

The Difference Between Cleansing And Sanctification



Foundations (Day 44)
by Derek Prince

The seventh great effect of God's Word is that of cleansing and sanctification. The key text for this is Ephesians 5:25-27.

> "Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 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."

There are a number of important points in this passage which deserve attention. Notice, first, that the two processes of cleansing and sanctifying are closely joined together. However, although these two processes are closely related, they are not identical. The distinction between them is this: that which is truly sanctified must of necessity be absolutely pure and clean; but that which is pure and clean need not necessarily be in the fullest sense sanctified. In other words: it is possible to have purity, or cleanness, without sanctification, but it is not possible to have sanctification without purity, or cleanness.

So, cleansing is an essential part of sanctification but not the whole of it. Later in this study we shall examine more closely the exact meaning of the word sanctification.

Turning again to Ephesians 5 we notice, second, that one main, definite purpose for which Christ redeemed the Church is "that He might sanctify and cleanse it" (v. 26).

Thus, the purpose of Christ's atoning death for the Church as a whole, and for each individual Christian in particular, is not fulfilled until those who are redeemed by His death have gone through a subsequent process of cleansing and sanctifying. Paul makes it plain that only those Christians who have gone through this process will be in the condition necessary for their final presentation to Christ as His bride – and the condition which he specifies is that of a glorious Church, "not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing ... holy and without blemish" (v. 27).

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The third point to notice in this passage is that the means which Christ uses to cleanse and sanctify the Church is "the washing of water by the word" (v. 26). It is God's Word which is the means of sanctifying and cleansing; in this respect the operation of God's Word is compared to the washing of pure water.

Even before Christ's atoning death upon the cross had actually been consummated, He had already assured His disciples of the cleansing power of His Word which He had spoken to them.

> "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you." (John 15:3)

We see, therefore, that the Word of God is a divine agent of spiritual cleansing, compared in its operation to the washing of pure water.

Devotional

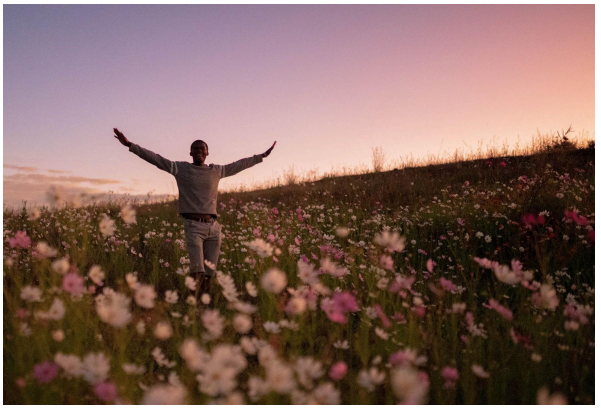
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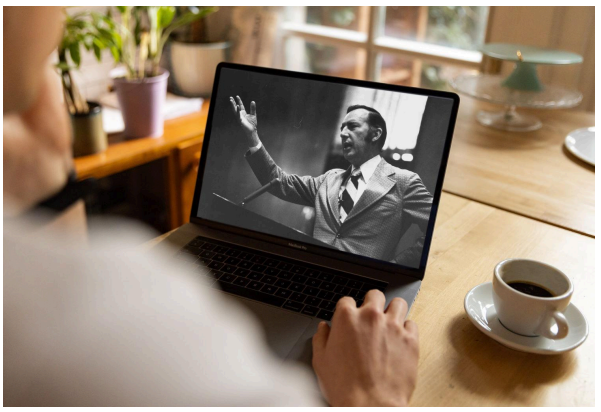
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