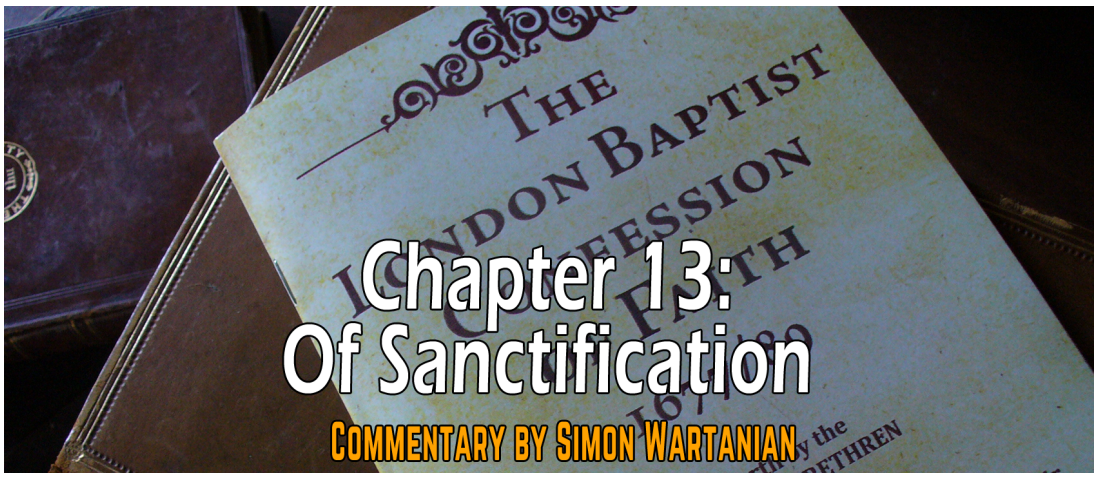
1689 Baptist Confession Chapter 13: Of Sanctification - Commentary

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Chapter 13: Of Sanctification

Now that we were elected, called and justified we enter into the Christian life, which is one of growth in holiness with ups and downs. In this chapter, we will deal with the question concerning what sanctification is and what Scripture says about it.

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§1 Through The Virtue Of Christ's Death And Resurrection, Are Also Farther Sanctified, Really And Personally

1. They who are **united to Christ,** effectually called, and regenerated, having **a new heart and a new spirit** created in them **through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, 1** are also farther sanctified, really and personally, **2** through the same virtue, **3** by **His Word** and **Spirit** dwelling in them; **4** the **dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed,** and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified, and they more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces, to the practice of **all true holiness**, **5 without which no man shall see the Lord**. **6**
    1. John 3:3-8; 1 John 2:29; 3:9-10; Rom. 1:7; 6:1-11; 15:16; 2 Cor. 1:1; Eph. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Col. 3:12; Acts 20:32; 26:18; 1 Cor. 1:2, 6:11[1]
    2. 1 Thess. 5:23; Rom. 6:19, 22
    3. 1 Cor. 6:11; Acts 20:32; Phil. 3:10; Rom. 6:5-6
    4. John 17:17, Eph. 5:26; 3:16-19; Rom. 8:13
    5. Rom. 6:13-14; Gal. 5:17, 24; Rom. 8:13; Col. 1:11; Eph. 3:16-19; 4:22-25; 2 Cor. 7:1
    6. Heb. 12:14

Those who have been saved have **a new heart and a new spirit created in them** in accordance with the promise of the New Covenant (Ezek. 36:25-27). What this means is that they have a new nature and no longer are they enslaved by the old sinful nature inherited from Adam. This is all **through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection**. Christ's work is the basis that we have a new nature. After having this new nature **created in them**, they are **farther sanctified, really and personally** (1 Thess. 5:13; Rom. 6:22). To be sanctified means to be set apart. If we are being sanctified by the Holy Spirit it means that we are being made more like Christ. This sanctification is **through the same virtue** as our receiving the new nature, i.e., by Christ's death and resurrection. The way that He sanctifies us is **by His Word and Spirit dwelling in them** (John 17:17; Rom. 8:13; Eph. 3:16-19; 5:26). Word and Spirit is also how He calls us to Himself (**chapter 10:1**). It is also how He keeps us for and to Himself. By this new nature and sanctification, **the dominion of the whole body of sin is**

destroyed (Rom. 6:13-14). The **dominion** is destroyed, but sin is not yet uprooted. We are to fight. **Several lusts** of the flesh **are more and more weakened and mortified** (killed). Not only are we fighting and overcoming sin and temptation, but we are also progressing toward holiness in being **more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving grace**. This is so that we would **practice all true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord** (Heb. 12:14). The Lord grants us holiness and calls us to holiness so that we would see Him.

United, Called and Regenerated

I refer the interested reader to the previous chapters where we dealt with these things. I lightly touched upon our **union with Christ in chapter 8 paragraph 5** (**see chapter 27, paragraph 1** for more detail). We dealt with the **effectual call or Irresistible Grace in chapter 10** and **Regeneration and Justification were dealt with in chapter 11**.

Sanctification

The answer to question 35 "What is sanctification?" of the Westminster Shorter Catechism is as follows:

> 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.[2]

Having this definition, we can say that sanctification is a work of renewal and enablement. This enablement is twofold: to die unto sin and to live unto righteousness. It is a work of life and death by God. But before we dive into sanctification and its effect, we must first note that "to sanctify" something is to "make it holy".

Holiness

Sanctification has to do with making or declaring holy. Holiness essentially has to do with "otherness" or setting apart. This idea is conveyed in the Old Testament by the use of words like:

- consecrate (e.g. firstborn [Ex. 13:2]; the people of Israel [Ex. 19:10; Josh. 3:5; 7:13], the priests [Ex. 19:10, 22; 28:3]; Mt. Sinai [Ex. 19:23]; gifts [Ex. 28:38]; offering [Ex. 29:27]; Passover lamb [2 Chron. 30:17]; altar [Ex. 29:36, 27, 44]; the tent of meeting and all its items [Ex. 30:26-29]; the temple [2 Chron. 29:5]; a fast [Joel 1:14; 2:15]),
- set apart (e.g. Israel and the godly [Gen. 49:26; Deut. 10:8; Ps. 4:3]; priests [Num. 16:9]; musicians [1 Chron. 25:1]; land [Ex. 8:22]; newborn of man and beast [Ex. 13:12]; animals [Lev. 20:25]; cities [Deut. 4:41; Josh. 16:9]),
- separate (e.g. Israel [Lev. 15:31; 20:24, 26]; priests [Num. 8:14; 1 Chron. 23:13]; animals [Lev. 20:25]; Nazarite [Num. 6:2, 3, 12]; a portion of the temple [Ezek. 48:21-22]).

While our initial idea may be that of making people holy or setting people apart, the usage of these words is very wide, ranging from people to things. If we consider the usage of the word "holy" then this would encompass these things above and even more. The basic idea conveyed from these passages is that a thing or a person is separated from a common purpose and given another purpose and it or they belong to another, e.g. God. William D. Mounce explains the concept of holiness and the Hebrew word used in the Old Testament:

> Generally, *qados* [which is used 117 times] is translated as "holy," "holy one," or "saint." It describes that which is by nature sacred or that which has been admitted to the sphere of the sacred by divine rite. It describes, therefore, that which is distinct or separate from the common or profane.[3]

All over the Bible, God is said to be holy. He Himself provides the standard which our holiness or the holiness of things are measured against. He is said to be "Holy, holy, holy" (Isa. 6:3; Rev. 4:8). It is the only attribute of God that is raised to the third repetition. It is not an attribute among many others. Rather, it is the attribute that encompasses all others. His love is holy; His justice is holy; His grace is holy; His wrath is holy and so forth. Holiness to God means that is He is morally perfect, other and separated from sinners. J. I. Packer explains:

> When Scripture calls God, or individual persons of the Godhead, "holy" (as it often does: Lev. 11:44-45; Josh. 24:19; Isa. 2:2; Ps. 99:9; Isa. 1:4; 6:3; 41:14, 16, 20; 57:15; Ezek. 39:7; Amos 4:2; John 17:11; Acts 5:3-4, 32; Rev. 15:4), the word signifies everything about God that sets him apart from us and makes him an object of awe, adoration, and dread to us. It covers all aspects of his transcendent greatness and moral perfection and thus is an attribute of all his attributes, pointing to the "Godness" of God at every point. Every facet of God's nature and every aspect of his character may properly be spoken of as holy, just because it is his. The core of the concept, however, is God's purity, which cannot tolerate any form of sin (Hab. 1:13) and thus calls sinners to constant self-abasement in his presence (Isa. 6:5).[4]

The Lord God says to His people: You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy (Lev. 19:2; 1 Pet. 1:16). God's people are especially called to holiness of life because of their relationship with God (Lev. 20:26; Deut. 7:6; 14:2; 26:19). The *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature* gives us a pretty good picture of what is consecrated or considered the use of the Greek and Hebrews words for "holy":

> The Hebrew word □□□□□□ and the Greek word ἅγιος, rendered "holy," "hallowed," and "sanctified," are applied to certain times which were hallowed — as the Sabbath and the Hebrew festivals (Gen 2:3; Exo 20:8; Exo 20:11; Lev 23:37; 2Ki 10:20); to the things said to be hallowed, as the sacred incense or perfume (Exo 30:36; Mat 7:6), the sacred vestments (Exo 28:2; Exo 28:4), the sacred utensils (Exo 30:29; 1Ch 22:10; 2Ti 2:21), the holy bread (Lev 21:22; 1Sa 21:5), the altar (Exo 29:37; Exo 30:1; Exo 30:10; Mat 23:19), and portions of the sacrifices (Lev 2:3; Lev 2:10). So, also, of places said to be hallowed (Exo 3:5; Act 7:33), as the holy city, i.e. Jerusalem (Neh 11:1; Isa 48:2; Mat 4:5; Mat 24:15; Mat 27:53; Act 6:13; Act 22:28), the holy mountain, i.e. Zion (Psa 2:6), the Tabernacle (Num 18:10); the Temple (Psa 138:2), the most holy place, the oracle (Exo 26:33; Exo 28:43; Heb 9:2-3; Heb 9:12; 1Ki 6:16; 1Ki 8:6; Eze 41:23). So, also, men are said to be hallowed, as Aaron and his sons (1Ch 23:13; 1Ch 24:5; Isa 43:28), the firstborn (Exo 13:2), and the Hebrew people (Exo 19:10; Exo 19:14; Daniel 12), also the *pious* Hebrews, the "saints" (Deu 33:3; Psa 16:3; Dan 7:18), like the word □□□□□□, rendered "saint" (Psa 30:4; Psa 31:23; Psa 37:28; Psa 1:5; Psa 52:9; Psa 79:2; Psa 97:10), and "godly" (Psa 4:3).[5]

