***Sanctification

Colossians 1:25-29

COL-230***

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

2 Timothy 4:2-4: "Preach the word. Be ready in season and out of season. Reprove, rebuke, and exhort with great patience and instruction, for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and they will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths."

This morning, we consider Colossians 1:25-29 out of the Word of Truth, "The Mystery of the Church," segment number 45.

In Colossians 1:28, the apostle Paul writes, "And we proclaim Him, admonishing every man, and teaching every man, with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete (or mature) in Christ." In this verse, the apostle Paul declares that the purpose of his ministry, of teaching Bible doctrine, is to give God's wisdom to believers, so that they may grow up spiritually. They may develop into mature Christians.

Paul reiterates this objective in a different way in Ephesians 4:11-13: "And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastor-teachers, for the equipping of the saints, for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ."

The purpose, the apostle Paul says of his instruction in the Word of God, is so that people well become Christlike, and so they would rise to the maturity of the characteristics of the Lord Jesus.

**Holiness**

Now, the basic characteristic of a mature Christian is personal holiness. That means separation from the world unto the will of God. It comes from this Greek word: "hagios" (hag'-ee-os). And it means "to be set apart." Holiness means separation. And in the earlier era of the church history, holiness was a very big subject. It was very much on people's minds, and people were very conscious of the fact that they moved through a world which was unholy, and that they moved through concepts which did not come from God, but from Satan, and were actually the foundational principles of the world about us. So, they understood that holiness could not come from other people. It could not come from imitating what your friends and neighbors do. It had to come from another standard, and that was the Word of God. And holiness, at heart, is separation. And separation from Satan's system is what characterizes a mature Christian. Of all the qualities that identify the Christian who has moved on to super-grace maturity, this is it: holiness. That is separation from the evils of the world system, but it is separation unto the will of God.

We have several Scriptures that point that out to us. For example, in 1 Peter 1:14-15, Peter says, "As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts, which were yours, in your ignorance." When you were an unsaved person, the old sin nature was all that you had to guide you. So, the lust patterns of the sin nature was your lifestyle. "But like the Holy One Who called you, be holy yourselves also, in all your behavior. Be separate from the world's ways in your behavior, because it is written, 'You shall be holy for I am holy.'"

In 2 Timothy 4:6-8, Paul says, "For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come." He comes to the close of the book of 2 Timothy – the last book that he wrote to his associate Timothy, who will now be replacing him. Paul has gone through the second trial in Rome under Nero. And this time the judgment was death.

So, Paul says, "I'm now going to be poured out like a priest pours out a drink offering on the altar in worship of God. My life is now going to be taken, as an expression of my worship of God. So, the time of my departure has come." And then he says what we all hope we can say, when we come to the same position that he's in. It's an uphill battle all the way.

2 Timothy 4:7, "I have fought the good fight. I have finished the course. I have kept the faith." I have been a good soldier of Jesus Christ. I took my orders, and I obeyed His will, and I have completed the mission. I have finished the course. I have completed the mission that he gave me, and for which I was born." Nothing is more tragic than a Christian who dies with an unfinished mission because he dawdled; fooled around; messed around; wasted his life' and, looked for a better day to do what needed to be done now. And then will have all eternity to regret how he could have been such a fool. That is true, even (often), when he was warned that that was a potential. Paul always lived under the consciousness of separation to the will of God: "I have fought the good fight; I finished my mission. I've kept the faith. I've been true to doctrine.

**The Crown of Righteousness**

What is the consequence? 2 Timothy 4:8, "In the future, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness." That is one of the four crowns that certain Christians will receive. The crown of righteousness goes to Christians who have spent most of their time in temporal fellowship with God the Father. The crown of righteousness goes to the Christian who kept known sins confessed; who did not grieve the Holy Spirit; who did not quench the Holy Spirit; but walked by means of the Holy Spirit, so that he was fulfilling the will of God in his life. That Christian is going to have a crown of righteousness to honor him through all eternity. And everyone will look, and they'll see: "Here's the badge of honor in heaven for this Christian who did what? He made a choice: my life for God. That's it. Many things I could go for. Many things I think are important, but my life in the will of God separated from the world, unto Him.

Paul says, "In the future, there is laid up for me, at the Judgment Seat of Christ (he means the crown of righteousness), which the Lord, the Righteous Judge will award to me." It's a reward. It is not something that you get because you are saved, or because you believe the gospel. You don't get a crown of righteousness for that. This is an award. This is one of the potential rewards. It's a medal of honor: "On that day (the day of the Judgment Seat of Christ), and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing." Paul says, "Now, I'm not the only Christian who is going to get this crown, but others who look forward to the day of standing before Christ, at His appearing." When He appears, what a great reward to get this crown.

