

Christian Sanctification

Text: I Thessalonians 4:1-8 Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. 2 For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. 3 **For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:** 4 That **every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour**; 5 Not in the lust of **concupiscence**, even as the Gentiles which know not God: 6 That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. 7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. 8 He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.

Concupiscence meaning: (con-cu-pis-cence) is strong desire, especially as it pertains to sexuality. Newer translations usually trade the word concupiscence for phrases such as covetous desires, evil desires, and passion of lust. Concupiscence in the Bible always refers to passionate desire for something that God has forbidden. (ref.: <https://www.gotquestions.org/concupiscence.html>)

Romans 7:18 For I know that in me (that is, **in my flesh,**) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

I Corinthians 9:27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

This is the 7th Sermon on the Fundamental Truths– TONIGHT – Sanctification

Previous non-negotiable tenets of faith sermons were:

- .01 The Bible is the Word of God - inspired by God, without error, & reliable/trustworthy for our faith.
- .02 There is Only One God as revealed in Scripture as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- .03 The Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ
- .04 & .05 The Fall and Salvation of Man
- .06 The Ordinances of the Church
- .07 Baptism in the Holy Spirit

NEXT SERMONS: ⁽¹⁾ Mission of the Church/Church Ministries; ⁽²⁾ Divine Healing; ⁽³⁾ Blessed Hope; ⁽⁴⁾ The Millennial Reign of Christ; ⁽⁵⁾ Final Judgement; ⁽⁶⁾ The New Heaven and the New Earth

Introduction: Christlike holiness, discipleship, self-denial, obedience to biblical principles, are words that describe few people in our modern society. Who will walk in biblical integrity against the strong winds of temptation? A few champions from every generation have risen to meet the challenge, but only a few. A great number of fellow Christians follow the crowd down the path of least resistance. Holiness teaching is not for everyone but there will always be some in every generation that are determined, with God's help, to go beyond the minimum requirements that satisfies many others. Like a skilled marksman, they aim for the center of the target instead of the outer perimeter.

2 Timothy 2-4 admonishes and warns every generation to, *"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season..., For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth...*

The Assembly of God's STATEMENTS ON FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS concerning Sanctification:

1) The Scriptures teach a life of "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." --- *Hebrews 12:14*

2) By the power of the Holy Spirit we are able to obey the command: "Be ye holy, for I am holy." -- *1 Peter 1:15,16*

3) Sanctification is realized in the believer by recognizing his identification with Christ in His death and resurrection, and by the faith reckoning daily upon the fact of that union, and by offering every faculty continually to the dominion of the Holy Spirit. -- *Romans 6:1-13; Romans 8:1,2; Romans 8:13; Galatians 2:20; Philippians 2:12,13; 1 Peter 1:5*

I. What is Sanctification? Sanctification means being set apart or consecrated as God's possession and choosing to pursue a lifestyle that pleases God!

Exodus 19:3-6 And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. **Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.**

II. Understanding Sanctification - a simple 101 Refresher Course:

1. What Sanctification is NOT:

Do not confuse biblical holiness with “**legalism**” or “**personal convictions!**”

- **Legalism:** excessive reliance on laws, rituals, or human performance as a basis for acceptance with God.
- **Personal Conviction:** a firmly held belief or opinion – **EXAMPLE** – **Romans 14:2-6** For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

Note: personal convictions must have sound biblical foundations or they only apply to you!

2. God is Holy and Sinless – we are not!

Romans 7:18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

3. God commands Christians to live a Consecrated or Holy Life!

OLD TESTAMENT - Leviticus 11:44-45 For I am the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. For I am the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: **ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.**

NEW TESTAMENT – I Peter 1:14-16 As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: 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.**

4. We live in a Fallen World - the whole world around us is full of sin and wickedness!

I John 5:19 And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.

5. The Fallen World is becoming darker and more sinful as we approach the End Times!

Matthew 24:11-12 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

6. Christians still possess a root of the Fallen Nature called the “OLD MAN!”

Romans 7:22-25 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

7. Satan uses our “Fallen Nature” (or in biblical terms: “OUR FLESH”) as a means of attacking us!

Galatians 5:17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

HENCE THE AGE-OLD BATTLE BETWEEN HOLINESS & SIN – our “fallen nature” & Satan VS. our “Born Again” Christian Nature & the Holy Spirit abiding within the heart of the Believer!

8. *We can never win the battle in our own strength!*

God has provided Powerful Weapons to assist us in winning the battle!

II Corinthians 10:3-4 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;

Romans 8:11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

9. *If we falter or stumble, God is quick to forgive - but we must not continue in sin!*

I John 1:9-10 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

Illustration: Do we cast out a baby because he soils his diaper? NO, we love the baby too much to do that! We will clean up the baby and provide him with a new garment! Neither will God cast us away if we “CONFESS OUR SINS!” Yet, a baby must mature and become potty trained to minimize accidents!

Note: I realize that this is an imperfect and somewhat crude example. We will never reach a perfect and sinless lifestyle until we are in heaven but we should seek to become more Christlike every day!

10. Finally, do not fall into the trap of the “cheap grace” doctrine! It is not biblical!

Galatians 6:6-7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

III. CLOSING: Biblical holiness may turn many people off and make the Christian experience unappealing, but it must be faithfully proclaimed in the backslidden and compromising churches of today.

Biblical holiness IS NOT “legalism” or “salvation by works” or a “Bondage Teaching from the Old Testament” as taught by many modern teachers of today. It is the true teaching of the New Testament.

Please understand, the Bible warns, “without holiness, NO MAN SHALL SEE THE LORD!”

Some Simple Questions to Ponder:

1. If holiness is attained by grace alone, why does the New Testament include numerous teachings on the subject of Christian Conduct?

2. Where does the Bible say that sin has become a non-issue with God? Please provide CHAPTER & VERSE!

3. If the “CHEAP GRACE” teaching is true and sin is no longer relevant to modern Believers, why does Satan still tempt Christians?

4. Should Christian conduct be based upon New Testament Scripture or upon what other Christians around us may be doing?

Romans 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.