

Sanctification

by W.H. Griffith Thomas

Sanctification is the process of being set apart for God, consecrated, and purified, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Scripture: Psalm 139:23, John 17:19, Romans 6:14, 2 Corinthians 5:15, Galatians 5:16, Ephesians 5:25, Colossians 2:6, Titus 2:14, Hebrews 10:10, 1 John 2:1

Topics: "Sanctification", "Holy Spirit"

Description

W.H. Griffith Thomas delves into the multifaceted purpose of Christ's death, emphasizing salvation from the penalty, power, and presence of sin. He explores the threefold nature of salvation: Justification, Sanctification, and Glorification, highlighting the believer's position in Christ and the essential role of consecration and purification in Sanctification. Thomas explains the believer's journey from justification to sanctification, emphasizing the need for continual growth in grace and the process of progressive sanctification. He addresses the believer's struggle with sin, presenting eradication and suppression as inadequate views, and advocates for counteraction through the power of the Holy Spirit. Thomas underscores the importance of faith in appropriating Christ for sanctification and maintaining a life of holiness.

Transcript

If an average congregation, or even Bible class, were asked, "Why did Jesus Christ die?" the answer in almost every case would probably be, "He died for our sins, in our stead." This would be all true; but not all the truth. The purpose of the death of Christ is brought before us in the New Testament in a variety of ways, and each of them calls for careful attention. For our present purpose we must look at three passages: 2 Corinthians 5:15, Ephesians 5:25, Titus 2:14. When we do so, we shall easily see that "for our sins" means salvation from at least three things: the penalty, the power, and the presence of sin. Salvation is one of the greatest and widest words in the New Testament, and concerns the past, present, and future. It embraces Justification, Sanctification, and Glorification. These three great truths are expressed for us in three phrases: in Christ, like Christ, with Christ, and at least one passage has all three in it (Acts 26:18).

We have already considered the first, Justification; now we have to look at the second, which has an intimate and necessary connection with what has preceded. Justification is to Sanctification as the foundation is to the building, the source to the stream, the cause to the effect. Let us, therefore, give heed

to the teaching of 1 Thessalonians 4:3: "This is the will of God, even your Sanctification."

I. The Principle of Sanctification

Sanctification is a familiar word, but perhaps its very familiarity prevents us from understanding the two great truths involved and included in it.

Sanctification means, first of all, Consecration, or a true relation to God. It needs to be reiterated that the root idea of the Hebrew and Greek word for "holy," "sanctify," and their cognates is separation. The original idea seems to be ceremonial, and, etymologically, that which is "holy" or "sanctified" means "that which belongs to God," the primary idea being not moral, but ceremonial. This original meaning is seen in connection with days, places, institutions (as well as persons) being holy or sanctified, where the meaning can only be separation (Gen. 2:3, Exod. 13:2, Josh. 7:13). Thus Sanctification, in its etymological sense, means being set apart from other things for God's ownership (Isa. 43:21; Eph. 1:12, 2:10, 3:10). We can see the same truth in connection with the dedication of the priests of the Old Testament. Then, too, we observe the use of the word as applied to our Lord in a well-known passage, "I sanctify myself" (John 17:19), meaning "I consecrate myself." It is, therefore, important and essential to remember, as one of the foundations of our life and experience, that the root idea of Sanctification is Consecration. We are redeemed to be set apart, dedicated, consecrated, "kept for the Master's use".

Then, as a result, Sanctification comes to mean Purification, or a true condition before God. This is the natural and necessary consequence of our possession by God. Scripture proceeds from etymology to usage, and goes on to show the moral and ethical meaning of our being consecrated, or separated. To be used when set apart involves fitness, and Scripture speaks of a twofold fitness, meetness. We are first of all "made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. 1:12). Then, as the outcome of this, we are made "meet for the Master's use" (2 Tim. 2:21). When God possesses us, we are possessed by His presence, and the Holy Spirit cannot be in us without purifying our thoughts, desires and motives, and so equipping us for His service.