Paul says, "This is what God has for me, and for anybody else, who makes the choice to go with God all the way. In John 8:29, this was a characteristic of the Lord Jesus: "holiness; and, separation to the purposes of God. In John 8:29, He says, "And He Who sent Me; (that is, God the Father) is with Me. He has not left Me alone. For I always do the things that are pleasing to Him." God always walks with the Christian who pleases Him, and with the Christian who does that which pleases God. What is it that pleases the Father? His will – His superior knowledge of what is the right; the best; and, the thing that should be done. The Lord Jesus said: "For me, it is always, day-by-day, the will of my Father.

Now, in contrast to this, in Romans 8:8, the apostle Paul says, "And those who are in the flesh (under the control of the old sin nature) cannot please God." You are operating on the basis of the sin nature, which is operating on the basis of the wisdom of Satan, which is expressed in all the society around you. That's the tricky part, because everybody else is wrong, and only you Christians are right, because your frame of reference is different: "For those who are in the old sin nature flesh, you cannot please God."

Then, in Galatians 1:10, the apostle Paul makes a point again. Paul says, "For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Am I striving to please men? If I were still striving to please men, I would not be a bond servant of Christ." So, there's your contrast. The apostle Paul says, "In my ministry, I've told you some things that you don't like to hear. Some of you people in Galatia have gone back to legalisms. Some of you are trying to live under tithing, and circumcision, and all of the Old Testament system of life that is simply your human self-will. And I'm telling you that that's wrong. It's not the will of God, and it's not holiness. It's not being led by the Holy Spirit. It's not being guided by the knowledge of doctrine.

So, he says, "Why do I tell you this? So that I can gain favor with people? Or is it because I want to gain favor with God?" He says, "Well, I'm doing this because I want to not please men, but I want to please God." If I didn't, I couldn't call myself a servant of God. I couldn't call myself one who has no will, but only God's will. Now that is Christian maturity.

And that's what Paul says in Colossians 1:28: "I'm trying to bring people around in the devil's world, where they will be able to rise to that kind of dedicated maturity" – that kind of magnificent living, so that they're not just a bunch of animals running around on this earth. But they are true prince and princesses, reflecting the image of God, which is in them.

Well, in Galatians 1:10, he says, "For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men?" This is a little preview of coming attraction in Colossians 1:29, he uses this word "striving," and it is a word in an athletic contest, and a connotes the picture of somebody hustling on a track: sweating; playing in an athletic contest; hitting the ball; all the exertion; everything is on the line; nothing held back; and, every effort being booed. That is a very interesting word. He says, "Am I knocking myself out (as we would say) to please men? Never." Paul says I'm a mature Christian. And as a mature Christian, my focus is on pleasing my Heavenly Father.

Let's look at one more. 2 Thessalonians 4:1-8 is very illuminating on the subject of holiness and separation unto the will of God: "Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us instruction (as to how you ought to walk, and please God), that just as you actually do walk, that you may excel still more." Paul is saying: "You're doing good. But do even better" in that concept of holiness and separation.

**Sanctification**

"For you know what commandments we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God: your sanctification." And you're back to this word "hagios" again. "Sanctification" is another word for "holiness." This is the will of God: your sanctification.

**The Will of God**

Whoa! Whoa! Wait a minute! I thought it was the will of God for me to have a good job, and make a lot of money, and enjoy a good life." No. "I thought it was a will of God for me to get a nice house, and to keep improving it, and adding onto it." No. "I thought it was a will of God for me to have a family, and to have some magnificent production out of those children." No. The will of God is your holiness. The purpose of God is for you to be separated to what He wants you to do with your abilities; your spiritual gifts; your money; and, uh-oh, your time. I can't give you my time. Are you asking me for the key for my car? That would mean it's your car. Are you asking me for the key for my business? That would mean it's your business. Are you asking me for the key to my house? That means it's your house. This is the will of God: your sanctification; that is, separation – that you abstain from sexual immorality, and that each of you know how to possess his own vessel (his body), in sanctification (in holiness and honor), not in lustful passion like the gentiles who do not know God.

