

A Sanctified Spirit

by A.B. Simpson

Sanctification is the process of making us holy, separating us from sin and the world, and dedicating us to God.

Scripture: Romans 12:1, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Hebrews 12:14

Topics: "Sanctification", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

A.B. Simpson emphasizes the profound nature of sanctification, explaining that it encompasses the spirit, soul, and body, and is essential for a believer's relationship with God. He describes the spirit as the divine element in man that recognizes God and is capable of fellowship with Him. Simpson outlines that a sanctified spirit is one that is separated from sin, dedicated to God, and filled with His presence, enabling believers to live in obedience and holiness. He encourages the congregation to recognize their need for a sanctified spirit and to dedicate themselves fully to God, allowing His grace to transform their lives. The sermon calls for a deep commitment to understanding and experiencing the fullness of God's sanctifying grace.

Transcript

Having seen the source and meaning of sanctification, let us next trace its sphere and extent. "I pray God to sanctify you through and through" is the meaning of this verse. And then Paul specifies the threefold division of our human nature, the spirit, the soul, and the body as respectively the subjects of this work of grace. The Divine Trinity has its counterpart in human nature, at least in some feeble measure. Man has been called a trichotomy or a triplex nature, and there seems good ground to claim that this division is recognized in the Scriptures. In the original account of man's creation the body is first distinctly mentioned--"the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground." Then we have the soul and spirit clearly distinguished in the words which follow, "God breathed into man the breath of life and man became a living soul." We have first the breath of spirit of the Almighty imparted into man's higher being and then the physical principle constituting him a living soul.

Again in the account of our Lord's child we have the same division. "The child grew," His physical life; "waxed strong in spirit," His spiritual; "filled with wisdom," His intellectual or soul life. Again in I Cor. 2, the apostle Paul very clearly distinguishes between the soul and the spirit in man. The psychical man, that is, the soul man, he tells us, "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God neither can he know them for they are spiritually discerned, but he that is spiritual discerneth all things." The psychical man, therefore, is the man of the soul, the spiritual man is the man of quickened spirit. It will be noticed that in this passage he

begins with the spirit and gradually descends to the soul and body as the subjects of sanctification. This is quite instructive and significant.

The other day in speaking to our builders, they remarked, "We always work from the top story downward and end with the basement, and so we never go back over our finished work, or need to soil the floors that have been cleansed and completed." And so in God's great house, He works from the top downward. So it is in the growth of the tree. Let it add a thousand layers, you will find that not one is laid on from the outside but each of them has a separate growth from the innermost pith of the tree. The tree's life is from within, outward. So in the tabernacle, the great symbol of spiritual truth, in the account given us in the book of Exodus, we find Jehovah beginning in the Holy of Holies in the Ark of the Covenant, and traveling outward until He has traversed the sanctuary with all its sacred vessels, and reached the external court, with its laver and altar of sacrifice.

Beautiful type of the work of sanctifying grace; the holy Shekinah of the divine spirit and the indwelling Christ in the innermost chamber of the spirit, and spreading their heavenly life and influence abroad through every part until they penetrate every faculty of the soul and every organ of the physical being with their transforming and consecrating power.

I. WHAT IS THE SPIRIT?

In a word it may be said that it is the divine element in man, or perhaps more correctly, that which is cognizant of God. It is not the intellectual or mental or aesthetic or sensational part of man but the spiritual, the higher nature, that which recognizes and holds converse with the heavenly and divine.

It is that in us which knows God, which directly and immediately is conscious of the divine presence and can hold fellowship with Him, hearing His voice, beholding His glory, receiving intuitively the impression of His touch and the conviction of His will, understanding and worshipping His character and attributes, speaking to Him in the spirit and language of prayer and praise and heavenly communion. It is, also, directly conscious of the other world of evil spirits, and knows the touch of the enemy as well as the voice of the Shepherd.

The spirit is that which recognizes the difference between right and wrong, which loves the right and thinks, discerns, chooses in harmony with righteousness. It is the moral element in human nature. It is the region in which conscience speaks and reigns. It is the seat of righteousness and purity and sanctity, it is that which resembles God, the new man created in righteousness and true holiness after His image. Every one must be conscious of such an element in his being and feel that it is essentially different from the mere faculties of the understanding or the feelings of the heart.

