



LOVING GOD

...THE PATH TO A DEEPER WALK WITH CHRIST

LOUIE E. BUSTLE





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Loving God: The Path To A Deeper Walk With Christ
Deeper Life Publication

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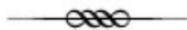
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PREFACE



Whether you are fishing for fish or fishing for souls, experience counts.

Louis E. Bustle is a man of heartfelt and holy experience. Traveling the world in the interest of world mission, Dr. Bustle has kept mental notes on the things that touch the heart. These pages are not mental notes however; they are the writings of a man who has learned the importance of living and preaching the holiness message.

In brief chapters of this book, you will find a wealth of experience in paragraphs and principles that address one of the most important issues facing the church in a post-Christian culture: Living a life of holiness.

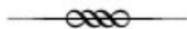
Scripture applications and quotable quotes in *Loving God* will make this a classic writing that will inspire generations to come. Dr. Bustle has

mined the depths of God's Word for truths that will never be out of place—no matter what the values of the culture may be. God's requirements for living a holy life are unchanging. So these changeless beliefs, written from stories and Bible studies that are dear to his heart, will endear your heart as well.

Each chapter is a lesson on holiness. The reading may be casual, but the cause is very serious. We need to know more about God's plan for holy living in an unholy setting. *Loving God* will give you insights that are practical and powerful. You'll need them for every day of your life. You'll need them for eternity.

—STAN TOLER

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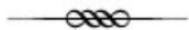


I dedicate this book to my beautiful family who are seeking to be God's holy people. Ellen has been by my side for more than 40 years (no one better!) Rick, Beth, Amber and Ashley Guilfoil are a beautiful family totally committed to God. It is a joy to see John and Heather follow the Lord.

Holiness forevermore!

—LOUIE E. BUSTLE

INTRODUCTION



My heart was set on fire as a young man of 23.

Watching my father live in the victory of sins forgiven and walking in obedient faith, I hungered to know more about the saving and sanctifying grace of God. At 23 years of age, I discovered the answer to my struggles: Entire sanctification.

I found out that God will not only forgive sin, He will reach to the core of the sin problem and apply the blood of Calvary. “Jesus saves from all sin” has been the theme of my preaching and teaching throughout my years of ministry—a ministry that has spanned years and continents.

You can love God with all your heart. I know because I have experienced it; and I have met countless numbers who have found “His grace is all complete.” Their love, their mission, their

sacrifice, and their peace in the midst of storms have witnessed to the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts.

I pray that these will be more than words on paper. I pray that they will be principles that will live in your heart—in newness and joy. God wants to do a new and holy work in you. You don't have to struggle as I struggled. The message is in your hands. God's provision reaches to you with victory over life, and a new joy in ministry.

—Louie E. Bustle



GOD'S PROVISIONS

1

IT STARTED ON DAY ONE



“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them”

(Genesis 1:27).

God has always had a great purpose for His people, for every person in every generation. Perfection and holiness characterized His highest creation. The dust that formed Adam was the raw

material which became a vessel of God's holiness. And the glow of Eden was the holy fellowship between God and the first couple, Adam and Eve.

He loved them enough to give them the opportunity to choose whether or not to love Him back. Love, by its very nature, requires a choice. God's choice was for them to love Him with all of their hearts. Their choice was submission to sin. The vessels of His holiness were marred by their sad decision.

But history's last chapter wasn't written on that one day, in that solitary place of disobedience. God refused to give up.

He still refuses. He intends to have a holy people, full of love for Him and for others. Many times His mercy has been tested by the evil choices we have made. But His love for us, and His desire to have a holy relationship with us,

drove Him to convince and convict us until we recognized Him as Savior.

Then when we acknowledged Him as Lord, we had the assurance that God had cleansed our heart and made us holy. That one day of rebellion was turned into a great day of celebration.

Have I made the right choice?

Am I serving God with all of my heart?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, I thank you for providing your holiness to me; help me to be your holy person in all that I do, and to love You with all of my heart.

QUOTE FOR THE DAY: “Sanctification in the proper sense is an instantaneous deliverance from all sin.”

—John Wesley¹

2

MY BAD, YOUR BAD



“Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?”

(Genesis 3:1).

A cage forces, programming dictates, and neither fosters love. The Creator did not make prisoners or robots; He made human spirits with the intellect to reason and the capability to love.

Then He gave them the power of choice—to decide whom to love.

To choose to love God, we must also have a choice to disobey. Temptation is the property line of our choice. God allowed Satan to highlight the choice for Adam and Eve—to be satisfied with God's provision or to reach out for more earthly wisdom and prideful knowledge. This is still the greatest problem. We want to control our own lives and make our own choices. We want to run our own religion and be recognized for our own efforts—going through the motions, without God.

God's plan is for us to surrender our lives to His loving providence and follow His plan, totally. Just obey! The mystery of the gospel starts here. It is a faith gospel, and we follow by obedient faith. We choose to be transformed from

our sinful ways and to get a new heart from a holy God, letting Him do a divine work in us.

Choosing to sin is actually choosing a cage, slavery to the influence of Satan, following his directives like a robot. It's the wrong choice.

In what ways do I try to take control of my life rather than depend on God?

What things in my life could hinder me from choosing to obey God?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, I choose to love You with all my heart, now please lead me and empower me to turn from sin and self-sovereignty. I want to love You completely.

QUOTE FOR THE DAY: "A real desire after complete holiness is the truest mark of being born again."

—Robert Murray McCheyne²

3

CAN WE ESCAPE THE BLAME GAME?



“When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, ‘I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless’”
(Genesis 17:1).

Genesis 17:1 declares that He is God (*El Shaddai*—all powerful) and that we are to walk with Him (meaning to walk back and forth in His

presence; to live out one's life) and be spiritually blameless.

When a jury acquits a suspect, it declares, “not guilty” or “no blame.” Afterward, the blame cannot be laid legally at the feet of the one who was accused. Because of Christ's sacrifice, we can be acquitted—declared blameless. The blame that was ours was paid at Calvary. The inadequacies that result from being human and fallible are covered by the efficacious grace of Christ as we “walk back and forth” with Him. That keeps our lives up-to-date and spotless before God.

Though He was speaking specifically to Abraham, this principle is found throughout the Word, as a commandment for all people—including us.

“Blameless!” That looks like a big job! Is it possible? If God said it, did He not mean it? And if He did not mean it, why did He say it? He meant it, and it is possible!

Blameless is not as difficult as it seems. What does it mean? Abraham had no blame; his motives, his devotion, his heart toward God were without blemish. His love was a singular love without any self-rule.

Is there any part of my life that is still self-controlled?

How can I have a single love for God?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, I want to be without blame before You; please cleanse me of selfish motives and give me a heart focused on Your will.

QUOTE FOR THE DAY: “Sanctification is the divine act of making holy; perfect love is the experience of such as have been made holy: the result of holiness.”

—C. W. Ruth³

4

THE COLOR OF A SNOWDRIFT



“Come now, let us reason together,” says the LORD. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool”

(Isaiah 1:18).

If you’ve ever seen city lights sparkle on a snow-paved street or gazed across rolling farmland iced with fresh snowflakes, you know the absolute dazzling whiteness that seems to cover

the earth. Because we lived in mild climates as missionaries, my children did not grow up enjoying playing in snow. They didn't get to build snowmen. They couldn't appreciate the color of a snowdrift. But those who have know there is nothing that compares to that white blanketing.

We always talk about sin as something dirty, unclean. And it is. But something as white as snow is a reminder of something clean and untainted. Sin taints us but the blood of Jesus cleans us up again. He died to straighten out our lives and bring us back to the very purpose for which we were born, to make us clean enough to have a relationship with a Holy God, white as snow.

When Jesus came into my life, I became a new person. My heart was washed white, like the unsullied snow. I began to live again as a newborn babe in Christ—unstained with the pollution of sin. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:17 that if anyone

is in Christ, he or she becomes a new creature; old things are passed away and all things become new. This is God's call...let Him do the work in you. To be forgiven is a fresh, pure, white-as-snow feeling.

Can I accept God's full forgiveness?

Can I believe that He wants me to live without sinning?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Oh God, make me clean and keep my heart as white as the purest snow.

QUOTE FOR THE DAY: "The greatness of a man's power is the measure of his surrender."

—William Booth⁴

5

ONE-UPPING THE SNOW



“Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow”
(Psalm 51:7).

You know what it means to “one-up” someone, don’t you? Whatever they say or do, you do one better. That’s what God did when He created the plan of salvation. He had already made the natural phenomenon of snow to cover the ugly

muddiness of a bleak winter. Then, He introduced His cleansing that would “one-up” the soul of man, making it even whiter than snow.

Snow has impurities because it is formed from elements in the atmosphere which contain dust, dirt, and other unclean elements. Personal holiness comes from the nature of God, which has no blemish, no uncleanness: perfect cleanness.

When we come to Christ, we are interested in one thing—cleansing. Guilt and conviction have brought us to repentance. We recognized our situation and God brought us to a place of wanting to be free from the sins we have committed, and the path of sin we have followed. “White as snow” symbolizes freedom from committed sin. But, “whiter than snow” symbolizes the deeper work of grace that God does in our lives, and deals with the nature of sin and its power.

Jesus died on the Cross to cleanse us to the very core. John says in his first epistle that if we confess our sins, God will forgive us and cleanse us of all unrighteousness.

Have I trusted God to cleanse me?

Have I asked God to do anything in my spiritual life that He has not answered?

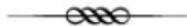
PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, I want to be clean and holy. I want You to create a clean heart in me so I can walk with You day by day.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “As God never inspires a prayer but with a design to answer it, he who hungers and thirsts after the full salvation of God may depend on being speedily and effectually blessed, or satisfied; well fed, as the word implies.”

—Adam Clarke⁵

6

BETTER THAN A *TIDE* COMMERCIAL



“I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols”
(Ezekiel 36:25).

Mowing the lawn, cleaning the garage, painting a room...have you ever done a dirty job and have gotten so dirty you just felt terrible? It felt so good to take a hot shower and to toss your

dirty clothes into a washing machine. There is something in all of us that cries out to be clean. Awareness of our inner selfishness makes us feel grimy. We long for cleansing.

God has a plan for each of us that provides for inner and outer purity—until the deeds and motive mirror the holiness of God. That's something no laundry detergent can do, no matter what the commercial boasts. It is better than *Tide!*

God adds, "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove your heart of stone from you and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws" (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

**What things in my life made me feel dirty?
Do I have a Jesus Heart?**

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Make me clean, O God, and put your Spirit in me.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “Submission to God, or entire consecration, is our act, with assisting grace. Entire sanctification is God’s work, wrought in the soul.”

—John Wood⁶

7

NOT JUST FORGIVEN, PERFECT TOO!



“In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil”
(Job 1: 1).

It’s a pop culture theme—“Hey, I’m not perfect, just forgiven.” The fact is, that’s no excuse. God has made a way for us to be both. The biblical account of Job, with all its suffering and sorrow, is

really a story about his relationship with God. For Job to put his family, wealth, and relationships on the line, he had to have had a wonderful experience with God. There was no doubt that his faith was based on something special. Was it because he was perfect? The Bible says that he was a man who was blameless and upright. He feared God and did no evil.

God had a relationship with Job. He was sure that Job would always be true. He was sure that Job was a faithful man. As a pen that writes well fulfills the very purpose for which it was made, Job also fulfilled the purpose for which he was created: to serve God with a fully devoted heart.

Satan was sure that Job served God because he was a blessed, rich man. God was sure that Job served Him because he loved Him. The last chapter records that Job stayed true to his faith in his beloved God. The question for us is why do

we serve God? Is it for what we get, for help in the tough times, or to get closer to the One we love with all our hearts?

Do I have a love relationship with God?

Can God depend on me?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, please put that kind of “Job” love in my heart so I will love You for who You are and not for what You can do for me.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “You will have endless opposition, keener trials, and severer temptations in a life of holiness. But the gift of the Holy Spirit makes every man a soldier, and Christ in the heart causes him to be more than a conqueror.”

—J.O. McClurkan⁷

8

NOT EVEN ONCE



“In all this, Job did not sin in what he said”
(Job 2:10b).

Total integrity is rare. In our world of sound-bites and digital records, it is impossible to elude the gaffes, let alone the intentional departures from the right path. It is safe to say that Job was handed a unique assignment from God—severe testing and scrutiny from both heaven and hell.

Talk about news crews and investigative teams! Job was under the all-seeing eye of God and the accusatory stare of Satan. Yet...Job did not sin nor blame God...not even once.

Satan failed to get Job to curse God by taking all of his earthly things away. It is interesting to listen to people blame God when things don't go their way. Of course, when things are going well, it is easier to serve Him. But what happens when things don't go our way? Have we considered that God may have another plan? God has promised to bring good out of everything that happens to believers.

Notice that Job's friends and family blamed God and wanted Job to curse God and die. I have always thought that if you are going to die anyway, why curse God at the end? The reason: that is exactly what Satan wants us to do. That is his trick to get us out of our relationship with the

God who created us. Holiness will help us stay true in the difficult times.

Do I tend to blame God when things don't go as I think they should?

Do I totally trust God to run my life?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, help me to keep my faith in You until the end, with a love that will not let me turn away.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “It is wonderful what God can do with a broken heart, if He gets all the pieces.”

—Samuel Chadwick⁸

9

GOD GAVE HIS WORD



“I will cleanse them from all the sin they have committed against me and will forgive all their sins of rebellion against me”
(Jeremiah 33:8).

Holiness subtracts something from our lives: rebellion. In the Old Testament, God always wanted His people to be clean. He planned for man to live a holy life and love Him. His people, Israel, were very rebellious and constantly turned

from God. In the writings of Jeremiah we see that God is promising cleansing to His people. It would cleanse them from all their sins. God was promising the restoration of real life in them. He wanted them to be healed and to enjoy abundant peace and security. At this point they were in captivity in Babylon. They had suffered greatly for their rebellion. God saw that they were ready to repent and come back to Him.

God promises the same today. We can be set free and cleansed from our sins—both those we have committed and the twisted desires from which the acts come forth. Being clean is a wonderful thing. Not only do we have the biblical assurance, God also lets us experience its emotional satisfaction, just as I felt as a boy after plowing until midnight and coming home to a hot bath. Did it ever feel good! I was clean!

God wants to reach down into our very nature and wash away whatever stain is there. This is a cleansing of the heart, soul, and conscience that feels like one is starting life all over again.

What do I need to do to get rid of rebellion?

What earthly things are more important than a right relationship with God?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, I come to You for deep cleansing of any rebellion You find in me.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “Before we go to our knees to receive the Baptism of Fire, let me beg of you to see to it that your souls are in harmony with the will and purpose of the Holy Spirit whom you seek.”

—William Booth⁹

10

THE REFEREE WHO IS ALWAYS RIGHT



“When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, ‘I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless’”
(Genesis 17:1).

God sees the big picture of the game of life. He views the details from the sidelines of heaven. He watches each pass, each block, and each tackle. He knows the players like no other coach ever

did. But He is not just the coach; He is also the referee. And He makes perfectly accurate calls. Unlike human refs, He is biased. He wants us to win and gives us every possible opportunity that His grace can provide.