"And that no man transgressed, and defraud his brother in the matter, because the Lord is the avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before, and solemnly warned you." He's talking about sensual passions, and sexual immorality, and that's what the word "defraud" means. It is playing around the edges of sexual activity, even if the sex is not engaged in. God says, "This is not sanctification. This is not separation to the will of God. You're raising desires in a person, and then you can't fulfill the desires, unless you decide to thumb your nose completely at God.

Paul says, "I tell you not to do this. You can be high and mighty, and you may even get away with it on the earthly realm. But God is an avenger, and I've told you about this, and I've solemnly warned you. You are a Christian. Your call is holiness: "For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification." There's the word "holiness" again.

So, the basic characteristic of a mature Christian is personal holiness – separation from the world unto the will of God. Every Christian is first and foremost called to a holy lifestyle in Christ for all the days of his life. It never ends. Some would say, "But I thought you were calling me to have a career. Look at this wonderful talent I have. No? I'm going to use that talent in my will." But that's the point. It is not the fact that you have some wonderful career, or some wonderful talent that you may exercise. I'm called to holiness as a lifestyle, first and foremost, all the days of my life. And if, at a certain point in time, you forget that, you'll step out of the boundaries of spiritual maturity, and you will do it by violating personal holiness, and the consequences can be very long-lasting, and even eternal in their impact.

In Titus 2:11-14, I do hope you have your Bibles here this morning, because boy, are we going to read Scripture: "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires, and to live sensibly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope, and the appearing of the glory of our great God and savior, Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed, and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good works."

The mature Christian is separated to the will of God; to the service of God; to fighting the good fight; and, fulfilling his mission. Can you say "No?" Yep, you betcha, because you do have to make a choice. Holiness in practice is being Christlike, and it is a matter of your deciding that that's what you want to be or not. Christ-likeness is thinking and acting like Jesus would in a life situation. Ephesians 5:1 says: "To imitate God."

So, the goal of training in doctrine, that the apostle Paul has been engaged in, is to give the Christian the wisdom of God by which to live a godly life in the devil's world, separated to the will of God. Most Christians never grow up spiritually. They never rise to the point where they live a holy life, because they do not want to abandon their involvement in Satan's world system. They just do not want to cut out of the world system. They never rise to it. They constantly excuse themselves. They constantly defend themselves.

A little booklet was written by [A. W. Tozer](https://awtozer.com/books/), on the subject of How to be Filled with the Holy Spirit has some, I thought, very insightful observations. And I would like to read a couple of paragraphs to you from Dr. Tozer's book. He's dead now. He's with the Lord. But he did some magnificent biblical exposition. And he's talking about walking with the Spirit, and being a companion of God the Holy Spirit. He's talking about the subject of what Paul is talking about – being a mature Christian, characterized by the holiness of separation, unto the purpose of God.

He says, on page 49, "I am talking now about how we can cultivate the Spirit's fellowship – How we can walk with Him, day-by-day, and hour-by-hour." Now, that's an important subject. I hear Christians talking about that all the time: "I have this gift. I don't want them to use this gift to praise myself, or to glorify myself. I want to do the will of God. I want to praise the Lord with it." And then they promptly go off, and live the lifestyle of the world. What are you talking about? You don't even live the life of Christ, let alone, you say that you want to serve Christ?

Continuing now, on page 50: "There are some of you who are not ready for this sermon at all. You are trying to face both ways at once. You're trying to take some of this world, and to get some of that world over yonder. You are a Christian, but I'm talking about an advance upon the first early stages of salvation, and the cultivation of the presence of the Holy Spirit, so that He may illuminate, and bless, and lift, and purify, and direct your life. You are not ready for this, because you haven't given up *all*, that you might have *the all*. You want some, but you don't want all. And that is the reason you are not ready.

"You, who have not given up the world, will not be able to understand what I'm talking about. You want Christianity for its insurance value. You want just what a man wants when he takes out a policy on his life, or his car, or his house. You don't want liberalism (modernism), because it hasn't any insurance value. You are willing to support this proposition financially. He would be a poor man who would want insurance, and not be willing to pay for it. If Jesus Christ died for you on the cross, you are very happy about that, because it means you won't be brought into judgment, but have passed from death into life. You're willing to live reasonably well, because that is the premium you are paying for the guarantee that God will bless you while you live, and take you home to heaven when you die.

"You may not be ready, because you're conception of religion is social, and not spiritual. There are people like that. They have watered down the religion of the New Testament until it has no strength in it. They have introduced the water of their own opinion into it until it has no taste left. They're socially minded. That is as far as it goes with them. People like that may be saved. I'm not prepared to say that they're not saved, but I'm prepared to say that they are not ready for what I'm talking about. The gospel of Christ is essentially spiritual, and Christian truth, working upon human souls by the Holy Ghost, makes Christian men and women spiritual.