Thus Sanctification means primarily the act and fact of belonging to God, and then, as the outcome, the proof of this in the life we live. This is how it has been put by a recent writer:

"Whatever one finds in the Bible 'holy' or its cognates, whether in the Old Testament or the New, whether in the Psalms or Wisdom Literature or Gospels, the meaning is everywhere fundamentally the same. God as God only is holy in the absolute sense, for He alone possesses the perfection of moral being. They who belong to God by self-dedication belong to Himself also in moral likeness for they share His life." [Sweet, "The Study of the English Bible," p. 214.]

II. The Place of Sanctification

It will help us to understand the meaning and Importance of Sanctification if we consider it in relation to its place in St. Paul's teaching in Romans, chapters 1 to 8. In chapters 1:18 to 3:20 the Apostle shows that man's unrighteousness demanded Divine righteousness; then, from 3:21 to 4:25 he points out how God provided this righteousness in Christ, and how it is to be received by faith; and then in 5:1-12 he shows how the righteousness lasts in spite of every obstacle.

Up to this point he has been concerned only with these three great truths, but now at once comes an important question. If this righteousness thus covers the past and guarantees the future, what about the present in between? This is the problem of chapters 6 to 8, dealing with Sanctification. Since Righteousness as Justification is Salvation from the penalty of sin; so Righteousness as Sanctification is

Salvation from the power of sin, and this, with a brief reference to Glorification as Salvation from the presence of sin, is the great theme of chapters 6 to 8.

It is important to remember that the believer has been set apart for God through Christ's Redemption from the very outset "by the offering of the Body of Jesus Christ, once for all" (Heb. 10:9-10). In this sense, all who believe are "Saints," or sanctified from the moment of their acceptance of Christ (Col. 1:12-13). The Holy Spirit bears witness to this, "By one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified, whereof the Holy Spirit also is the Witness to us" (Heb. 10:14-15).

All believers are, therefore, said to be "sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Christ Jesus" (Jude 1). To this effect we read in St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians, "The Church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called Saints" (1 Cor. 1:1-2). This refers to the Christian's position, and, of course, in no way depends upon his spiritual condition at any moment, for the weakest, most ignorant believer has this relationship. We know that among these Corinthians there were contentions, there was pride in human wisdom, they were described as "carnal" and still "babes in Christ," they were "puffed up," they were sadly indifferent to sin in the Church; and yet the Apostle says of these very people, "Ye are sanctified" (1 Cor. 6:11); and in the same chapter he speaks of them as possessing the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16).

It is thus clear that a sanctified person is one who belongs to God, whose position in Christ is settled quite apart from anything that he himself is or does. Everyone who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ is in Christ, and has been sanctified by the offering of Jesus Christ once for all, and, as such, is truly a "Saint" in position. He grows in grace, rather than into it. But it is, of course, essential that our position should become expressed in our personal experience. The Apostle divides men into three classes.

Some he calls "natural, not having the Spirit" (1 Cor. 2:14). This refers to men who have not been born again, and are, therefore, neither justified nor sanctified. Others are described as "carnal" believers, who walk after the flesh, those who are babes in Christ when they ought to be growing into Christian manhood (1 Cor. 3:1-4). Yet, notwithstanding this weakness, these believers are included among those who are called "Saints" at the outset of the Epistle. The third class is described by the word "spiritual"; this refers to the man who is walking in the Holy Spirit in fellowship with God in Christ.

And so the believer is intended to become more and more thoroughly separated unto God, consecrated, dedicated in heart and life, and more and more conformed to the image of his Master. This is the meaning of "growth in grace". The believer is not only to be free, as in Justification, from the penalty of sin, but also free from the power, the bondage, the dominion of it. This is a pathway for the whole of the Christian life, and it is sometimes described as "progressive sanctification".

