

## Purge me... Wash me...

### Sanctification

(Psa 51:7 KJV) "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

This beautiful verse exemplifies the true nature of sanctification. On the night of the first Passover, the angel of death passed over the houses whose door frames had been painted with the blood of lamb. Hyssop was the cluster of dried stems which was used as a brush to paint on the blood. (Exo.12:22) How wonderful that David and we also, can plea purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean. Wash me and I shall be made whiter than snow by the blood of the True Lamb of God.

In the New Testament, the word sanctify, "hagiazō" and sanctification, "hagiasmos" are both from the Greek word "hagio" which is translated holy in many different contexts. Furthermore, the Greek word for saints, "hagio," is also this basic Greek term for holy. Holiness, then is very much inherent in the definition of sanctification. "Hagio" further means set apart, separate, cleansed and made fit for the presence of God. It also can mean consecrated for His service. Truly, there is but One in all the universe who is inherently Holy by nature, and that is God.

We know from Hebrews 12:29 that our God is a consuming fire. By His very nature, that which is not made fit for His presence would be utterly consumed in His unapproachable, searching light. "God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all." (1 John 1:5) We as sinful, fallen creatures fall vastly short of the glory of God. Moreover, as Hebrews 12:14 says, "Without holiness, no man shall see God."

Still, the Bible clearly states that the redeemed do have the hope of heaven and are destined to share all eternity with the Lord. Why? Surely by His grace alone, He makes us "meet to be partakers in the inheritance of the saints in light.(Col. 1:12)" We are not only cleared of the charges against us in God's lower court; but also, by His precious blood and atoning work on the cross, He also clothes us in His righteousness. He makes us clean, washed, purified and completely acceptable for His presence. All the laws and ordinances in the Mosaic law concerning purification and acceptability are met and satisfied by the work of this Great High Priest.

This foundation work of making us perfect for His presence is totally, wholly and completely the work of God. It is the *root* of sanctification. Sanctification is first and foremost His work on our behalf, not our work. The first set of verses listed explore this fundamental aspect of sanctification.

Moreover, like so many doctrines in the Bible, there is the root, which is all of God, and there is the fruit which is our little bit added. Our goal then, is to "adorn the doctrine" that has been given us. We must "work it out" or seek to behave in our lives so that these things, wrought on our behalf, are visible in our daily witness. However, this practical side of sanctification can only hope to be effective in God's eyes, if we realize that this is only possible through the cleansing power of the Word and our close identification with Christ. Only then, can our earthly walk have hope of being "a vessel unto honor, sanctified and meet for the Master's use." (2 Tim. 2:21)

Most of what I have learned about this subject and the main ideas that are presented in this study are thanks to the wonderful teaching of Charles H. Welch. There are two main points of reference for this study, besides the Scriptures themselves. One is Welch's fine article entitled "Sanctification," in Volume 7 of the *Alphabetical Analysis* pp. 221-241. The other is contained in the audio series, [Christian Fundamentals, W178-179](#) entitled "Sanctification," which is available on this web site.

Let us now try to survey as many of the pertinent Scriptures on this great subject as possible and see if these things are so.

#### The Root: Sanctified by God alone

(Acts 26:17-18 KJV) "Delivering thee from the people, and *from* the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, {18} To open their eyes, and to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive

**forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."**

(Rom 15:15-17 KJV) "Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, {16} That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost. {17} I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God."

(1 Cor 1:1-2 KJV) "Paul, called *to be* an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes *our* brother, {2} Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to be* saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:"

(1 Cor 1:29-31 KJV) "That no flesh should glory in his presence. {30} But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: {31} That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

( Welch points out that the last word "and" is the Greek word "te" meaning "as well as." Therefore, Christ is made unto us sanctification *as well as* redemption.)

(1 Cor 6:10-11 KJV) "Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. {11} And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

(Eph 5:25-27 KJV) "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; {26} That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, {27} 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."

Holy and without blemish, spot, wrinkle or any such thing: that is much of the theme of sanctification. This definition is further expanded in the next verse, which includes a play on words-sanctified *wholly* and preserved blameless.

(1 Th 5:23 KJV) "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."

(2 Th 2:12-13 KJV) "That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. {13} But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:"

(Heb 2:10-12 KJV) "For it became him, for whom *are* all things, and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. {11} For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, {12} Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee."

Notice in this next verse that the previous sacrifices of bulls and goats could only purify the flesh, but the One True Sacrifice of Christ purges the conscience. He alone can put off the old man.