"I don't like to say this, but I think that some of you are not ready for this message, because you are more influenced by the world than you are by the New Testament. I am perfectly certain that I could make up 15 boxcar loads of fundamentalist Christians this hour, in the city of Chicago, who are more influenced in their whole outlook by Hollywood than they are by the Lord Jesus Christ. I'm positive that much that passes for the gospel in our day is very little more than a very mild case of orthodox religion grafted onto a heart that is sold out to the world, in his pleasures, and tastes, and ambitions.

"The kind of preaching that I have been giving has disturbed some people. I'm not going to apologize at all, because, necessarily, if I have been traveling along thinking that I am all right, and there comes a man of God, and he tells me that there is much land to be possessed, it will disturb me. That is the preliminary twinge that comes to the soul that wants to know God. Whenever the Word of God hits us, it disturbs us. So, don't be disturbed by the disturbance. Remember that it is quite normal. God has to jar us loose.

"However, there are some who are prepared. They are the ones who have made the grand sweet committal. They have seen heaven drawn near, and earth recede. The things of this world have become less and less attractive, and the things of heaven have begun to pull, as the moon pulls at the sea, and they are prepared now."

So, that's the issue. It isn't that the Word of God is wrong. It isn't that the demands upon us for holiness are wrong. It's the fact that a lot of Christians just aren't prepared for it. They don't want that kind of a life. The immature Christian bases his relationship to Jesus Christ on his emotions. The emotions of the old sin nature are always wrong, and he foolishly thinks that he is living in the wisdom of God. And he is sadly immature – doing his own thing in the world system. If you are not determined that it is all of Christ, and none of you, then it is none of Christ. It cannot be both ways.

**The Marks of an Immature Christian**

What are the marks of an immature Christian? Everyone enters the Christian life by being born again spiritually. That very phrase indicates that you start off as a baby Christian. You are spiritual. You are at that moment in the will of God. You are at that moment under the guidance and control of the Holy Spirit, but you're immature. Now, the job of the local church, through the exploratory preaching of the pastor-teacher, is what God has set up to develop this weak baby Christian into a strong mature believer. And that's what the apostle Paul has pointed out to us as his objective.

In Ephesians 4:14-16, after benefiting by the pastor-teacher instruction, we are bringing the believer to spiritual maturity with the quality of holiness, he says, "As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness, in deceitful scheming." That is what you see on TV all the time by the religious leaders: "But speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, Who is the Head, even Christ, from Whom the whole body, being fitted and held together, by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part causes the growth of the body, for the building up of itself in love." the body of Christ, the church, has a local expression, and that local expression is all kinds of different believers who are all focused on one thing: the will of God. And part of the will of God is how you fit into that local church ministry; what your place is; what part you're to play; and, how devoted you are going to be to that purpose for God. When it comes down to the local church, it's going to interfere with your life.

Well, the point that you notice, in Ephesians 4:16, is if you get some peace missing, then things don't go well, and things don't go smoothly. Do you think that God is not going to notice that? Do you think that He's going to ignore that? You should have been in your spot; with your place; with your call; with your gift; with your ability; and, with your responsibility? But were you there. No. You were on the outside, looking in, while the noble souls were carrying on, trying to make it.

Ephesians 4:16: "From whom (from Christ) The whole body (the body of Christ – the church) is being fitted and held together." That is true about the church universal, but it is reflected in the local church: "By that which every joint supplies." It's like a body. Every part of it has a purpose: "According to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love." If you've got a piece missing in that local church, it's not going to be able to grow very well. It's not going to be able to maintain itself. It's not going to be as effective. Do you think that God is not going to notice that?

Some Christian is out there doing his own thing, and not focusing upon the thing of God – a Christian with great ability, and maybe even great appeal in the world system, and thinking that here, God has called him to do that. This is the spiritual maturity structure in the soul that we've talked about so often.

Now, Christians who are not fed on the doctrines of Scripture, so that they know those principles, in the local church services, will never progress to spiritual maturity. Such Christians don't have a chance to reach super-grace level. They can't. Nobody is explaining, verse-by-verse, the doctrines of Scripture. That is expository preaching. That's not the common thing you find. Those Christians don't have a chance. Christians, however, who are regularly fed on the Word of God ((on the doctrines of Scripture), but are negative to it, never progress to spiritual maturity either.