The spirit is that which chooses, purposes, determines and thus practically decides the whole question of our action and obedience. In short, it is the region of the will, that mightiest impulse of human nature, that almost divine prerogative which God has shared with man, His child, that very helm of life on whose decision hang the whole issues of character and destiny. What a momentous force it is, and how essential that it be wholly sanctified. As it is, or is not, sanctified, the life is one of obedience or disobedience, and when the will is right, and the choice is fixed, and the eye is single, God recognizes the heart as true and pure. "If there be a willing mind it is accepted according to what a man hath and not according to what he hath not."

The spirit is that which trusts. Confidence is one of its attributes and exercises. It is the filial quality in the child of God which looks in the Father's face without a cloud, which lies upon His bosom without a fear and puts its hand in His with the abandonment of childlike simplicity.

The spirit is that which loves God. It is not now the human emotional love of which we speak, for that belongs to the lower nature of the soul and may be most fully developed in one whose spirit is still dead to God in trespasses and sins; but it is that divine love which is the direct gift of the Holy Spirit and the true spring of all holiness and obedience. It is nothing less than the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit, and its appropriate sphere is the human heart.

The spirit is that which glorifies God, which makes His will and honor its supreme aim and loses itself in His glory. The very conception of such an aim is foreign to the human mind and can be only received by a spirit which has been born again and created in the divine image.

The spirit is that which enjoys God, which hungers for His presence and fellowship and finds its nourishment, its portion, its satisfaction, its inheritance in Himself as its all and in all.

This wonderful element of our human nature is subject to all the sensibilities and susceptibilities which we find in a coarser form in our physical life. There are spiritual senses and organs just as real and intense as those of our physical frame. We find them distinctly recognized in the Scriptures. There is the sense of spiritual hearing, "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches," "Blessed are your ears, for they hear," "My sheep hear my voice and they follow me." There is the sense of vision, "Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty and the land that is very far off," "Looking unto Jesus," "Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord," "Having eyes they see not," "He hath sent me to open the blind eyes and turn them from darkness unto light and the power of Satan unto God." There is the sense of spiritual touch, "That I may apprehend, (or, grasp with my hand) that for which I am apprehended of Christ Jesus," "Who touched me," "As many as touched him were made perfectly whole." There is the sense of taste, "He that eateth me shall live by me," "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good," "He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." There is the sense of smell. Very definitely is it referred to in the 11th of Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him and shall make him of quick smell in the fear of the Lord." The spirit is a real subsistence, and when separated from the body after death, it will have the same consciousness as when in life, and perhaps intense powers of feeling, action and enjoyment.

Such is a brief view of this supreme endowment of our humanity, this upper chamber of the house of God, this higher nature received from our Creator, and lost, or, at least, degraded, defiled and buried through our sin and fall.

II. WHAT IS IT FOR THE SPIRIT TO BE SANCTIFIED?

It is indispensable, first of all, that it be quickened into life. Naturally it is dead, and the work of regeneration quickens it into vitality as a new-born life, breathed, given from heaven as unto us in the first creation, as from the very lips of God. So, in one sense, the unregenerate soul is not spiritually alive. Its faculties are alive, its animal life is active, but its spiritual vitality is suspended. It is true there is a kind of spiritual life in the corpse that is buried in yonder tomb, given over to the horrible forms of life which prey upon it. And so the spirit of the ungodly is alive, but it is possessed with the demon spirits of evil, and alive unto sin and Satan, as the regenerate soul is alive unto God.

But now what is a sanctified spirit?

1. It is a spirit separated.

Have you ever looked upon the dark, cold ground in early spring, through which if you drew your hand, it would chill and defile your fingers and perhaps it was mixed with the manure of the barnyard and the crawling earth worms that burrowed in it? Yet, have you never seen, growing out of that dark soil, a little plant or flower, with roots white as the driven snow, and leaf as delicate and petals as pure as a baby's dimpled cheek, separated by its own nature and purity from the dirty soil that was all around it and could not even stain it? So the spirit born of God is separated in its own divine nature from its own self and the sinful heart, and the very first step of sanctification is to recognize this separation and count ourselves no longer the same person, but partakers of the divine nature and alive unto God as those who have been raised from the dead. And as such we are to separate our spirit from all that is not of God; not only from sin but from the world and from self and our whole old natural life. All our spiritual instincts, senses and organs are to be separated from evil and intuitively to turn away from even the touch and approach of temptation. We are to refuse to hear with our inward ear the stranger's voice, to see with the spirit's eye the fascinating vision of temptation, to touch in spiritual contact any unclean thing, to taste even the forbidden joy, and by the quick sense of smell at once recognize and turn from the unwholesome atmosphere, and as evil of any kind is revealed to the spirit, it is to renounce it and to ask God to separate it from it and to put the gulf of His presence between the soul and the sin.

