

TRAINING IN GODLINESS

The Doctrine of Sanctification

LESSON THREE

I. INTRODUCTION

Brief Review Lectures One & Two

II. DEFINITIVE SANCTIFICATION

a. Defined

- Definitive sanctification (D.S.) has to do with that precise moment in time when we are instantaneously brought out of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son of God.
- Definitive sanctification is to be set apart to God, in Christ. It is a one-time unrepeatable action. It is “positional”!

b. Regeneration

“Regeneration is a secret act of God in which He imparts new spiritual life to us.”

Wayne Grudem

- Regeneration, or a.k.a. the new birth, is that precise moment when we are born again “spiritually” by virtue of the word of God being energized by the Spirit of God in our hearts.
- Regeneration is the work of God alone!
- In regeneration we are made alive in Christ; and in D.S. we are set apart in Christ positionally.

Romans 8:28-30, *“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.”*

- Verse 30 is known in Reformed Theology as the chain of salvation (Ordo Salutis – Order of Salvation). Every link within this chain is the work of God’s sovereign grace! They are the activity of God alone!
- *“Where does this link of D.S. fit within this chain” and “why it is wonderful news that D.S. is a work of God alone?”*
- A quick overview of the links. First link is foreknowledge. To foreknow is to forelove. This link involves God’s freedom where He

chooses or elects a people to be saved in union with His Son on the basis of His own good pleasure and purpose.

- God does not foreknow or elect or choose on the basis of foreseen faith. He foreknows on the basis of the freedom of His will!
- Those whom He foreknew, these He predestines (2nd link). This 2nd is part of the decree of God.
- And those whom He predestined, He called (3rd link). This calling is not the general call of the gospel all people can hear. This “call” is an internal call. It’s a call by the Holy Spirit. This “calling” is specific and personal. This calling always results in regeneration.
- This call is an effectual call b/c this call will always result in saving faith...B/c...all those that He calls...He justifies (4th link)! God declares them eternally righteous with the righteousness of His Son.
- AND all whom He justifies, He glorifies (5th link).
- Nobody foreknown fails to be glorified! Nobody is lost. Salvation is secure! And it’s secure b/c it’s based on the sovereign gracious work of God.

Now, where does the “link” of sanctification occur within this chain? It falls in between justification & glorification in the divine chain.

- When a person believes on Christ, they are justified, adopted and immediately **“set apart positionally in Christ”!** They are definitively sanctified!
- This is a one-time unrepeatable action performed by God alone.
- Progressive Sanctification (P.S.) is a work of God and man. P.S. deals with our “practice”, and since it deals with our practice, that aspect of our sanctification...fluctuates!
- D.S. never fluctuates. Its settled and its fixed precisely b/c it is the work of God alone.

2 very important applications:

#1 *“Can anything stop God’s eternal purpose to bring the people He foreloves and predestines to be conformed to Christ from coming to pass? Anyone or anything in all creation going to eternally frustrate the Trinity’s design and purpose in salvation??”*

#2 In the grind of life, in the difficulties and challenges and warfare and setbacks that await us in our lifelong journey to obey Christ; if the only category we have in thinking about our sanctification is progressive sanctification, then we will be very vulnerable to condemnation, shame and defeat.

- If we are not clear in distinguishing D.S. from P.S., then we will not be able to rightly confront our remaining sin and do battle against it.
- If we are not first convinced that every sin we discover and have to face is already a sin Christ defeated and set us free from its “dominion” ...then we will be vulnerable to adopt to a victims mindset.
- If at the end of the day, our being set apart in Christ and staying set apart in Christ is dependent on our own free will; then, if we’re consistent, then we can get ourselves out of Christ. In this system, you cannot have assurance, b/c your assurance is only as good as your faith.
- **THEOLOGY MATTERS!!**

“What actually occurs in definitive or initial sanctification?”

- In definitive sanctification, we died to the dominion of sin!
- c. Dead to “dominion” of sin
- When we say dominion, we mean the rule, the reign, the superior overarching controlling sphere.
 - In D.S. we are not saying we no longer sin! No! Although sin remains in the Christian it does not reign in the Christian!

Biblical Passages Supporting D.S.

- I Corinthians 1:2, *“To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those **sanctified** in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours.”*
- I Corinthians 6:11, *“and such were some of you. But you were washed, you were **sanctified**, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”*
- Galatians 2:19-20, *“For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. 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 the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”*

Romans 6:1-23, “What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

- Romans chapter 6 is telling us is that when we are united to Jesus Christ in true saving faith, we not only partake of the blessing of justification, but we also partake of the blessing of sanctification!
- The gospel not only provides me an external perfect righteousness **imputed** to me, but it also provides me with a new heart in which an **impacted** righteousness is produced and ever strengthened by the Holy Spirit who indwells me.
- Romans 6 serves as the foundational text asserting that faith in Christ/union with Christ results in the deliverance from the reign or the dominion to sin.

Romans 6 summed up...

Christ's death for sin becomes our death to sin! We died with Him 2000 years ago when He died. We were buried with Him and we were raised with Him in His resurrection.

- Any Christian who sets out to live holy and take obedience to Christ as Lord seriously (which every Christian must do), who does not have a firm and settled grasp, not just on their justification but also on definitive sanctification, will become prey for the devil and suffer much condemnation.
- If we are not “trained” for this war, we will become POWs in this war.
- Where we are not rooted and grounded in a clear and realistic expectation of what to expect as we sincerely and genuinely follow Christ; then we will be subject to discouragement, depression and even despair.

2 New Testament Contrasts

d. Old man/new man

- Romans 6:6, “We know that our **old self** was crucified with Him...”
- Colossians 3:9, “Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the **old self** with its practices and have put on the **new self**, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.”
- Ephesians 4:20-22, “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 out 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.”
- The old self/old man refers to the totality of the humanity of our old self under the dominion of sin. And the mark of the old man walks and lives in the realm of which sin dominates. The new man/new self is the regenerate man in union with Christ.
- The putting off and putting on is decisively/definitively done... **but...** the renewing is continuous/progressive.

To be taught “Christ in a saving way” is to hear Him and be taught by Him. And what Christ teaches us, is that when we are united to Him; we have put off the old man and put on the new man.

e. Realm of flesh to Spirit

- *Romans 8:1-9, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. 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. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him."*

- All men fall into one of only two categories; those that belong to the "flesh" and those that belong to the "Spirit". And the distinguishing mark to determine which category you are in, is evidenced by what you place your mind on and how you walk!

- If we are truly united to Christ, then we have the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit delivers us from the realm of the flesh. Where the Spirit of Christ is, there is of necessity a fundamental break with sin!

- *"The Christian is **not in** the flesh, but the flesh **is in** the Christian."*

III. TWO SUMMARIZING STATEMENTS

1st What definitive sanctification teaches us is that for any person who is truly united to Jesus Christ, there will, of necessity, be a radical breach with sin. We do not need to know *when* we have passed over that threshold, but only that we have passed over that threshold.

2nd unless we have experienced definitive sanctification, it is impossible to experience progressive sanctification.