

*Second Baptist Church of Doylestown*

*Wed. Eve. Bible Study - 1/13/16*

*Great Words Of The Bible*

## **SANCTIFICATION**

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**Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 4: 1-12**

<sup>1</sup>As for other matters, brothers and sisters, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more. <sup>2</sup>For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. <sup>3</sup>It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; <sup>4</sup>that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, <sup>5</sup>not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God; <sup>6</sup>and that in this matter no one should wrong or take advantage of a brother or sister. The Lord will punish all those who commit such sins, as we told you and warned you before. <sup>7</sup>For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. <sup>8</sup>Therefore, anyone who rejects this instruction does not reject a human being but God, the very God who gives you his Holy Spirit. <sup>9</sup>Now about your love for one another we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other. <sup>10</sup>And in fact, you do love all of God's family throughout Macedonia. Yet we urge you, brothers and sisters, to do so more and more, <sup>11</sup>and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life: You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you, <sup>12</sup>so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.

The prominence given in scripture to the doctrine of sanctification emphasizes its importance, and in this study we need to begin by making two things clear. First, we must understand the meaning of the word; second, we must understand how the word is used, particularly in relation to believers.

### **1. THE TWO-FOLD MEANING OF THE WORD**

The first and the root meaning of the word *sanctify* (and 'holy' and 'saint', for they all come from the same words in the Hebrew and the Greek), is *to set apart to and for a sacred purpose*. Thus, in Leviticus 21:8 we read that, because He is unique in His person and alone qualified for the whole work of redemption, Jesus sanctified Himself. In the Old Testament we read of days, places and things being sanctified - that is, set apart for a holy and a sacred purpose □- look up Genesis 2:3 "Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done."; Exodus 29:43 "there also I will meet with the Israelites, and the place will be consecrated by my glory.; 40:10-11 "Then anoint the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils; consecrate the altar, and it will be most holy. <sup>11</sup>Anoint the basin and its stand and consecrate them."

But there is a further meaning in the use of the word *sanctify*. Because of the presence of sin, of evil, in man and in the world, the word also, when it refers to man, means not only separation TO a sacred and holy purpose, but *separation FROM that which is evil, sinful and unclean*. An illustration of this in the Old Testament is found in **2 Chronicles 29:5** ", and said: **"Listen to me, Levites! Consecrate yourselves now and consecrate the temple of the LORD, the God of your ancestors. Remove all defilement from the sanctuary."** and in the New Testament in **2 Corinthians 7:1** **"Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God."**

The word *sanctification* therefore has in it a two-fold meaning: *separation FROM sin and defilement, and dedication TO God - from and to!* This brings us to the place where we must consider the use of the word *sanctification* in relation to believers.

## **2. THE TWO-FOLD MEANING OF THE WORD IN RELATION TO BELIEVERS**

The two ways in which scripture uses the word in reference to every believer is: first, that every believer is already fully and eternally sanctified because of his faith in and his union with the Lord Jesus Christ □- look up **Hebrews 10:10 and 14;** **"And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."** <sup>14</sup> **"For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy"** and second, that every believer is to be sanctified □- look up **1 Thessalonians 4:3** (and verses 1-12).

To put it another way: every believer is already *positionally* sanctified, and nothing can be added to or taken away from this glorious fact. As Christians, saints, we are sanctified. But, *experimentally* we are not fully sanctified; this is a progressive work of God in our lives which will, or should go on changing us more and more into the likeness of Christ until we see Him and are then (and only then) "conformed" to His image (Romans 8:29); and "to present you before his glorious presence without fault" (Jude 24); "without stain or wrinkle, or any other blemish" (Ephesians 5:27).

## **3. HOW WE ARE PROGRESSIVELY SANCTIFIED**

How is this experimental and progressive sanctification brought about? It is God's work, but what are the means He uses? To answer these questions with different scriptural terminology, turn to **Philippians 2:12-13** **"Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, <sup>13</sup> for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.: God works "in" us, but we have to work "out" what He works "in". How?**

1. **He sanctifies us as we deliberately cleanse ourselves from sinful and doubtful things.** The ground of all cleansing is the blood of Christ □- look up **1 John 1:7** **"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin."**; but in the matter of practical and experimental cleansing (or sanctification) we are called upon to act □- as illustrated in **2 Chronicles 29:5** ", and said: **"Listen to me, Levites! Consecrate yourselves now and consecrate the temple of the LORD, the God of your ancestors. Remove all**

defilement from the sanctuary.", 12,15-17; 2 Corinthians 6:14,15,17 and 7:1; Colossians 3:5-10 and 2 Timothy 2:19-22.

2. He sanctifies us as we unreservedly yield ourselves to Him. Compare Romans 12:1 "Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship" and Romans 6:13 "Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness." □- our "bodies" are made up of many "members" □- see 1 Corinthians 12:12.
3. He sanctifies us as we cultivate a life of communion with God in prayer. Look up Luke 11:1; Philippians 4:6; 1 Thessalonians 5:17 and 2 Peter 3:18.
4. He sanctifies us as we live in daily obedience to His Word and to His Spirit. Compare John 15:3 "You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you."; 17:17; Ephesians 5:18; Colossians 3:16; 1 Peter 1:22; 2 Corinthians 3:18.
5. He sanctifies us as we keep short accounts with God. That is, as we confess all sin immediately we are conscious of having committed it □- look up Proverbs 28:13 "Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy". and 1 John 1:9.
6. He sanctifies us as we trust Him in life's disciplines. Look up Hebrews 12:10 "They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness.", and compare Job 23:10; James 1:2-4 and 1 Peter 1:7 and Romans 8:28-29.
7. He sanctifies us as we live in the light of His coming. Look up James 5:7-9 "Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. <sup>8</sup> You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. <sup>9</sup> Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!"; 2 Peter 3:11-14; 1 John 2:28 and 3:1-3.

**So, believer:**

1. You are already sanctified *positionally* due to your union with the Lord Jesus as your Saviour □ Hebrews 10:10 and 14 - ;" And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."- <sup>14</sup> For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy"
2. You are to be sanctified *experimentally* and *progressively*, and this gracious transformation will take place as you give heed to the "means" mentioned above! Now read 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 "May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup> The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it."