God gave Abraham a clear message: “I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless.” God says very plainly that He wants us to live without sin—to play to win. And the way He makes that possible is through relationship. God had chosen to work through Abraham to develop a special people to love God and walk with Him. Yes, he had a relationship with God already, but now there was a new covenant being written. God wanted to confirm His new covenant with Abraham and the generations to follow. The word “blameless” raises the competitive bar to an impossible level. The only way we can reach it is through a relationship with a mighty God who

gives His holiness to us. He cleanses our nature and redirects our human desires.

This is the promise of a covenant with God . . . a holy relationship of walking and talking with Him daily. We can know that we are blameless in God's sight because we have been cleansed and made holy through relationship with Him.

Which are my daily activities that need God's cleansing?

What does 'blameless' mean?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, work Your holiness in me so I can pass the standard of blamelessness before You.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: "I found that if I would surrender to the Holy Spirit this conscious mind—all I knew and all I did not know—He would cleanse at these depths I could not control."

—E. Stanley Jones¹⁰

11

MADE AGAIN



“So I went down to the potter’s house, and I saw him working at the wheel. But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him”

(Jeremiah 18:3-4).

Fascinated, I stood beside a potter, watching artistry form a pot out of clay. He started with plain clay, without blemish. It was pliable, yielding to his touch. As he threw the clay and

pumped the wheel, he started to shape the muddy lump into a beautiful design. At times, an irregular swirl or blotch marred the creation. That's when he refashioned it and began the shaping process again. He continued to work the clay until it was perfectly molded, just as he envisioned.

Think what God can do with us if we are totally His. From the beginning, His intentions were to have a holy people. He made us with the potential to be a people to love Him with all our hearts. In His first design, we were flawless, but something has happened to us. We have committed sin; we have rebelled. Even our nature has become flawed and tainted.

The Creator did not cast us away; He added His wonderful redemption, layers of grace—until we were made new. He can transform our lives, even taking out the flaw of sin in our nature, restoring us to His perfect plan.

What ‘light’ does God want to give me today?

How can I relax and let God mold me into the shape He wants me to be?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Father, please fashion me in Your perfect image and keep me pliable when You find a flaw.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “The longer I live, the larger allowances I make for human infirmities. I exact more from myself and less from others. Go thou and do likewise.”

—John Wesley¹¹

12

UNMIXED DEVOTION



“I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Sovereign LORD, when I show myself holy through you before their eyes”

(Ezekiel 36:23).

Holiness lives in an environment of absolute devotion. God has no tolerance for the worship of idols. An idol is anything that comes between us

and our Lord, anything that crowds the Creator from the number one place in our lives.

God will do everything He can to get us to turn to Him and away from idols. It may take persecution or painful setbacks, something that will wake us up and bring us to repentance. That is what He did with the children of Israel by sending them into exile under captivity. Why? They shamed His name with unholy conduct. God wanted them to be His models of holiness to the peoples of the world, but they had brought God to mockery in the eyes of the nations. Now He was bringing them to the altar of repentance.

He did all of this to clear His holy name. He must have holy people who serve and worship Him alone. The world must see through us that He is Jehovah God—sovereign and holy. He shows His holiness through our holiness. He will cleanse us from all our impurities and idols. He

will put a new heart in us. He will put His Spirit in us. He will cause us to love by His law and to love Him fully.

Have I been cleansed of my idols?

Is there anything crowding Jesus off the throne of my life?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, show me whatever is crowding You off the throne of my life.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “Thank God, the new birth cleans a man up while the baptism of the Holy Ghost cleans him out.”

—Bud Robinson¹²

13

HOLINESS IS SERVICE



“In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church...”

(Ephesians 5:28-29).

God gives human skin to the relationship of holiness. He compares Christ and the church to marriage between a man and woman. Each partner has a responsibility in the marriage covenant,

and Christ is the leader, both in love and in service. He protects His bride, provides for her, and makes her honor and care His delight, and then He presents her to Himself without a stain or wrinkle. The church, devoting itself entirely to Him, responds with reverence and commitment, finding joy in relationship.

It is an awesome pattern for daily living as well as for holy hearts. Men, love your wives sacrificially as Christ loves the church. Wives, submit to your husband as the church responds to the leadership of Christ.

Holiness makes a difference in human relationships. Though I grew up in an atmosphere where men sometimes abused their position, there has been a work in progress in me for these more than 40 years of marriage. The other day Ellen was talking to a lady from another country about the culture there and the challenge for men

to treat their wives as themselves. Ellen was able to say, “I am thankful that I grew up with a father who treated women with real respect and honor. Now through these years I have had a husband who honors me the same way.”

How do I honor people? Family?

Do they see Jesus in me?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Lord, live out Your holiness in my relationships today.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “For every look at self, take ten looks at Christ.”

—R.M. McCheyne¹³

14

THE PRICE OF HOLINESS



“And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all...because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy”

(Hebrews 10:10, 14).

Anthing of value has a price tag. Holiness is an exception. But the price is more than we can afford and costlier than we could imagine. In Old Testament times, God’s plan for settling the cost for sin was paid in the lives of countless animals

whose blood was spilled as an offering of atonement. It was a conditional and limited plan, which was only effective in paying sin's debt because it looked ahead to the final payment Jesus made on that hill outside Jerusalem. The spilling of His blood was the permanent solution, a once-for-all sacrifice that covers the past and gives hope for the future. Through the merits of His sacrifice we can know forgiveness of sins and sanctification by faith.

This Gospel is a day-by-day relationship of loving and serving and walking in the power and provision of the Lord. His sacrifice not only allows for the cleansing of our acts of sin but also for its dominance in the very center of our being. We can love Him and love others with all of our hearts because He empowers us to love. We can live victoriously over temptation and division because He enables us to win.

What is my relationship with Jesus like?

In what ways am I empowered to love?

What are the ways that I live victoriously over temptation?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Lord, thank You for the price You paid so I can share in Your holiness.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “Holiness, then, for you and for me, is not maturity, but purity: a clean heart in which the Holy Spirit dwells, filling it with pure, tender, and constant love to God and man.”

—Samuel Logan Brengle¹⁴

15

I WANT
THE FRONT SEAT



“Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth”
(John 17:17).

I wonder if Jesus shook his head as He listened. Like kids fighting for the front seat of the minivan, the disciples were squabbling again over position and power. Two of them were

seeking importance by applying for the second ranking seats in the Kingdom.

Jesus prayed for his disciples—as well as you and me—in John 17. For three years the Master had taught them; He knew their hearts. They were still divided, and without a total understanding of the Kingdom. The sin principle was prevalent and the self-nature was being revealed.

They needed to be cleansed and empowered. They needed another Helper. They needed to give up their own agendas, crucify self-centeredness, and be filled with the empowering Spirit of God. So he prayed. He prayed that they would be set apart from the selfishness of the world. He prayed that their empty ambitions would be filled with all the fullness of God, sanctified for service.

His plan for His disciples hasn't changed.
What love He has for us! What power He has for
us!

What is God's agenda?

How do I live as a living sacrifice?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Father, empower
me to live by Your agenda and not the desires of
self.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: "The body is a liv-
ing sacrifice. You go on presenting it day by day,
hour by hour and you never stop."

—Martyn Lloyd-Jones¹⁵

16

HE PAID THE BRIDE- PRICE



“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy...”

(Eph 5:25-26a).

In some cultures, the price of a marriage relationship is bartered. A few cows or pigs could mean the difference between being with the one you love and living alone. The one who is willing

to pay the bride-price is the one who wins the hand of marriage.

Christ paid the bride-price in our relationship with Him. Heaven's best suffered Earth's worst to win the hand of His bride, the church. How beautifully that plays out in our husband and wife relationships. Ellen and I have been married for over 40 years. It has been a wonderful relationship. We have had our disagreements and surely we are very human, but our hearts are sanctified, set apart for the holy purpose of loving and serving our wonderful Lord. This devotion to our Lord has strengthened our commitment to one another.

We pay a daily price for our relationship. We sacrifice our selfishness for the sake of each other. We are happy to do it because we learned it from the One who paid our dowry. It has been our relationship with Christ that has always

brought us through as husband and wife. It demonstrates to a watching world the unconditional love Christ has for us and the way the church responds to Him.

God wants sanctified people to make up the church, those who are pure and set apart, holy in the eyes of the Lord. His love for the church is the ultimate proof—He gave Himself for it. His plan was to sanctify and cleanse it in order to make it glorious. We mirror the relationship of Christ and His church in our relationships to each other.

How do marriage and our relationship with Christ compare?

What does unconditional love for God mean?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Lord, let my marriage be a reflection of the love You have for Your church.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “We declare then, that holiness is in harmony with good common sense, in providing for happiness in this world as well as the world to come.”

—George Asbury Mclaughlin¹⁶

UNDENIABLE PROOF



“May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me”
(John 17:23).

The case of holiness is on trial. The burden of proof is on the church. We claim to know Christ, to follow His teaching, to be empowered by His Spirit. A skeptical culture sits in the jury box. Jesus told us how we can win the case: unity.

In this prayer recorded by John the apostle, Jesus prays for His followers—the church of that day as well as believers of all time.

In verse 11, He prays that we would be one as He and the Father are one. That seems like impossibility, but if Jesus said it, we should believe it—and figure out how to make it possible.

In verses 22-23 we have the proof that Jesus is the Son of God. We normally refer to the cross as the proof, but proving the Cross can be difficult today. The real proof is in the sacrifice of the Cross—in how we are willing to surrender our comforts or our very lives to get along with each other.

Am I proof that the Father sent Jesus?

What are some of the many ways I love the people of God?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, show the proof of Your power through my love for my brothers and sisters in Christ.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “Jesus Christ has undertaken by His redemption to put in me a heart so pure that God can see nothing to censure.”

—Oswald Chambers¹⁷

18

HIS CALL



“For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life”
(1 Thessalonians 4:7).

We answer many calls in our lives—the call to mealtimes, the call to military service, the call to civic duty, or the call to compassionate ministry. Does one remain? Have we answered the call to live a holy life?

In this New Testament chapter, Paul pleads for purity. This verse spells it out plainly: God's will is for us to be holy in our lives. Some talk about the work of entire sanctification as only dedication or commitment. Some say it is only to be set apart. However, it means more than that.

God issued the call to me one Sunday morning just before church. My Dad got out of my car and, looking over the top of the car, asked, "Son, have you been sanctified?" I said, "I guess so." The problem was that I didn't "know so." I didn't really know what he was talking about.

That morning the pastor preached on being entirely sanctified. It was not long until I was seeking the experience of the fullness of the Holy Spirit, and sought it until I could claim victory.

Have I had the wake-up call?

Have I heard God's call to a holy life?

What is my answer?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, my answer is “yes” to Your call for holy living.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “There’s only one proof of the Holy Ghost in your life and that’s a holy life.”

—Leonard Ravenhill¹⁸

19

FULL SALVATION



“And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood”
(Hebrews 13:12).

For something to be completely clean, it must be washed inside and out. We often relate the death of Jesus on the cross to forgiveness for committed sin, actions. It is important to understand that the gospel is much more. Christ’s

death also provides cleansing for inbred sin—the fallen nature.

God never intended to leave us partly clean. The Hebrews writer expresses it well. Jesus died to cover the whole problem, inside and out. The plan of God was for full salvation from all sin. Jesus suffered outside the gate of Jerusalem, a place reserved for the worst law breakers. His blood was the ultimate sacrifice for all our sins, including the cleansing of the carnal nature.

We can be set free by a cleansing that reaches down into the core of our being and cleanses the motives and intents of the heart. We can be restored to the very image of God so that our desires reflect His nature.

Do you have that kind of victory? You can!

Can I just be partly clean?

Are my motives clean?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Lord, cleanse my nature of the corruption of sin.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “The perfection I teach is perfect love; loving God with all the heart, receiving Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King, to reign alone over all our thoughts, words and actions.”

—John Wesley¹⁹

20

OUR DEFENSE ATTORNEY



“My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One”

(1 John 2:1).

Our culture is curious about crime. Often media’s bestsellers have a crime or criminals as a backdrop. Crime is a serious behavior. When facing the standard of the law, a criminal needs

someone to speak on his or her behalf. The attorney represents the condemned and mediates for them. Sin is behind every crime. And breaking God's law is even more serious than breaking earthly laws. Thankfully, we don't have to stand alone before heaven's courts. Jesus is our representative, our heavenly Attorney. His death made it possible for us to live without the penalty of sin hanging over our heads. In fact, His death makes it possible for us to keep from voluntarily violating the known laws of God. We do not have to commit sin.

But John knows that it is still possible for us to sin, and he gives a way to move forward. When we are saved and entirely sanctified we don't want to offend our loving Lord by committing sin. But if we slip and do sin, John tells us that we have an Advocate to plead our case. Because He paid the price, we can repent and turn and

walk forward in victory. That does not give us a license to continue in sin but provides an escape to keep our loving relationship with the Heavenly Father.

In a recent camp meeting a man told me of his struggles with a sin he had not been able to overcome. He was afraid God would withdraw from him, even though he knew he loved God with all his heart. How wonderful to give this brother the reassuring news that, if we sin, we have an Advocate whose sacrifice will never be spurned in heaven's court.

Do I need to ask God's forgiveness for something?

Thank Him for a way to escape!

PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, thank You for providing an Advocate for us.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: "The whole design of God was to restore man to his image, and raise

him from the ruins of his fall; in a word, to make him perfect; to blot out all his sins, purify his soul, and fill him with all holiness.”

—Adam Clarke²⁰

21

HE SHOWED US HOW



“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete”

(John 15:9-11).

The best way to become proficient at something is to observe someone who is good at it, and then learn by example. Jesus asks us to do

nothing that He has not done. He offers Himself as the example; He kept the Father's commandments and abided in His love. He asks us to do the same because He knows it is the way to experience His joy.

Have you ever thought of the joy Jesus had? Imagine Him as a boy growing up in Nazareth, working in the carpenter's shop with Joseph and his brothers, playing in the fields near His home, or walking through the forests that He himself had created. What a joy it must have been to be able to match wits with the elders in Jerusalem.

It seems like His joy came from the fact that He was always doing the will of the Father. It was the reason He came into the world. Later on in this passage, He talks about laying down one's life for another. Just as He laid down His life for us, He expects that we will lay down our lives for our friends.

Keeping His commandments and sacrificing for others are two results of God's holiness being lived out through us. We cannot do these things apart from His power. When the Holy Spirit lives through us, our lives demonstrate the mystery of the gospel.

What does it mean to “remain in My love?”

What is the Joy of Jesus?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, help me experience Your joy as I remain in You.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “Now it seems to me that if God wills our sanctification, and Christ died to provide our sanctification, and the Holy Spirit is here to accomplish our sanctification, that a man might get sanctified.”

—C. W. Ruth²¹



LIVING THE LIFE

22

A HOLY WALK



“Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God”

(Genesis 6:9).

