

“Men’s hearts are being searched...it is a tremendous sifting time, not only of actions but of inner motives. Nothing can escape the all-searching eye of God.”

Frank Bartleman, Azusa Street

Prayer Study #314

**THE HOLY SPIRIT, CONSECRATION, JUSTIFICATION,
SANCTIFICATION, AND THE NARROW WAY**

First Love Ministries, Inc., of Perry, Georgia

Enter you in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way, that leads to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leads to life, and few there be that find it.

Matthew 7:14-15

And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness; it will be for those who walk on that Way. The unclean will not journey on it; wicked fools will not go about on it.

Isaiah 35:8

I believe that the Lord will deal more and more with His people, and in my own life, in the area of holiness. The truly Spirit-baptized ones will yearn more and more to walk the narrow way in the days to come. In order to walk in holiness, we must more and more consecrate our lives to the Lord of Glory. **Consecration** is the act of committing ourselves to a life of uncompromising dedication to God or to a life of holiness. Closely related to this process is **justification**, which is God’s acceptance of our faith in Him whereby He looks on us just as if we have never sinned, because of the atonement of the blood of Jesus. When the Father God looks at us, He sees us as perfect and complete because of the blood of Jesus. Therefore, we have been justified *by faith* in that blood; therefore, we are allowed to establish a relationship with Him. It takes our faith and His blood to have this relationship. Also related to the life of consecration is **sanctification**, which is the process by which the Holy Spirit so works in a consecrated life to separate that Christian from both the world *and* the ways of the world. Sanctification is necessary so that the believer can be used for divine service.

All of this is elementary so far for the mature believer who has been around the block, so to speak, for the Lord a few times, and it is not my purpose to get into a heavy theological discussion, but I think these concepts are important as we aspire to walk with Jesus in a sinful and fallen world.

Perhaps the most controversial of these concepts is sanctification. Some believers honestly believe that they are totally sanctified when they become believers in Jesus, and they believe they never sin again. My own belief is that the scriptures give evidence to sanctification on three levels. First, there is **positional sanctification**. As soon as we enter into relationship with Jesus, God the Father, as has already been noted, sees us as absolutely holy because we are covered with the blood of Jesus, and the Father sees the righteousness and holiness of Christ. Secondly, there is **progressive sanctification**. We should always be growing in the Lord, going or progressing from glory to glory, and becoming more and more Christlike, every day that we live, until we come to **ultimate sanctification**. Of course, we all know that the walk of faith is not always in a straight line, positive direction because we are tempted and tried and often fail and fall back into sinful habits. Hopefully most of the Body of Christ goes forward much more than it goes backwards. At any rate, because of progressive sanctification I can say, "I am not what I used to be, and I am not what I am going to be." The relationship between positional sanctification and progressive sanctification is found in 1st Corinthians 1:2: *To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy.* The Greek word for *sanctified* and *holy* are the same root word. Thus, a Christian is holy because of the blood of Jesus and called to be holy at the same time. Or he is sanctified positionally because of the blood of Jesus but is called to be sanctified progressively as he walks out the walk of faith.

Progressive sanctification is described in Galatians 5:19-23: *Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outburst of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murder, drunkenness, revelries, and the like: of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in times past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.* The believer through the help of the Holy Spirit puts these works of the flesh behind him-sometimes it is a long process-and allows the seed of the Holy Spirit in his temple to produce fruit.

We see progress sanctification also in Colossians 3:1-25: *If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth:*

fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all. Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts to which also you were called in one body, and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God, the Father through Him. Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and do not be bitter toward them. Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord. Fathers do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eye service, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.

Paul summarizes this whole process of progressive sanctification by writing to the brethren in Rome: Romans 12:1-2-*I appeal to you therefore, brethren, and beg of you in view of [all] the mercies of God, to make a decisive dedication of your bodies [presenting all your members and faculties] as a living sacrifice, holy (devoted, consecrated) and well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable (rational, intelligent) service and spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world (this age), [fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs], but be transformed (changed) by the [entire]renewal of your mind [by its new ideals and its new attitude], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what is the good and acceptable and*

perfect will of God, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect [in his sight for you].

We are all on a spiritual journey whereby our lives are to produce less and less acts of the fleshly nature and to shun more and more of the sinful world and more and more of the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Thus, in order to progressively make progress on our spiritual journey, we must die to the flesh and walk in obedience to the Holy Spirit. That is tough! In other words, we must walk the narrow way, and we must realize that Jesus Himself said that few would find it. The only way that we will find it is by being led by the Spirit, and I believe that we cannot be fully led by the Spirit unless we are baptized in the Holy Spirit. Even then, that does not mean we have arrived, but it does put us on the right road, the Highway of Holiness.

I believe we won't walk in ultimate sanctification until He comes or we go to be with him. This will be when He establishes His Kingdom on the earth or when we die and enter His Kingdom in heaven. The flesh nature will be gone, and this will be the ultimate sanctification.

We are sanctified by the blood. Hebrews 13:12-*Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.* **We are sanctified by the Word and our faith in that Word.** John 17:17-**Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.** **We are sanctified by the Holy Spirit.** Romans 15:16-...*that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.* **We are sanctified by the Name of Jesus.** 1st Corinthians 6:9-11-*Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.* **We are sanctified by the altar.** Matthew 23:19-**Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift?** Here Jesus tells us that the gift which was offered in sacrifice to God was sanctified, made holy, set apart, by being placed upon God's altar. As we offer our bodies as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:2), He sanctifies us.

In summary, it is the *dunamis* power of the Holy Spirit, which we receive through the Baptism of the Spirit, that gives us the strength to walk in consecration, justification, sanctification, and the narrow way. We need that power in these evil days to overcome the world and to walk in holiness.