

TRAINING IN GODLINESS
The Doctrine of Sanctification

LESSON FOUR

I. INTRODUCTION

Brief review lecture three

II. PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION

a. Defined

- Progressive sanctification (P.S.) is the ongoing work of God's grace whereby He enables believers to put sin to death in their lives and conforms them more and more to the image of Christ.
- P.S. is "progressive". It's a process. And it's a lifelong process! When we are dealing with P.S. we are dealing with the life of faith. The obedience of faith!
- *"A long obedience in the same direction".*

Eugene H. Peterson

2 truths that serve as guardrails the rest of the way...

- First, we must pursue obedience in an "evangelical" way. Theologians have sought to distinguish the 2 ways Christians can be motivated to pursue obedience to God. One way to be motivated to obedience is in a "legal" way.
- Legal obedience is when we seek to obey God in order to attain acceptance and/or maintain acceptance with God. This is known as legalism.
- Evangelical obedience is referring to that obedience born from a child's love for His father. An obedience fueled by gratitude and thanksgiving. Evangelical obedience is a gospel obedience.
- Second, we must understand that P.S. is a work of God and...man! P.S. is a "synergistic" work; (i.e. work of God and man).
- In P.S. God works "**concurrently**" with the believer. In P.S. God doesn't work independent of us, or apart from us or without us. God works in us, both, for us to will and to do for His good pleasure.
- Philippians 2:12-13, *"Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."*

- See if that 1st truth of evangelical obedience sets up a guardrail on one side of the road to keep us from flying off into legalism; this second truth of “concurrence” sets up a guardrail on the other side of the road to keep us from flying off into lawlessness!

Scriptural texts that clearly demonstrate that P.S. “is” the very will of God for our lives.

b. The will of God for every believer

I Thessalonians 4:3-4, *“For this is the will of God, your sanctification, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor.”*

Romans 12:1-2, *“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”*

2 Corinthians 7:1, *“Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.”*

Galatians 5:16-17, *“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.”*

Colossians 3:5, *“Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.”*

V.12, *“Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.”*

I Timothy 4:7-8, *“Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.”*

Titus 2:11-14, *“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.”*

I Peter 2:11, *“Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.”*

I John 2:3-4, “And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him”

Revelation 22:10-17, “And he said to me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy.” “Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.” Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star. The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.”

- Any idea, attitude or teaching that would minimize or negate the necessity for progressive sanctification, must be utterly rejected as unscriptural.
- The reason why we must become sanctified is due to the fact that although sin no longer “reigns” over us, it does “remain” in us.

How does progressive sanctification occur?

- Answer this question in 3 parts. Part one will involve the remaining part of this lecture, and then we’ll cover parts 2 and 3 in next weeks lecture.
- The first way the Lord brings about our progressive sanctification is in how He **motivates** us! The Lord motivates us to holiness in a variety of ways.
- “Jesus is the Great Physician, and like any good doctor He writes different prescriptions for different illnesses. The gospel is always the remedy for the guilt of sin, but when it comes to over-coming the presence of sin, Jesus has many doses at His disposal. He knows that personalities and sins and situations all vary. So what might be good motivation for holiness in a certain situation with a particular person facing a specific sin may not be the best prescription for someone else in different circumstances. Jesus has many medicines for our motivation.”

Kevin DeYoung

7 main headings...

c. The motives of sanctification

- **#1** The Scriptures motivate us to holiness by the **“Love of God”**.
- Galatians 2:20, *“I have been crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in Him who loved me and gave Himself for me.”* The love of Christ was a massive motive energizing Paul to a life of holiness.
- I John 4:10, *“In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to the propitiation for our sins.”*
- John 15:8-11, *“By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.”*
- John 17:26, *“I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”*
- The love of God is not only the chief motivation in our lives to obey Him, but the love of God is what is behind every other motivator.
- **#2** The Scriptures motivate us to holiness for the **“Glory of God”**.
- I Corinthians 6:19-20, *“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.”*
- Philippians 1:9-11, *“And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.”*
- The Westminster Larger and Shorter catechisms both begin with this question, *“What is the chief end of man?”* Answer – To **glorify** God and enjoy Him forever.