The “One Way” sign means exactly what it says. Failure to follow it would not only break the law, it would jeopardize your safety. Noah followed the “One Way” sign—and it was God’s law and God’s way. It was a holy way. It is

impossible to walk very long with God and remain unholy. The direction in which He leads us is not compatible with a self-guided life. In the Garden, Adam and Eve walked with God in perfection. When they sinned, they had to walk on by themselves, looking ahead to the Redeemer through whom “the crooked roads shall be made straight...” (Luke 3:5). Nowhere is that correcting work more evident than in the life of a believer who lives a surrendered life. Since God is holy we can only walk with Him in holiness of life.

Throughout Scripture we see stories of those who walked with God. But two men are specifically known as “God walkers”: Enoch and Noah. Noah’s walk was particularly dangerous. For him, to walk with God meant walking “against the flow of traffic.” Much of the earth was corrupt but Noah was uncorrupted. The direction of his life and desires of his heart proved that he

walked “God’s Way.” The holy love of God was displayed to a doubting and mocking world through him.

Have you ever known such a person? I met such a man in Ethiopia. He spends days at a time in prayer. When he prays, God listens and answers. He is around 80 years old and still is planting churches and interceding for the souls of people. God has used him to help bring revival to that land.

Can we walk that closely with our loving heavenly Father? Yes, I believe we can—if we will put the time and effort into the relationship. Remember, God is not far off and the Bible says, “Let us draw near.”

Meditate on what it means to ‘walk with God’!

How does my prayer life help my relationship with Jesus?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Father, give me a holy heart so that I may walk with You all my life.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “Holiness is unmingled purity.”

—John Wood²²

23

NO TOLLS, JUST PURITY



“And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness. The unclean will not journey on it; it will be for those who walk in that Way; wicked fools will not go about on it”
(Isaiah 35:8).

I’ve traveled many roads in my life. Some were mere paths through a South American jungle, while others were super highways across the European continent. In many countries, a good

road has a price tag. Tolls are charged to pay for the expense of construction and upkeep of the highways. The users pay for the privilege of using the road.

God has a highway. Isaiah called it the “way of holiness.” Its construction wasn’t cheap. It cost heaven a precious price—the very Son of God. Because He paid the amount in full on Calvary, you and I can travel the way of holiness for free. All He requires is purity.

Heaven is going to be a clean place made by a holy God. The people who are going there are holy too. The entrance ramp to the thoroughfare of holiness is complete surrender. No one will stray onto this road by accident; it takes an act of the will. It is a way of life that we can enjoy now—loving God with all our hearts as we walk toward the city at the end of the road.

This holy way is not optional for us. We are marching into the future in some direction. Why not march on the “way of Holiness” in obedience to God’s will? Proverbs 22:5 says, “In the paths of the wicked lie thorns and snares...” Though Satan promises an easy way, the path of self is tangled and difficult and, in the end, it leads to destruction. But “The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day” (Proverbs 4:18). The toll has been paid. The pure in heart will reach their destination. The pure in heart shall see God.

Is there anything in my life that would not fit in Heaven?

How can I be cleansed?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, show me the right path for this day, and give me wisdom and stamina to walk it.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “Let us never mark out a way for God, but seek the cleansing power of the Holy Ghost, until it comes just as he is pleased to manifest it.”

—John Wood²³

24

PITCH IT



“Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon”

(Isaiah 55:7).

You’ve seen the garbage containers placed along sidewalks. Signs written on them or above them read “Pitch In.” It’s a slogan for clean cities. The message is clear: Trash is unwelcome in this area. The only place for it is the city landfill.

The holy life has a strict “no litter” code. The trash of sinful living, including thoughts and actions, is not welcome. Sin and holiness will never share the same space. They are opposites. They are like light and darkness. When one appears, the other disappears.

God’s promise is sure. When we “Pitch In” He will “Power Up.” The Lord will do the work in our hearts that will give us power to forsake our sinful thoughts and ways, to make us righteous. But we have to make the decision to dump the garbage of self-centeredness. God cannot do it for us. When the light of the Holy Spirit reveals the litter in our hearts, we can confess it—we can “Pitch In.” God has promised to clean out the litter, to take it to the landfill of confessed sin. He will restore us to a right relationship so we can be in the same space and of the same mind as Jesus. We are made one with Him, pure and holy

because of His work in us and because we have left the unholy things behind. The unholy life produces bags of rotting garbage. Don't let it stay around. Pitch it. Let a loving God make you holy through and through.

What do I think about?

How can I do better?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Lord, I forsake my old patterns of living and surrender to You.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “When the mind is renewed and the whole life cleansed, then the will of God is perfectly fulfilled.”

—Adam Clarke²⁴

25

STAIN REMOVER



“Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool”
(Isaiah 1:18).

Our culture has an obsession with perfection, in the external that is. There is no lack of publicity for the latest stain removers or the most effective teeth whiteners. The problem is they seldom live up to their promises.

Even before time, God planned a perfect stain remover. Ephesians 1:4 says, “For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.” Isaiah prophesied the perfection—scarlet and crimson stains would be whitened. God is interested in restoring our souls and hearts in holiness.

In the back of my home we have some open ground, trees, and a small pond of water. Our house is on high ground, so when we look the back, we are looking down. We love the different view each season brings to it. It is particularly beautiful in winter. Snow covers the withered ground and the pond. The tree limbs turned drab and ugly by autumn come alive with bright, clinging snow.

Isaiah describes the transformation of the old into the bright and beautiful of the new—crimson to whitened wool, new life from the old.

What a difference He will make in our lives if we are willing and obedient, just as Isaiah says in this verse. God has that kind of power.

Do I have any stain of sin in my heart?

How can God make the difference?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Lord, I come obediently to You and Your plan for my life.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “The spiritual part of a divine blessing can come on the lightning express while the intellectual part may arrive some hours or days later on the freight.”

—Beverly Carradine²⁵

26

DANGEROUS ROADS



“No lion will be there, nor will any ferocious beast get up on it; they will not be found there. But only the redeemed will walk there”

(Isaiah 35:9).

I’ll never forget the safari in that South African game park. We were driving through the park at night. As we rounded a curve, there, just in front of the open Jeep, was a pride of lions calmly walking down the road toward us. The driver

quickly put on the brakes and stopped. The lions passed right by us. I could have reached out and touched the big male lion as it passed, but it could have been fatal.

Living in a sinful world can be just as fatal. There is often an attraction to the dangerous, and it is all around us. When Jesus prayed for His disciples, He didn't pray that they would be exempt from the world's dangers; He prayed that they would be empowered against them.

Verse nine talks about God's protection. The highway of the holy leads to a place of eternal safety—heaven. But the journey is often dangerous. The good news is that if God expects us to walk the Highway, He'll protect us every step of the way. A surrendered life is a safer life. When we are totally focused on Him, we will spend more time pleasing Him than thinking about dangerous roads and lions. God will take care of the

lions in the path. It is his standard: Holiness unto the Lord.

What is the surrendered life?

How can I focus more on Jesus?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Lord, thank you for the protection of an empowered life.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “He calls for a crusade, a campaign, and an adventure of saving passion. For this enterprise He wants a separated, sanctified and sacrificial people.”

—Samuel Chadwick²⁶

27

THERE IS A WAY



“We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all”
(Isaiah 53:6).

Have you ever been lost?

Ellen and I were returning to the mission field, driving from Nashville to Miami. When we got to Chattanooga, we were passing a big semi truck and did not see the road signs. The road split, and

we took the north fork. We had gone the wrong way for one hour before we realized it. I will never forget the feeling of despair, thinking of the two hours we had lost on the long trip. Finally, we found the right way and moved on.

Humanity has a problem. Without Christ, it is lost. The route was right from Creation, but Adam took the wrong turn at the fork in the road—and all humanity was born with the tendency to follow him. God has worked to fix the problem from the time of the fall in the Garden of Eden. Sin has separated us from God, and Isaiah says we have all gone astray. But God is seeking to bring us back, to turn to Him.

Isaiah 53:1 says the arm of the Lord has been revealed. God's arm is His only Son, Jesus. He came to take our infirmities and carry our sorrows. He was stricken by God and was pierced for our transgressions. He took our punishment

and His wounds heal us. Isaiah also says that the arm of the Lord is not shortened. It reaches out to heal us and to take away our sin—not only the acts of sin but also our sinful nature. Have you taken the wrong turn and found yourself going in the wrong direction? Turn back. Seek His forgiveness and cleansing—this very moment.

How can the sinful nature turn me onto the wrong road?

How can I be cleansed from the sinful nature?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, I turn back to You with all my heart. Forgive me and cleanse me.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “The same Book which says that God created the heavens and the earth declares that God sanctifies the soul wholly.”

—Beverly Carradine²⁷

28

WHEN IS IT RIGHT TO HATE?



“Let those who love the LORD hate evil, for he guards the lives of his faithful ones and delivers them from the hand of the wicked”

(Psalm 97:10).

From childhood we have been taught not to hate. But the Psalmist seems to fly in the face of that teaching, telling us there are some things we should hate. Why? Because God hates some

things: “There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers” (Proverbs 6: 16-19).

If you will live a life of holiness, you will learn to hate some things—not *some people*, but *some things*. You must hate evil and sin or it will be impossible to love God with all your heart. A holy God and evil cannot live in the same house.

When I was first converted I had a choice to make. I still liked my friends but they kept trying to drag me back. Soon, I had to choose to drop them and find new friends. I had to hate my old ways to make the break and turn to God. I found new friends who had the same values in Christ. I found new places to go that would reflect my

new faith in Christ. God did a miracle in helping me to hate the old ways of sin and evil.

If we who love the Lord will hate evil then the Lord will guard our lives as the faithful ones and he will deliver us from the hand of the wicked.

Do I need to stop being friends with someone who is hindering my walk with Christ?

How can I hate sin?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Lord, give me the hatred that you have for sin and guard my life as your faithful one.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “There was something within me not redeemed, something else down in the cellar that seemed to be sullenly at war with this new life. I was at war with myself.”

—E. Stanley Jones²⁸

29

PUT THROUGH THE FIRE



“For he will be like a refiner’s fire or a launderer’s soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness”

(Malachi 3:2b-3).

My mother would heat a sewing needle over a fire and use it to work a sliver out of my finger or hand. I can’t say the process was always welcomed. But the combination of the purified

needle and the removal of the foreign object usually resulted in a quick healing.

Malachi the prophet compares the refining fire with healing and purifying.

Shallow living is repugnant to God. Jesus said to the church, “So, because you are luke-warm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth” (Revelation 3:16).

God is so wearied with those who are trying to turn evil into something good. Does that sound like the day in which we live? You see, the only way that we can see that a stick that looks straight is really crooked is to put it up next to a straight edge. Then one will see the imperfections of the stick. It is the same way with our lives when we are placed beside a holy God--then we see how unholy we really are. We must always go back to the source to find our standard for godliness and righteousness.

God sent His Messenger, Jesus, to make the ultimate sacrifice for our sins and the nature of sin, all at the same time. He became the “refiner’s fire” that cleanses our hearts and purifies us from all sin to turn our eyes and hearts toward the Lord. Is there a sliver of self-indulgence or control in your heart? Let the Holy Spirit of God probe your heart with the needle of conviction, purified by the Refiner’s Fire.

Is my church experience shallow?

How can I become a fire for Jesus?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Father, probe and purify those areas of my life that bring shallowness instead of true holiness.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “Entire sanctification is the fitness for heaven.”

—George Asbury Mcclaughlin²⁹

30

UPDATED EDITION



“Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God”
(Hebrews 10:11-12).

Most civic ordinances contain laws that have become obsolete. For example, one law still on the books requires lanterns on automobiles, while another law gives birds the right of way on a

public highway. Thankfully there are updated editions on the books.

The laws of Old Testament religion had strict demands. Each sin demanded a sacrifice, but still, the Hebrews writer says, the ceremony could “never take away sins.”

God knew our need of a new Covenant and gave us an updated edition. He sent His only Son to become one of us, and die as the permanent sin offering. He was the great High Priest, who sat down at the right hand of His Father after finishing the work of redemption.

This New Covenant is not just for the committed sins, but His death paid the price for full salvation from all our sins. He never planned to leave us in the struggle between forgiveness from our sins and freedom from the fallen nature. He planned that we could have total freedom from both types of sin. Hebrews 10:10 states it like it

is: the blood of Christ has sanctified us once and for all. Verse 12 says that He offered “one sacrifice for sin for all time.”

The New Covenant is so much better than the old one. When we have repented and have been forgiven there is no longer any need for an offering for sin.

His plan for each of us is to sanctify or purify our hearts so we are holy enough to enter into the Holy of Holies by the blood of Jesus.

What are the two types of sin?

What is the price that was paid to be pure?

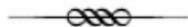
PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, My heart’s desire is a complete freedom from sin through Christ’s sacrifice.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “Holiness is the grandest and most comprehensive idea in the universe.”

—John Wood³⁰

31

GOD'S ULTIMATE
DESIRE
FOR YOU



"It is God's will that you should be sanctified"
(1 Thessalonians 4:3).

Many Christians spend their whole lives in a search for God's will, when so much of it has already been revealed. The Bible says that He is not willing that any should perish, but that all

should come to repentance. I was in a meeting recently where a man was talking about evangelizing. He said that we needed to get the gospel to everyone possible so that those whom God has “chosen” to be saved will respond and receive God’s plan of salvation. But God’s plan includes everyone—whenever believes in Him should not perish. He did not pick and choose those who would be saved.

His will does not stop there; His plan is to finish the sin problem. It not only includes “everyone”, it includes “everything.” Paul is explaining to the believers of Thessalonica that it is God’s will for them to be sanctified. To be sanctified is more than just being separated from worldly things. It is to be in love with the heavenly, an experience of holy love that we can receive by grace.

The ultimate desire of God for you is for your sanctification. This work of grace brings us to a place of commitment and cleansing that will fix the problem of sin and set us free to love God with a cleansed heart. The wonderful news is that we can know that He has done the work and sanctified us, making us holy people.

The first time I heard the message of entire sanctification I remember that my heart was convicted by the reality that it was what I needed. I thought that would be wonderful if it were true. Now I know from personal experience that it is true, that it is God's perfect will for all of us.

Since God's will is for me to be sanctified, is that my desire?

What does the Holy Spirit reveal to me?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, I will not stop pursuing You until I know that You have fixed the problem of sin in my life.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “Through consecration and faith a pure heart is obtained and the sanctified life begins.”

—J. O. McClurkan³¹

WHAT IS LACKING



*“Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again
and supply what is lacking in your faith”*
(1 Thessalonians 3:10).

I had a wonderful pastor who preached holiness as a second work of grace. I was trying to live an effective Christian life but felt the civil war within my heart. I wanted to serve the Lord but also felt this other pull backwards. I was struggling

along, just like many believers. When I heard the message that I could be perfected in love it rang with truth. It certainly gave me hope that there was more that I could receive. I began to seek for the experience and God began to do a deeper work in me.