It is clearly taught by the Apostle in such a passage as 2 Corinthians 3:17-18. This process goes on to the close of the believer's life on earth (Eph. 5:25-26), and will be completed when the Lord Himself appears (Eph. 5:27; see also Phil. 3:20-21). This, then, is the place and force of Sanctification in the Christian life. It refers exclusively to one who is already saved, and who is desirous of being delivered from the power and control of sin, as well as from its penalty, and made more and more godlike.

This state requires a man to realize, first of all, his position in Christ, and God's purpose concerning him, and then to be conscious that God requires what He has purposed. Thereby Sanctification is seen to be the logical and inevitable outcome of Justification.

III. The Provision For Sanctification It will again help us to understand St. Paul's teaching in Romans 6 to 8 if we consider the Divine provision for our becoming holy. The Apostle leads up to it by a question (Rom. 6:1). Someone is assumed to object to his teaching on Justification, and to ask: "Does not this doctrine of righteousness by faith encourage to sin?" The Apostle answers by showing that the death of Christ has two results: (1) it meets a guilty past; (2) it also meets a sinful present.

It thus deals not only with sins (plural), but also with sin (singular), not only with the fruit, but also with the root. Sin is Death, Disease, and Departure; and Righteousness must meet all these three aspects. In chapter 3:21 to chapter 5:11, the main thought is of sin as Death; in chapter 5:12 to chapter 8:39, of sin as Disease; while in chapters 12 to 16 the ruling idea is of sin as Departure. And thus the Apostle deals with Justification, Sanctification, Consecration. Now let us observe by a careful study of the general teaching of chapters 6-8 what provision God has made for our Sanctification.

It is assumed, first of all, that the person to be sanctified is already justified, according to the teaching of chapter 3:21-26 and chapter 4:5. Then comes the needed provision for the sin which still dwells in the believer. The subject is introduced generally in chapter 5:12-21 by the contrast instituted between Adam and Christ. Through Adam we have become involved in sin and death, and through Christ we are involved in righteousness and life. Then in chapter 6 is shown the Christian's relation to sin.

First comes the teaching that continuance in sin is utterly impossible (verses 1-14). This is due to the fact that the believer has union with Christ in His death and life. This does not refer to personal experience, but to actual fact as accomplished by Christ. It is this that gives force to the first keyword of the passage, "Know ye not." As Christ's death changes our relation to God and provides for our justification, or legal discharge, so it also is intended to change our character, and it does this by means of a spiritual union with Christ.

And herein lies the force of the second keyword, the important word "reckon" (verse 11), a word which means to count upon a thing as true. When Christ died, we are reckoned by God as having died with Him; and when He rose again, we are regarded as having risen. This reckoning of God is to be met by a corresponding reckoning on our part, and we are to believe concerning Christ what God teaches us has actually taken place. Thus when it is realized that we are spiritually united with Christ in His death and life, Justification by faith is shown to involve no license to sin.

Then the Apostle goes on to teach with equal clearness that continuance in acts of sinning is equally impossible (verses 15-23). This is shown by the thought of subjection to Christ as a Master, together with the contrast between the old life and the new. In the past we were slaves to sin; in the present we are servants to holiness, and it follows that the old master and the old service are absolutely impossible. It is at this point that the third keyword of the chapter is vital and important, "yield" (verse 19).

As we have reckoned ourselves dead to sin and alive unto God, we are to surrender ourselves to Him as those who are alive from the dead, and every faculty of our being is to be presented to Him for His use and service. And thus Justification by Faith is seen to be an introduction and an incentive to holiness; and while the Christian has liberty from sin, he has no license to sin. It is particularly important to note that chapter 6:14 sums up the entire subject of these three chapters, "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law, but under grace."

"Sin shall not have dominion over you": this is the teaching of chapter 6. "Ye are not under law": this is the teaching, as we shall see, of chapter 7. "But under grace": this is the teaching of chapter 8. Then follows

the important and essential question of the relation of the Christian to law (chap. 7). In this connection it is necessary to remember that "Law" stands here for self-effort, the endeavour of self by its own unaided powers to do the will of God. Up to the present the Apostle has taught that the Grace of God in the death and resurrection of Christ provides for victory over sin.