And it must be separated ever from the spirits of others, and, indeed, from any human spirit that could control it apart from the will of God. All the aspects of the spirit which we have already referred to must be separated. The higher consciousness that knows God must be separated from all other gods but Him. The moral senses that know right must separate from all wrong. The will must be separated from the choice or inclination of all but His will. The power of trust must be voluntarily separated from every thought of unbelief or distrust. The power to love must be wholly separated from forbidden love. The aim and motive must be separated from all that is not for His glory, the source of its pleasure must be purified and the spirit separated from all joy that is not in harmony with the joy of the Lord. Beloved, is your spirit thus separated, cleansed, and detached from everything that could defile or distract you from the will of God and life of holiness?

2. A sanctified spirit is a dedicated spirit.

Its powers of apprehension are dedicated to know God and to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus. His Word is the object of its deepest study and meditation, and His attributes and His glory the theme of its most delightful contemplation. To know God and to be filled with His Spirit and to be ever in His presence is its highest aim. Its will is dedicated to God. It chooses Him deliberately as its portion and its sovereign Lord, and delights to abandon itself to His entire possession and to His perfect will. It is this element of a single heart and a supreme choice of God which constitutes what the Scriptures call a perfect heart, and which they affirm of many a Christian whose steps were not always perfect. Every moral sense in the sanctified spirit is dedicated to God. It chooses His standards of right and wrong and desires above all things to bear His image and be conformed to His nature.

Its power of trusting is dedicated. It is determined to trust God under any circumstances and in spite of all feelings, as an act of will that chooses to believe His Word notwithstanding every discouragement and temptation. A spirit that thus chooses God will be sustained by the very faith of God Himself imparted to it.

Its love is dedicated and its power of loving. It chooses to love God supremely and to love all as God would have us to love, regarding every human being in the light of God and His will, and adjusting itself to every relationship in such a manner as to please God. It is dedicated to the glory of God. It accepts this and not the applause of men nor its own pleasing as the true end and purpose of life and lays itself a living sacrifice on His altar.

And, further, it is dedicated to enjoy God. It chooses Him as its portion, its happiness, all and in all, and consents to find all its satisfaction in Him and Him alone, whether it be in the loss of every other channel of happiness or by His filling all the springs of life with Himself.

A dedicated spirit is thus wholly given to God, to know Him, to choose His will, to resemble His character, to trust His Word, to love Him supremely, to glorify Him only, to enjoy Him wholly and to belong to Him utterly, unreservedly, and forever. All its senses, susceptibilities and capacities are dedicated to Him. It yields itself to Him to be made by Him all that He would have it to be and to have His perfect will wrought out by it forever. It chooses to hear only what He would speak, to see only what He would have it behold, to touch only at His bidding and to use every power and capability in and for Him only. It regards itself henceforth as His property, subject to His disposal and existing for His great purpose regarding it. It is consecrated not so much to the works, or truth, or the cause, or the church as to the Lord. And this is done gladly, freely, without fear or reservation, but as a great privilege and honor to be permitted thus to belong to so great and good a Master, and have Him undertake so uncongenial a task as our sanctification and exaltation.

This dedication of our spirit can be made in the very first moment of consecration and before we have a single conscious experience or feeling answering to the dedication we make. As empty vessels, as bare possibilities with nothing in us yet but the entire consent of our will to be all that the Lord would have us, we yield ourselves to God according to His will.

This act of dedication should be made once for all, and then recognized as done and as including every subsequent act which we may ever renew as we receive more light in detail respecting His will concerning us.

It is possible for us, once for all and not knowing perhaps one thousandth part of all that it means, to give ourselves to God for all that He understands it to mean, and to know henceforth that we are utterly and eternally the Lord's as certainly as we shall know that we are the Lord's after we have been a million years in glory.