That was the case of the Corinthian Christians. They had great instruction, but they were so sinful, and so negative, and so cocky, and so arrogant, and there were so many of them to encourage one another, that in spite of all the instruction from Paul, they were a bunch of spiritual babies. They couldn't even sit in church, and keep their attention on the Word of God, before they were wandering around, distracted by some fly on the ceiling.

In 1 Corinthians 3:1-3, the apostle Paul gets a little fed up with this. He says to them, "And I, brethren, cannot speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh (old sin nature men), as to babes in Christ." I gave you milk to drink. Oh, I could have given you so much steak. I could have given you what the Spirit of God calls "the deep things of the Spirit of God." I could have been given you a banquet of the big food – the heavy stuff. That stuff would've taken you to the exhilarating heights of your Christian experience. What could I do? I gave you a glass of milk, because you're such a sorry lot. You're so entangled in the world, and you think you're so right: "I gave you milk to drink, not solid food, for you were not able to receive it." You couldn't take the deep things.

Indeed, even now, you're not able still. But did these people have opinions? Oh my goodness, did they have opinions? Paul gets to them, and sometimes he gets a little heavy-handed. He gets very sarcastic in 1 and 2 Corinthians, as he relates how they've treated him; the things they've said about him; the abuse that he has suffered. These people who knew nothing until he came and brought them into the spiritual life. And now, they've become so smart.

1 Corinthians 3:3 says, "For you are still fleshly." You're still old sin nature-dominated: "For since there's jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men, like unsaved men?" Any Christian who does not regularly attend the local church service as commanded in Scripture is going to be spiritually weak, and prone to carnality. Any Christian who is negative to instruction that is true, will be weak. Any Christian who does not attend, he'll be weak. Don't ever trust a Christian who does not sit in this auditorium, being instructed in the Word of God. That Christian is a danger. He is in the world system. He has Satan's thinking. And if he knows a little bit about the Bible, he's even more dangerous, because his guidance will be way off-center, and it will be hard to distinguish what his frame of reference is.

The divine institution of volition comes into play here in a very big, major way, in determining whether a Christian ever becomes spiritually mature. Here is one place that you have to make a decision: being mature in a holy separation to the will of God. Most Christians are just not interested. They don't care. They're not concerned. This does not hold their heart's attention – to be separated to the will of God; and, to be devoted to that for which has brought you into this world.

I received a letter from a family Christian family, with formerly military background. And they live at Two Rivers, Alaska. It's sort of like the French Riviera. It is a very lovely place: Two Rivers. In this letter, the mother writes a newsy letter about what's going on in the family. They have a daughter. Her name is Tillandia, and she is 15. And in one of the newsy parts of this letter, she talks to us about Tillandia.

"Tillandia had the opportunity to attend a fantastic violin workshop, and to join in practice with others playing chamber music. It was an exhilarating experience, and one she enjoyed thoroughly, even though it meant that she had to perform in the huge concert hall at the University of Alaska. At the end of it all, she felt like she must not get involved with this kind of thing too often, because of how it appeals to her flesh. It also required some contact with other young people who might divert her attention from her relationship with Christ. Her teacher was pleased at her success, and expressed her desire to prepare her for similar experiences.

"I was amazed at how quickly and confidently Tillandia addressed the teacher. She told her that she did not have an ambition to be a famous violinist, because she wanted to put her heart and energies into pleasing the Lord. The teacher, who is very antagonistic concerning things of the Lord, assured her that her playing would surely make Him happy. Tillandia then explained that she felt like she loved the violin, at times, more than the Lord, and that she didn't want any idols in her life, even if it meant that she would have to set aside playing the violin altogether. The teacher laughed nervously, and stated that Tillandia was talking about something far deeper than she could comprehend.

I know that I want her to have the opportunity to excel in this area. Why? Is it because I want to be proud of her, or want her to be someone in this world, or want to assure that our children are accomplished in in one area or another? Are we just trying to keep a door open, where they will be accepted by the world? Sometimes the pull of the world upon our families is tied to us parents wanting something for our children.

We have watched many friends fail in this struggle with their children. They have pushed their children into areas of achievement, and in doing so, have succeeded in pushing them away from the heart of God. We must be very careful to look at all these things carefully, to see if the pursuits that we go after are really of the Lord. Are we pushing our children out there because it is where God wants them to be? Or is it because it appeals to our flesh in some way? We may open our hearts to the searching of the Spirit of God as He reveals our own deceitful heart, and lines our affection with the things that please the heart of God."

