

# Entire Sanctification as Taught by James and Jude

by Dougan Clark

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*Dougan Clark explores the teachings of James and Jude on entire sanctification, emphasizing the harmony of faith, works, and the role of the Holy Spirit in achieving holiness.*

**Scripture:** James 1:4

**Topics:** "Entire Sanctification", "Holy Spirit"

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## Description

Dougan Clark delves into the teachings of James and Jude, exploring their perspectives on entire sanctification. James emphasizes the importance of faith demonstrated through good works, complementing Paul's teachings on justification by faith. He highlights the necessity of patience for achieving perfection and vividly describes inbred sin as lust, cautioning against the enticements of the devil. Jude encourages believers to pray in the Holy Ghost, emphasizing the power of prayer energized by the Spirit for various blessings, including healing, conversion, and sanctification.

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## Transcript

James and Jude were brothers. They were also "brethren of the Lord." Whether this expression means actual brothers, namely, children of Joseph and Mary, or whether it means only cousins, also whether these two men were apostles or not, are questions which I leave to the Biblical critics. Receiving without argument their respective epistles as belonging to the inspired canon, I am to inquire what their teaching is in reference to the one theme of this book, that is, entire sanctification.

James, as a writer, is intensely practical. As Bishop of Jerusalem he presided specially over the Jewish Christian Church, and his epistle is addressed "to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad," i.e., to the Jews of the Dispersion, primarily, no doubt, to the Christian Jews, but also secondarily and by way of warning to the unconverted Jews. James was "zealous of the law." He fully agreed with Paul and with Peter that the yoke of circumcision and the Mosaic law was not to be imposed upon the Gentile Churches, but he, no doubt, strongly insisted that Jewish converts should be still very careful to observe the outward law. His epistle is like Matthew's gospel, and savors strongly of the Sermon on the Mount. As a bishop and overseer of a Jewish flock of Christians, while he fully assented to Paul's teaching on justification by faith, he, nevertheless, urged upon the people with vehemence that they should show their faith by their works and that they should be "doers of the word and not hearers only." As Paul completely demolishes the

doctrine of salvation by the works of the law, so James in his epistle offers us an inspired and a vigorous protest against every form of Antinomianism. Thus the two writers, both moved by the Holy Ghost, present the two aspects of gospel truth so plainly that he may run that readeth. "We are saved by faith, not by works," says Paul. "Aye," says James, "but we are saved in good works, not out of them," and we must be careful to maintain good works, not in order to be saved, but because we are saved. Good works are necessary, not as the ground or the cause of salvation, but as the fruit and resultant and test of the salvation which we have received by faith. James, therefore, is not antagonistic to, but only complementary of the great apostle of the Gentiles.

And mark how he strikes or aims right at the mark of Christian perfection in the very beginning of his epistle. He assures us that if we let patience have her perfect work, we shall be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

Christian perfection, then, according to James, is perfect patience. Christian perfection according to John, is perfect love. Christian perfection, according to Paul, is maturity or being "thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Christian perfection, according to Peter, is in being established, strengthened, settled. Surely none but a caviller will find any want of harmony between these different modes of expression. They all imply deliverance from sin, which is always instantaneous, and some of them imply a mature Christian character, which is always gradual.

James gives a vivid description of inbred sin under the name of lust. "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived it bringeth forth (actual) sin; and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death."

We cannot doubt that James, like the other writers of the Bible, believed in a personal devil, for he speaks of a wisdom which is "devilish" and if a man is enticed to sin by the natural depravity of his heart, we must not overlook the fact that the enticement implies an enticer, and that the wicked spiritual adversary of our race knows how to adapt his baits to the peculiar form in which inbred sin is strongest in each individual, and thus, if possible, to entrap and destroy him. Depravity exists by nature in all, but in one man it is particularly felt in the direction of covetousness, in another, of pride, in another, of ambition, in another, of sensuality. Satan's temptations in the first of these would most likely be something which holds out the prospect of getting gain by sinning; in the second, it would be something to feed his intense admiration of self, to cherish his pride; in the third, it would be the hope of political or some other kind of power on the condition of sacrificing principle; in the fourth, it would be the gratification of bodily appetites as in drunkenness, gluttony, or licentiousness. Thus the trap is set for every man, and the trapper is wary. God save us from his wiles.