In the New Testament, we meet a few Greek words with the same basic input. The verb ἁγιάζω (*hagiazo*, G37) in its various forms is used 25 times in the New Testament. It is used to mean "*to separate, consecrate; cleanse, purify, sanctify; regard* or *reverence as holy*".[6] It is used of God's name (Matt. 6:9; Luke 11:2); the gold of the temple, the gift on the altar (Matt. 23:17, 19); of Christ (John 10:36; 17:19; Heb. 2:11; 10:29 **see here**; 1 Pet. 3:15); of believers (John 17:17, 19; Acts 20:32; 26:18; 1 Cor. 1:2; 6:11; 1 Thess. 5:23; 2 Tim. 2:21; Heb. 2:11; 10:10, 14; 13:12; Rev. 22:11); of the church (Eph 5:26); of the unbelieving spouse and children (1 Cor. 7:14); of things made holy by the word of God and prayer (1 Tim. 4:5); of the flesh (Heb. 9:13). As Louis Berkhof observes, "The verb *hagiazo* is a derivative of *hagios*, which like the Hebrew *qadosh* expresses primarily the idea of separation."[7]

The next word is the adjective ἅγιος (*hagios*, G40). *Hagios* is used 221 times in the New Testament. Mounce explains:

> In general, two facts stand out in the NT regarding *hagios* ("holy, sacred"). First, God and what is associated with him is declared as "holy." God is specifically described as holy (Jn. 17:11; 1 Pet. 1:15-16; Rev. 6:8; 6:10), and Christ is called holy in the same sense as God (Rev. 3:7; cf. 1 Jn. 2:20). God's name is holy (Lk. 1:49), as is his covenant (Lk. 1:72), his angels (Mk. 8:38; Lk. 9:26; Acts 10:22; Jude 14; Rev. 14:10), his attendants (Eph. 2:19; Col. 1:12; 1 Thess. 3:13; Rev. 18:20), the prophets (Lk. 1:70), and the Scriptures (Rom. 1:2; 7:12). Jesus is addressed as "the Holy One of God" by an unclean spirit (Mk. 1:24; Lk. 4:34), by the angel Gabriel (Lk. 1:35), and by Simon Peter (Jn. 6:69). He is called God's "holy servant" (Acts 4:27; cf. 3:14). Here reference to "holy" means belonging to and authorized by God and thus, resisting Jesus is equivalent to resisting God.
>
> Second, the proper sphere of the holy in the NT is not priestly or ritual but the prophetic. The sacred no longer belongs to things, places, or rites, but to manifestations of life produced by the Spirit. In Paul's letters those who name Jesus as their Lord are called *hagoi*, "saints." This is not primarily an ethical expression but is parallel to being "called" (Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2), "chosen" (Rom. 8:33; Col. 3:12), and "faithful" (Col. 1:2). It implies association with the Holy Spirit. Christ is the one in whom believers become holy to the true God (see 1 Cor. 6:11). The power to do so comes from the risen Christ, who operates according to the Spirit of holiness (Rom. 1:4). In these cases holiness refers to a relationship with God that is not mediated through ritual (ceremonial) observance but through the leading of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:14). Spiritual worship is the offering of oneself as a living, holy sacrifice, acceptable to God (Rom. 12:1).[8]

This word is also used all over the LXX. This is the word used in the name the *Holy* Spirit; this is the word which is used of the

"saints"; this is the word which is used of that which is separated for religious use. Louis Berkhof observes that *hagios* is "The really characteristic word of the New Testament" and "Its primary meaning is that of separation in consecration and devotion to the service of God. With this, is connected the idea that what is set aside from the world for God, should also separate itself from the world's defilement and share in God's purity. This explains the fact that *hagios* speedily acquired an ethical signification."

Next up is the noun ἁγιασμός (*hagiasmos*, G38). This word is used 10 times in the New Testament and it could basically be translated as "holiness" or "sanctification." Mounce explains that *hagiasmos* '("holiness, sanctification, consecration") is generally used in the NT in the moral sense, referring to the process (or the final result of that process) of making pure or holy."[8] So, Paul says that we should no longer present our bodily members as "slaves to impurity and to lawlessness", but as "slaves to righteousness leading to *sanctification*" or holiness (**Rom. 6:19**). While we are now ahead of ourselves, here we see that sanctification does not merely affect us internally, but externally also in what we do with our bodily members for example. In **Romans 6:22**, we are set free from sin and the fruit from that "leads to *sanctification* and its end, eternal life." **1 Corinthians 1:30** teaches that Christ has even become "*sanctification*" to us, which He does by His Holy Spirit, the Agent of sanctification. God's will and calling are for our sanctification (**1 Thess. 4:3, 7**) and the purpose is that we "[may] know how to control [our] own body in *holiness* and honor" (**1 Thess. 4:4**). Our salvation was "through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth" according to **2 Thessalonians 2:13**. There is a kind or degree of *holiness* which we must possess "without which no one will see the Lord" (**Heb. 12:14**), which the Lord works in us through discipline (Heb. 12:10, a different word is used here than *hagiasmos*). According to **1 Peter 1:2**, our election "according to the foreknowledge of God the Father" was "in the *sanctification* of the Spirit". Then there is the use in 1 Timothy 2:15, which I'm not sure what the passage means. We see that this word is used with reference to moral purity rather than merely separation. As Mounce observed, this word is used to refer to the *process* and not merely to the fact of *sanctification* or holiness. Berkhof explains that while *hagasmos* 'denotes ethical purification, it includes the idea of separation, namely, "the separation of the spirit from all that is impure and polluting, and a renunciation of the sins towards which the desires of the flesh and of the mind lead us." While *hagiasmos* denotes the work of sanctification, there are two other words that describe the result of the process, namely, *hagiotes* and *hagiosune*.'[9] We will take a look at these words below. But first, let us take a look at another word which Mounce mentions.

This word is the adjective ὅσιος (*hosios*, G3741). It is used 41 times in the LXX and it is a word primarily found in Old Testament citations. It is used of Christ as the "Holy One" (Acts 2:27; 13:35); of the "*holy* and sure blessings of David (Acts 13:34 cited from Isa. 55:3); men should raise *holy* hands in prayer (1 Tim. 2:8); an elder should be "hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, *holy*, and disciplined" (Titus 1:8); the Lord Jesus, our high priest is "*holy*, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners" (Heb. 7:26); finally, God is said to be alone *holy* (Rev. 15:4) and He is also the "Holy One" Who is just (Rev. 16:5). In all these instances, we cannot separate the idea of moral holiness. In each of these instances, moral purity is that which is clearly intended to be conveyed. That's why Berkhof observes that *hosios* "describes a person or thing as free from defilement or wickedness, or more actively (of persons) as religiously fulfilling every moral obligation."[9]

Two words remain for us to consider. The first one is ἁγιότης (*hagiotes*, G41) which is used only in Hebrews 12:14. It basically means moral holiness. Second, the word ἁγιωσύνη (*hagiosune*, G42) is used 3 times in the New Testament. In **Romans 1:**3-**4**, we read that Christ was "from David according to the flesh" and "was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of *holiness* by his resurrection from the dead". In this passage, the spirit of *holiness* is the Spirit Who/which is opposed to the flesh, which is spiritual and divine. In **2 Corinthians 7:1**, Paul calls us to "cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing *holiness* to completion in the fear of God." Here is an aspect of killing sin and thereby pursuing moral purity away from the defilement of body and spirit. To be pure not merely in spirit, but also in body (since the previous chapter had to do with sexual immorality). In **1 Thessalonians 3:13**, *holiness* is connected to blamelessness when Paul calls us to "establish [our] hearts blameless in *holiness* before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints." Therefore, Berkhof writes that "These passages show that the quality of holiness or freedom from pollution and impurity is essential to God, was exhibited by Jesus Christ, and is imparted to the Christian."[10]

We must not forget that the holiness of a person or a thing is dependent upon its relationship with God. Berkhof writes that "The idea of holiness is never that of moral goodness considered in itself, but always that of ethical goodness seen in relation to God."[11] God declares Himself to be the standard of holiness when He says that since He is holy, we also should be holy (1 Pet. 1:15-16; Lev. 11:44; 19:2; 20:7).

Sanctification and Its Author

What is sanctification then? Wayne Grudem defines sanctification in this way:

> Sanctification is a progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and like Christ in our actual lives.[12]

In sanctification, God works in us to make us more Christ-like. It is a process throughout our Christian life on earth where God works to conform us to the image of Christ (Rom. 8:28-29). Throughout our Christian life, we will, by the grace and work of the Holy Spirit, learn to hate and forsake our sins and follow Christ more faithfully. Louis Berkhof defines it thus:

> Sanctification may be defined as *that gracious and continuous operation of the Holy Spirit, by which He delivers the justified sinner from the pollution of sin, renews his whole nature in the image of God, and enables him to perform good works.*[13]

Notice that Grudem speaks of "a progressive work of God" and Berkhof of a "continuous operation" which implies that this is not a one-time event like justification.

This work of sanctification is specifically attributed to the Holy Spirit. **1 Corinthians 6:11** says that both justification and sanctification come by the agency of "the Spirit of our God." Calvin comments on this passage, saying that "Christ, then, is the source of all blessings to us from him we obtain all things; but Christ himself, with all his blessings, is communicated to us by the Spirit. For it is by faith that we receive Christ, and have his graces applied to us. The Author of faith is the Spirit."[14] **1 Peter 1:2** says that our election was "in the sanctification of the Spirit". This means that "The election that was purposed by the Father was carried into effect by the agency of the Spirit in making them holy."[15] Joseph Benson explains the work of the Spirit in the life of the Christian from this passage:

> *Through sanctification of the Spirit* — Through the renewing and purifying influences of the Spirit on their souls; for sanctification implies an internal change wrought in the heart, the first part of which is termed *regeneration,* Joh 1:13, or *a new creation,* 2Co 5:17; Tit 3:5; producing, 1st, Power over sin, 1Pe 4:1-2; Romans 6.; over the world, 1Jn 5:4; and the flesh, Rom 8:2. 2d, Devotedness to God and his service in heart and life. 3d, A continually increasing conformity to the divine image.[16]

In **2 Thessalonians 2:13**, we are said to be chosen "to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth." A similar idea is given in this passage as in 1 Peter 1:2. It means that believers are "made holy by the Divine Spirit."[15] This work is "wrought by the Spirit who sanctifies all the elect people of God, first by eternally consecrating them to perfect holiness in Christ, once for all, next by progressively imparting it."[17] We may lastly add **2 Corinthians 3:18** to the list:

> 2 Cor. 3:18 And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are **being transformed into the same image** from one degree of glory to another. For **this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit**.

