

we know to be God's will for our lives, and sin requires repentance. However, mistakes of judgment, errors made through ignorance, or lapses through human frailty are not sin, provided they spring from a heart motivated by love. God knows the difference between what is motivated by love and what is motivated by compromise or defiance, and He will make that clear to us as we seek His help.

The challenges of daily living will offer many opportunities for Christian growth to occur after we are sanctified. As we seek God regarding how to handle the trials of life, and then obey His instruction, we will continue to develop in spiritual maturity.

A CHALLENGE

Have you experienced entire sanctification? God does not intend for us to struggle against carnality for the rest of our lives. He has power to cleanse our hearts and make us holy as He is holy. By the help and grace of God, each one of us can have that testimony!

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SANCTIFICATION

THE PATH OF HOLINESS

The verb *sanctify* has three basic meanings: "to make holy or purify," "to consecrate or to separate from ungodliness and dedicate to God," and, "to hallow." A sanctified person, then, is one who has been purified of his old sin nature, is consecrated or set apart to serve God, and is holy. The experience of sanctification is what accomplishes this transformation. It involves both dedicating one's life to God and an eradication of the sin nature.

WHAT IS THE SIN NATURE?

We learn in the first chapters of Genesis that though Adam and Eve were created with a pure bias or inclination, they also had a free will. They chose to do wrong, and that choice plunged all humanity into a depraved condition. Subsequently, every person has been born with a tendency toward sin, referred to interchangeably as the "sin nature," the "Adamic nature," the "carnal nature," and "carnality." Sadly, evidence of mankind's sinful nature is seen all around the world.

As well as being born with a sinful nature, every individual eventually chooses to sin. While we were sinners, the carnal nature manifested itself in the form of rebellion, disobedience, lust, and other actions that were displeasing to God. We would have been held accountable for those committed sins on the Day of Judgment

had we not repented of them and obtained pardon. When we turned from our sins and sought God's mercy, His Spirit witnessed to our hearts that we were forgiven. What joy filled our hearts when we became children of God! With that born again experience, a Christian life began. However, the underlying bias toward sin—the carnal nature—still existed after we were saved.

THE REMEDY FOR CARNALITY

It is impossible to conquer the carnal nature in our own strength. Fighting against that internal bias toward sin is like a man trying to extricate himself from quicksand—the more he struggles to free himself, the deeper he sinks. His only means of escape must come from outside, and likewise it takes God to liberate us from the nature of sin with which we were born. He alone has the power not only to forgive our past wrongdoings at salvation, but also to eradicate the carnal nature.

The remedy for the sin nature is the experience of sanctification, which is possible through the Blood of Jesus. When we prayed through to salvation, we received the assurance that our committed sins had been forgiven. Sanctification is a second, instantaneous, and definite work of grace which brings about a change deep within—a change that deals

with the carnal nature from which acts of sin spring. When we experience sanctification, the sin nature no longer dominates us because it has been eradicated.

Sanctification does not eliminate the possibility of being tempted and sinning, just as Adam was created in a pure moral state and yet was tempted and sinned. Sanctified people can choose to reject what we know is right and go back into sin. However, it will be easier for us to resist temptation because the inward inclination to sin is gone.

HOW TO RECEIVE SANCTIFICATION

It is not our fault we were born with a sin nature, but we are responsible for taking advantage of the remedy God offers through sanctification.

The way in which a person approaches God for sanctification is different from the approach for salvation. When a person comes to God for salvation, he comes knowing that he has sinned. He comes in repentance and asks for mercy and forgiveness. In contrast, when that individual comes to God to be sanctified, he comes with a recognition of needing something more—deliverance from the inbred sin nature. He hungers for the ability to fully conform to the image and nature of Christ. He comes consecrating, presenting his life in total submission

as a living sacrifice to God. That is his part—to yield or separate himself to God. As he looks to God in simple faith, believing Him for this experience, God will do His part by purifying his heart, making it holy.

A person knows when he has received the experience of sanctification, just as surely as he knew when he was saved, even if he does not know what to call it at the time. The divine love of God floods his heart and the Spirit of God witnesses with his spirit that he has been cleansed.

BIBLICAL ADMONITION

Often in Scripture, the words *sanctified* and *holy* are synonymous. In 1 Peter 1:15-16, we find the command: “But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.” It is God’s will for His followers to be sanctified. In John 17:17, Jesus prayed for His disciples to be sanctified, saying, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”

In 1 Thessalonians 4:3, the Apostle Paul told the believers at Thessalonica, “For this is the will of God, even your sanctification . . .” In verse 7, he went on to say, “For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.” At the close of his epistle, he prayed the Thessalonians would receive that experience,

saying, “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. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.”

CONTINUING TO GROW SPIRITUALLY

The meaning of the word *wholly* in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 is “entirely,” and that is why the experience of sanctification is sometimes referred to as “entire sanctification.” There is no implication that God would sanctify the Thessalonian believers part way and then more as they went along. The experience of sanctification is entire; it is complete. We do not grow into the experience of entire sanctification. We must experience that purifying flame for the carnal nature to be eradicated.

However, there is still a necessity for spiritual growth after we have been sanctified. As sanctified individuals, we have dedicated ourselves entirely to God, so we have a deep longing for purity in spirit, soul, and body, and gladly turn away from anything that would contaminate. Holiness within also motivates a desire to always do what is right. Yet, we are still human. While the nature of sin has been removed, the experience of sanctification does not result in absolute perfection in the same sense that God is absolutely perfect. The experience of

sanctification does not remove the limitations and frailties that accompany humanity; we are made *morally* perfect, not mentally, physically, or emotionally perfect.

Lack of experience, lack of proper information, or poor judgment may cause sanctified believers to make less than perfect decisions at times. We may occasionally exhibit a degree of impatience, perhaps resulting from a lack of proper rest, accumulated stress, or illness. If sanctification made people perfect in the absolute sense, we would never change our minds, combat secular thoughts during Sunday morning worship services, or need to apologize.

Justification and sanctification establish a condition where we desire to correct shortcomings. A victorious life is not proved by an absence of human flaws or weaknesses, but by the fact that we have the power and grace to take steps to correct any behavior that falls short of what God desires from us. We have a sensitivity that motivates us, for example, to offer an apology when one is due. In our desire to please God, we will freely confess our deficiencies to Him and to our fellowman as needed. That spirit of sensitivity is Christian perfection at work.

This is not to suggest that God allows us to excuse, rationalize, or ignore sinful behavior. Sins are deliberate transgressions of what