Paul knew the believers in the Thessalonica church were walking in the Lord. In chapter one, we read Paul's letter to them about how they were examples of the faith. They were effective witnesses. They were examples to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. They had been evangelizing in a big way. They were surely a people who were forgiven and serving the Lord, but they lacked something very important: God's sanctifying work of grace (3:10).

The Apostle Paul wanted to help them fix the problem. He wanted them to know God as he knew them. He wanted to perfect what was

lacking in their faith and to get them to increase and abound in love. This is the holiness of God that will establish our hearts in love.

I remember the day that I died to Louie and God sanctified my heart and filled me with His holy love. The Holy Spirit possessed me. What wonderful grace to live in!

What does Paul mean, “lacking in your faith?”

How can I be crucified in Christ?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Lord, please give me a holy heart filled with your holy love.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “He can just as easily save you from all sin in the body as out of the body.”

—John Wesley³²

LOVE IS THE MARK



“Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands”

(1 John 5:1-2).

There are all kinds of bumper stickers, pins, and T-shirts that Christians use to identify themselves. But love is the mark of a follower of Jesus. He came as the incarnate love of God and is

the epitome of love for us. Love sent Him to Bethlehem. Love sent Him to Gethsemane. Love sent Him to Calvary.

His love in us becomes powerful in its reach and its witness. The disciples were not wellknown because of their education, their vocation, or their economic standing. They were well-known because of their love for God and for each other. Their very lives were a testimony to the world. If you want to impact others, love is the greatest way.

The good news of Jesus is a gospel of love. It is His love overflowing in us that marks us as believers. Where will His love take you today? To a hospital room? A prison? An inner city mission? What will you do for others that will express God's love for them?

Some of my fondest memories of traveling across the continents are those of meeting fellow

Christians who expressed their love to me, not just in words but also in deeds. Random acts of kindness in the name of the Lord endeared people to me whom I had never met. But I knew their Jesus and His love in them made me love Him even more.

What am I here for?

What can I do today to make a difference in the life of someone?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, help me to show Your life in me through my love to others.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “To be filled with God is a great thing, to be filled with the fullness of God is still greater; to be filled with all the fullness of God is greatest of all.”

—Adam Clarke³³

A FAITH DEVELOPED



“We sent Timothy, who is our brother and God’s fellow worker in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith”

(1 Thessalonians 3:2).

The message of full salvation becomes contagious as people who have experienced it spread it around. Timothy was a “holiness carrier,” a “fellow worker in spreading the gospel.”

Paul wanted nothing more than to please God. He knew that people could go astray even after they had once known the love of God. He knew that people could also slide along without growing and maturing. He knew that some people have the tendency to try to hold on in their own strength and not receive a deeper work of God's grace.

The people to whom he was writing were believers who had received a transformation of the Spirit. They were examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia. Their faith had not gone out. But he wanted them to know that holiness is also a process—a process of growing and maturing. He wanted them to have a faith perfected in His love. How? They could have a deeper work of grace by receiving the infilling of the Holy Spirit as it had been promised at Pentecost.

Are you content in your faith? Are there new heights to climb spiritually? Of course! The songwriter said it for us, “Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.”

Can I be held up as an example of Christ?

What does being an example mean to others?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Father, give me a deeper work of grace in my heart through the in-filling of the Holy Spirit.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “Where the blessed Holy Ghost can have perfect right of way, He will convict sinners and regenerate believers and sanctify His own people and fill them with Himself.”

—Bud Robinson³⁴

35

HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH



“May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ”

(1 Thessalonians 5:23).

How holy do we have to be to make it to heaven? Not the real question! The real question is how holy does God want us to be to have an

unbroken fellowship and growing relationship with Him?

In his letter to Christians in Thessalonica, Paul gives spiritual rules for us to live by. Can you believe we can pray without ceasing? Can we keep from grieving the Holy Spirit? Yes, we can and Paul gives us the answer: be holy. How holy? Just holy! The Bible says to be holy as God is holy. Follow His commandments, model the life of His Son, surrender every decision and direction to the Holy Spirit—just live by obedient faith in the Christ you gave yourself to in the beginning.

But there is another factor: Holy does as holy is. In 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Paul says there is a divine work of grace that God can do in our lives to help us be all He wants us to be. He can sanctify or cleanse our hearts through and through. It is a complete work of grace and it is a lasting work

of grace. He says that it will keep us until Jesus comes.

He did that for me. He gave me that amazing grace—through and through, a complete work, and a lasting work.

How holy do I need to be to get to Heaven?

How holy do I need to be to be a follower of Jesus?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Lord, please make me holy so I can have unbroken fellowship with you.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “God has one destined end for mankind - holiness!”

—Oswald Chambers³⁵

36

WAITING COMES FIRST



*“I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high”
(Luke 24:49).*

Our culture is always in motion. From “people movers” in airports to parachute rides as birthday gifts, we like to be on the move. Even our church ministries focus on activities and motion. But

Jesus advised that there are times when we should purposefully stand still.

In His last meeting with His disciples before the crucifixion and resurrection, Jesus revealed that the promise of Pentecost—the power of the Holy Spirit—was on the way. But to experience the promise, they would have to take a spiritual “time out.”

He had been teaching as recorded by John in chapters 13-17 about the promise of the Holy Spirit. Now in Matthew 28 and Acts 1, He lays out the vision of winning the world with the gospel.

The Great Commission in Mathew 28:18-20 cannot be accomplished without Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:8. How important it is to find our Jerusalem and tarry or wait until we have died out to our self-centeredness and self-propelled ministries. To those who waited in that Upper Room,

The Holy Spirit came with sanctifying power (Acts 2). It was life changing for them and it will be for you. There is nothing more important than being filled with all the fullness of God, and receiving the promise of His Holy Spirit in His fullness.

Jesus saw the need of His disciples. He did not want them to go out to try to change the world until they had been changed themselves—sanctified, holy.

He knows our hearts as well. We cannot do the work without the power. We must “wait” before we “go into all the world.” We need the Holy Spirit to flood our lives in sanctifying power and to cleanse us from the pollution of sin—the bent to sin—the sin principle in our lives.

Where was my Jerusalem experience?

What difference did it make in my life?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, help me to wait before you; to “tarry” with you, and to experience Your life changing power through the Holy Spirit.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “Make an entire consecration of yourself to God—your soul, body, time, talents, influence, and your all—a complete assignment of all to Christ.”

—John Wood³⁶

37

THERE IS NO TWILIGHT ZONE



“The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children”

(Romans 8:16).

There was a television program in the '60's that featured paranormal events in the lives of everyday people. Called the “Twilight Zone,” each

week, actors portrayed people in unexplained situations.

Over the years I have met thousands who are living in a spiritual “Twilight Zone.” They have experienced some kind of faith commitment—even to testifying of entire sanctification—but often they don’t know how to explain it, and they don’t know how to verify it. They have no assurance of real victory that the Holy Spirit has done the work of fully sanctifying. They settle for head knowledge and do not pursue the experience until there is victory.

If we settle for that, we actually are trying to bring God down to our level rather than letting Him take us to His. The church is full of people struggling with this problem. Even our boards and committees have people who are trying to make major decisions without the fullness of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

In the country of Peru during the year that we lived there, many pastors came to the altar to be sanctified. They had studied and had the head knowledge without the assurance that the Holy Spirit had done His cleansing work in their hearts. In my messages, I kept the focus on the definite work of the Holy Spirit, that one could know the work is done.

That is what Paul is saying to us in Romans 8. The Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. As forgiven people, we can know the faith experience of entire sanctification. His Holy Spirit will give witness as a peace that fills our hearts.

Have I expected less from God than He can do in my life?

Do I believe His full promise?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Lord, I ask You to give me insight from Your Word and a

consciousness of Your presence until I will know the Holy Spirit has filled my heart.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “The cleansing blood has reached the remotest corners and deepest jungles of the spirit. God reigns within without a rival.”

—J. O. McClurkan³⁷

“IT’S THE DRIEST”



“But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life”

(Romans 6:22).

When I was a college student studying for the ministry, I worked as a barber. Two of the other barbers also were believers. They were always going at each other concerning doctrine. One was constantly trying to take me to debates in the city

between the two denominations. It was not a pretty situation. The arguments were heated and unconnected because they would not answer the other, and would always twist the scriptures or take them out of context.

One of the barbers believed that we are converted by being baptized with water. He would use Romans 6 as his proof chapter and would try to debate with me in the barbershop. One day I answered him this way. “Well, actually, Romans 6 may be the driest chapter in the Bible.” He never did bring up the subject again.

So many jump back and forth, interpreting this chapter between an actual water baptism and being filled with the Holy Spirit. Paul is trying to draw our attention to the sin that can be crucified—our carnal nature. We can be set free from this principle of sin in our lives when we are

crucified, dead in this spiritual baptism and “have your fruit to holiness” (Verse 22 NKJV).

When the Bible talks about “free” that is just what it means. Jesus died so we can be free from all sin to live in victory every day of our lives.

Have I depended on baptism rather than a real transformation?

In what way am I born to be free?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, please baptize me with Your Holy Spirit so I can be free from sin.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “Holiness takes out of the heart the discordant notes, and puts a man in harmony with the object of his creation, in harmony with his fellowman; in harmony with the laws of nature and in harmony with his God, and so brings the very harmony and music of heaven into the soul.”

—C. W. Ruth³⁸

39

SOUL COMMUNICATIONS



“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express”

(Romans 8:26).

Have you gotten into the habit of just saying little prayers and letting it go at that?

Many of our prayers are superficial—without much depth or effort. Romans 8:26 is a lesson in

prayer, which assumes that Christians pray constantly about everything: “we ought to pray.” That means total dependence on God for every decision we make. An active prayer life is a proof of our close relationship with Christ. It is very much like a close relationship in marriage. Like a communion of souls, my wife Ellen and I talk over everything.

Here in Romans, Paul is talking about a soul communion, a relationship where we become one in mind with the Lord. He so abides in us that it fulfills John 14 where Jesus says that the Holy Spirit will abide, almost take over, or be beside us and be our comforter/helper.

Paul knew that we cannot run our own lives. He wanted to be deeply connected even in prayer, where the Holy Helper is always in control. He helps us in our praying.

In college, we would gather in a small group to pray. I can still remember the times when there were no more words and it seemed the Holy Spirit would just hover over us in a sweet spirit of communion. It was like He would take over the praying for us. There is power in praying. It is God empowering us. This is a powerful verse that we need to dwell on and practice every day of our lives.

Have I received the Holy Helper?

Am I willing to live a life of deep relationship with God?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Lord, show me how to deepen my relationship with You in prayer. I depend on your Spirit to guide my praying.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “What the sun is to the solar system, holiness is to the soul-life, in that everything radiates from and converges to this center.”

—C. W. Ruth³⁹

40

IT ISN'T HALFWAY



“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will”

(Romans 12:1-2).

What would you give up in order to have the totally committed relationship with God that He wants you to have? God’s commitment to His

relationship with you: the Cross. I know of Christians in other lands who have literally laid down their lives for God—they are modern martyrs who are inscribed in Heaven's Hall of Fame.

You may or may not have to make a decision to give up your physical life, but when you live a life of holiness you will make a spiritual sacrifice—a living offering to God. This includes everything you are and everything you hope to be.

Transformation is the goal. It is not partial; it is complete—sanctified through and through! That means totally, all of us.

Paul is sure this is reasonable for us. And it happens both in a moment and on a continuing basis. It is a lifestyle as well as a definite work of God in us.

How much of a commitment does God expect?

How much does God give in return?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, help me make a complete consecration of every attitude or action of this day so You can transform me through and through.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “Entire sanctification cannot continue without continued submission to God.”

—John Wood⁴⁰

41

FLESHING OUT THE FAITH



“For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you”

(Romans 12:3).

I have made it a point to keep my childhood experiences basic in my ministry through the years. I was born into a very humble home. Dad had a

first-grade education and Mom only finished the second grade. Where I was born there was not even a road to the house. We used the creek as the road. We did not have a car. I remember how embarrassing it was to go to town in a wagon pulled by two mules. Even with those struggles, I am so glad for my heritage.

I don't know what kind of childhood Paul had but I am sure it was not so humble. He had many honors as a scholar and was ranked highly in everything he did. Yet he was willing to sacrifice the prestige, to count it as nothing, for the higher purpose of faith in Christ.

We must all come to God on an equal footing. The gospel is opposite to our human and worldly thinking. When we are humble and depend on God for everything, we can really live and be free. We should remember the grace given to us

as it says in verse 3. We are one body working together and have different functions and gifts.

The basis for fleshing out our faith is wrapped up in the spiritual principles Paul gives us in Romans 12. In verses 9 to 21, we are told to love good and hate evil, be kind, give preference to one another, be fervent in spirit, rejoice, practice hospitality, bless those who persecute you, be of the same mind, be humble, live peaceably with all people and do not be overcome with evil but overcome evil with good.

As a sanctified believer, you are the very character of God wrapped in human skin. What you will do today comes from what God has done in you. As you flesh out the Word, you personify its truth and power.

What is faith for me?

How do I have faith to receive what God has for me?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Lord, help me to keep in focus where You brought me from to where I am today.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “Holy is the way God is. To be holy he does not conform to a standard. He is that standard.”

—A. W. Tozer⁴¹

42

CONNECTING TO THE SOURCE



“How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent?”

(Romans 10:14-15a).

Mission is at the heart of the Gospel. Just go back to the two great commandments. When we love God with all our heart it drives us to the

mission of loving all people into His kingdom. If we do not have a passion for reaching the lost of the world I question the depth of our love for our Lord.

Paul says it well: all people need the Gospel. They need God's plan for their lives. God's plan is that everyone would come to know Him in saving and sanctifying grace, so they can love Him with all their hearts. It is so simple that it should help us focus on our mission. Without this work in the heart of a person, it is like a house wired for electric lights where all the wires are in place and all the light bulbs are screwed in, but someone has forgotten to connect the house with the feed of electricity from the street. It is not connected to the source.

Our mandate is to lead our friends, neighbors, and family to hook up their houses (lives) to the One who gives real life and makes the lights

shine. Paul explains it like this: “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent (Romans 10:13-14)?”

Our mission is to go forth with a system of evangelism that connects all the people groups of the world to the giver of real spiritual life: Jesus Christ. It is a holy cause and a worthy cause for holiness people.

Why does God put us in the mission?

Why does He care for the world?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, help me to connect others to the source of real life.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “The holy man is not one who cannot sin. A holy man is one who will not sin.”

—A. W. Tozer⁴²

BLUEPRINT FOR LIVING



“I have written you quite boldly on some points, as if to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles with the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit”
(Romans 15:15-16).

Many years ago I discovered that the Apostle Paul had outlined a blueprint for holy living in the fifteenth chapter of Romans. There are main

points of that blueprint that I have tried to live out in my life and ministry.

Help the weak. “We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves” (v. 1). We can be strong enough to give a hand to anyone who is not so strong.

Build up others. “Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up” (v. 2). If we make a neighbor stronger we become stronger. When we edify others we are like Christ who did not please Himself but took our reproach on Himself.

