

SANCTIFICATION FOR BORN-AGAIN CHRISTIANS

IT is wonderful to be saved and know you are a Christian but it is more wonderful to be sanctified.

The Bible teaches that the experience of being saved, and the experience of being sanctified are two different works of grace received by faith through the power of the shed Blood of Jesus Christ.

Justification and Sanctification

Through the first work of grace, Justification, the sinner who comes to God for pardon is forgiven all his evil deeds — his outward sins. At this time he is saved and given power to go and sin no more. This experience of justification is often spoken of as salvation from sin, and also as being born again — becoming a Bible Christian .

Through the second work of grace, Sanctification, the heart of the born-again Christian is cleansed of all carnality. That inward sin nature which caused him to sin in the first place is taken away by the Blood of Jesus and his heart is made pure and holy.

No one can be sanctified until he has first been saved — born again. Before you seek to be sanctified, make certain you are saved.

How to Be Saved

Every sinner who comes to God for salvation must repent. In Acts 3:19, we read: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." To repent means to be so sorry you have sinned that you turn away from all your sins and turn to God. When you come to Him, tell Him you are guilty. Ask His forgiveness, and have a purpose in your heart never to sin again.

You must also believe that God answers your prayer, that He forgives you. It is through faith in the power of the Blood of Jesus that you are saved — born again. The Bible says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). "For by grace are ye saved through faith" (Ephesians 2:8).

When you truly repent and believe, the Lord forgives you of all your sinful deeds, and He remembers them against you no more. You are justified before God. To be justified is to be saved from your sins, born again of the Spirit of God, and given power to live above sin. The Spirit also bears witness with your spirit, that you are a child of God. (See Romans 8:16.)

This first work of grace in the heart —justification — is a mighty experience. It is a spiritual birth, the new birth, which brings a complete change in your life. "Ye must be born again" (John 3:7).

The Christian Life

From the moment you are justified, saved, born again, you are a new creature in Christ Jesus. You do not walk in the way of sin, but in the way that leads to Heaven. You live a life of victory over sin, for "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin" (I John 3:9).

Your desires are all good. You are honest, upright, and do no harm to anyone. You do all you can within your own power to live peaceably with all men.

You have no feeling of guilt because you are not doing anything sinful. There is peace within your soul. The Bible says, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1).

The Christian life will not always be easy. You will have hard things to bear. You will be tempted to do evil, but God will give you victory over all sin. To keep this victory you must continue to pray, continue to read God's Word, believe it and obey it.

The Need for Sanctification

When you are first saved, such joy fills your heart that you may feel there is nothing more you will ever need from the Lord. But in time, you find there is something within you which occasionally rises up and troubles you. This uprising springs forth from the root of sin —the sin nature — which is still in your heart even though you are saved; and it will remain there until you are sanctified — made holy.

Sin Nature Inherited

When Adam disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden, sin entered into his heart. And every child born into this world has that inherited nature of sin, Adam's sinful nature, in his heart; and it needs to be taken out. This Adamic nature, the carnal nature, can be seen in little children. Even babies show signs of stubbornness, jealousy and anger. But these little ones are innocent and if they died they would go to Heaven.

When one is old enough to know what is good and what is evil, and knows what is actually sinful, he then must ask God to forgive him and save him from his sins if he wants to go to Heaven. After he is saved he should then pray to have that carnal nature removed which caused him to sin, that he may be pure and holy in heart.

Holiness Demanded

In Hebrews 12:14, 15, we read: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled." God has always demanded holiness. He told Moses, in Old Testament times, to speak to the congregation and say: "Be ye holy: for I am the LORD your God. "And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them: I am the LORD which sanctify you" (Leviticus 20:7, 8).

David, the Psalmist, after he had sinned, saw his great need for forgiveness and also for cleansing. He asked God to blot out his "transgressions" — his sins — and then he prayed: "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin" (Psalm 51:2). David wanted to be pure and holy. God is a holy God. Heaven is a holy place. And God's Word says, "Be ye holy, for I am holy" (I Peter 1:16).