It is the Spirit of Christ the ascended Lord Who transforms us into Christ's image (Rom. 8:29), as we adore and behold His beautiful face through faith. Barnes beautifully explains this passage:

> The idea is, that it is by the Lord Jesus Christ, the spirit of the law, the spirit referred to by Paul above, 2Co 3:6, 2Co 3:17. It is done by the Holy Spirit procured or imparted by the Lord Jesus. This sentiment is in accordance with that which prevails everywhere in the Bible, that it is by the Holy Spirit alone that the heart is changed and purified. And the "object" of the statement here is, doubtless, to prevent the supposition that the change from "glory to glory" was produced in any sense by the "mere" contemplation of truth, or by any physical operation of such contemplation on the mind. It was by the Spirit of God alone that the heart was changed even under the gospel, and amidst the full blaze of its truth, Were it not for his agency, even the contemplation of the glorious truths of the gospel would be in vain, and would produce no saving effect on the human heart.[15]

These were the direct references to the Holy Spirit being the Agent of sanctification. Yet, we can also see that the fruits of sanctification are wrought by the Spirit and therefore, conclude in an indirect manner that He is the Agent (e.g. Rom. 8:11, 26-27; 15:16; 1 Cor. 6:19; Gal. 5:16-18, 22-23).

The Triune God is also said to sanctify us. **1 Thessalonians 5:23** says, "Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely" (see also 1 Thess. 4:3). **Philippians 2:13** says that "it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."

The Father disciplines us so as to lead to our holiness (Heb. 12:5-11, esp. v. 10). The Lord, in His High Priestly Prayer, prays, "Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth" (John 17:17). In **Hebrews 13:20-21**, the Author prays, "may the God of

peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus...equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen"

We cannot forget the role of God the Son in this and it is most crucial. His role is that by His death He has secured the sanctification of His people. He *earned* our sanctification. It is on the basis of His death that we are sanctified. **1 Corinthians 1:30** says that Christ Jesus even became sanctification to us! He is the reason and basis that we are sanctified through the agency of His Holy Spirit. **Hebrews 10:10, 14** teaches that the offering of Christ forms the basis of our past and present sanctification! Moreover, He also provides the pattern which we should imitate for our growth in holiness (1 Cor. 11:1; Heb. 12:1-2; 1 Pet. 2:21; 1 John 2:6). Without the offering of Christ, sanctification could not be accomplished and without the Holy Spirit, sanctification cannot be applied and enjoyed. **Titus 2:14** teaches us that Christ "give himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to *purify* himself a people for his own possession". This purification also includes not only declaring them holy, but also progressively making them holy. Christ's love for the church was so great that He "gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her...that she might be holy and without blemish" (**Eph. 5:26-27**). Christ died for the sanctification of His bride and when He meets her face-to-face, she will be without blemish.

The Triune God aims for our sanctification, but this work is especially attributed to the Holy Spirit of the Almighty.

What Sanctification Consists In

As the Confession tells us, by sanctification two things are accomplished. First, "the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified". Second, we are "more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces, to the practice of all true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." As we have observed above so now we say again: sanctification is a work of life and death. In sanctification, we do not merely focus on killing sin, but also on living unto righteousness. We do not merely focus on holiness, but also on the mortification of sin. The Westminster Shorter Catechism speaks of "[dying] unto sin, and [living] unto righteousness". Let us see what the Bible says about these elements and our sanctification.

Romans 8:13 teaches us to "by the Spirit...put to death the deeds of the body" so that "you will live." This means that through the Holy Spirit we are to kill anything and everything sinful in us. Without the Holy Spirit, this killing of sin is not possible. Albert Barnes observes on the promise of "you will live" that

> Either your sins must die, or you must. If they are suffered to live, you will die. If they are put to death, you will be saved. No man can be saved in his sins. This closes the argument of the apostle for the superiority of the gospel to the Law in promoting the purity of man. By this train of reasoning, he has shown that the gospel has accomplished what the Law could not do - the sanctification of the soul, the destruction of the corrupt passions of our nature, and the recovery of man to God.[15]

When is sin destroyed? When we are no longer controlled by its power and swayed by its savor. And if you are killing sin by the Holy Spirit, it shows that you are led by the Spirit which means that you are a child of God (Rom. 8:14)! It means that you have a new identity; no longer an identity defined by sin, but one defined by the Spirit of holiness. Which not only means killing sin, but also living unto holiness and righteousness. Living unto that which befits a child of God. We do not merely kill sin and leave it at that. We kill sin and replace it with righteousness and holiness! We do not kill the desire to lust merely, but we kill it by teaching ourselves to be content with our wives and with God.

Colossians 3:5 is to the same effect as this passage. Paul, there, gives a command to "Put to death therefore what is earthly in you". We may ask what is the "earthly" in us? Paul answers in the remainder of the verse: "sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry." But let us not gloss over this verse without first asking what came before it since it seems to be a conclusion ("Put to death *therefore...*"). The apostle does not merely tell us to kill sin, but he does it because he first called us to "seek the things that are above, where Christ is" (Col. 3:1). This means that we are to set our minds on the things that are above (Col. 3:2). In fact, we have already "died" and the "life" which we now have "is hidden with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3). In fact, "Christ...is [our] life" (Col. 3:4). We see in this passage not only the call to kill sin, but it is prefaced by the call to focus on Christ and have our minds set on the things that are above and belong to Him. This is based on the fact that we have died to the flesh and our old man is dead. We have a new life and this life is Christ. Then comes the call to put to death what is earthly in us because that which is heavenly (or from above, i.e., holy and belonging to Christ) is inconsistent with that which is earthly (i.e., sinful). In fact, those things which are earthly were part of our mindset before we came to know Christ (Col. 3:7). But they no longer belong to us and we should stay away from them (Col. 3:8). Why? Because "you have put off the old self with its practices". In other words, you "have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (Gal. 5:24; cf. Gal. 2:20). But this passage does not stop at the death of the old man, but points us to the fact that we "have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator" (Col. 3:10). The parallel passage in Ephesians 4:24 tells us that this "new self" is "created after the likeness of God in *true righteousness and holiness*." What we must note from Colossians 3:10 is the fact that this image is *being renewed*. We are

not created anew and thereby are made perfect in our conduct. Rather, there is a process of continual renewal. Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown observe that the new man's "development into a perfectly renewed nature is continually progressing to completion."[17] The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges explains this renewal in these words:

> *is renewed*] Lit. and better, **is being renewed**; a present not aorist participle.—In the parallel place in Eph. "the new man" "*was created*," as a definite fact; here he is continuously "*being renewed*," maintained as it were by a continuous creative act. (Cp. for the verb in a kindred context, 2Co 4:16.)—Practically, the thought is of the believer's maintained union with His Lord, and his realization in that union of continued peace and spiritual power. As if the Head, for the member, were evermore "made new," and so always newly reflected and as it were reproduced in the member.—Lightfoot compares, in contrast, Eph 4:22; "the old man is *being corrupted*, is *decaying*."[18]

As we move forward, Paul tells us what to put on:

> Col 3:12-17 **Put on then**, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, 13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. 14 And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. 15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

We are to "put to death" (Col. 3:5) and "put off the old self" (Col. 3:9) so as to "put on" the new man! We replace sin with righteousness. James Boyce observes that sanctification consists in "the destruction and removal of man's sinful condition, and habits, and action, which he by nature ardently loves, and the substitution for them of their very opposites in every respect."[19] It is needless to expound upon the things listed in vv. 12-17 because they are self-explanatory and clearly opposed to that which belongs to the old man (Col. 3:5, 8-9). Calvin observes that 'As he has enumerated some parts of the old man, so he now also enumerates some parts of the new. "*Then*," says he, "will it appear that ye are renewed by Christ, when ye are *merciful* and *kind*. For these are the effects and evidences of renovation." Hence the exhortation depends on the second clause, and, accordingly, he keeps up the metaphor in the word rendered *put on*.'[14]

Sanctified and Being Sanctified

Theologians have spoken about sanctification in two ways. Sanctification is a present reality and a past reality. In other words, *progressive* and *definitive* sanctification. John Frame explains:

> The instantaneous beginning of sanctification is called *definitive sanctification*, contrasted with the ongoing process of *progressive sanctification*. The first is a single act of God that happens at a single point in time. The second is a continuing work of God with which he calls us to cooperate.[20]

We will briefly look at definitive and progressive sanctification and see how Hebrews 10 combines these two.

We may speak of sanctification a few ways related to us. *First*, the elect have been set apart by God for salvation from all eternity. In this stage, we are not using sanctification in the usual sense of making more Christ-like, but of setting apart. Even from eternity, our election and salvation were in view of our "sanctification of the Spirit" (1 Pet. 1:2; cf. 2 Thess. 2:13).

The *second* sense in which we may speak of our sanctification is in connection to effectual calling and regeneration. Regeneration involves a real change in our nature and appetites. It is truly the start of our sanctification. It is our definitive sanctification. In fact, A. H. Strong defines sanctification as "that continuous operation of the Holy Spirit, by which the holy disposition imparted in regeneration is maintained and strengthened."[21] It is here that we are transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of God (e.g. Acts 26:18; Col. 1:13; 2 Cor. 4:4-6). It cannot be so that we have savored the sweetness of Christ and then remain with the same appetites that we had when He had not revealed Himself to us. According to Berkhof, sanctification "consists fundamentally and primarily in a divine operation in the soul, whereby the holy disposition born in regeneration is strengthened and its holy exercises are increased."[22] This is also the basis that we are called holy or saints. Scripture says that we are "those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Chris" (1 Cor. 1:2). To be a saint (a holy one) is not a privilege for a special class, but it is the identity of every believer in Christ. We were indeed "called to be saints" (Rom. 1:7) and such we are. There is no real sanctification without regeneration.