Promote unity. “May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus” (v. 5). Our God is patient and caring. He has the power to grant us to be like-minded toward one another.

Give hope. “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (v. 13). People are desperate for hope, and the work that Christ has done in your heart is a wellspring of hope.

Mature. “I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another” (v. 14). Being sanctified leads us on to maturity if we will walk in the light each day.

Live a sanctified life. “...Proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit” (v. 16b). Sanctification is being “set apart for holy use.” It means that the Holy Spirit has done a deep cleansing work in our hearts so that there is no committed sin, nor is the sin principle any longer in us.

How many of these do I do?

How can I do more and do it better?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Lord, I need the Holy Spirit's power so I can follow your blueprint for living.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: "The great test of whether the holiness we profess to seek or to attain is truth and life will be whether it be manifest in the increasing humility it produces."

—A. W. Tozer⁴³

TRUST THE AUTHOR



“For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God”

(1 Corinthians 1:17-18).

Have you ever taken note that the gospel doesn't make sense humanly? It is a mystery to the natural man and even to the Christian, unless

we accept it by faith. It does not make sense for a person to get up in front of a group of people and preach. It makes more sense just to talk and teach. Why would we exhort and give an invitation? It is simple—the Gospel is contrary to the thinking of man. That was God's plan all along. He wanted the gospel to be on a divine level of understanding, or better yet, a level of acceptance by faith. We have no idea how it works but it does.

You cannot explain how prayer works but it does. You cannot explain how preaching works but it moves people to action and allows the Holy Spirit to speak and convict the heart.

Paul declares in verse 18 that the message of the cross is foolishness unless you have received Christ as your Savior. Then you understand from the inside because the Holy Spirit teaches you and quickens your heart and mind. God's Spirit

lifts us to a level where we can see from His perspective. God has made foolishness the wisdom of the world because it takes faith to believe it. Trusting the Word of God means trusting the Author with all your heart.

Will you live by faith every day, walking blindly in the mystery of the Gospel?

What are some scriptures that illustrate the mystery of the Gospel?

How can I let God help me understand the mystery of the Gospel?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, I take the mystery of Gospel by faith.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “Holiness is in-wrought by the Holy Spirit, not because we have suffered, but because we have surrendered.”

—Richard Shelley Taylor⁴⁴

LOOK FOR THE TRAP



“So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall! No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it”

(1 Corinthians 10:12-13).

I did not grow up in the church. Though we went to church occasionally, I did not receive Christ until I was 21 years of age. In my early

days as a believer I heard some teaching that inferred that being entirely sanctified lifted you above temptation. I think my pastors were always clear on the subject, but it was in other settings that I picked this up.

Paul clearly states that we all must be careful. We must discipline our bodies and bring them into subjection (1 Corinthians 9:27). The devil is always at work, trying to get us into his hands. He will do anything to convince us to leave the Father's house.

My theory is this: if the devil can't get us to quit our devotions, become anemic, and fall into willful sin, then he will take us up and out. He will get us to the place where we become so enamored with ourselves or something else that we take our eyes off of Christ, fixing them onto something else. I have seen it happen many times.

The devil spends overtime working on us. This is the reason Paul says that we must discipline ourselves and follow the Spirit. This is why we need a cleansed heart, so we can live a sanctified life, loving God with all of our hearts every moment.

What is the difference between being sanctified and being a disciplined Christian after being sanctified?

How can I resist the devil?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Lord, help me be watchful of the traps Satan has laid for me today.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “It is quite true to say, “I can’t live a holy life,” but you can decide to let Jesus make you holy.”

—Oswald Chambers⁴⁵

46

IN TRAINING



“Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize”

(1 Corinthians 9:26-27).

Being sanctified through complete surrender is a work of grace, but living the life takes personal discipline. In my early years of living for Christ, I found that it was necessary to apply major

discipline to live in relationship with a holy God. In fact, I am still in training.

Now, some like to try to live a life of holiness just by discipline without dying out to self-centeredness and receiving the power of the Holy Spirit. Others like to put the focus on receiving the infilling and that is all that is needed. However, it is a balance of both experience and discipline.

Without the crisis moment of surrender, it is just self-discipline. And without the ongoing discipline of self, it is a relationship that is difficult to maintain. We need the power of the Holy Spirit working in us, as Jesus talked about in Acts 1:8, and as Paul describes in Ephesians 3:20. There is Divine power to help us in the discipline of ourselves.

This is what John describes in I John 1:7 when he writes about walking in the light. It is a day-

by-day experience of being obedient to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. He will lead and guide. He will give power and light. He will be our Holy Helper. As holiness believers, we should be known more for our disciplines than disqualifications.

What am I planning for today that will keep me “in training?”

Am I following a plan of discipline to live a holy life—separated for God?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, I ask for your grace so I can balance my surrender with personal discipline.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “The best way for anyone to know how much he ought to aspire after holiness is to consider not how much will make his present life easy, but to ask himself how much he thinks will make him easy at the hour of death.?”

—William Law⁴⁶

DON'T TAKE A DETOUR



“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men”

(1 Corinthians 12:4-6).

I know of a man who was very talented. He had lots of ability even without God in his heart. In reality he could do much of the “Lord’s work” without even being saved from sin. Eventually he let loose of his relationship with God and trusted

in his own abilities, and fell hard into sin. He disgraced himself, his family, and God.

The devil works overtime to get us to depend on our own abilities. Another of the temptations he uses is to distract our eyes from Christ and onto the gifts of the Spirit, so that we can use them for our own gratification. In the Book of Acts, Simon wanted to buy the power of the Spirit so he could use it. It is a trick of the devil for us to think that spiritual gifts make us more important. God never gives us gifts so that we can be recognized, He gives them so we can be used to bring Him glory. We are not to be seen. Rather, we should lift up Christ and live a holy and humble life in Him.

In chapters 12-14 of 1 Corinthians, you will see a diversion that caused great problems in the church. Paul had a lot of trouble trying to fix the situation. The devil likes to detour us from the

main thing: the Gospel. Be careful not to seek gifts but to seek the One who gives the gifts. Do not seek to be important. Don't let your talents go to your head, let them go to your heart. Honor and lift up Jesus as the one who died for us. It is when we are dead to self-centeredness that we can be used of God. Don't take the detour.

Are my eyes only on Christ?

Do I depend on Christ and not on my gifts and abilities?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Lord, I want to use the gifts that You have given to me for Your glory and not my own.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “Study universal holiness of life. Your whole usefulness depends on this, for your sermons last but an hour or two, your life preaches all the week.”

—Robert Murray McCheyne⁴⁷

48

GOD'S GUARANTEE



“Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come”
(2 Corinthians 5:5).

When I was a little boy we lived on a farm far away from department stores. We used the Sears and Roebuck catalog to order things through the mail. When something was on the way, it seemed

that I just couldn't wait for it to arrive, but somehow I always did.

There was great expectation as I waited. I didn't yet have what I ordered, but I knew it was coming because the store said it was. There was a hope, a confidence, and a faith element in all of that. Sometimes when the order came I was disappointed, because the picture in the catalog didn't seem to match the product I received. But most of the time I was very happy with what came in the mail.

If I had faith in a company to send me material things, how much more should I have faith in the Lord for spiritual things? Paul declares it right—we walk by faith and not by sight. We have confidence because we know God personally and He never fails us. He is always by our side. He is always making intercession for us. He has our best interests always in His mind. He

loves us more that we can even imagine. Being entirely sanctified makes us even surer of the things to come—and the provisions for the day.

Do you intercede?

Do you wait, expecting God to answer?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, I trust Your guarantee and by faith, choose to walk with You.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “If we would have holiness, we must be infilled by the Holy One. But there must be no limiting of His power, no barrier to His control, no veiling or curtaining of His light.”

—D. L. Moody⁴⁸

49

TAKE YOUR VITAMINS



“Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God”

(2 Corinthians 7:1).

How would you like to be time-frozen at the age of two, and stay that age and size all your life? That would be very abnormal. Imagine living in the “terrible twos” all your life! And imagine the people around you having to live with

you at that age—all your life! With most kids, we just can't wait until they reach three years old, and become more mature or outgrow some of the rebellion of the twos.

Maybe the Heavenly Father feels like that. Maybe He is ready for all of us, especially new believers, to move on and turn our self-centered lives over to Him. He must be ready for us to be crucified with Him in death to self so we will not be living in rebellion, questioning Him and His sovereignty all the time.

Just as children have growth spurts as they continue toward adulthood, so we must experience spurts of growth in our walk with the Lord. We must take our spiritual vitamins—the nourishment of the Word, the fellowship of the believers, the strengthening of service, and the oxygen of prayer.

After we are sanctified there is even more growth in grace. Even with the “terrible twos” of self-centeredness behind us, we don’t have to stay at the spiritual age of three; we must continue to grow after we have been filled with the Spirit. We never stop growing and maturing with the Lord. It is a dynamic relationship.

Have you died to self-centeredness?

Are you closer today to Christ than one year ago?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Lord, help me move past the “terrible twos” through a death to my self-will.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “If we would have holiness, we must be infilled by the Holy One. But there must be no limiting of His power, no barrier to His control, no veiling or curtaining of His light.”

—F. B. Myer⁴⁹

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SECRET FORMULA



“Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong”
(2 Corinthians 12:8-10).

I don’t know how prayer works. I just know it works! You may have had experiences where

you thought you knew how it worked, but then “that” situation came along, and you realized that answers to prayer are God’s mysteries. We both know that prayer operates within the realm of God’s will. We intercede, but He “supersedes.”

Prayer is not a hammer to force God to do what we want. It is not an attempt to manage God as we would coax Santa Claus for goodies. It is standing in the gap for someone in need.

Prayer works best when we have a holy relationship with Him, and we are walking in the light that He gives us. It is very much like our earthly relationships. When we have a wonderful relationship with someone, we have a tendency to give on behalf of that person if there is a need.

God has His plan but there are examples in the Word where it seems He changes His mind when someone stands in the gap for someone else through prayer.

God keeps His own timetable for answering prayer. He wants to work miracles on our behalf when we have the right attitude and faith. Have we spent enough time in prayer that we are where He wants us? He will always answer for the best of those who love Him.

In this passage, God could do even greater things for Paul by saying ‘no.’ His grace was sufficient.

Do you care enough or believe enough to stand in the gap?

Are you willing to spend the energy and time interceding?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, give me the resolve to stand in the gap through prayer and to accept Your answers in Your time.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “Study universal holiness of life. Your whole usefulness depends on this.”

51

GARDENS FROM GRAVES



“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me”

(Galatians 2:20).

We don't want to die. There is something in us that makes us want to preserve life—down to our very last breaths. We simply do not want to lose control. It is the same spiritually: There is also

something in us that drives us to be in control of everything. We want to be like God, but as the Maker, not like Him as the Holy One.

The Apostle Paul found the secret of life. The Bible calls it the mystery of the gospel. It is life through death. Those who have seen things grow in the soil should understand this principle. I grew up on a farm. It was natural to plant a corn seed so it would die, only to sprout into a living plant that would produce more corn.

Galatians 2:20 shows us this foundational principle. In this verse, God is telling us to crucify our self-centeredness by faith and to be willing to die to our own control. Then He will give us real life by raising us up with Christ, who lives in us and will be in total control of every part of our lives. He is faithful and powerful to do what He promises and does not promise something that is impossible or impractical.

I saw the principle at work in the country of Peru. A young lady was at the altar with tears in her eyes, and she died to the desires of self and prayed through to victory. The power of God was awesome as I witnessed the peace that replaced the struggle.

Are you crucified with Christ so that He can really live in and through you?

Are you in control of your life, or is Christ in control?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, please help me to discover the principle of life through the death of my will.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “The greatest miracle that God can do today is to take an unholy man out of an unholy world, and make that man holy and put him back into that unholy world and keep him holy in it.”

—Leonard Ravenhill⁵¹

WHO NEEDS DOCTRINE?



*“Until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming”
(Ephesians 4:13-14).*

A religious leader once said that our job is not to teach a set of doctrines but to preach Christ. I

understand what he means but somehow I believe that we need to be taught doctrine. Doctrine is taught every day through the media. Humanistic doctrine. Political doctrine. Cultic doctrine. Doctrine is important. We must know what we believe, especially as Christians.

Doctrine is the roadmap to guide people in their relationship with Christ and to help them in their walk to heaven. It was so important to the disciples in chapter two of Acts that they practiced teaching it daily and studied the doctrine of the apostles. How will we preach Christ if we don't know His doctrine?

We cannot read the Bible without finding the doctrine or belief of God and what He wants us to understand. When I was first converted I would take notes of the messages. It really helped me to grow in grace and knowledge of God. Doctrine is the understanding of God and His will for

us. It teaches us what we need to know for victorious living and how we are to live our lives in Christ. How we live and act is very important.

Every denomination has a manual or a book of organizational rules which includes its beliefs. These beliefs should be based on God's Word. How wonderful it is to know that we are living by the beliefs and rules that God wants.

What was the apostles' doctrine in Acts 2?

Can you explain the doctrine of holiness to a friend?

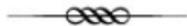
PRAYER FOR TODAY: Lord, thank You for giving us a set of principles to know You better, and to guide us in our daily lives.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: "The Holy Spirit is first of all a moral flame. It is not an accident of language that He is called the Holy Spirit, for whatever else the word holy may mean it does

undoubtedly carry with it the idea of moral purity.”

—A W Tozer⁵²

KEEP A SPIRITUAL GROWTH CHART



“And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God”
(Philippians 1:9-11).

You’ll see it in many schools. Usually by the door there is a growth chart—markings that

indicate the height of the students. Their teachers also keep a “growth chart” to mark their educational progress. Keeping a growth chart isn’t a bad idea for Christians either!

The apostle Paul wrote these powerful words about 29 years after Pentecost. Many things had occurred in that important church era, starting with Jesus’ challenge for the disciples to evangelize the world. His plan was for them first to receive the power of the Holy Spirit, which we read about in Acts chapter two. The apostles kept this message and practice alive.

For them, entire sanctification was not the end but the real beginning. Being cleansed and empowered is not just a one-time experience; it is necessary for our ongoing growth in Christ. Holiness of heart is the gate to real growth in the Lord. It is the base for a long-lasting and exciting relationship with our empowering God.

If we walk in the light that God gives us, He will keep doing His work in us. Paul says in verse six, "...being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." Ours is a wonderful, growing relationship as we walk with Him and talk with Him day after day. We fall in love with the Savior more and more each day in a holy relationship. He keeps filling us with His love so we can keep on growing in love with Him.

The powerful work of God leads us deeper into His love as we grow in grace.

How is my growth chart looking?

How can I keep growing?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, I want to grow in relationship with You through the power of the Spirit.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “Like generating steam in a locomotive, like charging a battery with electricity, so the fiery baptism not only purifies, but empowers, the child of God to become a witness for God.”

—F. B. Meyer⁵³

54

ON THE SAME PAGE



“For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose”
(Philippians 2:13).