And yet, after this one comprehensive act of dedication it is quite proper for us, as new light comes to us and we become conscious of new powers or possibilities we can lay at His feet, to say our glad "yes" to His claim as often as it is renewed. Yet this is only the working out in detail of the all-inclusive consecration that we made at first.

Beloved, have you thus dedicated yourself and your spirit to God, and will you henceforth dare to reckon yourself all the Lord's, and as each new chamber of your higher nature opens to your consciousness, will you gladly put the key of it in His gracious hand and recognize him as its Owner and Guest?

3. The sanctified spirit is a spirit filled with the presence and the Spirit of the Lord.

What it gives to him is only a possibility. It is His presence that makes it a reality. Even when dedicated it is but a vessel, empty and meet for the Master's use. It is He who fills it and pours it out for the supply of the needs of others or to satisfy the desire of his own heart. Even the consecration which we make to God, the very act of dedication itself, has to be made perfect by His grace. We cannot even yield ourselves to Him in a manner that is without imperfection, but we can choose to be His, and then He will come into our dedicated will and make the living sacrifice worthy of His holy altar.

We can lie down upon that altar in full surrender and then He, the great Burnt-Offering, will lie down by our side and offer Himself in us to God as a sacrifice of sweet-smelling savor. This was, really, the meaning of the Burnt-Offering of old. The offerer did not offer himself, but touched the spotless lamb and it became the perfect offering. So with our hand upon the head of Christ, our consecration is accepted in Him, and He comes into our will and our spirit, and so unites Himself with us that the sacrifice is acceptable and complete.

And so, again, our knowledge of God and fellowship with Him are dependent upon His own grace to be made effectual. We dedicate our spirit to God, and then He reveals Himself to us, opening the eyes of our understanding, showing us the person of Christ, unfolding His truth to our spiritual apprehension, and making us to see light in His own light.

It is wonderful how the untutored mind will thus often, in a short time, by the simple touch of the Holy Spirit, be filled with the most profound and scriptural teaching of God and the plan of salvation through Christ. We once knew a poor girl, saved from a life of infamy and but little educated, in a few days rise to the most extraordinary acquaintance with the Scriptures and the whole plan of redemption through the simple anointing of the Holy Spirit. We simply give to Him our spirit that it may know Him and He fills it with His light and revelation.

So, again, we choose to be transformed to His image, but we cannot create that image by our own morality or struggles after righteousness. We must be created anew in His likeness by His own Spirit, and stamped with His resemblance by His heavenly seal impressed directly upon our heart from His hand. And thus He does become to us our holiness, for Christ is made unto us our sanctification, and we are made the righteousness of God in Him. We turn from the sin, choose to be holy, and God fills our proffered hand with His own spotless righteousness.

So, again, our faith is but the filling of His Spirit and the imparting of the faith of God. We choose to trust and He makes that choice good by enabling us to believe, and to continue in the faith grounded and settled, and so living by the faith of the Son of God. Our love is but a purpose on our part, the power is His; for when we choose to love He sheds abroad that love within us and imparts to us His own Spirit and nature which is love. All our struggles will not work up one throb of genuine love to God, but He will breathe His own perfect love into any heart that chooses to make Him the one object of affection. We cannot love our enemies but we can choose to love them, and God will make us to love them. Often have we known consecrated characters placed in circumstances where they were obliged to come in contact with uncongenial companions whom they could not love; but, choosing at His bidding to act in the spirit of love, God has so inbreathed His very heart, that without a struggle they could adjust themselves to this relationship and meet the uncongenial associate, or even enemy, with quietness, and even tenderness, and a holy desire for his highest good.

So, again, it is with His joy in us. And so, likewise, the power to glorify Him is nothing more nor less than simply this, to let God Himself be manifested in us and so glorify Himself, as others see Him reflected through us. Sanctification is thus God's own life in the spirit that is yielded up to Him to be His dwelling place and the instrument of His power and will. So also of our spiritual senses of which we have spoken. They are sanctified when they become the organs of God's operation, when our spiritual ear is quickened by His Spirit, our spiritual eyes opened by His touch, our spiritual taste, and touch, and smell, made alive by His own quickening life within us.