And as Peter tells us to lay aside inbred sin, as it exists in the form of malice, and guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and shows itself in evil speakings, so James tells us to lay apart "all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness," or "overflowing of wickedness." Ah, beloved, most truly did Jesus say that the heart of man is a fountain of wickedness, out of the heart of man proceed evil thoughts and all actual sins; yes, there is by nature in each one of us a superfluity of naughtiness, an overflowing of wickedness, a natural depravity, an inbred sin, and this must be "laid apart," it must be gotten rid of by bringing and subjecting the heart where it dwells to the fiery baptism with the Holy Ghost, and then shall we be in a position to receive, with meekness, the engrafted word, which is able to save our souls.

St. James speaks of the "law of liberty," and of the "royal law," the latter being, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," and both mean, I apprehend, just what we have already alluded to as the law of love. "Love," says Paul, "is the fulfilling of the law," and this is liberty, and this is royalty, the freedom to do God's will because we love it, and to have all the antagonisms to that blessed will expelled from our hearts, and all lawful affections and passions subdued and subjected to Him who is our King, and who reigns without a rival in our hearts.

"I worship Thee, sweet will of God,

And all Thy ways adore;

And every day I live, I seem

To love Thee more and more."

If this is not the true liberty and the true royalty, where shall we find them? Not on earth, at least.

James does not spend words in exhorting us to seek more religion, but he tersely defines pure religion. And that is what we want. It does not depend upon age, nor size, nor growth. A stalk of corn may be pure as soon as it raises itself above the surface of the ground. Another stalk may be impure and diseased when it is many feet in height. A Christian may seek and find pure religion and undefiled, very soon after he is born again. Another Christian may spend years and years in seeking more religion, and yet not become the possessor of purity of heart.

This pure religion, according to our author, consists in works of beneficence and love as to its outward manifestations, but its true inward principle is in keeping one's self "unspotted from the world." Oh, that all my readers with myself, may thus keep themselves unspotted from the world, which involves the idea of being sanctified wholly, and in the end "may be found of Him in peace without spot and blameless."

But an objector here interposes with a quotation from James which is supposed to preclude the possibility of living without sin. "In many things we offend all." But this expression is not to be thus interpreted. To make it mean that all Christians must continue in the commission of sin to the end of their lives, would not only be doing violence to that which is the very trend of our author's teaching, namely, a spotless morality and a pure and holy life, but it would also prove too much. For a little further on we read, in reference to that unruly evil, the tongue, "Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men which are made after the similitude of God," and again, "Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn about their whole body." Surely no expositor would maintain from such language that James was a tamer of horses and a profane swearer. The truth is, that James, out of kindness and courtesy, includes himself among his hearers or readers, and means to show us how liable we are to give offence through rash and ill-advised words, and then, on the other hand, he does not fail to mention the man who does not offend in word, and who is able, by the grace of God, to bridle the whole body, that is, to live without sin, and whom, again, he styles a "perfect man."

Our author further informs us that heavenly, divine wisdom is first pure, then peaceable. The carnal Christian, or babe in Christ, would often reverse this arrangement. He is clamorous for peace, often to the extent that he would have a wisdom that is first peaceable and then pure, but the Holy Ghost puts purity first, and He is always right. No compromise must be made with error in doctrine, or evil in practice, even for the sake of peace. But when we become possessors of a wisdom which is first pure, then, also, the

other qualities follow in proper succession, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated and the rest.