(Heb 9:13-14 KJV) "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: {14} How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

(Heb 10:9-10 KJV) "Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. {10} By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

(Heb 10:14 KJV) "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

Welch points out that the words *perfected forever* (Greek- teleioo es en dienekes) should be literally translated *perfected unto perpetuity*. The Greek expression "en dienekes" is the strongest way in the Bible of emphasizing eternity. The same Greek expression is used in the negative in Hebrews 10:1 to say that the animal sacrifices offered could

literally never perfect unto perpetuity. But in contrast Christ's offering sanctifies believers in the strongest most final way for all eternity!

(Heb 10:29 KJV) "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"

(Heb 13:11-12 KJV) "For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. {12} Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate."

(1 Pet 1:2 KJV) "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied."

(Jude 1:1 KJV) "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:"

(1 John 1:7 KJV) "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

(The original here is in the perfect tense. Literally then, it reads, "the blood of Jesus Christ keeps on cleansing us from all sin"-past, present and future sins!)

### **Holy-"Hagios"**

This root word occurs 231 times in the New Testament and is often translated "holy," mostly in connection with the Holy Spirit and God; however, it is also the ordinary word translated "saints." These are telling passages, for they are often in conjunction with our perfect presentation, which bears heavily on the theme of sanctification.

(Rom 11:16 KJV) "For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches."

(1 Cor 3:17 KJV) "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

(Eph 1:4 KJV) "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:"

(Eph 2:21 KJV) "In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:"

(Eph 5:27 KJV) "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."

(Col 1:22 KJV) "In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight:"

(2 Tim 1:9 KJV) "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,"

(Titus 3:5 KJV) "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;"

(Heb 3:1 KJV) "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;"

### **The Fruit: working it out**

The theme of these Scriptures is the practical outworking side of sanctification. Our standing is sure, but with what

service are we going to adorn this doctrine? It is as though the Lord says to us, "You have been made holy in my sight, now act like it!"

(1 Pet 1:14-16 KJV) "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: {15} But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; {16} Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."

The paramount question then is how do we sanctify our lives for His service? If sanctification also means to be consecrated and set apart for the Master's use, we need

God-given directives on how we can be more holy in our walk. The answer seems to be two-fold: immersion in His Holy Word and our close identification with Christ, which means counting our selves to be dead, buried and risen with Him with our focus on heavenly things where Christ sits at the right hand of God. If we can constantly pursue these things *first*, then perhaps we are better able to behave as we should in the Lord.

### Washing of the water by the Word

(John 13:6-11 KJV) "Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? {7} Jesus answered and said unto him, **What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.** {8} Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. **Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.** {9} Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also *my* hands and *my* head. {10} Jesus saith to him, **He that is washed (leumeno) needeth not save to wash(nipashia) his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.** {11} For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, **Ye are not all clean."**

The previous passage from John is very significant in many ways. Not only does the Lord of all Creation stoop to the lowest slave work in a household, but He makes an important point about sanctification. Remember that sanctification involves cleansing in order to be fit for God's presence or His service. When Christ tells Peter that he that is washed and need only to wash his feet, He uses two different Greek words. The first is "leumeno" which means a full bath. The second word Christ uses is the Greek word for rinse, "nipashia." As Welch points out in his "["Sanctification" audio \(W178-179\)](#), Christ is telling Peter that since he has been saved, he has already had his bath. Hence, there is no need to wash Peter's head and hands. Peter and every redeemed believer are thoroughly bathed by the Savior's blood. All that is necessary is to rinse off the dirt that daily soils our feet-the part that comes in contact with the sinful world. This is the practical side of sanctification, which also rests on our dependence on Christ.

How is the daily rinsing accomplished? The answer is in the "washing of the water of the Word." Our daily Bible study rinses the dirt of the world off our feet. As we know, the Word of God is sharper than a two-edged sword, and it is through His Holy Writ that we know God. The more we know God and allow the Holy Spirit to speak to us through this Word, then the more we might begin to please him and make this experimental side of sanctification a reality in our lives. This precept is repeated three-fold in the following passages.

(John 15:2-3 KJV) "**Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.** {3} **Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.**" (Notice here that the word purge is the Greek word "kathairo" which really means cleanse and is where our word catharsis comes from. This also fits into the theme of sanctification.)

(John 17:17-20 KJV) "**Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.** {18} **As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.** {19} **And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.** {20} **Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;"**

(Eph 5:25-27 KJV) "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; {26} That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, {27} 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."

