

TRAINING IN GODLINESS

The Doctrine of Sanctification

LESSON FIVE

I. INTRODUCTION

Brief Review Progressive Sanctification Part One

- Romans 7:14-25, *“For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.”*
- This not only the heart cry of a Christian, but it is the heart cry of an advanced Christian.
- To the degree that one grows in the experiential awareness of Christ and godliness, will be to the degree that one grows in the experiential awareness of remaining sin.
- This portrait communicates with crystal clarity is that every Christian is in a war with remaining sin and therefore, that remaining sin makes training for godliness absolutely necessary.

II. PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION CONTINUED

The means

#1 The word of God

- John 17:17, *“Sanctify them by the truth, your word is truth.”*
- The primary **means** of sanctification comes by the word of God.
- Matthew 4:4, *“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”*

- I Tim 4:6, *“If you put these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed.”*
- II Tim 3:16, *“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness.”*
- Sanctification is **impossible** apart from diligently studying, understanding and obeying the Scriptures.

#2 The Spirit of God

- John 16:7-15, *“Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.”*
- I John 2:27, *“But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in him.”*
- The Spirit’s primary ministry is to grant us illumination and spiritual understanding in the Scriptures,
- I Cor 2:14-16, *“Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.”*
- Ephesians 1:15-19, *“For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his*

glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might”

- Progressive sanctification occurs when the Spirit and the word are working concurrently together in the soul of the believer.

“In spiritual and divine things, which pertain to salvation of the soul, man is like a pillar of salt, like Lot’s wife, yea, like a log and a stone, like a lifeless statue, which uses neither eyes nor mouth nor sense nor heart...All teaching and preaching is lost upon him, until he is enlightened, converted and regenerated by the Holy Ghost.”

Martin Luther

- The Holy Spirit’s ministry is Christ centered!

#3 The grace of God

- 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.”*
- God’s grace “trains” us! The gospel is for....BELIEVERS!
- I Corinthians 15:1, *“Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received (past tense), in which you stand (present tense) and by which you are being saved (continuous tense).*
- The only way we can face the enemy within and the enemy without and not be paralyzed by conscience and the devil, is to preach the gospel to ourselves every day, b/c the gospel is a powerful means to sanctification!

#4 The Law of God

LBCF, chapter 19 sections 6 and 7...

Section 6: Although true believers are not under the law as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified or condemned,[1] yet it is of great use to them as well as to others, in that as a rule of life, informing them of the will of God and their duty, it directs and binds them to walk accordingly; discovering also the sinful pollutions of their natures, hearts, and lives, so as examining themselves thereby, they may come to further conviction of, humiliation for, and hatred against, sin;[2] together with a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ and the perfection of his obedience; it is likewise of use to the regenerate to restrain their corruptions, in that it forbids sin; and the threatenings of it serve to show what even their sins deserve, and what afflictions in this life they may expect for them, although freed from the curse and unallayed rigor thereof. The promises of it likewise show them God's approbation of obedience, and

what blessings they may expect upon the performance thereof, though not as due to them by the law as a covenant of works; so as man's doing good and refraining from evil, because the law encourages to the one and deters from the other, is no evidence of his being under the law and not under grace.[3]

Section 7: Neither are the aforementioned uses of the law contrary to the grace of the Gospel, but do sweetly comply with it,[1] the Spirit of Christ subduing and enabling the will of man to do that freely and cheerfully which the will of God, revealed in the law, requires to be done.

- God in JC fulfills the law in every way! He first fulfills the law “for” us through Christ’s obedience, but He then fulfills the law “in” us b/c He writes that very law on our hearts by the Holy Spirit.
- Romans 8:3-4, *“For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled **in** us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”*
- Grace empowers us to obey! And its through our active obedience that we become conformed into the image of the Son!
- Ecclesiastes 12:13, *“The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.”*
- I Corinthians 7:19, *“For neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision, but keeping the commandments of God.”*
- Revelation 12:17, *“Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.”*

#5 The child of God

- P.S. is 100% the work of the Spirit and it is 100% the work of the child of God.
- Galatians 2:20, *“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me, and the life that I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.”*
- Christ lives His life through us, in so far as we are 100% engaged in living our lives for Christ!
- Living this life as a child of God...**is hard!** It involves straining, struggling, fighting and persevering.

- Philippians 3:13-14, *“Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and **straining** (agonizing) forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”*
- Colossians 1:28-29, *“Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.”*
- 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.”*

#6 The church of God

- Progressive sanctification is a group project. My individual development and maturity involves the church.
- There is no such thing as a “lone ranger” Christian.
- Although we may be visibly in the church, we can still be unwilling to make visible our struggles with remaining sin in the church.
- The gospel sets us free to be honest about our remaining sin!

#7 The providences of God

- Romans 5:3, *“We rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance and endurance produces character (there’s the sanctification) and character produces hope.”*
- James 1:2, *“Count it all joy my brothers when you meet trials of various kinds...ok why James; for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”*
- I Peter 1:6, *“In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith – more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire- may be found to praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”*
- The reason all 3 apostles tell us to rejoice in trials and sufferings, no matter what form they come, is b/c they all understand that those trials are God’s providence to grow us in progressive sanctification!

