

# TRAINING IN GODLINESS

## *The Doctrine of Sanctification*

### LESSON SIX

#### I. INTRODUCTION

- *\*Outlines obtained by clicking on titles\**
- **“Hindrances”** to progressive sanctification.
- The hindrances to our progressive sanctification fall under the 3-fold category of...the flesh, the world and the devil.

#### II. HINDRANCES

##### a. The flesh

- The “flesh” can refer to our physical bodies in Scripture depending on the context. But the flesh refers to that principle of remaining corruption that is not eradicated when we are born again.
- 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.”*
- Paul thinks things, and says things and does things he (the new man) doesn’t want to do!
- Paul is not in the flesh, categorically! He is in Christ and He is in the Spirit...BUT, although Paul is not in the flesh the flesh is still in him.

- Galatians 5:16-21, *“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. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”*
  - The flesh is an enemy so deadly that it must be crucified...daily! B/c the flesh remains with us the entirety of our lives.
- b. The world
- Matthew 13:22, *“As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.”*
  - This worlds system, with all of its allurements and treasures and promises of prosperity and ease and comfort deceives many from making their priority to seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness first.
  - I John 2:15-17, *“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.”*
- c. The devil
- Satan and the entire order of fallen angels are united in their purpose to thwart, frustrate, stall and cripple us in our walk of sanctification!
  - They’re intention is to so assault our minds with a barrage of fiery darts... so that they can ultimately, hopefully, establish... a stronghold!
  - If we are “unprepared for the battle”, b/c we are not wearing our helmet of salvation; then he will find easy soldiers to defeat.
  - One major way Satan hinders our sanctification. False teaching.

## **False teachings**

- The greatest threat to the NT church according to the writings of the Apostles, is false teachers and their false teachings.
- False teaching never presents itself as false. The devil is the mastermind behind all forms of teaching that distorts the gospel and the need for holiness.

A few false teachings...

1. Legalism – *“Legalism is seeking to achieve forgiveness from God and justification before God through obedience to God. Legalism is essentially self-atonement for the purpose of self-glorification and ultimately for self-worship.”*

C.J. Mahaney

2. Antinomianism – Antinomianism is lawlessness. It is a lawless attitude toward the Christian life.
  - Since we’re not justified by our obedience under the law, obedience to the law of God is abrogated altogether.
3. Forms of Perfectionism (Triumphalism); this minimizes or even altogether seeks to negate the “struggle” in progressive sanctification.
  - Holiness Movement!
  - The normative way the Spirit brings about our change in mind and actions is through **“mortification & vivification”**.

## **Heidelberg Catechism**

Q.114: But can those converted to God keep these commandments (10) perfectly?

Answer: No. In this life even the holiest have only a small beginning of this obedience. Nevertheless, with earnest purpose they do begin to live not only according to some but to all the commandments of God.

## **WCF**

Chapter 16 Of Good Works

Section 6: Notwithstanding, the persons of believers being accepted through Christ, their good works also are accepted in him; not as though they were in this life wholly unblamable and unreprouable in God's sight; but that he, looking upon them in his Son, is pleased to accept and reward that which is sincere, although accompanied with many weaknesses and imperfections.

- We must never expect any form of perfection in this life, however, what we must expect...is a hard battle where we strive to make genuine obedience amidst many weaknesses and imperfections!
4. The Prosperity gospel! The prosperity gospel basically states that it is God's will for you to "prosper", in health and in wealth.
- Prosperity theology can cover a broad range. We can go from one end that is blatant and overt (name it and claim it) to more subtle and covert forms where we misinterpret "Suffering/Trials".
  - Prosperity theology dooms us to falsely interpreted our trials and sufferings; which in turn will greatly impede sanctification! If suffering/pain/losses/tragedy only comes b/c we've either sinned or b/c we don't have enough faith to get God to deliver us...then our sanctification is doomed.
  - What Scripture and Christian history clearly demonstrates is that very often suffering and tribulation and trials of various kinds...comes...precisely b/c we are obedient!
  - II Tim 3:12, *"Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."*

*"I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I want to be, I am not what I hope to be in another world; but still I am not what I once used to be, and by the grace of God I am what I am"*

John Newton

### **III. CLIMACTIC SANCTIFICATION**

The grand purpose of God in our salvation comes to its "climax" in glorification!