The third sense in which we may speak of our sanctification is in connection to our justification. Justification forms the basis for our continual sanctification. In justification, we are *declared* righteous, and in sanctification, we are *made* righteous. Berkhof explains:

> Justification is the judicial basis for sanctification. God has the right to demand of us holiness of life, but because we cannot work out this holiness for ourselves, He freely works it within us through the Holy Spirit on the basis of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, which is imputed to us in justification. The very fact that it is based on justification, in which the free grace of God stands out with the greatest prominence, excludes the idea that we can ever merit anything in sanctification. The Roman Catholic idea that justification enables man to perform meritorious works is contrary to Scripture. Justification as such does not effect a change in our inner being and therefore needs sanctification as its complement. It is not sufficient that the sinner stands righteous before God; he must also be holy in his inmost life.[23]

We may see this aspect of sanctification in Philippians 3:9-12. Paul rejoices in the "righteousness from God that depends on faith" (Phil. 3:9) and desires to become "like him in his death" and this so that he "may attain the resurrection of the dead" (Phil. 3:10-11). He does anything and everything so that he may attain "perfect[ion]...because Christ Jesus has made me his own" (Phil. 3:12). Paul's justification forms the basis and the motivation for him seeking holiness and perfection.

Now that we've mentioned the ways in which we may speak of sanctification, we now turn our focus to definitive sanctification. **Definitive sanctification** forms a break-up with sin. It takes place at the moment of regeneration whereby we receive a new heart and a new spirit according to the promise of the New Covenant (Ezek. 36:25-27). It is at this point that we are set free from slavery to sin (e.g. Rom. 6:6-7, 9-12, 16-18; 8:1-2; Gal. 4:3-5; Eph. 2:1-3, 12-13; John 8:31-36). Scripture speaks of this break-up in terms of dying. A dead person is bound to no one and nothing. Therefore, we must consider ourselves *dead* to sin and *alive* to God (Rom. 6:11). This means that we must no longer serve sin, but live in service of God. But this life which we live is in and through Christ (Rom. 6:11; Gal. 2:20). Christ never sinned in His earthly life and this is the aim for all Christians to be conformed to their Master. After the statement in Romans 6:11, comes the call to no longer let sin reign in our bodies (Rom. 6:12). We are dead to it and should live as if we are unaffected and unattracted to it. How we are to do that? By no longer presenting our bodies as "instruments of unrighteousness" but as "instruments for righteousness" (Rom. 6:13). And this is all based upon the fact that "sin will have no dominion over you" (Rom. 6:14)!

1 John 3:9 says that those who are "born of God" do not make "a practice of sinning". It does not say that we do not sin. It says that we do not practice sin. There is a huge difference. To practice sin means to live in sin. This, the Christian cannot do "for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God." God will make sure that those who belong to Him, do not live in a manner that is displeasing to Him. We do displease Him with our sinning, but He is all the more overjoyed by our seeking His face in forgiveness (1 John 1:9). Yet no true Christian can return to a life of sin because God will not allow it. This is the test between "the children of God" and "the children of the devil": "whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother" (1 John 3:10). We have been set free from slavery to sin and we are now commanded to live in slavery to righteousness, no longer serving sin. This is *progressive sanctification*. Therefore, definitive sanctification is a past and accomplished event, which nonetheless has implications for the present.

Dr. Frame explains **progressive sanctification**:

> But sanctification is not only that initial reorientation. It is also our gradual growth in holiness and righteousness, our progress in God's way, the way of good works.[24]

We must keep this "initial reorientation" and seek its growth in every area of our lives. This is accomplished in our continual sanctification. This is also usually the sense in which the word is most often used. We may point the interested reader back to our discussion above on Romans 8:13 and Colossians 3 (**see here**). We spoke there about the two elements of sanctification: dying unto sin and living unto righteousness. It is called progressive sanctification because it is throughout the Christian life. It is never completed in this life. It is only complete when we meet the Lord (either when we die for our spirit, or when He comes for our spirit and body). Progressive sanctification is not a line going upward from sin to righteousness. But it is rather a life-long process of ups and downs. While it is true that it is a process of ups and downs, yet there is truly a continual growth upward unto holiness. James Boyce compares it to climbing a mountain:

> The process of sanctification is like the ascent of a mountain. One is always going forward, though not always upward, yet the final end of the progressive movement of every kind is the attainment of the summit. Sometimes, because of difficulties, the road itself descends, only more easily to ascend again. Sometimes certain attractions by the way cause a deviation from the route most suitable for ascent. Often it is feared that there has been no higher attainment, often

that it has been but a continual descent, until, perchance, some point of view is gained from which to look down upon the plain whence the journey was begun and behold the height which has already been overcome. Often, with wearied feet, and desponding heart, the traveller is ready to despair, because of his own feebleness, and the difficulties which surround. But he earnestly presses forward and the journey is completed, the ascent is made, the end is attained.[25]

Obviously, once we come to know Christ, especially if we had lived a gross life, we will realize that it is no longer acceptable for us to do certain things and we will try to stop doing them. Therefore, there is a direct growth and going upward in a sense. But as we read the Word of God and learn God's will for us, we will discover more and more sin in us and more holiness which we desire to attain. But Christians do sin and fall into sin. We sometimes have seasons of disobedience and negligence to the means that God has ordained to bless and sanctify us as for example the Word of God, prayer, corporate worship, Christian fellowship, the ordinances. Therefore, there are also downs in our Christian life. It is not a straight line gradually going upward, rather a sort of zig-zag or flatline. When Paul came to repentance, there was a direct break from his sinful life:

Gal. 1:23 They only were hearing it said, "He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy."

But this does not mean that he was from that moment free from sin. He was certainly free from the dominion of sin, but was not free from its presence in his life. Therefore, he largely speaks of this inner war in Romans 7 among other places. But he is confident that he will have the victory:

Rom. 7:22-25 For **I delight in the law of God, in my inner being**, 23 but I see in my members another law waging war against **the law of my mind** and making me captive to **the law of sin that dwells in my members**. 24 Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from **this body of death**? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself **serve the law of God with my mind**, but **with my flesh I serve the law of sin**.

There is a continual conflict within Paul and two things waging war against each other. But he is confident that he will have victory through Jesus Christ our Lord! He speaks of himself in the present tense as being the foremost of sinners (1 Tim. 1:15). He knows that he has not yet attained perfection, but it is still his aim to do so (Phil. 3:11-12). In **Galatians 5**, he speaks of the two opposing desires of the flesh and the Spirit of God. This is similar to Romans 7 and what is there called the law of my mind and the law of sin. He writes:

Gal. 5:16-17 But I say, **walk by the Spirit**, and **you will not gratify the desires of the flesh**. 17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

Paul gives a command, namely: walk by the Spirit. This means that we must live "under the influences of the Holy Spirit; admit those influences fully into your hearts. Do not resist him, but yield to all his suggestions".[15] We should seek to listen to the directions of the Spirit and keep His Word in our hearts. To walk in the Spirit means to conduct ourselves in keeping and consistent with the Holy Spirit. In Galatians 5:25, Paul says, "If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit." Barnes explains:

The sense of this verse probably is, "We who are Christians profess to be under the influences of the Holy Spirit. By his influences and agency is our spiritual life. We profess not to be under the dominion of the flesh; not to be controlled by its appetites and desires. Let us then act in this manner, and as if we believed this. Let us yield ourselves to his influences, and show that we are controlled by that Spirit." It is an earnest exhortation to Christians to yield wholly to the agency of the Holy Spirit on their hearts, and to submit to his guidance...[15]

We are to walk in or by the Spirit, which means we must live *by* the Spirit and keep in step with the Spirit. Now we return to Galatians 5:16. Of what benefit is walking by the Spirit? Paul says that if we walk by the Spirit we will "not gratify the desires of the flesh." Then vv. 17 to the end go on to explains what the works and fruits of the flesh and the Holy Spirit are. We will not dive into the details, but let us listen to Philip Schaff on v. 16:

The Holy Spirit and the sinful flesh are so antagonistic and irreconcilable that to follow the one is to resist and defeat

the other. The 'flesh' is here, as in Gal 5:13; Gal 5:17; Gal 5:19, and often in Paul (also Joh 3:6), used in a moral sense, and designates the fallen, carnal, sinful nature of man. It is not confined to sensuality, but embraces also the evil dispositions of the mind (Gal 5:20).[26]

The Spirit and flesh are not friends, neither are they indifferent to each other. They are mortal enemies. We cannot mortify our sinful nature by doing good or positive thinking. The way in which the Bible teaches us to do this is right before us in this passage. It is by walking by the Spirit that we destroy the desires of the flesh. Romans 8:13 says, "by the Spirit [we] put to death the deeds of the body". Without the work of the Holy Spirit, there is no victory in our spiritual life.

That sanctification is **progressive** is seen in the fact that it is represented as a present reality and aim. So, the apostle Paul says that he is still pressing to make perfection his own (Phil. 3:12). It is something that he has not yet attained. In **2 Corinthians 3:18**, Paul speaks about a most essential aspect of our growth in holiness: beholding the beauty of Christ. He speaks of us "beholding the glory of the Lord" and we "*are being transformed* into the same image from one degree of glory to another." This is a present reality. It is only in heaven or when the Lord comes back that we will perfectly be conformed to His image. John says that "we know that when he appears we shall be like him" (1 John 3:2). Notice also how Paul begins in 2 Corinthians 3:18, "And *we all*, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord..." This is not a privilege for a few, but it is for all believers. He includes himself within the group which is beholding and being transformed. We may even say that he is being transformed even as he is beholding. He is being changed as he is enjoying the infinite beauty of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In **Ephesians 4**, Paul uses the metaphor of a body reaching unity and maturity. God gave ministries to the church "to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:12). Building up is not a short process, but in this case, a life-long process. This building up of the saints continues "until we all attain to the unity of the faith...to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). As long as we have sin in our lives, we will need sanctification. The Scriptures teach that no one is sinless in this life (e.g. 1 John 1:8-9). This shows us also that sanctification is *incomplete* in this life. Colossians 3 was also discussed above (**see here**), in which it is said that "the new self...is *being renewed* in knowledge after the image of its creator" (Col. 3:10). It is true that we were renewed in regeneration, but there is still a continual renewal through our life. The image will be the same only when we see Him (1 John 3:2).