- **#3** The Scriptures motivate us to holiness by the **“Grace of God”**.
- Titus 3:4-7, *“But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”*
- See *“Mainspring of Sanctification”*, lecture 2
- **#4** The Scriptures motivate us to holiness for the **“Pleasure of God”**
- Colossians 1:9-10, *“And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him.”*
- Colossians 3:20, *“Children obey you parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.”*
- Hebrews 13:16, *“Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.”*
- I John 3:22, *“Whatever we ask we receive from Him, Because we keep His commandments and do what pleases Him.”*
- **#5** The Scriptures motivate us to holiness by the **“Fear of God”**
- Deuteronomy 5:29, *“Oh that they had such a heart as this always, to fear me and to keep all my commandments, that it might go well with them and with their descendants forever!”*
- Ecclesiastes 12:13-14, *“The end of the matter, all has been heard. Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.”*
- The fear of God is that reverential awe and filial fear we have for God b/c He is Almighty God, but also b/c this God is also our heavenly Father.
- Psalm 130:4, *“But with You there is forgiveness, that You may be feared.”*

- *“What Psalm 130:4 teaches us is that forgiveness is the fertile soil for growing a right fear of God. Without God’s forgiveness we could never approach Him or want to. Without the cross, God would only be a dreadful Judge of whom we would be afraid.”*

Dr. Michael Reeves

- It’s God’s forgiving love that generates and motivates holiness.
- *“Oh! That a great God should be a good God.”*

John Bunyan

- **#6** The Scriptures motivate us to holiness by **“Rewards or Loss”**.
- Matthew 6:2-4, *“Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”* Vs. 19-21, *“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*
- II Corinthians 5:6-10, *“So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.”*
- Our labor is not only never in vain, it is storing up for us eternal treasures and rewards.
- **#7** The Scriptures motivate us to holiness by **“The Warnings of Lawlessness and Apostasy”**.
- Hebrews 6:4-8, *“For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt. For*

land that has drunk the rain that often falls on it, and produces a crop useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God. But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed, and its end is to be burned.”

- Do the warning texts have any relevance to Christians?
- Matthew 5:29-30, *“If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.”*
- And one of the first and most important tools of interpreting any passage of Scripture accurately is identifying the original audience.
- Jesus is teaching those who for all intent and purposes have committed themselves to sit under His teachings in order to live in the light of His teachings.
- One thing He stresses is that authentic discipleship will be involve that all His disciples take their sin seriously! He took our sins very seriously when He died on the cross and removed the wrath of God from us. So we must take our sins seriously.
- The figurative speech of hyperbole is an exaggerated form of speech used to communicate the weightiness and seriousness of the matter.
- What Jesus is saying to true disciples is that we must take our sin, our remaining sin, seriously, to the point that were willing to mutilate our members so as to keep ourselves from sinning.
- For every person who is truly regenerated and united to Christ, that believer will take sin seriously knowing that if they don't,... if they adopt a lawless attitude, if they start to characteristically practice sin...then...that would indicate that they **might** not be truly saved, that their faith is superficial and that they are in danger of ending up in hell!
- The warning passages motivate true Christians to holiness. It serves to keep the believer watchful and diligent. **BECAUSE**...if upon examining myself I discern that these things are not true of me (characteristically/not perfectly), then it would serve me by warning me that I might not really be a true believer in Christ and may ultimately be lost!

- Matthew 7:22-23, “*On that Day many will say to me Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and cast out demons in Your name and do many mighty works in Your name? And then I will declare to them, I never knew you; depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness.*”
- That warning is a great mercy to the person in church but not in Christ! But that same warning is a great mercy to the true Christian b/c it serves them by keeping them sober, watchful and diligent so as to not drift into apostasy and unbelief!

Westminster Confession of Faith Chapter 14: Of Saving Faith, Section 2

*“By this faith, a Christian believes to be true whatsoever is revealed in the Word, for the authority of God himself speaking therein; **and acts differently upon that which each particular passage thereof contains; yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatenings,** and embracing the promises of God for this life, and that which is to come. But the principal acts of saving faith are accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace.”*

- The Lord motivates His children in progressive sanctification in multiple ways.
- We must avoid the temptation and danger to flatten our Bibles and say that the ONLY way the Lord motivates us to holiness is by His love and grace!
- The Lord motivates His children to holiness and obedience in a variety of ways b/c He knows how deceiving and how stubborn sin is in our lives.