- John 17:22-24, *"The glory that You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in Me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that You have sent Me and loved them even as You loved Me. Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, may be with Me where I am, to see My glory that You have given Me because You loved Me before the foundation of the world."*
- Romans 5 vs 1-3, *"Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God."*
- II Peter 1 vs 3-5, *"His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called*

*us to His own glory and excellence, by which He has granted to us His precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.”*

- In the gospel, God has intentionally purposed to exercise His omnipotence, so that we can share in His divine nature, b/c He has called us to His own glory.
- *"Glorification is the final step in the application of redemption. It will happen when Christ returns and raises from the dead the bodies of all believers for all time who have died, and reunites them with their souls, and changes the bodies of all believers who remain alive, thereby giving all believers at the same time perfect resurrection bodies like His own."*

Wayne Grudem

- When we speak of climactic sanctification or glorification we are in strictest terms referring to that moment when at Christ's return, He will at that moment, transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body.

### **Perfection of our spirits**

- When we die our spirits/soul (the immaterial part of us) is perfected the moment we enter into the presence of the Lord.
- This is known as the "intermediate state". When a Christian dies, he or she doesn't go into soul sleep or purgatory. The souls of departed saints go immediately into the presence of the Lord, and those souls are instantaneously made perfect.
- Hebrews 12:22-23, *"But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect."*
- So currently, all of the righteous, all who are united to Christ, from all history, are at this point in time, in heaven with the Lord...but they do not yet have glorified bodies. BUT...they are in that inner person (spirit/soul) perfect!
- II Corinthians 5:8, *"To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord"*.

- Philippians 1:23, *“I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.”*
- We must remember that our progressive sanctification involves the sanctification of our inner man and our outer man. Our whole persons, body and soul, are being conformed into the image of Christ.
- And so at death, every Christian is made perfect in spirit and worships Christ without any encumbrance of sin...however they are still awaiting the redemption/or glorification of their bodies.

### **Resurrection of the body**

Now concerning the literal and physical resurrection of our bodies, the NT gives us insights into this final aspect of our redemption in various passages like II Cor. 5 vs 1-5 and Philippians 3:21.

- I Corinthians 15:13-19, *“But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.”*
- Since we are united to Christ, then as certainly as we have shared in His righteousness, as certainly as we have shared in His sonship and as certainly as we are sharing in His new life now, ...then certainly we will share in His resurrection.
- I Corinthians 15:50-55, *“I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?””*

- The end result in our sanctification is nothing less than eternally sharing in and reflecting the glory of Christ as glorified members of His body.
- This is our certain inheritance! This is what we have been predestined for! And this is where all of our training ends beloved.

### **Final Implications**

- **#1** The resurrection of Jesus Christ testifies to the fact, that He has all authority over death.

I Corinthian 15:54, *“When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, ‘Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is your victory? O Death, where is your sting?’*

- As the First Born from the dead, He has all authority over death. His resurrection, and all who share in His resurrection, conquer death! Death, and all its grim and destructive power is vanquished by the resurrection of Christ
- Revelation 1:17-18, *“Fear not, I am the First and the Last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.”*
- The very first words the Lord Jesus Christ speaks to His servant John, to go and communicate to His church are words that concern His authority over the realm of death.
- Jesus Christ has defeated death and that HE alone therefore can free us from eternal death is the news every sinner must hear! It’s the message of first importance!
- The resurrection must embolden our witness!
- **2<sup>nd</sup>**, the resurrection of Jesus Christ guarantees that our labors are never in vain. Rather they carry eternal consequences.

I Corinthians 15:58, *“Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.”*

- Devote yourself completely to personal purity and conformity to Christ and devote yourself to the work of the Lord.