

Two Sides Of The Process Of Sanctification



Foundations (Day 48)
by Derek Prince

Yesterday we've read some verses about sanctification. Summing up these passages, we arrive at this conclusion: Sanctification, according to the New Testament, is through five great means or agencies:

1. The Holy Spirit
2. The truth of God's Word
3. The altar of sacrifice
4. The blood of Christ
5. Faith in Christ

The process thus unfolded may be briefly outlined as follows: The Holy Spirit initiates the work of sanctification in the heart and mind of each one whom God has chosen in His eternal purposes. Through the truth of God's Word, as it is received in the heart and mind, the Holy Spirit speaks, reveals the altar of sacrifice, separates the believer from all that holds him back from God and draws him to place himself in surrender and consecration upon that altar. There the believer is sanctified and set apart to God both by the contact with the altar and by the cleansing and purifying power of the blood that was shed upon the altar.

However, the exact extent to which each of these four sanctifying agents – the Spirit, the Word, the altar and the blood – accomplish their sanctifying work in each believer is decided by the fifth factor in the process; that is, by the individual faith of each believer. In the work of sanctification, God does not violate the one great law which governs all His works of grace in each believer – the law of faith.

> "As you have believed, so let it be done for you." (Matt. 8:13)

Let us now examine a little more closely the part played by God's Word in this process of sanctification. First we must note that there are two aspects to sanctification – one negative and the other positive. The negative aspect consists in being separated from sin and the world and from all that is unclean and impure. The positive aspect consists in being

made partaker of God's holy nature.

In much preaching, both on this and on other related subjects, there is a general tendency to overemphasise the negative at the expense of the positive. As Christians we tend to speak much more about the "do nots" in God's Word than about the "dos." For example, in Ephesians 5:18 we usually lay much more stress upon the negative "do not be drunk with wine" than we do upon the positive "be filled with the Spirit." However, this is an inaccurate and unsatisfactory way to present God's Word.

With regard to holiness, the Scriptures make it plain that this is something much more than a negative attitude of abstaining from sin and uncleanness. For example, in Hebrews 12:10 we are told that God, as a heavenly Father, chastens us, His children, for our profit that we may be partakers of His holiness. Again, in 1 Peter 1:15-16 we read:

> "But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, 'Be holy, for I am holy.'"

We see that holiness is a part of God's eternal, unchanging nature. God was holy before sin ever entered into the universe, and God will still be holy when sin has once again been banished forever. We, as God's people, are to be partakers of this part of His eternal nature. Separation from sin, just like cleansing from sin, is a stage in this process, but it is not the whole process. The final, positive result which God desires in us goes beyond both cleansing and separation.

Devotional

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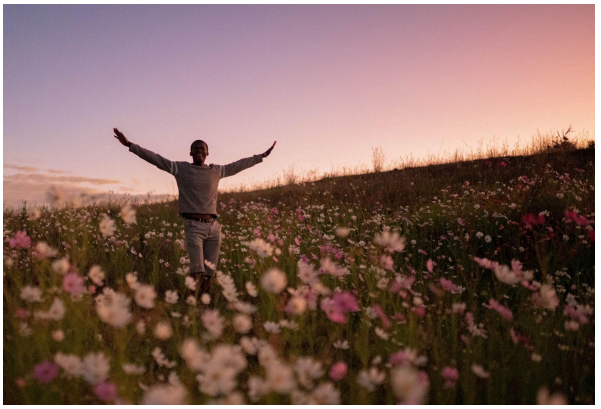

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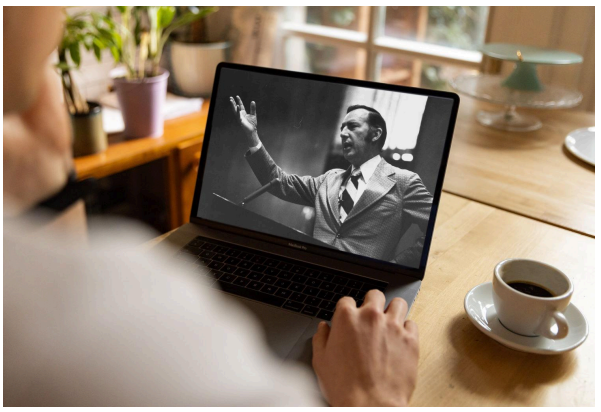

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