But now he has to deal with the experience of struggles against indwelling sin. The problem may be stated thus: if the believer need not and ought not to sin (chap. 6), can he not, nevertheless, make himself holy? The answer is a very decided negative, and is shown in two main lines of teaching. In the first place, the old life is seen to be fruitless, and the new life alone fruitful (verses 1-6). The Apostle's argument proceeds along the line of the illustration of marriage, and, without going into the detail of his treatment, the threefold thought is perfectly clear: Union, Fruit, Service.

This is intended to teach the result of our union with Christ in His death and life; and just as he had spoken of "newness of life" (chap. 6:4), so, now, he emphasizes "newness of spirit" (chap. 7:6). Then, in an important passage (verses 7-25), he goes on to show that the believer cannot possibly sanctify himself by effort of his own. Law may order, but it cannot effect; it commands, but does not equip; it condemns, but does not enable. The struggles within cannot possibly bring about holiness, because of the fact and power of indwelling sin.

And thus, as a man contemplates himself in his efforts to be holy, he is necessarily led to utter despair (verse 24). Hence, just as the Apostle had previously taught that man, by no effort of his own, can justify himself (chap. 3), so now, with equal clearness, he teaches that man cannot sanctify himself (chap. 7). At this point, however, it is necessary to guard against a misconception. The terrible struggle depicted in chapter 7 is not to be understood as giving an excuse for sin, for this chapter does not depict the normal Christian life, which is one of victory.

The struggle here described cannot possibly make sinning inevitable, or else no real conquest and no real holiness would be possible. We shall see this as we study the next chapter. The last and most important aspect of the present subject is the Christian's relation to Divine grace, as brought out in chapter 8. The Apostle has already stated that the believer is "under grace" (chap. 6:14), and in this chapter it is shown what the grace does. Christ's Redemption, while it covers the past, does not leave the present unprotected, and it is, therefore, wrong to say that the Christian cannot help sinning.

A modern writer [Deissmann, "Bible Studies," p. 264.] says that the original meaning of the word rendered "condemnation" (chap. 8:1) refers to civil disability and means that there was no legal embarrassment on land which could therefore be conveyed from one person to another. This has been aptly rendered into the language of spiritual experience by another writer [Rev. Harrington C. Lees.] who translates the word by "handicap," so that the verse will read: "There is, therefore, now no 'handicap' to them that are in Christ Jesus."

It is of vital importance that this should be seen, experienced, and enjoyed. Just as chapter 7 teaches the impossibility of holiness in man's way, so chapter 8 is equally clear about the possibility of holiness in God's way. And as in chapter 7 "I" occurs thirty-three times, without a single reference to the Holy Spirit, so in chapter 8 there are no less than twenty references to the Holy Spirit, and practically none referring to ourselves. It is impossible, and for our present purpose unnecessary, to outline the whole of the teaching of the chapter, but it will be worthwhile looking generally at what the Apostle teaches.

If special attention be given to the first four verses, as, in some respects, the heart of the teaching [See above under Possibility/Power.] every disability or "handicap" will be seen to be more than met by the Divine provision. The disability of the flesh through sin is met by the power of the Spirit (verses 1-11). The disability of the heart through fear is met by the presence of the Spirit (verses 12-17a). The disability of circumstances through persecution is met by the peace of the Holy Spirit (verses 17b-30).

And the disability of life through opposition is met by the possession of the Holy Spirit (verses 31-39). And so the Apostle shows that righteousness in Christ means victory over sin (chap. 6), that this victory is impossible by any effort of self which is powerless for holiness (chap. 7), and that this is blessedly possible in and through the Spirit, who equips, assures and triumphs in and for us over the flesh, over sufferings, and over opposition (chap. 8). Now we are able to understand what the Apostle means by the believer being "free from sin".

He uses this term in three places, and each time in a different sense. First of all, there is freedom from the penalty of sin (Rom. 6:7). This is the judicial act of God in justifying the repentant and believing sinner. It does not refer to a moral change of heart, but simply to the act and fact of God accounting the believer as righteous in Christ, and therefore released from the penalty of sin by reason of what Christ has done. Then comes the thought of freedom from the practice of sin, by, a change of service (chap. 6:17-18).