The mechanics

The mechanics specially involve 2 spheres: **mortification and vivification**.
Mortification means to put to death and vivification means to bring to life!

*“Progressive sanctification has two parts: mortification and vivification, “both of which happen to us by participation in Christ,” as Calvin notes in his Institutes. These occur simultaneously and continuously throughout the Christian life, rather than in stages. Christ’s death alone is atoning and cannot be repeated. He died **for** our sins, but we die **to** our sins. Christ took up his cross once and for all as a sacrifice for sin, but he calls his disciples to “take up [their] cross daily,” facing persecution from within and without.”*

Micheal Horton

- The motivations and the means will avail us nothing unless we are firmly committed to apply the mechanics.

#1 The necessity of repentance

- Matthew 3:1, *“In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand.”*
- Matthew 4:17, *“From that time Jesus began to preach saying, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”*
- Acts 2:37-38, *“Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”*
- Acts 3:19, *“Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.”*
- Entering the Kingdom of God is dependent upon repentance and faith. The kingdom of God welcomes any sinner & every sinner, who will repent!
- Repentance is not a one-time act never to be performed again! The necessity of repentance is a call for ongoing repentance throughout the Christians life.

“When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said ‘Repent’, He intended that the entire life of believers should be repentance.”

Martin Luther’s 1st Thesis

- II Corinthians 7:10-11 provides us the ingredients of true repentance...

- True repentance always results in the mortification of sin. Repentance is more than confessing sin. Repentance involves confessing sin but its more than that. Its putting sin to death, its turning away, its saying no! Its going to war with your flesh. Repentance is no easy task! And yet it is a life-long task for the Christian.

#2 The necessity of hearing

- The most repeated phrase in the NT is *“He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”*
- Hearing, biblically, describes the attitude and disposition of our heart as we audibly hear God’s words. Hearing involves how we receive and treat the word of God! Having ears to hear involves the deep inner desire to “understand Gods words so that we can actually trust God, love God and obey God.”
- Hearing is not about our ears; it’s about our heart!
- *How do we cultivate hearing?* Prayerful meditation.

#3 The necessity of preaching the gospel to ourselves

- Revisit lecture 2...

#4 The necessity of the thinking

- When we speak about the necessity of thinking we are dealing with the centrality of our minds in relationship to sanctification.
- I Peter 1:13-16, *“Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”*
- The command to be holy (v.16) finds its origin in our minds (v.13). The preparing/the girding up of the loins of our minds is where holiness begins! Sanctification begins with the mind. If we pollute our minds, we will pollute our walk.
- Romans 12:2, *“Do not be conformed to the 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.”*
- Sanctification not only begins with our minds, but it continues with our minds. How we think is critical.

- *At what point do we deal with sin? We must deal with sin at the level of our thinking.*
- *The battlefield is in the mind! As we control our thoughts, we control our passions. For we live out of our thinking. A sanctified and disciplined mind steers the ship. Ungodly emotions and desires are halted at a sanctified mind.*
- *Thinking is a form of behavior!*
- *Ephesians 4:20-24, “But that is not the way you learned Christ!— assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.”*

#5 The necessity of walking

- *Galatians 5:16 – “Walk by the Spirit and you will “not” gratify the desires of the flesh.”*
- *Psalm 1:1, “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers.”*
- *Ephesians 5:1-2, “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” V.15-16, “Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.”*
- *I John 1:7, “But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.”*
- *Progressive sanctification is characterized by a life of walking by the Spirit. And walking by the Spirit, in the Spirit, is the result of letting the words of Christ dwell in us richly. The word of Christ grants us the mind of Christ and with the mind of Christ, the Spirit governs our walk.*

#6 The necessity of works

- *Ephesians 2:10, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”*
- *Titus 2:14, “He (Christ) 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”.*
- *The “walking” necessarily leads us into the path of works!*

- James, 2:14, *“What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?”* V.18, *“Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”* 1:22, *“But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”*
- Progressive sanctification does not occur apart from the necessity of us practicing good works.

#7 The necessity of persevering

- Highly recommend Tom Schreiner’s book, “Run to win the prize” on this point
- Matthew 10:22, *“And you will be hated by all for my names sake. But the one who endures (also be translated perseveres or patience) to the end will be saved.”*
- Matthew 24:11-13, *“And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.”*
- Hebrews 10:36, *“For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.”*
- Revelation 13:10, *“If anyone is to be taken captive, to captivity he goes; if anyone is to be slain with the sword, with the sword must he be slain. Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.”* 14 v.12, *“Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.”*
- The promises of blessing and reward are made to those who conquer! And the only ones who can conquer are those who persevere.
- Conquering must **not** be understood to mean...eradication! Conquering is persevering in faith and obedience to Jesus despite all the struggles we face from within and from without!
- Conquering and persevering doesn’t necessarily equal “great faith”; but it does always equal “real faith!”
- If we would make real and genuine progress in sanctification then we must embrace a life of principled obedience by engaging in the mechanics of ongoing repentance, hearing, preaching, thinking, walking, working and persevering.