

TEACHING GOAL

Study the process of sanctification and the tremendous battle that ensues to the obtaining of it.

DOCTRINAL STANDARDS

Q. What is Sanctification?

A. Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness

S.C. 35, L.C. 75, 77-78 W.C. of F. XIII, Savoy 13, Young 51

SCRIPTURAL BASIS

Study Passage: Romans 7

Support Passages: I Thessalonians 5:23, II Thessalonians 2:13, Romans 6, I Corinthians 6, Philippians 3:1-16, Romans 12:1-2, I Peter 1:13-21

BIBLE STORY

Genesis 12-25:11; The life of Abraham, often used as an example of faith and godliness, proves that perfection is impossible even to the greatest of saints.

.MEMORY ASSIGNMENT

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

APPLICATION

Since the old man, the sinful nature, remains in the Christian, we must make a real effort to subdue it and to conform ourselves to Christ.

SUMMARY

We certainly do not lack for scripture passages that teach the people of God to be holy. Holiness, by the way, is simply another word that means to be sanctified. To be holy is to be separate from sin.

The difference between justification and adoption as opposed to sanctification should be obvious. The former two are acts of God while the latter is a work or process performed by God in the believer. Scripture speaks of this process in two ways, first, as a deadening of the old sinful nature and secondly, as the making alive of the new nature wherein we conform more and more to the nature of Christ.

That these two natures are present in the believer is clearly taught in Romans chapter 7. Roman Catholic theologians, however, as well as many evangelical theologians, teach that Romans 7 speaks of Paul's life before he was converted. But we notice immediately Paul's statement in verse 24, "Wretched man that I am ---" We who are Christians still have the remnants of the body of death (verses 24 and 25) and we serve both the law of God and the law of sin. That the unbeliever cannot serve the law of God at all is clear from statement of Paul, "For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot." (Romans 8:7, ESV) Thus we conclude that Paul speaks of his experience as a believer.

As we can see, Paul states the glorious truth that even though believers serve both the law of sin and the law of God, even so, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." (Romans 8:1, ESV) Furthermore there is no condition to this truth according to the great majority of Greek texts. (We note here that several minor texts include the phrase. *who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit*)

According to the great majority of Greek texts, there are no ifs, ands or buts to the truth that we are not condemned even though we may fall into sin as Paul often claims to do. Thus Spurgeon comments on this verse that we have "free justification." What a precious jewel is this! Not that we are enjoined to sin and debauch ourselves. God forbid! But even while this process of sanctification is not completed, we are not condemned. (Romans 6)

Speaking of the state of perfection obtained at the resurrection which he has not yet obtained in this life Paul writes, "Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own." (Philippians 3:12, ESV) The same Greek word translated "*perfect*" in verse 12 is translated "*mature*" in verse 15, "Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you." (Philippians 3:15, ESV) Verse 15 must refer to maturity as it is according to the English Standard Version for Paul has already stated that he is not perfect as he will be at the resurrection from the dead,

We are to be holy, even as God is holy (I Peter 1:16) and surely the holiness of God is central in scripture, for He is holy in all His attributes. Yet

there is a marvelous escape when we sin, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John 1:8-2:1, ESV)

Praise God!