Now, beloved, have you ever learned this wonderful secret of regenerated spirit and God's Spirit, the Guest and Occupant of that consecrated abode? Shall we illustrate this somewhat lofty conception by a simple illustration? Here is a common leather case which represents the body. Within it is a silver casket, which stands for the soul. We touch a spring and it opens and discloses an exquisite golden locket, which we shall consider as the symbol of the spirit or higher nature, and within that golden locket is a place all set with precious gems for a single picture.

Is it empty in your spirit or is it filled with some other face, or is it dedicated to and occupied by your blessed Lord? Is it His shrine and His home and has He accepted it and made it the seat of His glorious abode and throne of His blessed kingdom of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost? Or are there some who read these lines who have not yet even learned the meaning of their own spirit and do not know whether it has yet been quickened from the dead and prepared to be the seat of Christ's indwelling? All that they know of life consists in the physical organism, their mental faculties and their human affections. They have a keen, quick, human life, all aglow with emotion and mental activity, but the spirit, alas, alas! is so dead and cold that it has not even caught the grasp of these higher thoughts that we have been contemplating.

Ah, beloved! there is one world that you have not yet entered, and that is the eternal world to which you are hastening. The life you are living can never introduce you to the sphere of heavenly beings, for "flesh and blood cannot inherit eternal life, nor corruption incorruption." Your physical life will wither like the flowers of summer, your mental endowments will rise to the highest human rank, but will not touch the joy of that celestial realm. You must have another nature before you can enter the kingdom of heaven. "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Just suppose for a moment a man going to a great musical festival in Germany. He enters the great Concert Hall but he does not know a single word of the language spoken nor has the faintest germ of musical taste. To him the words are unmeaning gutturals, and the notes a jargon of confusing noises. He could understand a problem in mathematics, he could discourse with them with eloquence in English on questions of politics or philosophy, but he is out of place, he does not possess the key to their society or enjoyment.

And so let us suppose the highest intellect of earth entering the society of heaven. To him their songs and joys would all seem as incomprehensible as the conversation of a cultivated home circle would be to the little dog that sits at their feet or the canary that sings in the window. It belongs to a different race and cannot touch their world. Nor could such a man have one point of contact with these heavenly beings. It would be another world, a world unknown, a world as barren as a wilderness; and from its scenes he would be glad to haste to find some congenial fellowship. He cannot reach its range because it is a spiritual race of beings, and he has but an intellectual nature. And, on the other hand, they would save as little interest in him as his range is infinitely below theirs.

We can imagine the porter of yonder gates asking him what he knows, and he begins to tell them about the lore of classical culture, the mythologies of Greece or the monuments of Egypt. The angel smiles with pity and answers, "Why, these splendid memories of which you speak are not worthy of comparison with the world in which we dwell. The grandest temple of Egypt would not make a pedestal for one of the stairs of heaven." Perhaps he tells them of astronomy, the distance or magnitude of the stars. "Why," the angel answers, "we have no need of these dim and distant calculations here. There is not one of yonder worlds we have not visited and we could tell you ten thousand times more of its mysteries than you have ever dreamed of, but the glories of these cannot be compared with the glory of Him who sits upon the throne, whom you have not eyes to see, or the sweetness of these redemption songs which you cannot even hear because you have not ears to hear. One thrill of the rapture we feel you cannot ever know because your heart has not been quickened in one heavenly chord. You do not belong here. You live in the lower realm of mind alone, but this is the Home of God and those who have received His nature, His Spirit, and are admitted as His children to dwell in His presence and share His infinite and everlasting joy.

Beloved, this is the high calling which is given to every one of Adam's race who has heard the gospel. You may become a son of God, you may receive a new spirit which can know and enjoy Him, and that spirit can be so sanctified, so cleansed, so enlarged, so filled with Himself, as to be able to reach the highest sublimity of His grace and glory and joy. Will you separate it from all that defiles and dwarfs it? Will you dedicate it to Him to be exalted to its highest possible destiny and will, henceforth receive Him to be its life and purity, its satisfaction, its nature, and its ALL and in ALL?

These four short lines of simple poetry express the depth and height of holiness, namely, as a great need and an infinite supply for that need in God. Beloved, shall they express, henceforth, your emptiness and your divine filling?

In the heart of man--

A cry;

In the heart of God--

Supply.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ab-simpson/a-sanctified-spirit/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net