We may see that sanctification is progressive in another way, namely, in the commands of the New Testament to live holy. For example, Peter says:

> 1 Pet 1:14-16 As **obedient children**, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, 15 but as he who called you is holy, **you also be holy in all your conduct**, 16 since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

Peter knows that those to whom he is writing are holy. He began his epistle by identifying them as "elect exiles", who were chosen "in the sanctification of the Spirit" (1 Pet. 1:1-2). We *are* a holy priesthood and a holy nation (1 Pet. 2:5, 9). Yet this does not mean that we are in no need of sanctification. There is both a definitive and continual aspect of our holiness. Therefore, he commands us to be holy as our God is holy. The Lord Jesus even called us to be "perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). In Hebrews 12:10, we are called to "Strive...for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord." God's will for us now is our "sanctification" (1 Thess. 4:3).

All these points indicate to show that our holiness is both a fact and a command. Furthermore, it is likewise continual and incomplete throughout our life on earth.

Thus, there is a sense in our sanctification which is past and that is that we are no longer slaves of sin, but slaves of God. God is now working in us His good pleasure and has set us apart not for destruction, but for glory. But, as we discussed above, there is still a sense in which we should still strive for holiness (Heb. 12:14) and seek to be sanctified now at the present time. Both of these senses come forward in a passage in Hebrews.

> Heb. 10:10-14 And by that will **we have been sanctified** through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11 And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. 12 But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, 13 waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. 14 For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those **who are being sanctified**.

Through the perfect obedience of Christ to the Father, we have been sanctified and set apart for God's purpose and use on the cross when the High Priest offered Himself as the spotless sacrifice. Then the writer to the Hebrews contrasts Christ's superiority to that of the priests under the Old Covenant. Then in v. 14, he says that His once-for-all-time offering has

perfected all of those who are being sanctified. Notice that in v. 12, the writer used the word ἡγιασμένοι (*hegiasmenoi*, G37), which is a perfect passive participle verb. The perfect tense describes a *completed verbal action in the past*. The passive voice means that the action is being done *unto* the subject and not by the subject. Here we see the verb ἁγιάζω (*hagiazo*, G37) being used as describing something that happened in the past. But we see a few verses later that the same verb, in a different form, is used again. In v. 14, we have the present passive participle ἁγιαζομένους (*hagiazomenous*). The present tense is the same as the English, it describes something that is happening at the present time when the author is writing. Those who are perfected are the ones who at the present time are being sanctified. We have been set apart for the purpose of God from all eternity and when we come to faith. But even at the present, God is at work in us to do His good pleasure and conform us more into Christ's image. Notice also that both aspects of our sanctification, either the initial or the continual, are based on Christ's atoning sacrifice.

God and Man

Notice that with the definition given by Grudem above (**see here**), he says that sanctification "is a work of God and man". In this process of sanctification, which is throughout the Christian life, man and God work together to bring about the result that we would be like Christ. Unlike regeneration, which is *monergistic*, i.e., there is only one power at work, sanctification is *synergistic*, i.e., there is a "together" working of man and God. Philippians 2 is an interesting text on this point:

> Phil. 2:12-16 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation** with fear and trembling, 13 **for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.** 14 Do all things without grumbling or disputing, 15 that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, 16 holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.

At the beginning of the chapter, Paul points to the Lord Jesus as the great example of humility whom the believers should model. He sets Christ as the example of the perfect faithful servant of God, like Whom all believers should seek to be. Now Paul is telling the believers to work out their salvation (not work *for* their salvation), namely—to bring the full perfection and implication of their salvation by following Christ's example as the servant of God. They are to work out their salvation and bring the fruits thereof by doing God's will, "*for*," or "*because of the reason"* that it is, in fact, God Who is working in us. It is God Who works in us to do His will. It is He Who supplies us with all that is necessary to obey Him (Heb. 13:20-21), therefore, all glory goes to God. It is He Who will cause us to obey according to the promise of the New Covenant (Ezek. 36:27). The Methodist Adam Clarke explains on v. 13, "Every holy purpose, pious resolution, good word, and good work, must come from him; ye must be *workers together with him*, that ye receive not his grace in vain; *because he worketh in you*, therefore work with him, and work out your own salvation." He also says:

> Because God works in them the power to will and the power to do, therefore the apostle exhorts them *to work out their own salvation*; most manifestly showing that the *use* of the powers of *volition* and *action* belongs to *themselves*. They cannot do God's work, they cannot produce in themselves a power *to will and to do*; and God will not do their work, *he* will not work out *their* salvation *with fear and trembling*.
>
> Though men have grievously puzzled themselves with questions relative to the *will* and *power* of the human being; yet no case can be plainer than that which the apostle lays down here: the *power* to *will* and *do* comes from GOD; the *use* of that power belongs to *man*. He that has not got this power can neither will nor work; he that has this power can do both. But it does not necessarily follow that he who has these powers will use them; the *possession* of the powers does not necessarily imply the *use* of those powers, because a man might have them, and not use or abuse them; therefore the apostle exhorts: *Work out your own salvation*.[27]

Then we move from vv. 12-13 to the rest of the passage quoted above and we see that Paul is commanding and encouraging the Philippians to persevere and do the will of God by obeying Him and doing good to each other. They are not to grumble about the things they are called to do, the reasons for that is that they may be blameless and innocent. That they may become more and more obedient to God and therefore, more and more like Christ. They are to shine as lights in the midst of utter darkness holding fast to the word of life, i.e., the gospel, the Word of God wherein they find the will of God.

This passage teaches us that God and man work together in the sanctification and obedience of the believer. Yet we must not think that God and man stand on equal footing. The passage clearly teaches that man is utterly dependent upon God, yet he must nonetheless work out his salvation. We may also observe the active participation of man in this work on sanctification in these ways:

- by commanding us to be holy (1 Pet. 1:15-16; 1 Thess. 4:3, 7; 2 Cor. 7:1; Heb. 12:14);
- by commanding and calling us to do that which is pleasing to God (e.g. Rom. 12:9-21; Col. 3:8-17; Eph. 4:17-32; Gal. 5:16-26);
- by commanding us to kill sin (e.g. Rom. 6:11-13, 19; 8:13; Titus 2:12; 1 Pet. 2:11);
- by commanding us to live unto righteousness (e.g. Rom. 6:11; 8:2, 13-17; 12:1-2; Eph. 4:25-32; 1 John 3:3; 2 Pet. 1:5).

Boyce explains:

> The believer must co-operate in the work of sanctification. His reception of the word of God, his reliance upon its promises, his struggles against sin, and his earnest longings for holiness are important elements in his sanctification. But the existence of these depends upon the belief that God has pardoned his sins, and will accept and bless him, which is the consequence of the personal trust in Christ which constitutes justifying faith.[28]

Dr. Frame observes what Scripture commands us to do:

> So Scripture commands us to yield our lives to God (Rom. 6:19; Phil. 3:13–14; Col. 3:10; Heb. 12:1), to strive for holiness (Rom. 8:13; 2 Cor. 7:1; 1 Thess. 4:3; Heb. 12:14; 1 Peter 1:15; 2 Peter 1:5; 1 John 3:3), to don the whole armor of God (Eph. 6:10–20) in order to fight against Satan and his angels, to put to death our sinful dispositions (Rom. 8:13; Col. 3:5).[29]

By the Spirit and Word

Now we move to the *means* of sanctification. The Confessions says that we are "farther sanctified, really and personally...by His Word and Spirit dwelling in them..." The Reformed often spoke of a few other things as also means of sanctification as the ordinances, prayer, corporate worship, and Christian fellowship. Grudem speaks of "Bible reading and meditation (Ps. 1:2; Matt. 4:4; 17:17), prayer (Eph. 6:18; Phil. 4:6), worship (Eph. 5:18–20), witnessing (Matt. 28:19–20), Christian fellowship (Heb. 10:24–25), and self-discipline or self-control (Gal. 5:23; Titus 1:8)."[30] Frame speaks, as he always does, in a triperspectivalistic means: God's law (normative: especially **the third use of the law**), the history of redemption (situational: God calls us to holiness by reminding us of what He has done for us) and personal experience (existential: believers as resources to each other).[31] Robert L. Dabney speaks of "The Means Three": "God's truth, His ordinances, and His providence."[32] James Boyce speaks of "the truth of God", and others which are subordinate to the word of God as (1) the providences of God, (2) the good works of Christians, (3) prayer, (4) the Lord's Day, (5) association of believers in church relations, (6) the ministry given by Christ, (7) the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper.[33] Berkhof speaks of the Word of God, the sacraments and providential guidance as being the means.[34] A. H. Strong speaks of "the word of God, prayer, association with other believers, and personal effort for the conversion of the ungodly".[35] John Dagg speaks merely of "the word of truth" and "the dispensations of Providence".[36]

From this short perusal into the systematic theologies to which I have access, the list can be as long or as short as one wants it to be. Our Confession focuses upon the two primary means: Word and Spirit as it does in other instances:

- We know that the Bible is the Word of God "from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts" (1:5);
- Christ governs the hearts of the redeemed "by his Word and Spirit" (8:8);
- God effectually calls the elect "by his Word and Spirit" (10:1);
- We are sanctified "by His Word and Spirit indwelling in [us]" (this paragraph);
- Saving faith "is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts, and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the Word" (14:1);
- Christ calls the church "through the ministry of his word, by his Spirit" (26:5).

Seeing the focus of the Confession upon Word and Spirit, it is no wonder that we see it here again. Yet we should not see this as the only means that the Confession allows for sanctification. We have good reason to explicitly mention prayer, corporate worship, the ordinances, the providence of God. All of these are still subordinate to the basic "Word and Spirit."

God works to sanctify us and make us more like Christ through the **Spirit** Whom He has given us and the **Word** that His Spirit has written for our benefit. Paul says that we were washed, sanctified and justified by the Spirit (1 Cor. 6:11). Our regeneration, justification, and sanctification are the work of the Spirit. In 2 Thessalonians 2:13, Paul says again that our

sanctification is through the Spirit of God within us. If the Spirit was not given to us we would have been hopeless. But it is the Spirit through Whom God works in us. It is the Spirit Whom He has given to us (Ezek. 36:25-27). It is the Spirit Who works in us fruit that is acceptable to God (Gal. 5:22-23). It is through the Spirit that the war against the flesh and sin is waged (Rom. 8:1-13). See more on the **Spirit in chapter 11**.