The believer is regarded as having left the service of one master for that of another, and under the new Master there is no possibility of any claim on the part of the old, but, on the contrary, a new service in the practice of righteousness (verses 20-22). Then, lastly, comes the thought of freedom from the power of sin (chap. 8:2). A mightier force has entered into the life of the believer, that of the Holy Spirit, which, having set him free from the dominion of sin, enables him to fulfill the will of God, and do that which is right and true.

And thus the righteous requirements of the law are fulfilled in him who walks not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (verse 4). This is the teaching found elsewhere, when the Apostle says, walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16). And it is this presence and power of the Holy Spirit within the heart that, in spite of the presence of indwelling sin, assures the soul of victory. There is, perhaps, no passage more important for this purpose than one that is often misread through failure to see the precise point of the original, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary one to the other, so that ye may not do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:18).

It is the presence of the Holy Spirit that prevents the believer from doing the evil that he would otherwise do, because the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus gives him the victory over the law of sin and death. All this gives special point to the question often asked today, whether sinning is inevitable to a believer. Must Christians sin? The answer is, "No, certainly not". This is the teaching, of the Apostle John, for he says: "These things write I unto you that ye may not sin" (1 John 2:1, R.V.).

If, therefore, this means what it says, it indicates that he wrote that Epistle, with all its wonderful depth and wealth of teaching, for the very purpose of showing Christians how they might live without sinning. The question of the relation of the believer to sin is one of very great importance; indeed, it is scarcely possible to exaggerate the momentous issues that spring from a true conception of what the Bible teaches on the subject. It will simplify matters if we limit ourselves at this point almost entirely to the teaching of the First Epistle of John, especially because there is so much in that part of God's word which bears on the matter.

The Christian life is intended to be one of continual safety. It is a subject that needs careful study, and, therefore, careful handling; but we shall be perfectly safe if we proceed along the line of God's Word, neither going in front nor dropping behind. First of all, it is essential to study every passage in the Epistle where the word "sin" occurs: Chapter 1:7, "Sin"; 1:8, "No sin"; 1:9, "Sins"; 1:10, "Not sinned"; 2:1, "Sin not"; 3:8, "Is sinning"; 3:9, "Cannot sin". It is only when we look at all these passages that we are in a position, by induction, to arrive at the truth concerning our relation to sin.

We find that there is a clear distinction to be kept in mind between "sin" and "sins," between the root and the fruit, between the principle and the practice. We observe this as we study three verses: "If we say that we have no sin" (1:8). To "have sin" is to possess the principle. "If we say that we have not sinned" (1:10). To "sin" is to express that principle in practice. Now notice, "If any man sin (2:1). There is an alteration from the "we" of 1:8 and 10 to the "any man" of 2:1.

Possibly the Apostle rather shrank from saying, "If we sin," because the ideal of the Christian life is sinlessness. What that sinlessness means we shall see presently, but we must notice that there are parallel words, and three lines of teaching: "If we say we have no sin": "If we say we have not sinned": "If any man sin." The reference to the Christian is perfectly clear; and "If any man sin" shows that even a saint may sin. But if the saint should sin - mark that - "We have an advocate with the Father."

There is a perfect propitiation provided: "If any man sin, we have an advocate." There is no allowance for sin, but a perfect provision in case we do sin; no need to sin, no right to sin, no compromise with sin, no license, but a provision in case we do. On board ship the provision of lifebelts and lifeboats is not associated with any intention to have a shipwreck, but they are there in case of need. When it is said here, "If any man sin, we have an advocate," it is the provision in case of need.

There are two Advocates. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Advocate with the Father, and the same word is used of the Holy Spirit in St. John - He is the Advocate within (John 14:16, Greek). So that we have Christ's perfect provision for us, and the Holy Spirit's perfect provision in us. There are three views about the relation of sin to the believer, and the believer to sin, which have a special bearing on our life. Two of them are wrong; one is right. By the use of the ordinary terms we may see what these three views mean.