Divine Sacrifice

When the people of Israel, in days of old, worshipped God; they killed animals and offered them for sacrifices and sin offerings. This pointed to the divine Sacrifice — Christ Jesus, the Lamb of God — who was to come into this world and die on Calvary so that through His shed Blood we could be saved and also sanctified.

We are told in Hebrews 13:11, 12: "The bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate."

If Jesus suffered and shed His Blood that we might be sanctified, we surely ought to pray earnestly to receive this experience.

How to Be Sanctified

Before you seek to be sanctified, first make sure you are saved from your sins and living above sin, because Jesus does not sanctify sinners. He made this clear in His prayer when He prayed for the disciples, saying:

"They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:16, 17). This tells us that the people for whom Jesus prayed were born-again Christians. They were in the world, but not of the world.

Your Part — God's Part

There are two parts to sanctification —your part and God's part. If you want to be sanctified, fully surrender your life to the will of God. Consecrate and yield yourself completely to Him and let Him have His way in your life — in all your plans, hopes and desires. This is your part.

After you have done your part, look to God in simple faith, praise Him and believe Him for your sanctification. God then will do His part : He will make your heart pure and holy by the cleansing Blood of Jesus. That carnal, Adamic nature — the sin nature with which you were born — is destroyed through the Blood applied.

You will know when you receive the experience of sanctification, just as surely as you knew when you were saved. The divine love of God floods your heart. A deeper peace and rest and joy comes into your soul. The Spirit of God witnesses with your spirit that you are sanctified.

This second, definite work of grace —sanctification — is something better felt than told, for words cannot explain it as it really is when received by the individual.

The Sanctified Life

After you are sanctified, it is easier to live a joyous, victorious Christian life because you no longer have that inherited sin nature within you to trouble you. It is true that temptation and trials will continue to come after you are sanctified, but all temptation will come from without — not from within. This is because the inward tendency toward sin — the sin nature which was once within your heart — is gone. When that very root of carnality is taken out, you will not find it hard to live a clean, pure, holy life each and every day.

The sanctified person seeks to do the will of God that he might walk in the Spirit and do that which is pleasing to the Lord. The Bible tells us that if we walk in the Spirit we bear the fruit of the Spirit: "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Galatians 5:22 23).

The standard for a sanctified life is clearly set forth in the 13th chapter of I Corinthians, where the divine love of God — charity — is described. We should read this chapter often and measure our lives by it.

Oneness — Unity

Sanctification brings unity, a oneness among God's people. "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one" (Hebrews 2:11). Where there is "oneness," there is no ill will, one against the other: there is no discord, no bitter debating or disputing, no division. They who are one in the Spirit of God have no spirit of revenge. They have nothing in them that wants to get even or hit back when another person hurts or grieves them.

Right Motives

Even though a sanctified person has a heart that is perfect toward God, he is not perfect in the same way that God is perfect. He still is human and can make mistakes. He can misjudge a situation and be

very much mistaken. But his motives are right. In his heart he craves to do the will of God, and to do right toward all men.

The love of God, deep in the heart of those who are sanctified, brings a love one for the other which causes them to live together and work together in unity — oneness.

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalm 133:1). For Us Today When Jesus prayed for His disciples to have this oneness, he included us today: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:20, 21).

This prayer for His disciples was definitely answered. Before the Day of Pentecost they "all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication" (Acts 1:14).

They who are wholly sanctified today have the same oneness that the disciples had after they were sanctified.

A Glorious Church

Christ wants His Church to be made up of holy, purified people. He gave Himself for the Church, "that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:26, 27).

Do you want to be one among the sanctified in the glorious Church spoken of here, and be ready to meet the Lord when He comes to receive His own? You can be.

If you are not saved, pray to be saved. If you are saved, and not sanctified, pray to be sanctified. The moment you make a complete surrender to God and believe His Word of promise, the Lord will sanctify you. Then, and then only, will you be ready to seek for and to receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost — the enduement of power for service.