The Lord Jesus prays to His Father that His people may be sanctified in the truth and this truth He identifies as His Word (John 17:17). The means whereby we are sanctified and become more like Christ is through meeting the God revealed in Jesus Christ in the Word that His Spirit wrote down for us (1 Sam. 3:21). In Acts 20:32, Paul commends and puts the Ephesians into the hands of God and the word of His grace, which Paul says that it "is able to build [us] up". Where would we find the will of God except in the Word of God through which we are made more like Christ? God sanctifies us through His Spirit and the Word which He inspired humans to write down as the rule of all faith and practice. We grow in grace as we grow in our knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 3:18). As we learn to behold and adore His beauty in the Word and through the Spirit, we are transformed into His image (2 Cor. 3:18). James Boyce shows us how fundamental the Word of God is to our sanctification by listing its effects:

> (1.) Such passages as connect spiritual life with truth; as John 6:63; 8:32.
> (2.) Such as ascribe quickening power to the word of God; as Ps. 119:50, 93.
> (3.) Such as teach the that truth is promotive of obedience; as Ps. 119:34, 43, 44.
> (4.) Such as declare its usefulness in preventing sin; as Ps. 119:11.
> (5.) Such as associate it with cleansing from sin; as Ps. 119:9; 1 Pet. 1:22.
> (6.) Such as state that it produces hatred of sin; as Ps. 119:104.
> (7.) Such as assert its power to lead to salvation; 2 Tim. 3:15-17.
> (8.) Such as say that "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" have been given through the knowledge of God, and Christ; as 2 Pet. 1:2, 3.
> (9.) Such as imply that growth in grace is due to greater knowledge; as Heb. 5:12-14.
> (10.) Such as account for inability to accept higher doctrinal truth, by such weakness as should be characteristic only of those who are babes in Christ; as 1 Cor. 3:1-3.
> (11.) Such as set forth the word of God as "the sword of the Spirit;" as Eph. 6:17.
> (12.) Such as announce that all the ministerial gifts bestowed by Christ are "for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ; till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Eph. 4:11-16.[37]

Prayer is another means by which God sanctifies us. In prayer, we go to God with our struggles, desires, supplications, and thanksgivings. In prayer, He molds us into the likeness of Christ as His Spirit teaches us how we ought to pray (Rom. 8:26-27). As our Lord took His time to pray (Matt. 14:23; 26:36; Mark 6:46; Luke 6:12), so we should seek to imitate Him even in that aspect of His earthly life. In prayer, we draw close to God, behold His glory and be transformed into His image, even in our desires and our needs.

Corporate worship and **fellowship** is another means that the Spirit uses to sanctify us. The church in Acts "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers" and as a result "awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles" (Acts 2:42-43). The beautiful unity of Christians in worship is illustrated here by the first church. The text goes on to say that "day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people" (Acts 2:46-47). Their unity in attending the temple and praising God there, and eating and celebrating the Lord's Supper in their homes, was certainly used by God to give them more growth in holiness. This holiness and change of nature were even seen by outsiders in that they had "favor with all the people." Coupled to this, the text ends with "And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved." Robert Dabney writes:

> Worship is a sanctifying means, because the petitions there offered are the appointed medium for receiving grace; and because all the parts of worship give expression and exercise, and thus growth, to holy principles.[38]

A Christian cannot grow to mature holiness without the body of believers to which he is called by God. The stirring each other to good works, encouraging each other and meeting each other goes hand-in-hand in Hebrews 10:24-25. As we converse with our brothers and sisters, we hear about what the Lord is doing in their lives and that should arouse a response in our hearts either of rejoicing when celebrating victories or a call to prayer when they're troubled in spirit.

The ordinances of **baptism** and the **Lord's Supper** no doubt are means to further sanctification. While baptism is a one-time event, the Lord's Supper is recurring. In the book of Acts, it is often spoken of in terms of breaking bread (Acts 2:42, 46; 20:7, 11; cf. Luke 24:35). Both ordinances remind us of what Christ has done for us and His promise of renewal and complete

forgiveness of sins. As we are united with Him in these ordinances, by faith we also grow more into His likeness.

Lastly, we may speak of **the providences of God**. By this, I mean personal experience with growth in holiness in favorable and adverse times. John Dagg lays it out beautifully:

> Besides the word of truth, the dispensations of Providence are used by the Holy Spirit, as means of sanctification. Afflictions are often blessed to the spiritual good of God's people. David says: "Before I was afflicted, I went astray; but now have I kept thy word." These afflictions are chastisements which our heavenly Father employs, to make us partakers of his holiness." In themselves, afflictions have no sanctifying efficacy, and many who are tried by them, are incited to greater hatred of God; but the Holy Spirit accompanies them to the believer with a sanctifying power, and uses them to wean his affections from the world, and fix them on God. When outward things either cease to give him enjoyment, or produce positive grief and pain, he finds within him a source of happiness, in the exercise of faith and hope in God. Hence, in his darkest hours, as to worldly prosperity, the believer sometimes finds his prospects of heaven most clear, and his foretaste of future blessedness most delightful.[39]

As Dagg does, so we must observe that this is connected with God's fatherly chastisement. This is beautifully laid out in Hebrews 12. The purpose of this chastisement is that "he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness" (Heb. 12:10). Dabney explains that the providence of God is not without the working of the Word and Spirit:

> Last, God's providences, both prosperous and adverse, are powerful means of sanctification, because they impress religious truth, and force it home, by operating with the word and Holy Spirit, on our natural emotions. See Ps. 119:71; Heb. 12:10; Rom. 2:4. But it should be remarked, that two things must concur for the sanctifying effect of Providences—the light of the word on the Providences to interpret them and give them their meaning, and the agency of the Holy Spirit inclining the heart to embrace the truths they serve to impress. Mere suffering has no holiness in it.[38]

Let us all use the means which the Lord has given us to grow in holiness and in fear of the Lord and in this way, walk in a manner worthy of His holy Name.

Dominion of Sin Destroyed

We spoke of this in chapter 9:4 on the **Will in the State of Grace**. There, we wrote about the fact that we are no longer under the dominion of sin, but that there still remains corruption and sin in our body. We are no longer slaves to sin, but that does not mean that we no longer sin. But it does mean that we cannot live in a continual lifestyle of sin and still be regenerate (1 John 3:9-10). Paul writes:

> Rom 6:14 For **sin will have no dominion over you**, since you are not under law but under grace.

This is a continuous process wherein we battle and are at war with our lusts and sins. It's not something that happens at one moment as justification, but it's an ongoing continuous process throughout our life on earth. The war rages against the Spirit and the flesh, and this war will not stop until one side wins. The victory is already decided. But the war is only over when we are on the other side.

Man Made Able to Obey God

Before regeneration and faith, we were unable and unwilling to do that which is pleasing to God. But now we are made able, by God and His Spirit, to walk in His ways and do that in which pleases Him. Ezekiel 36:25-27 is my favorite passage in this regard because it addresses my depravity and provides a solution for my helplessness. It is God Who promises to work in us His pleasure and to cause us to walk in His ways. It is God Who has given the regenerate His Holy Spirit through Whom the fruits which are pleasing to God are brought forth (Gal. 5:22-23). It is He Who has made us a new creation (2Cor 15:17) with a new nature, i.e. a new heart and a new spirit that desires to do the will of God and is no longer a slave of sin. To similar effect is Philippians 2:11-12 which we briefly looked at above (**see here**). Another passage is Hebrews 13:20-21 which is a source of great comfort:

> Heb 13:20-21 Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, 21 **equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight**, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

It is the God of peace, thanks to Whom we too who have been justified by Christ's blood have *shalom* (Rom. 5:1), Who works in us His will. It is He Who gives us everything that is necessary so that we may do His will. Meaning, that our obedience to God does not spring forth from ourselves, but instead it is worked in us by God the only Sovereign as we seek His face in prayer and in the Word. God gives us and equips us with everything good, so that we will walk in His statutes and rules, and so that we may do His will to the glory of His name. Ultimately, it is He Who is "working in us that which is pleasing in his sight." It does not mean that we are passive and we do not do anything (contra the anti-Calvinists), but it means that those things did not spring from our nature, our power, and nor are they for our glory, but the glory is to God alone. He gives us everything that is necessary and He calls us to do and walk in the things which He has provided for us, even as He has prepared good works for us (Eph. 2:10). See **chapter 16** on good works.

The Differences Between Sanctification and Justification

It is essential to understand the differences between justification and sanctification. The error of confusing and mixing these is foundational to the Roman Catholic system. They teach that in justification, God makes a sinner holy and righteous. This is false. The biblical teaching is that in justification God declares and accounts sinners righteous because of Christ's passive and active obedience (**see chapter 11**). In sanctification, God makes all those whom He has declared righteous, practically holy and righteous. It is very essential to grasp this difference. For if we confuse these two or mix them, then we lose justification by faith alone and the source of our peace with God. We may say that through our new birth, we are declared and made holy in Christ. But in sanctification, the Spirit calls us to obedience, growth in and conformity to Christ's image. Wayne Grudem provides a helpful table where the differences between justification and sanctification are declared:

Justification	Sanctification
Legal standing	Internal condition
Once for all time	Continuous throughout life
Entirely God's work	We cooperate
Perfect in this life	Not perfect in this life
The same in all Christians	Greater in some than in others[40]

(1) First of all, justification is a legal act. God *declares* those who put their trust in Jesus, legally clean and righteous. Not because they are so; they are not, but because of Christ's work on their behalf. (2) Sanctification is a moral and internal work on the heart. God works in us to change us internally (not without effects on the outside!). (3) We are justified *once*, while as we observed above (**see here**), sanctification is progressive and throughout our Christian life. We are not justified continually. We were declared and accounted just once-for-all in God's courtroom. But the Holy Spirit will keep working in us until we meet the Lord and are perfectly conformed to His image. (4) Justification is monergestic. It is God Who is doing the accounting righteous; placing our sins upon Christ and accounting His righteousness unto us. This is also done with no consideration of our good works. Yet in sanctification, we work together with God as He works in us (**see above**). (5-6) Justification is done and complete and the same for all Christians. The one with the weakest faith is as justified as the one with the strongest faith. But this is not the case in sanctification as we learn to pray, "I believe; help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24; Luke 17:5). Some Christians are simply walking closer with the Lord than others. Some are more mature than others. Holiness is different from person to person, yet justification is the same in all because all of us have the righteousness of Christ accounted to us.