Today I talked with a fellow believer from Argentina, who has come to us from another denomination. We talked about the reasons that he has chosen our denomination. He told me he is studying about holiness and is very intrigued

with its wonderful message. He also said that at the time he joined the church he was talking to an important church leader of that country about his decision. The leader said something like this: “You should not do that for they preach a message that is impossible to live.”

Of course I disagree. The gospel of grace may contain many divine mysteries, but being obedient to God’s will is plain and simple. The message of holiness is one of obedient faith in the plan and promises of God’s Word. For this we were born!

What about passages like “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:48); “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5 NKJV); “He who sins is of the devil” (I John 3:8 NKJV); “Sanctify them by the truth” (John 17:17). Yes, God wants to do more in our lives than we think.

Some people are satisfied to live in the struggle of daily sin and in constant repentance of sins committed. It seems that after a while it is not real repentance because they know it will just happen again.

We can have a fullness of the Spirit that will hold us steady and give us the will and power not to commit willful sin. As a matter of fact, we would not want to hurt our Lord by disobeying Him. We can love Him so much we won't want to commit sin. "No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God" (I John 3:9).

Why would the Bible tell us to have the mind of Christ?

How much of the power of God is working in you?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Lord, help me to live in the fullness of the Spirit and be obedient.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “This perfection is the restoration of man to the state of holiness from which he fell, by creating him anew in Christ Jesus, and restoring to him that image and likeness of God which he has lost.”

—Adam Clarke⁵⁴

THE DIVINE POSSIBILITY



“For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline. So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, who has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time”
(2 Timothy 1:7-9).

As one gets into all the doctrines taught by the different groups it is easy to get confused.

Splitting the hairs of theology is a favorite pastime of many. Some will lead us down the trail of being able to sin and get away with it without many consequences. Others will guide us to a holiness that is not biblical because it is built on a false understanding of God's Word. They claim that the experience does everything, and all we have to do is ride in the doctrinal wagon.

Paul is proclaiming to Timothy that doctrine must be biblical or it is not valid. Some were teaching doctrines other than the "Apostle's doctrine." He proclaims that holy living is the purpose of the commandment and it is love from a pure heart. In verse 14, he even claims that "the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus." (NASB).

Our holy calling is to receive a pure heart so we can have a good conscience and sincere faith.

Is it possible? Yes. First, because the Word says it is possible. In addition, so many have claimed the promise of God and have received this experience of grace and given testimony to it. We have seen their lives and accredit to them a life in harmony with God's promise.

It is a divine possibility for you as well. You can have a pure heart.

Are you willing to seek and hunger for the holiness experience?

Are you willing to keep growing in the experience of holiness?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, I seek to have a heart that is made pure, cleansed by Your Holy Spirit.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: "Again we have proved that holiness is the most reasonable thing in the world, for it brings the highest glory to God."

—George Asbury Mclaughlin⁵⁵

ONLY A DECOY



“But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them”
(2 Timothy 3:1-5).

I'm thinking of a wonderful lady whose father was a great pastor to the people but at home he

was brutal to the family. It has taken my friend years to work through the abuse. It left huge scars that will never totally go away.

Sometimes legalism leads people to depend on the things they do, or the rules they keep, or the things they eat or wear as proof of their holiness. This is not biblical holiness. Biblical holiness is not a form or outer facade of godliness but it is rather a heart cleansed of all self-seeking and pride—one that walks the walk.

Holiness is an experience of consecration but it is also a life to be lived by the discipline of things we do. Paul says that we should be spiritually blameless. That is not a form of godliness but a real holiness that comes from the heart, not from rules. We do the right things because we want to please our Lord.

Let us be careful not to have just a form of godliness.

How are your relationships at home?

How are your actions and reactions to others?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Lord, I want to have the heart of holiness to guide my everyday conduct.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “The greatest wisdom on this earth is holiness.”

—W.S. Plumer⁵⁶

57

GET OFF THE KIDS' MENU



“Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God”

(Hebrews 5:13-6:1).

Can you imagine just drinking milk all the time? It would save a lot of time. We would not have to decide what we are going to order in a restaurant or prepare at home. But it would not be normal.

Our cute little granddaughters went through a stage when all they wanted was water and milk. But there came a time when they wanted something more. You should see them now!

The Hebrews writer is saying that we are to go deeper in the principles of God. We need to be skilled in the Word of God. He refers to this as solid food because we are of full age. We need to stop ordering from the kids' menu.

The real issue is in 6:1, where he talks about going on to perfection. He knows that it is impossible for us to be humanly perfect, but that is not what he is referring to. He is talking about a deeper work of grace that Jesus was teaching.

When Jesus called us to be perfect “as he is perfect” he meant a perfect heart, one that is purified by His blood.

When God sanctifies the heart He purifies the very motive of our hearts. It is like a perfect love from God himself. It happens when we are crucified with Christ and filled with all the fullness of God.

From which menu do you eat?

Do you hunger to go deeper and deeper into God’s Word?

Do you long to walk closer to your Jesus?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, guide me deeper into grace so I can have Your perfect love.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “While holiness is not so popular in this country it is exceedingly popular in the country to which we are going.”

—C.W. Ruth⁵⁷

58

STREAMLINE YOUR GEAR



“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart”

(Hebrews 12:1-3).

To understand these verses we must look at sports. Almost every sport is known by its uniform or gear and they must be appropriate to the sport. For example, it does not make sense to put a weight belt on a track runner. He must have as little weight as possible in order to run freely.

For the believer, there is the problem of extra gear—a spiritual weight belt that hinders the run. The Hebrew writer says the weight is the sin. In the original language we have an important clue to help us understand what the writer was saying to us. Sin is twofold. There is the act of sin, but there is also the principle of sin. This refers to the original sin that we are all born with. In the original there is an article, “the,” before the word “sin” that refers to this second type of sin.

Here it refers to the carnal nature or this original sin that is the hindrance to the believer running the Christian race. If we are going to run

well we need to streamline the gear—in particular, get rid of the “weight belt” so we can run more freely. It will hinder and even make us stumble. It will keep us drinking milk rather than really getting into the meat of the Word of God in order to grow normally. Jesus died so we can be totally free from even this type of sin.

Are you having trouble running the race? Look at the weight of the sin principle in your life.

Have you been cleansed from all sin so you can run the race freely?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Lord, show me if the weight of the sin principle is hindering my race.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “To undertake to live a holy life without first obtaining a holy heart, is like undertaking to purify and clarify a

stream of water while there is yet a pig rooting in the spring.”

—C. W. Ruth⁵⁸

59

AN EVERYDAY REALITY



“But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy.’ Since you call on a Father who judges each man’s work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear”

(1 Peter 1:15-17).

About thirty-two years after Pentecost, Peter penned these words by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. We can only imagine the events and

development of the church in those years. We have the letters of the apostles to give us some idea. There were many attempts to detour the church—just as there are today—but the apostles kept bringing it back to the right path.

Peter's letter indicates that there was a problem of faith in the face of trials. In the early part of this chapter he talks about a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In verse five, he states that we are kept by the power of God through faith. We can greatly rejoice in this hope of heaven even though we may be grieved for a time here by trials that will enhance the genuineness of our faith. We are tested by fire so we can be found faithful in praising and honoring our Lord. We rejoice with inexpressible joy.

Peter declares in verse 15 that God calls us to be holy in all manner of living. The reality of this call is made possible by our consecration and by

God's work of grace accomplished and received by faith, as He cleanses and keeps on cleansing us from all sin. Holiness is an everyday reality—adequate for every need in the church and for every believer in the church.

Do you believe you have been released to have a holy heart?

Does your holy heart keep you from wanting to sin?

In what ways do you have power to keep from sinning?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, keep my consecrated heart by Your power and make holiness an everyday reality for me.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “Sanctification is not simply freedom from sin, but antagonism to sin.”

—C. W. Ruth⁵⁹

60

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS



“Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled”

(Hebrews 12:14-15, NASB).

People who resist holiness have a hard time with these verses. If we study them in the original language, it helps to realize that the tense of the

verb used means that that it is not optional, it is imperative and should be a reality every moment of every day.

We will start with the verb “*pursue*.” Peter says, “pursue peace” with everyone and “pursue [holiness]” because without each of these elements in our lives we cannot see the Lord. That looks very serious! I want to see the Lord and live with Him for eternity, don’t you?

Note that this verse takes us right back to the two Great Commandments. Is it not amazing how this theme keeps coming around? That means the theme of these commandments is important. It is the thread that runs all through the gospel. We are to love God with all our hearts and then to love all people.

There are just two things to give attention to here. One is to seek until we have received the work of entire sanctification by faith. This

cleanses our hearts so we can be holy people. It is this holiness that is referred to here. Then, based on this work of God in our lives, we can pursue peace with all people. That means to be disciplined in our attitude and actions toward others, to live a holy life before them. It is possible because it is a work that is promised by our wonderful Lord for today.

Think about what you pursue.

What is your first love?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Lord, by Your grace, I will pursue holiness of heart and life.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “Evil suggestions do not become yours until you put your endorsement on them.”

—J.O. McClurkan⁶⁰

61

FORSAKING ALL OTHERS



“Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation”
(1 Peter 2:1-2).

When we receive Christ in a dynamic work of grace, we want to quit sinning. His work is powerful enough for us to totally quit sinning,

even though we haven't yet received the infilling of God's Holy Spirit.

Even when I was first converted, I did not want to do anything that would separate me from my Lord. It was a love relationship that went deep. It was very much like when Ellen and I were married. Neither of us even thought about looking for a relationship with anyone else. We were satisfied with our relationship and wanted to love each other more each day.

The apostle Peter says it well. We must "lay aside all malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy and evil speaking." God wants to separate us from sin. When we get into the Word, God helps us to grow deeper in love with Him, and deeper in love with others. He will help us to walk in the light and quit the sin business, because we love Him.

But there is a deeper work of grace that God can do in our hearts. He can take away the stain

of sin so that our hearts are totally clean. It is a work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts that helps us resist willful transgression, hate sin, and turn our hearts totally toward God.

Think about the stain sin has left in your heart.

Is there a need for a deeper work of grace?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, thank you for the power of the Holy Spirit in me that helps me forsake willful sin and go deeper with You.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “Entire sanctification is the divine preparation of heart for the growth or development of all the fruit and graces of the Holy Spirit.”

—John Wood⁶¹

62

POUND IN THE LOOSE NAILS



“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect”
(1 Peter 3:15).

John Fletcher was one of the best theologians in history. He was a contemporary of John Wesley, but there was a point when he vacillated in his writing about the experience of entire

sanctification. Wesley and Fletcher finally found common ground in the scriptures. The scriptures are always a place to find common ground. The Word of God is the “reason” of our faith. And that “reason” may be expressed in our witness. In an age of biblical illiteracy, how important it is for the church to know and teach God’s Word. Without the sure grounding of scripture, faith may be weakened.

Like putting together the framework of a house, it is important to pound every nail deep into the wood because if you don’t, it is easier for the nail to begin to work itself out.

Testifying to what God’s grace has done in your life is just as important as pounding a nail all the way in. It gives you confidence, increases your determination for living, and impacts the people around who hear the testimony.

Of course, it is important to have a testimony that is alive, and fully compatible with the Bible. We may have heard those testimonies of being “saved, sanctified and petrified.” On the other hand, God works through people who have such dynamic testimonies that it makes others hungry for a spiritual relationship like it.

When I was first converted, I would drive for many miles just to hear my Sunday School teacher testify. She was so excited about having a personal relationship with Jesus that it had a powerful impact on me.

Do I have an experience deep enough to be totally grounded?

Am I excited enough about my faith to attract someone else to Christ?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Lord, help me seal my consecration to You by my verbal testimony.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “Perfect love makes a strong fortress of the heart: this fortress will be attacked, but is not as likely to be taken as without holiness.”

—John Wood⁶²

63

HE SHINES THE LIGHT



“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, purifies us from all sin”

(1 John 1:7).

I have learned to read the whole Bible through the eyes of this verse. It is powerful and has applications to everything taught in the Bible and to everything in our everyday lives.

Obedience to God is the key to unlocking real peace and happiness in our lives. Disobedience leads to guilt and a lack of peace. It will grind us into a terrible mental and spiritual state. In this verse, John says that if we walk in the light (if we are obedient), we will have a deep fellowship with Jesus.

If you've ever camped outdoors, you know how important it is to bring along a light source—a flashlight or a lantern. If you walk with another camper at night, you will probably share the light—and the light source brings you closer in proximity.

As we walk in the light that God gives us, we are growing in the Lord and in obedience. Every day God give us new instructions as He guides us along the way. He shines the flashlight in the dark so we can follow His ways and instructions.

And the more we walk in the light, the closer we are drawn to Him.

If we walk in the light that He gives us, He cleanses us from committed sin and even cleanses the “bent” or inner inclination toward sin so we can have peace with all men and holiness without which we cannot see the Lord. (Heb 12:14)

The blood of Jesus not only cleanses us from sin but keeps on cleansing us as we walk in obedience to God.

Have I opened myself up to all the light God wants me to have?

Am I leaning more toward the world or toward Jesus?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, I need Your power to walk in the light You shine for me.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “It is an undoubted truth that every doctrine that comes from God,

leads to God; and that which doth not tend to promote holiness is not of God.”

—George Whitefield⁶³

TOTALLY POSSESSED



“Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit”
(Ephesians 5:18).

Paul gives us wonderful guidance. Being filled with the Spirit is not optional for a true believer. Without going on to this marvelous relationship where one is totally filled with the Spirit, the believer will be a weak Christian. If we are walking

in the light, or being obedient in every way, then the Holy Spirit will lead us naturally deeper in our relationship with the Lord, until we have received the light to be entirely sanctified.

But reality tells us that many do not seek and live close enough to be lead like this in their experience with the Lord. They get diverted too easily.

Actually Paul is telling us that we can be so filled with the Spirit of God that He will permeate all our being—we will be totally possessed by His Spirit. Alcohol will control a person who has drunk it; it takes over until a person really has little control of himself. I have seen people so drunk that they could neither walk nor talk. That is the metaphor that Paul is using in this verse. We can be so totally filled with the Holy Spirit that He is in control of our actions and attitudes. As we maintain an up-to-date surrender, His

grace helps our words and deeds reflect the loveliness of Christ.

But there is another meaning here that is very significant for our daily lives. The tense of the Greek verb “filled” tells us that we are “to keep being filled by the Spirit.” Now, that is the way to live! Connected to the fountain so we can live a filled life in the Holy Spirit every moment of the day!

Am I possessed by the Holy Spirit?

What controls my mind?

Am I connected to the fountain of grace to keep being filled by the Holy Spirit?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Lord, I want to live a life that is continually filled with the Holy Spirit.

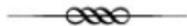
QUOTE FOR TODAY: “This, and this alone, is Christianity, a universal holiness in every part of life, a heavenly wisdom in all our

actions, not conforming to the spirit and temper of the world but turning all worldly enjoyments into means of piety and devotion to God.”

—William Law⁶⁴

65

HE FILLS IN THE BLANKS



“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth”

(Acts 1:8).