The first is often called eradication, and means the removal of the sinful principle within. Now, this goes too far; it goes beyond Scripture, and it is contrary to experience. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves," but we do not deceive anybody else. Ask anyone who teaches eradication this question - a question that goes to the very basis of the whole matter - "Do you believe in the perpetual need of the Atonement to cover any defect from the moment of supposed eradication?"

Is the Atonement necessary for the rest of your life?" "Certainly," is the answer. To which the reply is obvious: "Then you are a sinner." As long as we need the Atonement, there is sin, whether in defect or otherwise. For we must never forget that sinlessness is not merely the absence of sinning; it is the presence of the complete and perfect will of God fulfilled in our life, and to mention this is to see at once the need of the Atoning Sacrifice, to the very end of our days.

The second view is called by the term suppression. Now, if eradication goes too far, this does not go far enough, because suppression emphasizes that fighting and struggling which will almost inevitably land us in defeat again and again. This is the error of those who think Romans 7 depicts the normal Christian life. Romans 8 begins with "No condemnation". It closes with "No separation". But between the two there is "No defeat". This is the true and proper Christian experience.

Suppression, therefore, is inadequate, miserably inadequate, to the truth of God. The real word and the real thing is counteraction. Not eradication - that goes too far; not suppression - that does not go far enough; but counteraction, which just expresses the truth. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." There are two laws, and just as gravitation can be counteracted by volition, the higher law of the will, so the lower law of sin and death can be counteracted by the presence of the Holy Ghost in our hearts.

That is why, as we have seen, in Romans 7 there are about thirty occasions where we find "I," "I," "I," with no reference to the Holy Spirit, while in Romans 8 we get all those references to the Holy Spirit and almost nothing about "I," "I". It is the law of counteraction. A little girl, so it is said, was once asked by her teacher: "What did St. Paul mean by the words, 'I keep under my body'? How did he do it?" Her answer was, "By keeping his soul on top," - that is the law of counteraction.

We must not dream that the sinful principle is eradicated, and we must not trouble about suppressing it. We must allow the Holy Spirit to come into our life, and reign supreme in the throne room of the will, so that there may be this constant, continuous, blessed, and increasing counteraction. That is the word, or something like it, that St. Paul had in mind when he said, "Our old man (our unregenerate self) was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be rendered inoperative (not destroyed or annihilated)."

The Greek word used, *katargeo*, always means to rob of power, to render inoperative, to put out of employment, to place among the unemployed. This is why St. Paul always stopped short of eradication, and yet is never content with suppression, and this is what is meant by saying that our life is a life of continual safety. Some of us say every Sunday, "Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin." This is the teaching of counteraction. "Grant that this day we fall into no sin."

This is the law of counteraction. "That we may perfectly love Thee, and worthily magnify Thy holy name." How marvelously those old writers knew the secret of holiness! So the Christian, while he continues to have the principle of sin in him, need not, and ought not to express that principle in practice. But if he does, there is a provision, "Jesus Christ the Righteous". Not Jesus Christ the loving, or the merciful, but "the righteous". Christ deals with us on a righteous level, and treats the sins of His people by a righteous principle. He has no favourites, and makes no qualifications or allowances. Sin is sin, whether in God's people or not. The provision is there in case we should need it.

IV. The Practice of Sanctification In view of all that has been said, it becomes a very practical and definite question as to how this Sanctification can be realized. What is its method? How is this provision to be made part of the personal life of the believer? To this question there are two answers, according as we consider one or other aspect. The Divine side. St. Paul speaks of our being "sanctified in Christ" (1 Cor. 1:2). He also says that Christ is made unto us "Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30).

These three truths sum up the whole of the believer's life and of Christ's relation to him. The one Gift of God is the Person of Christ who is, from different aspects, our Righteousness in regard to the past, our Sanctification in regard to the present, and our Redemption in regard to the future. He is our Sanctification. A complete work in this respect has been wrought for us by Him; as complete as our Justification, "Sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. 10:10).