### Putting off the old man

As Welch points out on pp.232-241, of his "Sanctification" article in the *Alphabetical Analysis*, our apprehension of a more holy walk in this life also depends on our ability to put off the deeds of the old man and walk in this newness of life, which is ours through Christ. Just as our foundational, true sanctification to stand before God depends entirely on our identification with Christ, so does the practical outworking of sanctification. We need to reckon our old sinful nature as dead and buried with Christ, just as He counts it so. From there, if we can truly seek those things which are above and live looking always to Christ for our day to day walk, then we are at least on the right path to a more holy, godly walk. Of course, this is more easily said than done, and though it is always the goal before us, I don't think we can completely apprehend these things as long as we are still in this sinful flesh. Hence, "we groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed with our house which is from heaven." (2 Cor 5:2 KJV)

The following verses speak directly to this need for close identification with Christ in our walk as well as salvation.

(Gal 2:19-20 KJV) "For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. {20} I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

(Rom 6:1-19 KJV) "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? {2} God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? {3} Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? {4} Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. {5} For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: {6} Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. {7} For he that is dead is freed from sin. {8} Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: {9} Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. {10} For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. {11} Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. {12} Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. {13} Neither yield ye your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness unto God. {14} For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. {15} What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. {16} Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? {17} But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. {18} Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. {19} I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness."

Notice two main points in the previous verses from Romans chapter 6. One is the overwhelming theme of servitude—once under the dominion of sin, now free to serve the living God in newness of life. The other dominant point is the emphasis on the true identification or baptism with Christ. In verses 3-10, we are counted as having died with Him. We have been buried with Him, and we are raised with Him. Now, we should reckon ourselves as dead to sin, and alive unto Christ. He counts it all as done. If only we also could completely do the same. Union with Christ is the essential ingredient both for eternal life with Him in glory and a fruitful walk with Him now.

"For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren," (Heb 2:11-14 KJV)

Oh, that the great prayer of oneness with Christ, both in these passages and in John 17 would be more and more ours each day!

(John 17:21 KJV) "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."

### **Live Looking**

Colossians 3 further emphasizes that we need to fix our affection (or our bent as it would be in Greek) on heavenly things where Christ is enthroned. And as Titus 2:13 says, we should always be looking for our blessed hope or as Welch says to “live looking.” If we can do this, it should be much easier to count the old manner of life as dead and “adorn the doctrine” with our daily walk. Surely these things would bring further sanctification in our lives and witness.

(Col 3:1-6 KJV) "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. {2} Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. {3} For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. {4} When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. {5} Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: {6} For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:"

(Titus 2:9-14 KJV) "*Exhort* servants to be obedient unto their own masters, *and* to please *them* well in all *things*; not answering again; {10} Not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. {11} For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, {12} Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; {13} Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; {14} Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

(As Welch points out, the word soberly in verse 12 is the Greek word “sophronos” which is a derivative of the Greek term “soteria” ordinarily translated salvation. So to live soberly simply means then to be “of a salvation mind.” So by the grace of God, may we have a salvation mindset that always seeks to live looking for our blessed hope. In so doing we would adorn the wonderful doctrine that is ours! )

### **Vessel unto honor**

If we can steadfastly seek the Lord through daily Bible study and live looking always to where Christ sits, then we are in a better position to put away things in our lives that interfere with our sanctification and become a true vessel of honor for the Lord’s use.

I think that is the theme of the following practical verses on sanctification.

(2 Tim 2:20-22 KJV) "But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. {21} If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work. {22} Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." ( As Welch points out, the word dishonor in verse 20 should actually be translated “without honor or for common use.”)

Notice also the common theme of putting off the negative and putting on the positive: (flee.. follow) both in this verse and the next several listed.

(1 Th 4:2-5 KJV) "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:"

1 Pet 3:15 KJV) "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:"

(Rom 6:19 KJV) "I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness."

(Rom 6:22 KJV) "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness,

and the end everlasting life."

(Rom 12:1 KJV) "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."

(The word sacrifice comes from two roots: "sacer"-sacred and "facere"-fact or do or make. Again, as Welch points out, the idea is to present your life as a "sacred fact," or make it sacred. Behave in a way that shows what you wholeheartedly believe in your heart about Christ.)

(2 Cor 7:1 KJV) "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

( As Welch says, to perfect holiness means to "take holiness to its logical conclusion," because the word perfect (epiteleo) means to reach the end, finish the job.)

(1 Th 4:7 KJV) "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness."

(2 Pet 3:11 KJV) "*Seeing then that* all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,"

(1 John 3:2-3 KJV) "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. {3} And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

We must be identified with Christ unto sanctification both in its essential character and in its outworking. By His grace alone, may these truths be more and more evident in our lives and our witness. Praise be to Him only!

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