Our justification forms the basis for our continued sanctification as God works in us to *make* us holy and righteous in His sight.

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§2 This Sanctification Is Throughout The Whole Man, Yet Imperfect In This Life

2. This sanctification is **throughout the whole man,** yet **imperfect in this life;** there abideth still some **remnants of corruption** in every part, **1** whence ariseth a continual and **irreconcilable war; 2** the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. **3**
    1. 1 Thess. 5:23; 1 John 1:8, 10; Rom. 7:18, 23; Phil. 3:12
    2. 1 Cor. 9:24-27; 1 Tim. 1:18; 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7
    3. Gal. 5:17; 1 Peter 2:11

Since man was "wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body" (**chapter 6:2**) by the Fall, so also **this sanctification is throughout the whole man** (1 Thess. 5:23). It touches upon all parts and faculties of man, yet **imperfect in this life** (1 John 1:8). It will only be completed on the other side of eternity. Because sadly **there abideth still some remnants of corruption in every part** (Rom. 7:18). We are freed from the *dominion* of sin, but not

its *presence*. And from this combination of sanctification and **remnants of corruption**, we have a **continual and irreconcilable war** between the Spirit and the flesh (Gal. 5:17). Their desires are totally contrary to each other and in some way, they're found with us. Unredeemed man does not have this war because he is under the *dominion* of sin. Only redeemed man knows the **irreconcilable war** between the Spirit and the flesh.

Remnants of Corruption

I have already dealt with this in **chapter 9** on Free Will in **the State of Grace**. The interested reader may check our discussion on **Romans 7 and remaining corruptions here**.

Irreconcilable War

> Gal. 5:17 For the **desires of the flesh are against the Spirit**, and the **desires of the Spirit are against the flesh**, for these **are opposed to each other**, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

As long as we live in this body of sin (Rom. 7:24) and in this sinful and fallen world, we will never have complete victory over sin, in such a way that we will no longer sin. But the war will rage throughout the Christian life. In the passage above, we have two sorts of desires and those are the only desires that exist. There is no middle road of fleshly-spirited desires. The desires and fruits of the flesh are listed for us in Galatians 5:19-21 and the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23. Paul sets these desires against each other. There can be no mixing and there can be no compromise between these two types and sources of desire. Whenever these two come together they will clash and one will prevail. This is the type of war that Christians throughout their Christian life on earth will have to deal with. There is no Christian, no matter how holy from the outside, if asked honestly will say that they do not struggle with sin and do not experience this "irreconcilable war." Sometimes it is easier to choose the way of the Spirit and other times it is much easier to choose the way of the flesh. The way to avoid that the desires of the flesh overcome us says Paul is by "walking by the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16, 25; 6:8; Rom. 8:4-5, 12-14). To walk in the Spirit means to have a close relationship with the Spirit and a lifestyle characterized by the work of the Spirit. When we, through the Spirit, behold the beauty of God, we no longer carve and lust after sin, but our joy and satisfaction will be found in God alone. But when we are weak and are our satisfaction is not in God, we will seek the "fleeting pleasures of sin" (Heb. 11:25). Therefore, as long as this irreconcilable war rages, we will still be in need of sanctification.

Scripture teaches us that no living man is sinless. In **1 John 1:8**, we read that "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." I could not think of a stronger statement against anyone who thinks that they do not sin anymore or have not sinned (1 John 1:10). Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown explain:

> **that we have no sin**—"HAVE," not "have *had,*" must refer not to the past sinful life while unconverted, but to the *present* state wherein believers *have sin* even still. Observe, "sin" is in the singular; "(confess our) *sins*" (1Jo 1:9) in the plural. *Sin* refers to the *corruption of the old man* still present in us, and the *stain* created by the actual *sins* flowing from that old nature in us. To confess our need of cleansing from *present* sin is essential to "walking in the light"; so far is the presence of some sin incompatible with our *in the main* "walking in light." But the believer hates, confesses, and longs to be delivered from all sin, which is *darkness.* "They who defend their sins, will see in the great day whether their sins can defend them."[17]

Calvin explains that "By the word *sin*, is meant here not only corrupt and vicious inclination, but the fault or sinful act which really renders us guilty before God."[14] We may also adduce **1 Kings 8:46** which says that "there is no one who does not sin"; or **Proverbs 20:9**, which rhetorically asks, 'Who can say, "I have made my heart pure; I am clean from my sin"?', or **James 3:2**, which says that "we all stumble in many ways." All this to show that our sanctification in this life is incomplete. This does not mean that it is uncertain. It will certainly be complete, but not in this life.

Body and Soul

Often, we may have the sense that sanctification has only to do with our spirits or our souls. But the Confession says that "sanctification is throughout the whole man" and this not on its own authority. The Bible teaches that sanctification affects both body and soul. **1 Thessalonians 5:23** says, "Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Our complete sanctification is described as our "whole spirit and soul and body [being] kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Therefore, Charles Ellicott writes, "The idea is rather that of leaving no part unsanctified, than that of doing the work completely so far

as it goes: thus it serves to introduce the next sentence, which explains it."[41]

2 Corinthians 7:1 says that because of God's promises, "let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit". What are these promises? Well, we find these in the previous chapter and they are: we are the temple of the Holy Spirit; God dwells within us; He walks among us; He is our God and we are His people; He is our father and our we are His sons and daughters (2 Cor. 6:16-18). Adam Clarke explains, "The apostle undoubtedly means, drunkenness, fornication, adultery, and all such sins as are done immediately against the body; and by filthiness of the spirit, all impure desires, unholy thoughts, and polluting imaginations."[27] Barnes explains what the "filthiness of the flesh" is:

> The filthiness of the flesh here denotes evidently the gross and corrupt appetites and passions of the body, including all such actions of all kinds as are inconsistent with the virtue and purity with which the body, regarded as the temple of the Holy Spirit, should be kept holy - all such passions and appetites as the Holy Spirit of God would not produce.[15]

Sexual immorality may be foremost in the mind of the apostle since that was a problem with the church in Corinth (see 1 Cor. 6). He does not instruct them to only work on cleansing every defilement of the spirit, but "let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit". By doing so, we are "bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God." They are bringing holiness to completion because they are sanctifying both body and soul.

In **Romans 6:13**, the apostle calls us to no longer "present [our] members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness" but to present our "members to God as instruments for righteousness." Barnes explains, 'The word "members" here refers to the members of the body - the hands, feet, tongue, etc. It is a specification of what in Rom 6:12 is included under the general term "body;" see Rom 7:5, Rom 7:23; 1Co 6:15; 1Co 12:12, 1Co 12:18, 1Co 12:20.'[15] Sanctification begins internally, with our new heart, but it is not internal only. It inevitably works out to our body and our members as Paul calls them here. It affects what we do with our hands and feet; what we watch with our eyes; to whom or to what we listen with our ears; what words we speak with our tongues. Berkhof observes that "If the inner man is changed, there is bound to be change also in the periphery of life. Moreover, Scripture clearly and explicitly teaches that it affects both body and soul, I Thess. 5:23; II Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:12; I Cor. 6:15,20."[42] Lest we think that the sanctification of our bodies consists of asceticism (abstinence from physical pleasures), Dabney explains:

> The sanctification of our bodies consists, therefore, not in the ascetic mortification of our nerves, muscles, glands, etc., but in the employment of the members as the implements of none but holy volitions, and in such management and regulations of the senses, that they shall be the inlets of no objective, or occasional causes of wrong feeling. This will imply, of course, strict temperance, continence, and avoidance of temptation to the sinful awakening of appetite, as well as the preservation of muscular vigour, and healthy activity, by self denial and bodily hardihood. 1 Cor. 9:27; 2 Pet. 2:14; James 3:2.[43]

Wayne Grudem goes even deeper by specifying the parts or aspects that Scripture speaks about. Sanctification touches our **intellect** and **knowledge** (Col. 1:10; 3:10; Phil. 1:9; Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 10:5). 'Although our knowledge of God is more than intellectual knowledge, there is certainly an intellectual component to it, and Paul says that this knowledge of God should keep increasing throughout our lives: a life "worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him" is one that is continually "increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col. 1:10).'[44]

Growth in sanctification will affect our **emotions**. This happens as we grow in the fruits of the Holy Spirit as "love, joy, peace, patience" (Gal. 5:22). We will learn to "abstain from the passions of the flesh" (1 Pet. 2:11) and to "not love the world or the things in the world" (1 John 2:15). Instead, we will learn to become more "obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which [we] were committed" (Rom. 6:17). Negative emotions should no longer hold a place in our lives (Eph. 4:31; Col. 3:8). Our **will** is not exempted. God will work in us "to *will* and to work for his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13).

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§3 The Regenerate Part Doth Overcome

3. In which **war**, although the remaining corruption **for a time may much prevail, 1** yet through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the **regenerate part doth overcome; 2** and so the saints grow in grace, **perfecting holiness in the fear of God,** pressing after an heavenly life, in evangelical obedience to all the commands which Christ as Head and King, in His Word hath prescribed them. **3**
    1. Rom. 7:23
    2. Rom. 6:14; 1 John 5:4; Eph. 4:15-16

3. 2 Peter 3:18; 2 Cor. 3:18; 7:1; Matt. 28:20

There will be times when we fall into sin in this **war** and we see our **remaining corruption for a time may much prevail** (Rom. 7:23), but by the **strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ**, Whose work this is, **the regenerate part doth overcome** eventually (1 John 5:4-5). Through this constant **war**, the **saints grow in grace** (2 Peter 3:18) and the appreciation thereof, thankful to God for His Spirit in us. In this process of sanctification, grow in **perfecting holiness in the fear of God**, trying to become more like Christ with each day. **Pressing after an heavenly life**, not only in seeking for heaven but all the more in trying to live holy lives here on earth **in evangelical obedience to all the commands of Christ as Head and King** (Matt. 28:20). We heartily desire that which we before our regeneration despised—to love and obey Christ. These things, Christ, our **Head and King**, has put down in **His Word**. We know how we ought to obey Him from **His Word** which He gave us by His Spirit.

Victory Guaranteed

The promise of Scripture is indeed that "the generate part doth overcome". We have already touched on the fact that sanctification is a life-long process of ups and downs, and therefore, there will be times when our remaining corruption will get the best of us. But there will also be times when we, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, get the victory against our sin. The way to avoid and achieve victory against the flesh and sin is to walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:17) and use the means that God has given for our sanctification such as reading the Word, prayer, corporate worship and communion with the people of God.