For the three years Jesus was teaching the apostles, He always had a purpose in mind. He was trying to raise them to a place of responsibility in order to put the future ministry of the

church in their hands. So He talked about the promised power of the Holy Spirit that they would need for the work. He knew that they were very finite or human and could not do it alone. They had to be filled with His strength!

In this verse Jesus talks about the promise as something He would do for them. He would send the promise of the Father “upon” them. They would “receive” power after the Holy Spirit had come and filled them. Then they would be His witnesses to all the world. The mandate of Christ is to take the gospel to the whole world.

This promise seems to be a power that is beyond the human realm. The Greek form of our English word for *power* comes from the same root as the word *dynamite*. Wow! We can receive a dynamite kind of power! What a promise! He will give us the power to live a holy life and the power to share the gospel.

Do I understand what the promise is?

Have I received this dynamite in my life?

Am I willing to be a witness?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, I want Your dynamic power so I can carry out the mandate You gave Your followers.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “The Bible is proved to be a revelation from God, by the reasonableness and holiness of its precepts.”

—Adam Clarke⁶⁵

66

THE PROMISE FULFILLED



“When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.

They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them”

(Acts 2:1-4).

A promise is nothing unless it is truly given and truly received. God always fulfills His promises. You can take it to the bank. However, it is just as important that we are obedient to fulfill the receiving part. He sets up a promise and a plan for us to obey in order to receive.

The disciples went to the upper room and waited. I can only imagine what happened. Standing in the Upper Room on my trips to the Holy Land, I have thought that it seemed too small for 120 people to spend ten days waiting. I have also wondered what they did for those ten days.

We know that they cast lots for the replacement of Judas, but that must have been a human organization thing, since we never hear any more of Mathias. They must have talked about the scriptures, prayed a lot, and many other things. One thing I'm sure they did was to prepare their

hearts for the coming of the promise. In Acts 2 we read that they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Great power was upon them. They began to do marvelous things in His name. How much can God do in our lives when His promise of power is working in us?

Have I waited on the Holy Spirit to come?

Did someone lead me into the experience?

How long did I wait? Did I wait until I prayed through?

Can I know?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Lord, fulfill Your promise in me and give me the power of the Holy Spirit.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “He who has learned to pray has learned the greatest secret of a holy and happy life.”

—William Law⁶⁶

67

THE ANSWER



“The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, ‘Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!’ ...Then John gave this testimony: ‘I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God.’”
(John 1:29, 32-34).

Have you ever been around those people who just seem to know it all? I have known many of them. Some seem to not only know everything, they let you know they know everything. Other people really are very knowledgeable, but don't let on that they know much. I have a friend who is the second type. I have gone to him many times for counsel and he always has good advice.

According to John, Jesus is the answer. He came to take away the sin of the world. That is the answer to our problem. John is so sure of himself on the issue! Why? God had revealed the answer to him! How powerful is that! The world is looking for the answer but in the wrong places. John is pointing the world to the right place.

John goes on in verse thirty-three to talk about the perfect plan of God to baptize us with the Holy Spirit. God sent his Son, the Lamb of God, to take away all sin in us so we can live lives of

victory. He is our answer and all we need to do is receive His forgiveness and the baptism with God's Holy Spirit so we can walk in obedience day by day.

Do I have enough of God that I have total victory?

Is God's perfect plan working in my life?

What do I lack?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, thank You for providing the perfect Answer for the sin of the world.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: "No attribute of God is more dreadful to sinners than His holiness."

—Matthew Henry⁶⁷

68

PERFECT LOVE IS THE HUB



“Jesus replied: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind’”

(Matthew 22:37).

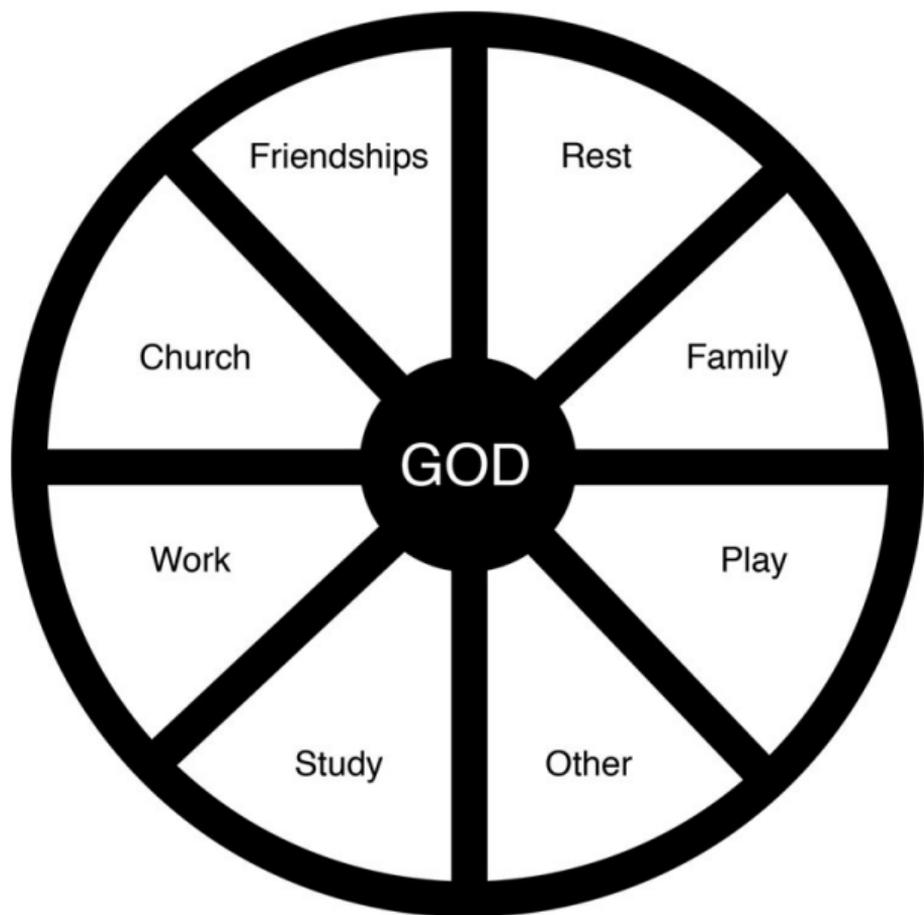
God’s first Great Commandment is both simple and complex. He wants us to love Him with all of our hearts. We love many things in this life. We can start with family, and go all the way to the

hobbies we enjoy. It is easy to have a divided, multi-love. What Jesus is saying to us is that we can have a singular love for God that will enable us to be the people God wants us to be. Love for Him needs to be number one in our lives, even though we love family and other things. Nothing should divide our love for Him.

It is like a wheel with spokes. The center or hub is the axiom that holds the wheel together. That is God! Everything that we love becomes the different spokes of the wheel, and they are all connected and held together by the hub. In the surrender of entire sanctification, perfect love for God becomes our hub or center. Of course, that can only happen when we are emptied of self-sovereignty and He becomes all in all to us, as we are set apart and cleansed of all sin.

Loving God with all of our hearts can only happen as God purifies our hearts in love. His

power working in us enables us to love Him from a purified heart. Holiness is the only way we can fulfill this commandment. It can only be accomplished through a heart that is totally sanctified by His blood.



Am I keeping a good balance?

Is God at the center of all the things I do?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Lord, let my love for You be the hub that holds everything together.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “God is ready to assume full responsibility for the life wholly yielded to Him.”

—Andrew Murray⁶⁸

69

THE SPIRIT'S SUFFICIENCY



“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you”

(John 16:13-14).

Many leaders of house churches in one Asian country were recently imprisoned for the faith and service to Christ. Jesus never promised a life

of ease to His followers. In fact He promised just the opposite. Jesus told the disciples that they would suffer for following Him and for preaching the gospel. He had not told them before because they were not ready. Now He is telling them of the Holy Spirit who will keep them steady and help them in difficulties.

It was God's plan for Jesus to go to the Father so He could send the Holy Spirit to be with them. After all, in His earthly presence, Jesus could be with them only at one place at a time, but the Holy Spirit could be with them all, in all places at the same time. The abiding of the Holy Spirit would be an amazing multiplication of the power of God working in the world and in their lives. If Jesus did not go away, the Holy Helper could not come to be with them.

Now, let us listen to God's plan for the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will convict of

sin for those who do not believe in Jesus. What a great help for us! The Holy Spirit will convict of righteousness and of judgment. He did not think they were ready for the rest, but just told them that the Holy Spirit would teach them and guide them into the truth after He had come into their hearts. The Holy Spirit would be the mediator between Jesus, the Father, and them. Just as He did for the disciples, the Holy Spirit is ready to work in your life anytime you will let Him.

What ways is the Holy Helper working in me?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, I welcome the Holy Spirit's work in my life today.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: "A servant of God has but one Master."

—George Mueller⁶⁹

70

HELD IN UNITY



“I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one”

(John 17:11).

Jesus is praying for His disciples and for you and me in this chapter. This is one of the most important chapters in God’s Word. He gives

some principles here that will carry us through to victory.

In verse 11, Jesus is praying that the believers will be “one” as He and the Father are one. Now would He have prayed for something that is totally impossible? I don’t think so. Look at the Trinity of God. Three in one sounds pretty inseparable to me.

All through the New Testament, Jesus is focusing on us loving God with all our hearts and our neighbor as ourselves. There is something about the gospel as the only religion of love that supersedes any other religion. This religion can only happen when He puts His love in us to enable us to love Him and the people of this world. As Jesus prayed, it is possible for us to love each other as Jesus and the Father love one another in holy unity.

How close do I think Jesus and the Father are?

What would bring the body of Christ (the Church) that close?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Lord, I want to love my brothers and sisters in Christ so that Your church might be one in Your name.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “The only right a Christian has is the right to give up his rights.”

—Oswald Chambers⁷⁰

71

KEPT,
NOT SECLUDED



“My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one”

(John 17:15).

Many religions teach that it is impossible for one to be kept from the evil one unless they are taken out of the world. That is one of the reasons

that monks go to the monastery. They want to be separated from temptation and from the world.

Jesus never planned for believers to be secluded from the world but to be kept in the world, and at the same time, kept from the evil one. This reveals the power of a true God! In the Old Testament, the sacrifice of animals did not have the power to keep the people from sin. But the New Testament sacrifice of Jesus is so powerful that, through repentance and the work of God, it takes the sin out of man and leaves him in the world as a testimony of the power of God.

There is a deeper work of grace beyond the first work that cleanses us from acts of sin that we have committed. It is a work that takes away even the stain of sin, so we are totally set free from the sin principle in our lives. This is the way we can be kept from the evil one. The power

of God works in our lives to enable us to be that free.

Have you been set free, totally free, or are you living in the struggle of trying to do it in your own strength? Have you received the power of God's Holy Spirit to cleanse your heart from the pollution of sin? You can know that He has applied this grace to your heart.

How am I being kept from the evil one?

Am I free enough to have keeping grace?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, please give me the power of the Holy Spirit in keeping grace.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: "Jesus Christ has undertaken by His redemption to put in me a heart so pure that God can see nothing to censure."

—Oswald Chambers⁷¹

ON THE WITNESS STAND



“I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me”

(John 17:22-23).

Jesus is praying here for all future believers. He gives us a truth that may not be found any other place. We live in a world that demands proof. Believers are continually on the witness stand to

testify to the facts of the gospel. They have latched on to the Cross as the proof that Jesus is the Son of God, but that is not the real proof.

Our testimony is the real proof of His life and sacrificial death. If God does not make a difference in our lives then why would people want to be like us? It has been told that Mahatma Gandhi was intrigued with the gospel. He studied and read all about the gospel, even the scriptures. In the end he said something like this: “If the teachings of Jesus were a reality in the lives of the Christians, then I would be a Christian.” Since he did not see a difference in the lives of believers, he turned toward another religion. What a missed opportunity for the church and the people that followed him!

The greatest proof that God the Father has sent Jesus into the world to take away sin is our love for each other. Verse 21 says, “that they may be

one as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that you sent me.”

When we are one, the world will see Jesus; but when we are divided, the world sees the world.

How do you want to testify?

How do people see Jesus in me?

What is different about me?

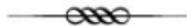
PRAYER FOR TODAY: Lord, let my life be proof that You are the true and Living Son of God.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “Whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes off the relish for spiritual things then it is sin for you, however, innocent it may be in itself.”

—Susanna Wesley⁷²

73

YOU HAVE TO TAKE IT ALL



*“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth”
(2 Timothy 2:15).*

Doctrine is important; it determines the way we walk. What we believe sets the pace for our lives. How we handle God’s Word will be the benchmark of our faith.

Believers in Jesus know that God's Word has power. The scriptures are real and true. How else do we really know His transforming power is working in our lives?

How we understand and use God's Word is also important. Paul says in verse 15 to "correctly handle the word of truth." In other words, use it with wisdom and skill to present Christ. We must also be able to not only know God's commandments, but to live by them. An entirely sanctified life is vital to all of this because the Holy Spirit guides us to understand what God wants for us as we strive to live the holy life.

God's Word is living. When you read it, God talks to you. The Holy Spirit will reveal God's truth to you. As you live in the Word, you automatically draw closer to God. When you depend on the Word, you develop a deeper relationship with the Heavenly Father.

We have gotten into thinking critically about God's Word until many now pick and choose what is true. If you don't believe the Bible as God's Word for us today, then you have nothing to stand on. But you believe...and you stand.

**What makes the Bible the Word of God?
Am I willing to believe the Word or just think as a human rationalizes?**

PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, help me to embrace all of Your Word and handle it correctly.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: "Every man is as holy as he really wants to be."

—A. W. Tozer⁷³

74

DON'T BE A POWER GRABBER



“When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles’ hands, he offered them money”

(Acts 8:18).

He was a great holiness preacher, a very successful pastor, and a district leader. But when revival came, some of the devil’s tricks came with it. People were detoured from the real message.

My friend fell into a trap. He wanted power and ended up losing his influence and effective ministry.

The same thing was taking place here in the eighth chapter of Acts. A real demonstration of divine power was happening but Simon saw an opportunity to grab the wheel and to make himself more powerful and important.

God never gives us power so we can use *it*, He gives it so He can use *us*. This is His promise. His power is available if we are living in the spirit of the mystery of the gospel. How's that? In your weakness, you become strong. When you are humble, you are lifted up and given honor, but anytime you let God-given power go to your head, you lose the spirit of the gospel and live your religion in your own strength.

In what ways am I trying to use power for me?

In what ways is the gospel a mystery to the normal person?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Lord, grant me the humility to let You control the power of the Spirit in my life.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “Whatever call a man may pretend to have, if he has not been called to holiness, he certainly has not been called to the ministry.”

—Charles H. Spurgeon⁷⁴

75

DON'T COMPARTMENTALIZE



“All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them”

(Acts 2:4).

In the Scriptures God is always present as three persons. We read, “Let us make man in our own image” (Genesis 1:26) as an example. The Triune God works together in perfect harmony. Living

in a culture that “needs to know,” we often try to bring the Trinity to a level of human understanding. We have the tendency to separate God into three persons and assign those persons totally separate functions and responsibilities, putting God into categories that make sense to us.

