even to subject all things to Himself. And there is a statement that the sin nature is removed. As there was none in Christ, so there will be none in us.

Finally, Ephesians 5:27, on ultimate sanctification: "That He might present to Himself the church (we Christians), in all our glory, having no spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that she should be holy and blameless." This is the final goal – ultimate sanctification of the Christian life.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:22-23, this is pointed out: "Abstain from every form of evil. Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely (ultimate sanctification – entirely), and may your spirit, and soul, and body (the three parts of the human being) be preserved complete, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

**Sinless Perfection**

This is the state of sinless perfection for the believer, and this is the ultimate sanctification, which is our great hope, and that we will enjoy for all eternity.

God, our Father, we do thank You for the fact that, while Satan is very subtle, we are not left to our own devices in dealing with his lies and deceit. We have the Word of God to alert us, and to guide us, and we pray for faithfulness to the specificities of doctrine. We pray that we will be good students of the Word of God, so that we never have to stand before You and be ashamed, because we stupidly misinterpreted a passage of Scripture that Satan had distorted, and thereby deceived us. We thank You for the wonderful gift of explaining Scripture, and the wonderful gift of being able to learn it from our teacher, the Spirit of God. We pray for careful meditation upon what we have heard, and that we will take caution from the experience that we have seen in other Christian groups who, if they're not careful, can fall victim to Satan, so that the very thing that we would seek to accomplish in our experience of sanctification can be totally lost. Thank You for the Word of God; the Word of God; and, the Word of God. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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