Listen, again, to the stern moralist and preacher of holiness, "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double minded." Here, again, we can but thankfully admire the perfect accuracy of the Holy Ghost, as regards the method of full salvation. To cleanse the hands is to obtain pardon and absolution for what we have done, and it is always the first work of the unsaved man to repent and seek the forgiveness of his sins. When this forgiveness has been obtained, then his hands are cleansed, but he may still be double-minded. He may still be unstable in all his ways. His spiritual course may still be zig-zag. His life may still be a series of sinning and repenting, and sinning again and repenting again, till he cries out in his misery, "O wretched man that I am, who (not what) shall deliver me from this body of death?" And then James's prescription comes home to him, "Purify your hearts, ye double-minded." Seek and obtain the blessing of entire sanctification, and, henceforth, with one mind and one purpose, run joyfully in the way of Christ's commandments. Justification first and entire sanctification afterwards. First cleanse your hands, then purify your hearts. And with this agree the words of the Psalmist, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy place?" "He that hath clean hands," that is, whose sins have been pardoned, "and a pure heart," that is, who has been sanctified wholly. The teachings of the Holy Ghost are marvelously harmonious in the Old Testament and the New.

Finally, James assures us that the "prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." And not only physical but spiritual blessing may be received in the same way for "If he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." His conclusion is that "The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working," R.V., but I prefer to regard the Greek participle in the original as in the passive voice, and then the meaning would be, as suggested by Dr. S.A. Keen in his Faith papers, "The prayer of a righteous man being energized" (by the Holy Ghost) "availeth much."

I should understand the "prayer of faith," therefore, to be a prayer begotten in the heart of the believer by the Holy Ghost, and with the prayer is communicated also the corresponding faith, and when this is the case, the answer is sure. Faith, in this use of the word, is a special gift, and may be given to some and withheld from others, also given at one time and withheld at another, just as God in His infinite and unerring wisdom may decide. This kind of faith is one of the special gifts of which we have an account in the 12th of 1st Corinthians, and differs, therefore, from the grace of faith or the power of believing the gospel unto salvation when it is presented, which is given to all men, and for the exercise of which, by actually believing, all are held responsible. "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be condemned."

And it is Jude, the brother of James, who exhorts his readers to pray in the Holy Ghost, the very same kind of praying which James calls the prayer of faith, and about which Paul also declares that "the Spirit Himself also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

A Holy Ghost prayer, therefore, such as Jude alludes to, is a prayer that is energized by the Holy Ghost. It is not the Holy Ghost who does the groaning, but He causes the heart of the consecrated believer to groan, by kindling those intense desires after some specific blessing, which often are, indeed, too deep for clear expression by utterance, and with the groanings, also, the faith is given, which takes hold of God's Almightyness for the answer. Such prayers do, indeed, move the hand that moves the world, and whether

it be for the healing of the sick, or the conversion of sinners, or the entire sanctification of believers, or the supply of temporal needs, or anything else which the Holy Spirit may suggest, the blessing is sure to come.

I am not forgetting that the assistance of the Holy Spirit is needed, and that it is obtainable in all true prayer, but ordinary prayer must be founded upon the promises of God and an exercise of will power to believe those promises, and therefore, it must be accompanied, in order to be effectual, by ordinary faith, the act of believing. Extraordinary prayer must be inspired directly by the Holy Spirit, and the gift of faith must come directly from Him. So that we have ordinary prayer, ordinary faith and ordinary results in the one case, while in the other, we have extraordinary prayer, extraordinary faith and extraordinary results. Praise the Lord.

Jude tells us that as Christian believers we are to "hate even the garment spotted by the flesh," that is, to keep entirely clear of all the pollutions of sin, symbolized by the garment of the leper which was regarded as unclean, and which passage, when spiritually interpreted, must mean the unspotted holiness of the true Christian. And as to the question of one's ability to live without sin, he commits us to the care of Him who is "able to keep us from falling," the very thing we need and which we cannot do for ourselves, and "to present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." First, then, we are to be sanctified wholly, then kept from falling by the power of Christ through the indwelling Spirit. Finally, presented without spot, blameless and faultless in the presence of God's glory in heaven. And this is the gospel according to Jude.

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