A local church is essential and necessary for the growth of every Christian. It is there where you will meet people with whom you will spend all eternity worshipping God. They can minister to you through the things that God has taught them and you can minister to them. We do not have to wage this war all alone, but we have brothers and sisters who likewise wage this irreconcilable war. It is there where the Word of God is preached and it is the church which is the center of God's love. All true Christians are waging war against their flesh. It is good to be in company. Holy Writ tells us that we already are conquerors in Christ. John writes:

> 1 John 5:4-5 For everyone who has been born of God **overcomes the world**. And this is the victory that has overcome the world— our faith. 5 Who is it that **overcomes the world** except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

Our victory against the evil world system, which would include sin and the flesh, is guaranteed by the fact that we have been born of God. Just as our Lord Jesus conquered, so likewise we are promised that we will conquer and overcome (Rev. 3:21). Paul applies this language of overcoming and conquering even to physical persecution. It doesn't matter how badly we are persecuted in the world, it doesn't matter how much we are hated for His sake, our identity is found in Christ, and in Him, we are more than conquerors (Rom. 8:37). As we wage this spiritual war, we should seek to more and more be obedient to God from the heart and grow in His grace that we may not wander from Him, but cling tightly to Him and shun the thought of sin. Peter encourages Christians to grow in the knowledge and grace of Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 3:18). We should seek Him more earnestly and more frequently in the Word and prayer, that our love and devotion for Him may grow and at the same time our love and devotion for sin and the flesh decrease and die out.

The writer of Hebrews tells us to strive "for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14). We are to pursue God and seek to be conformed to His will and to be like His beloved Son. As we behold, enjoy and worship Christ, the Spirit changes us into His likeness (2 Cor. 3:18). This holiness, the gracious Lord works in us by His grace through discipline. In v. 10, the writer tells us that the purpose of why God disciplines (not *condemns!*) His children is so "that we may share his holiness." He disciplines us for our own good so that we will be purified from sin and seek Christ instead of the fleeting pleasures of sin. He makes us more like Christ through His fatherly discipline.

As we seek to be more and more in love and satisfied with the Triune God, and as we seek to reverently fear Him we will realize that the "fear of the LORD is hatred of evil" (Prov. 8:13). Hated for sin and evil begins with an acknowledgment of the God against whom all our sin is committed (Ps. 51:4; Luke 15:18). It is the Triune God Who created us, owns us and has graciously redeemed us from the power of sin! As we seek to set His fear before us, not fear of condemnation (Rom. 8:1), but a healthy and reverent fear of disrespecting or dishonoring the God Who graciously saved us, we realize that we will not take pleasure in our sins anymore as we did before, because we have through our sin displeased the God Who saved us. We will be displeased with ourselves and troubled in our spirits when we realize that we have sinned against God. This is the Holy Spirit's work convicting us of our sin. When we realize this, we should go to the throne of grace and seek forgiveness and ask that God would cleanse us from our sins (Heb. 4:14-16; 1 John 1:8-9). In times of temptation, we should pray to the Spirit of grace that He may grant that we do not sin against our Lord. We should pray that God grant us victory against our

sin; that God would keep us from sinning against Him (Gen. 20:6). Our goal should always be to strive and pursue after holiness and to be conformed to the image of Christ. We look up to our Lord Who obeyed His Father in every way and prayed that God's will be done. Our goal is to be like Him and be conformed to His blessed image according to God's will.

> Heb 12:1-2 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us **run with endurance the race** that is set before us, 2 **looking to Jesus**, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Gracious Holy Spirit of God Whom Christ has given us, please make us more like Christ that God may be glorified in us. Grant that we may walk in His ways and take up our cross, deny ourselves and follow Him.

Sanctification Completed

This irreconcilable war is not without end. The outcome was already decided in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. For all who are in Him, perfection awaits. But this perfection or completion of sanctification comes in two stages. The complete sanctification of our souls is at death and for the body, at the resurrection. For those at the time of our Lord's blessed return, their sanctification will be complete at once.

Our **soul/spirit** will be perfected at our death. Scripture speaks of the believers in heaven as "the spirits of the righteous made perfect" (Heb. 12:23). These are the "saints now glorified and perfected—i.e. brought to the consummation of their course—in heaven (Rev 7:14-17)."[18] They no longer ache because of sin, nor are they affected by its power or presence in their lives. Grudem observes that 'This is only appropriate because it is in anticipation of the fact that "nothing unclean shall enter" into the presence of God, the heavenly city (Rev. 21:27).'[45] In Romans 8:29, being conformed to Christ's image is the goal for our predestination (see also Eph. 1:4; 5:27). This is partially accomplished when we will meet the Lord in heaven, but it awaits completion when our bodies will also be transformed.

Our **body** will be perfected at the Lord's return and our resurrection. John writes, "we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2). Seeing the Lord Christ will transform us completely, in body and soul no doubt. Christ "will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body" when He comes out of heaven (Phil. 3:20-21). 1 Corinthians 15:49 says that we will "bear the image of the man of heaven" and this is to take place "at his coming" (1 Cor. 15:23). The completion of our sanctification is often connected with the appearing of Christ and the resurrection as it was in 1 John 3:2. Colossians 3:4 says, "When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory." This state of glory is the state in which sin no longer exists in our lives.

Berkhof summarizes our position:

> The sanctification of the believer must, it would seem, be completed either at the very moment of death, or immediately after death, as far as the soul is concerned, and at the resurrection in so far as it pertains to the body. This would seem to follow from that fact that, on the one hand, the Bible teaches that in the present life no one can claim freedom from sin, I Kings 8:46; Prov. 20:9; Rom. 3:10,12; Jas. 3:2; I John 1:8; and that, on the other hand, those who have gone before are entirely sanctified. It speaks of them as "the spirits of just men made perfect," Heb. 12:23, and as "without blemish," Rev. 14:5. Moreover, we are told that in the heavenly city of God there shall in no wise enter "anything unclean or he that maketh an abomination and a lie," Rev. 21:27; and that Christ at His coming will "fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory," Phil. 3:21.[46]

Oh, how I long for my sanctification to be complete that I may never again displease my Lord and do only that which is pleasing to Him. Lord Jesus, thank You for Your offer on the cross, where You sanctified me definitively and called me to be Yours. Father, thank You for setting me apart from the foundation of the world with the aim that I may be holy and blameless to Your glory. Holy Spirit, thank You for dwelling in me and transforming me into Christ's image! All glory to the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.

Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your

whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(1 Thessalonians 5:23)

Footnotes

1. ^ *Many Scriptural references have been supplied by Samuel Waldron's Modern Exposition of 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith which was apparently supplied by the Westminster Confession of Faith 1646.*
2. ^ *Westminster Shorter Catechism. A Puritan's Mind.*
3. ^ *William D. Mounce. Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words. (Zondervan, 2006). p. 337.*
4. ^ *J. I. Packer. Concise Theology: A Guide To Historic Christian Beliefs. (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993). p. 43. Also found online.*
5. ^ *John McClintock & James Strong. Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature. Taken from the TheWord Bible Software. "Sanctification"*
6. ^ *Mounce, Dictionary. p. 1071, entry 39.*
7. ^ *Louis Berkhof. Systematic Theology. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Banner of Truth Trust. 1963). p. 527.*
8. a, b *Mounce, Dictionary. p. 338.*
9. a, b *Berkhof, Systematic Theology. p. 528.*
10. ^ *Ibid., pp. 528-529.*
11. ^ *Ibid., p. 532.*
12. ^ *Wayne Grudem. Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994). Chapter 38, p. 746.*
13. ^ *Berkhof, Systematic Theology. p. 532.*
14. a, b, c *John Calvin. Commentaries. Taken from the TheWord Bible Software. In loc.*
15. a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h *Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible. Taken from the TheWord Bible Software. In loc.*
16. ^ *Joseph Benson. Commentary on the Old and New Testaments. Taken from the TheWord Bible Software. In loc.*
17. a, b, c *Jamieson, Fausset, Brown. Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible (Abridged). Taken from the TheWord Bible Software. In loc.*
18. a, b *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges. Edited by J. J. S. Perowne. Taken from the TheWord Bible Software. In loc.*
19. ^ *James P. Boyce. Abstract of Systematic Theology. (Hanford, CA: Den Dulk Christian Foundation. 2000, originally 1887). p. 411. Also found online here.*
20. ^ *John M. Frame. Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2014). p. 986.*
21. ^ *A. H. Strong. Systematic Theology: A Compendium Designed For The Use Of Theological Students. (London: Pickering & Inglis, 1970. Originally, 1907). p. 869.*
22. ^ *Berkhof, Systematic Theology. p. 532.*
23. ^ *Ibid., p. 536.*
24. ^ *Frame, Systematic Theology. p. 987.*
25. ^ *Boyce, Abstract. p. 415.*
26. ^ *Philip Schaff. A Popular Commentary on the New Testament. Taken from the TheWord Bible*

Software. In loc.

27. a, b *Adam Clarke. Commentary And Critical Notes On The Bible. Taken from the TheWord Bible Software. In loc.*
28. ^ *Boyce, Abstract. p. 412.*
29. ^ *Frame, Systematic Theology. p. 988.*
30. ^ *Grudem, Systematic Theology. p. 755.*
31. ^ *Frame, Systematic Theology. pp. 989-992.*
32. ^ *Robert L. Dabney. Systematic Theology. (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1985, originally 1871). pp. 665-666.*
33. ^ *Boyce, Abstract. pp. 418-421.*
34. ^ *Berkhof, Systematic Theology. pp. 535-536.*
35. ^ *Strong, Systematic Theology. p. 874.*
36. ^ *J. L. Dagg. A Manual of Theology. (Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle Pub. 2009, originally 1857). p. 286.*
37. ^ *Boyce, Abstract. pp. 418-419.*
38. a, b *Dabney, Systematic Theology. p. 666.*
39. ^ *Dagg, Manual. pp. 286-287.*
40. ^ *Grudem, Systematic Theology. p. 747.*
41. ^ *Charles J. Ellicott. Commentary For English Readers. Taken from the TheWord Bible Software. In loc.*
42. ^ *Berkhof, Systematic Theology. p. 533.*
43. ^ *Dabney, Systematic Theology. p. 663.*
44. ^ *Grudem, Systematic Theology. p. 756.*
45. ^ *Ibid., p. 749.*
46. ^ *Berkhof, Systematic Theology. pp. 534-535.*