We have pet beliefs; sometimes we put God in a box. For example, some think that the disciples were saved at Pentecost. “They could not be saved before because...” Is God that small? Is He that predictable? What happened to the disciples when Jesus breathed on them in John chapter twenty? What about their relationship of walking with Him all those years? I am convinced that they were transformed and their lives were changed before Pentecost.

Another aspect that we need to watch is dividing God in our crisis experiences. Some think that when we are forgiven we receive Jesus, and

when we are sanctified we receive the Holy Spirit. NOT SO! When we are transformed from our committed sins, we receive all of God in forgiveness, but when we are sanctified we receive the *fullness* of the Holy Spirit. What this means is that we had the Holy Spirit in forgiveness but now He floods our soul completely in sanctification. Another way to put it is that God receives *all of us*. Our hearts are cleansed from the self-nature so they can be totally filled with all the fullness of Christ.

List ways that you know you have been forgiven.

List ways of how you know you have been sanctified.

PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, help me not to put Your person and Your grace into human compartments.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “The blood was shed outside of the gate, that His people might be sanctified. God is an economist. He provides for no impossibilities.”

—J. O. McClurkan⁷⁵

76

CLEANSSED TO THE CORE



“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness”

(1 John 1:9).

This is one of the best verses to use in leading someone to Christ. The power of confession and repentance brings the work of God into our hearts and lives. I am always amazed how God can

transform a life from the depths of sin. I would have never believed that my father could have been changed so drastically. It made such an impression on my life that I bought my first Bible and began searching.

This verse also talks about even a deeper work of grace. We can be cleansed from all sin. Yes, that is possible. We can be totally restored to God's moral image and live without committing voluntary sin. We are free indeed to love God with all of our hearts.

It is amazing to see how so many people, even church members, will fight the message of holiness. They will make fun of those who desire and testify to a holy life. They will even persecute seekers of holiness. Does that mean they will fight against God? It seems so, because the Bible is very clear not only here, but in many references that we should have a heart that is pure in

its motive before Him—cleansed to the core.
Have you been cleansed from all
unrighteousness?

How do I make sure I don't fight God?

**Do I encourage others to be set free from all
sin?**

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Lord, I want to be
pure to the very core of my being.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: “Sanctification puts
an artesian flow of joy into the heart.”

—J. O. McClurkan⁷⁶



BLESSINGS OF THE RELATIONSHIP

HOLY HELPER



“If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you”

(John 14:15-17).

As babies, we are totally dependent on our parents, but as we grow we become very independent and think we can do everything alone. The

gospel of faith forces us to acknowledge just the opposite—we all need help. As believers, the closer we want to walk with God, the more we will need to depend on Him.

In these verses, Jesus is saying that we are to love God and keep His commandments. He has promised us a special helper to enable us to do that. This helper is one who abides with us forever, helping us every day and every moment with any spiritual need. He will keep us steady and grounded, like a rock. All we need to do is abide, rest, and trust. How many times do we try to do it without the Holy Helper?

In my early days as a Christian, I tried so hard to do it by myself. I soon found out that He could empower me to be what He wanted me to be. When He sanctified me entirely by His power and His Holy Helper took control, my life in Him became even more abundant.

How close am I to Jesus?

List ways that reveal my walk with God.

Who is in control of my life?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Lord, I want your Holy Helper to guide me today in all I do.

QUOTE FOR THE DAY: Why are we not more holy? Chiefly because we are enthusiasts, looking for the end without the means.

—John Wesley⁷⁷

78

DIVINE GPS



“But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you”

(John 14:26).

A few years ago I bought a GPS. This little device has the amazing capacity to direct the driver to whatever destination he enters into its digital system. As a man with the normal aversion to asking for directions, it has been a big

help in our travels. Ellen, my wife, says that I should have bought her one 40 years ago because she is directionally challenged.

Now how would you like a permanent, built-in GPS to guide you not only in map directions but also in life choices? It may sound amusing, but it is actually promised by our Savior, Jesus. John 14:26 says the Holy Spirit will teach you and guide you in this life.

Life is confusing. Like visiting a new city with a complicated highway system, the freeway of life presents us with many interchanges. Wow! Do we ever need the Holy Spirit to guide and help us!

The problem is we have an aversion for asking directions! The time to simplify your journey is now. Turn your life over to Him and He will deliver what He has promised. He will become your spiritual global positioning system. According to

His promise, He will come and abide in you and guide you every mile of your journey to heaven.

Do I attempt to live a holy life on my own power?

List ways that you can allow God to guide you every day.

PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, thank You for providing the Holy Spirit to give me personal direction on the highways of life.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: God is ready to assume full responsibility for the life wholly yielded to Him.

—Andrew Murray⁷⁸

79

DEEP SUPPLY



“On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, ‘If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.’ By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified”
(John 7:37-39).

In John 7, Jesus begins to reveal His ministry. Verse 14 tells us that Jesus went up into the

temple and taught. In the teachings of Jesus He is constantly working toward the future. This passage is a powerful example of God's promises to us. He gives us a look at the promise of the Holy Spirit in verses 37-39.

He is referring to the coming of the Holy Spirit who had not yet been given (verse 39). He tells us that if we thirst we should just come to Him and drink. If we believe in Him, God's Word says that rivers of living water will flow out of our hearts. That is living in the overflow of God's Holy Spirit.

I grew up on a farm in southern Indiana in the USA. We had a well from which we drew our water for drinking. It had been dug by hand many years before. Though not very deep, it fed from an underground river and always had wonderful, cool water for the family.

Jesus is promising us something here that goes way beyond our human possibilities. He has a well of water (His Holy Spirit) that will flow in our lives and make us like Jesus.

List some things that you thirst for.

How can I connect to the fountain of the Holy Spirit?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Lord, let the presence and power of the Holy Spirit overflow in my life.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: There's only one proof of the Holy Ghost in your life and that's a holy life.

—Leonard Ravenhill⁷⁹

YOU'RE IN GOOD HANDS



“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will. And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?”

(Romans 8:26-28, 31)

Ellen and I had taken a rare trip to Cancun, Mexico, to celebrate our 40th wedding anniversary. We arrived at the hotel on Tuesday afternoon and just after midnight our home was struck by lightning and caught on fire. Some people said, “Are you not angry with God for letting your house burn?” They couldn’t understand why we weren’t. Yes, we were shocked and almost numb. We did not need that in our lives at that time. But why would we blame our loving heavenly Father?

Just as verse 26 says, we could feel the intercession of the Holy Spirit. The first thing we said to each other was, “I wonder what good God is going to bring out of this?” Paul tells us the good news in verse 28: God will work all things together for the good to those who love God. It is amazing how God watches over us and keeps us. We are in good hands because God has us in *His*

hands. If He is for us, who can be against us? We are safe in Him! A holy heart knows peace even when the fires come.

What in my life do I blame God for?

How can I change my mentality to seek God's plan and accept it?

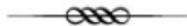
PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, thank You for the Spirit's intercession and for Your constant care.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: It is because of the hasty and superficial conversation with God that the sense of sin is so weak and that no motives have power to help you to hate and flee from sin as you should.

—A.W. Tozer⁸⁰

81

HOW BIG IS YOUR GOD



“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us...”

(Ephesians 3:20).

How big is your God? He is only as big as you will let Him be in your life. Yes, He can do anything, but sometimes we limit Him. In this verse, Paul is referring not only to how God supplies

our daily needs, but also how He promises the deeper work of sanctifying grace. God wants to bring us into His fullness by cleansing our hearts through and through.

Our God is so powerful that He can do even more than we can imagine. In Ephesians 3:16-17, He tells us that we can receive an experience of power in our interior being by His Spirit so that Christ can abide in our hearts. We can know the fullness of the love of Christ and be filled with all the fullness of God.

In verse 20, Paul declares that according to this power of God's Holy Spirit working in us, anything can happen. He is able. He is willing. What a gospel God has delivered to us! We can live in the shallow waters and struggle or we can get out into the deep and really know God's plan for our lives.

Would you let God be God and give you the gift of His Holy Spirit in sanctifying grace?

Do I limit God by saying that a Holy Life is not possible?

Have I settled for less than God's total freedom from sin?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Lord, I surrender my life so You can do more than I could even ask or imagine.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: The grace that does not make a man better than others is a worthless counterfeit. Christ saves His people, not IN their sins, but FROM their sins. Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord.

—Charles Spurgeon⁸¹

82

A VICTORIOUS LIFE



“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power”
(Ephesians 6:10).

It was at an altar at the age of 23 that I, Louie E. Bustle, died totally to my own will and gave God everything of me and of my future. And it was at that very moment that God opened the arsenals of heaven and gave me access to spiritual power and might. Until that time, I was struggling with

something within which took a lot of effort to control. I had experienced God's forgiveness of my sins, but I needed power over the reign of self in my heart. I needed a strength that only comes from the empowering of God's Holy Spirit, as Jesus expressed in Acts 1:8.

In this passage, the apostle Paul is expressing a deeper work of the Spirit which gives us the power to live a holy, victorious life in Christ. He also promises a power that will open our mouths to "make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel."

Again, this takes us back to the two great commandments of loving God with all our hearts and loving the people of the world the same. Is it not on purpose that Jesus comes right back and expresses the same thing in Acts 1:8? Now, after many years of preaching the mysteries of the

gospel, Paul is keeping this important focus alive. “Finally, be strong in the Lord.”

It is a word to the church and to every believer. We are in desperate need of Pentecost power. We've tried just about everything to shake our world, but seemingly the world is gaining ground that the church is willing to give up. We are not strong in self. We are not strong in beliefs. We are not strong in organization alone. Our strength is in the Lord. His might has been promised to us.

Are you willing to claim the promise of God's might?

How can I claim His promise?

Am I willing to pray through until I am dead to being self-centered?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, I need the strength that comes from the power of the Holy Spirit.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: We are not to be isolated but insulated, moving in the midst of evil but untouched by it.

—Vance Havner⁸²

THE PERKS OF MATURITY



“Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”

(James 1:2-4).

Would you like to be perfect and complete? This doesn't mean that you will not make mistakes, but that you can come to the place in your

walk with the Lord that you do not have a double mind and will not be tossed by the wind that blows at your faith. You will have an anchor to keep you from drifting in your relationship with Christ.

Will you be tempted after receiving the empowering of God's Holy Spirit? Definitely! James says that we will still have trials because that will help develop and mature our faith. This does not make us super human. It is a power from within to hold us steady in the temptation so that we can resist by an act of our will. In verse 12, James says that the experience of triumphing over the temptation through Christ will help us grow even stronger.

Now, don't think that your growth is over. This is the basic experience that leads to even greater growth in grace and love with your Jesus.

What is the difference between purity and maturity?

How can I run from temptation?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Lord, please perfect my faith so temptation will not defeat, but prove me.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: Jesus Christ has undertaken by His redemption to put in me a heart so pure that God can see nothing to censure.

—Oswald Chambers⁸³

PURE SUBSTANCE



“Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart”

(1 Peter 1:22).

Peter talks about a pure heart as normal for God’s people. This pure heart is defined by a heart of true love for God and all people. It really is that simple. We make it difficult by adding rules and regulations that make it more of a

legalistic system than a relationship with a loving God. It really is as simple as a heart whose motives are made pure by the blood of Jesus. That is holiness! Being pure is the only way we can live a holy life. Being pure is the only way we can love God with all our hearts. Otherwise we have a divided love.

In my early days as a believer, I loved God but wanted my way at the same time. I had forsaken my acts of sin, but had not yet surrendered my will to Him. When God entirely sanctified me, He helped me give my will to Him and that enabled me to love Him with an undivided heart—He had all of me. Through the years, it has been this relationship of living in surrender to His way that has given me the power of the Holy Spirit and kept me in His holy love.

Pure means that it has been refined and all of the foreign elements have been burned out. A

material like gold is not automatically pure; it is put through a hot fire that eliminates any contamination and makes the real metal pure and precious. That is the same thing that happens in our lives. The Holy Spirit makes us pure and precious through His holiness.

Do I have a pure heart?

How did I receive this pure heart?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: God, please remove any impurities from my heart and help me to love You with an undivided affection.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: There is no shortcut to holiness; it must be the business of our whole lives.

—William Wilberforce⁸⁴

THE GUARANTEE



“The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it”
(1 Thessalonians 5:24).

When I was a little boy, we used to get the Sears and Roebuck catalog. This “wish book” had all kinds of things a little boy would like. How I enjoyed looking at the wonderful things in that book. Sears also had a money-back guarantee. They were so sure you would like their

merchandise that they promised to return your money if you didn't.

God doesn't have a catalog; He has a book of promises. Unlike the expensive items in the Sears and Roebuck wish book, everything promised in His Word is available to the child of God. And His guarantee is His character—absolute truth and grace. God's promises are always true. You can totally depend on them. What He says He will do. He never fails to accomplish what He says.

Here in this verse is a promise to do something that many people think is impossible, but nevertheless it is true. Millions of people have claimed this promise and have received the empowering promise of the infilling of God's Holy Spirit.

Paul has just given the most wonderful news: God can do a divine work of cleansing grace that will hold us all the days of our life if we will be

obedient. Now he is telling us that God is faithful to do what He has promised. All we need to do is believe His Word. His promise will become a reality in our lives. If we believe, He will sanctify us holy.

Do I believe that God will do what He promises for me?

What is the difference that makes in my life?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Lord, thank You for the promise of Your Holy Spirit. I believe You.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: Catch on fire with enthusiasm and people will come for miles to watch you burn.

—John Wesley⁸⁵

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THE GIFT HE LOVES TO GIVE



“If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

(Luke 11:13).

Throughout His ministry, Jesus taught His followers to think of God as a Father. Now, He uses the comparison of parenting to teach us

something about God's promise of the Holy Spirit. He knows that we are finite and yet we want to do nice things for our kids. I have made it a practice to try to give good gifts to my children.

Somehow it pleases me when they are happy. To give them something nice does as much for me as it does for them.

Now, compare us to a loving Heavenly Father who wants to have a dynamic, holy relationship with us. He knows that we are needy and He has the answer for us. We are a people bent toward sin. He wants to fix our problem and bring us to the place where we can love Him with a singleness of heart. He wants to take the problem out of us. He has the solution.

So, even more than we like to please our children, God is delighted to give us the greatest gift, His Holy Spirit, so He can perfect our love toward Him.

Think on how God loves us and why.

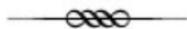
What was God willing to do to bring us into a Holy relationship with Him?

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Father, thank You for giving Your Holy Spirit to fill me with Your perfect love and empower me to live a holy life.

QUOTE FOR TODAY: Every one, though born of God in an instant, yet undoubtedly grows by slow degrees.

—John Wesley⁸⁶

ENDNOTES



(Author: I have purposefully included quotes on Holiness from the Internet. This wonderful doctrine of full salvation is not on the dusty shelves of time. It is alive in the hearts of minds of twenty-first century believers. Discover for yourself the frequency and variety of references to purity of heart and life. LEB)

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