So that Christ is our Sanctification, the Holy Spirit is our Sanctifier, and we are the Sanctified. The possession of Christ as Saviour and Sanctification is made real to us by the Holy Ghost, who glorifies

Christ to our souls according as we need Him. The human side. The Holy Spirit does His work through the Word of God, "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth" (John 17:17); "That they may be sanctified through the truth" (John 17:19). The truth of God is the great instrument used by the Spirit.

Through this we obtain at once a knowledge of sin, of salvation, of sonship, of the indwelling of the Spirit, and of the real value and power of the Sacrifice of Christ. St. Paul's emphasis in his great chapter on Sanctification is on knowledge, "Know ye not" (see Rom. 6:3, 6, 9, 16; 7:1). This thought of the truth of God in relation to our Sanctification is found in a number of passages in the New Testament, and they all teach the same lesson. "Ye are clean through the word" (John 15:3); "The washing of water by the word" (Eph. 5:26); "Seeing ye have purified your souls by obeying the truth" (1 Peter 1:22).

Associated with the Word of God is faith, which is our response to the Divine revelation. Faith appropriates Christ for Sanctification just as it did for Justification. This is the meaning of St. Paul's words, "Sanctified by faith" (Acts 26:18). We can also see the same truth if we consider the force of the Apostle's "as" and "so," "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him" (Col. 2:6). How did we receive Christ? By faith. Even so we are to walk - by faith.

As there are four factors at conversion, so there are four in the Christian life - the Lord, the Spirit, the Word, and Faith. Faith, as an act, receives Christ for Justification. Faith, as an attitude, appropriates Christ for Sanctification. The Lord provides for us a new relationship and also a new nature, and these two together sum up the meaning of Righteousness. This holy nature is a gift bestowed on our souls by the Holy Spirit, and is accepted by faith, and maintained by faith.

Then in turn will come the graces of love and hope. Faith looks up to the living Lord; love looks round on those for whom He died; and hope looks on to the coming of our great God and Saviour. And thus the whole Christian life, past, present, and future, is realized by the believer. An error very prevalent among uninstructed Christians, and one to be guarded against constantly, is that of practically assuming that Christ is to be accepted by faith, and then maintained only by fighting.

Just as if Christianity were pardon by the Saviour's free gift, and purification by the believer's constant struggling. On the contrary, it is both Justification and Sanctification in the one Lord, and both are to be appropriated and maintained by faith. Holiness is not an achievement, but a gift, and in the acceptance, appropriation, enjoyment and use of the gift will be found our growing Sanctification. Sanctification is first and fundamentally a position in which we have been placed in Christ by His Redemption, and in which we are to realize experimentally all that is involved in what He has done.

Christ is all - pardoning, justifying, sanctifying; and faith means surrendering, yielding, dedicating, trusting, using, obeying. The Christian life from first to last is the Christ-life and a life of faith. It is significant that almost everything is associated with faith. Thus, we are "justified by faith" (Rom. 3:28, 5:1), and saved by faith (Eph. 2:8). We "live by faith" (Gal. 2:20); we have "access to God by faith" (Rom. 5:2); "we walk by faith" (2 Cor. 5:7); our hearts are "purified by faith" (Acts 15:9); we overcome by faith (1 John 5:4), and we receive the Holy Spirit by faith (Gal. 3:14).

When the soul learns this lesson of the all-embracing nature and necessity of faith, it has become possessed of the true secret of Christian living. Faith receives Christ, rests on Him, reckons on His faithfulness, and realizes His Presence. Faith appropriates Divine grace, applies it to momentary need, appreciates its value, and abides in it every moment. It is of no wonder that the Apostle lays such stress on the life of faith in the great chapter known as "the roll call of faith" (Heb. 11), by saying that "without

faith it is impossible to please God" (verse 6).

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/wh-griffith-thomas/sanctification/>

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