Now, isn't that a quaint attitude on the part of that 15-year-old? Can you imagine worrying about loving something more than the will of God in her life? How quaint can you be?

Now, that is what it's all about. And how many adults have ever been able even to rise to that kind of a challenge, let alone such a young person. She's right on target. Her violin-playing ability may indeed be magnificently used by God. But that is secondary – that playing. The primary thing is the will of God. That's where I must be.

The apostle Paul says, as he'll tell us in the next verse, "Oh my, I knocked myself out. My job is so hard, trying to get Christians to rise to spiritual maturity. And the evidence of that, if it is achieved, is their holiness – their separation to the will of God.

I'd like to read you another section from Dr. Tozer. It kind of summarizes the whole thing. Beginning on page 42 of How to be Filled with the Holy Spirit, it says: "Again, before you can be filled with the Spirit, you must desire to be filled. Here I meet with certain amount of puzzlement. Somebody will say, 'How is it that you say to us that we must desire to be filled?' That is because you know we desire to be. Haven't we talked to you in person? Haven't we called you on the phone? Aren't we out here tonight to hear the sermon on the Holy Spirit? Isn't this all a comforting indication to you, that we have desires of being filled with the Holy Spirit?

That is not necessarily true, and I'll explain why. For instance, are you sure that you want to be possessed by a Spirit other than your own: even though that Spirit be the pure Spirit of God; even though He be the very gentle essence of the gentle Jesus, even though he'd be sane and pure and free; even though he be wisdom personified – wisdom himself; even though he have a healing precious ointment to distill; and, even though he be loving as the heart of God? That Spirit, if He ever possesses, you will be the Lord of your life.

"I ask you: do you want Him to be the Lord of your life, and that you want His benefits? I know. I take that for granted. But do you want to be possessed by Him? Do you want to hand the keys of your soul over to the Holy Spirit, and say, 'Lord, from now on, I don't even have a key to my own house? I come and go as You tell me.' Are you willing to give the office of your business establishment (your soul) over to the Lord, and say to Jesus, 'You sit in this chair? You handle these telephones, and boss the staff, and be Lord of this outfit? That is what I mean. Are you sure you want this? Are you sure that you desire it? Are you sure that you want your personality to be taken over by one who will expect obedience to the written and living Word?

"Are you sure that you want your personality to be taken over by One who will not tolerate the self-sins? For instance, self-love? You can no more have the Holy Spirit and have self-love, than you can have purity and impurity at the same time in the same place. He will not permit you to indulge: self-confidence; self-love; self-righteousness; self-admiration; self-aggrandizement; and, self-pity. These things are under the interdiction of God Almighty. And He cannot send His mighty Spirit to possess the heart where these things are.

"Again, I ask you: If you desire to have your personality taken over by One who stands in sharp opposition to the world's easy ways, with no tolerance of evil; no smiling at crooked jokes; and, no laughing off things that God hates? The Spirit of God, if He takes over, will bring you into opposition to the world, just as Jesus was brought into opposition to it.

"The world crucified Jesus because they couldn't stand Him. There was something in Him that rebuked them. And they hated Him for it, and finally crucified Him. The world hates the Holy Ghost as bad as they ever hated Jesus, the One from whom He proceeds.

"Are you sure, brother, that you want His help? Yes, you want a lot of his benefits. Yes, but are you willing to go with Him, in His opposition, to the easygoing ways of the world? If you are not, you needn't apply for anything more than you have, because you don't want him, and you only think you do.

"Again, are you sure that you need to be filled? Can you get along the way you are? You have been doing fairly well. You pray. You read your Bible. You give to missions. You enjoy singing hymns. You thank God. You don't drink, or gamble, or attend theaters. You are honest. And you have prayer at home.

You're glad about all this. Can't you get along like that? Are you sure you need any more than that? I want to be fair with you. I want to do what Jesus did. He turned around to them, when they were following Him, and He told them the truth" 'I don't want to take you in under false pretense. Are you sure you want to follow Me' He asked. And a great many turned away. But Peter said, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.' And the crowd that wouldn't turn away was the crowd that made history. The crowd that wouldn't turn back was the crowd that was there when the Holy Spirit came and filled all the place where they were sitting. The crowd that turned back never knew what it was all about."

So, how stand you, and where is your commitment?

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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[**Back to the Bible Questions index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/allarticles.htm)