

# a study of the *Holy Spirit*

## Lesson 8: The Sanctification of the Holy Spirit

1. 📖 What does "sanctification" refer to in the believer's life? There are several different responses given to this query...
  - a. The end result of the Holy Spirit baptism by which man's inborn sin is canceled.
  - b. The "second blessing" that renders the believer perfect and incapable of sin (i.e. sinlessness).
  - c. The result of "perfectionism" in the believer's life leading him/her to "holiness" in word, thought, and deed.
  - d. A mysterious condition in the believer that is accomplished via a direct work of the Holy Spirit.
  - e. The basic separation of the believer from the morals, attitudes, and thoughts of the world.

*Note:* Each of these responses is given to the question regarding "sanctification." Only the last is correct according to the Scripture. This well illustrates the confusion that exists over the term.

2. 📖 The current confusion regarding "sanctification" exists because many have a wrong idea about the Holy Spirit (they see Him as a mysterious force) and fail to understand how He works (via the Bible). They thus read Scripture and find the Holy Spirit is the agent for sanctification and arrive at an erroneous conclusion. *Note:* John 17:19; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Romans 15:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2.

Once again we find a biblical Truth been confused because the Holy Spirit has been treated with error and His work is viewed from a distorted perspective! The sad fact is that "sanctification in the Spirit" is not a complex subject!

3. 📖 A simple definition of "sanctification" is found in the Bible.
  - a. 📖 The Hebrew term is KADASH; the Greek term is *αγιαζω*, HAGIAZO. The basic root word is summed up by the English term "sacred"—something dedicated to a holy purpose.
  - b. 📖 Thus the word refers to something being separated for a holy purpose. This can refer to people (1 Corinthians 1:2); places (Exodus 3:5); altar (Exodus 29:36); gifts and

- offerings (Exodus 28:38; 29:27); days (Genesis 2:3; Joel 1:14; Leviticus 25:10).
- c. People, places, things, and times were "sanctified" by a ceremonial cleansing (Judges 17:3; 2 Samuel 8:11; 2 Kings 10:20; 1 Chronicles 18:11). Ask—"Is there a special ceremony by which one is *sanctified* to God today?" (Note—when the lesson examines how the Corinthians were sanctified his question needs to be re-examined.)
  - d. 🕊 The word focuses upon relationship with God—such are "sanctified" ("holy") because the object "sanctified" is in a special relationship with God. It has taken the ordinary and placed it in a special relationship.
  - e. Thus, one "sanctified by the Spirit" (Romans 15:16) is one who has been separated by the Spirit and placed in an entirely new relationship with God. Therefore the biblical concept has nothing to do with the Holy Spirit baptism, inward cleansing of Adamic sin, etc.! Ask—"How were the Gentiles (Romans 15:16) sanctified by the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:48)?"
4. 🕊 Unfortunately the ignorance about the Holy Spirit's work has led to errors regarding the biblical doctrine of "sanctification." Some of the major denominations (Methodist; Presbyterian; Nazarene; Holiness; Pentecostal; Assembly of God) share in the following list of errors in regard to the "sanctification of the Spirit."
- a. 🕊 A mysterious cleansing of original sin after we believe.
  - b. 🕊 The bestowal of perfectionism (or sinlessness) by which we can never sin as to be eternally lost.
  - c. 🕊 The importation of "holiness" into the believer's heart. "Since I have been sanctified, every impulse or desire to sin has been completely erased from my heart!"
  - d. 🕊 The evidence of Holy Spirit baptism (the second blessing) that "seals" the believer as God's child.
5. 🕊 Truth is always consistent—it never changes! This is how we know these four common ideas regarding sanctification are untruthful. Notice how each contradicts plain biblical principles. Transparency 8E
- a. The notion that man needs cleansing from original "sin-nature" is unscriptural (Ezekiel 18:20; 28:15). We are not sinners until we transgress the law of God (1 John 3:4). If ALL have Adam's sin, then ALL must have Christ's life (Romans 5:18).
  - b. 🕊 The concept of sinless perfection is not biblical. The New Testament teaches that even after conversion one will need forgiveness (1 John 1:6-9). There is the real possibility that some believers will so sin they will be eternally lost (Hebrews 6:4-6).

- c. ☞ The notion that "holiness" will be imported by sanctification (moral qualities will be mystically injected into your heart) fails to consider that certain things or places or days are "sanctified" and these have no ethical qualities—i.e. Jerusalem, altar, rooms of the Temple, etc. (Matthew 27:53; Exodus 29:36; Matthew 24:15).
  - d. ☞ The Holy Spirit baptism had nothing to do with sanctification. The Apostles were "sanctified" (John 17:17) BEFORE they were baptized with the Holy Spirit. The House of Cornelius received the Holy Spirit baptism BEFORE they obeyed the gospel—were they sanctified before they were saved?
6. The New Testament teaches how one is to be sanctified. This is taught in a very simple manner.
- a. ☞ 1 Corinthians 6:11 – The Corinthians were sanctified (1 Corinthians 1:1, 2). If we can discover HOW this happened to them, then we will know how we can be sanctified.
  - b. The answer is found by going back into the history of the events surrounding 1 Corinthians 6:11. This is an easy matter.
  - c. ☞ Acts 18:1-11. There was a reasoning of the gospel message (4, 5); ☞ some believed the gospel (8a); ☞ these were then immersed (8b).
  - d. ☞ These Corinthians participated in a threefold program as they obeyed the gospel (1 Corinthians 6:11).
    - 1) "Washed"—baptized
    - 2) ☐ "Sanctified"—separated into a special relationship with God.
    - 3) ☐ "Justified"—occupied an approved relationship with God.
7. ☞ "Sanctification in the Spirit" suggests these ideas that are rooted in the Scriptures—
- a. ☞ OBEDIENCE to God's commands (1 Corinthians 6:11).
  - b. ☞ PROGRESSION toward Christian maturity (1 Peter 1:15). The Spirit is able to promote a perpetual progression so we become more God-like (Psalm 119:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:23).
  - c. ☞ DISTINCTIVENESS of one who is separated from the world and used in God's service (1 Peter 2:11, 12; Matthew 5:16; Hebrews 12:14; Acts 26:18).
8. ☞ The manner in which the Holy Spirit "sanctifies" us is revealed—it is only via the Bible! The Holy Spirit is the *agent* of sanctification but the Bible is His *means* of sanctification.

The sanctification of the Holy Spirit is a life of transformation (2 Corinthians 3:18). The Holy

Spirit, working via the Scriptures, instructs, guides, and leads those who "hunger" for God's will (Matthew 5:6). Those desiring God's will are responsive and "digest" the Holy Word keeping the Divine commands and thus conform to righteousness. In this manner we are "strengthened with power" (Ephesians 3:16); add the supreme virtues of Christianity (2 Peter 1:5-7).

☞ That the Holy Spirit sanctifies only via the Word is evident from these points taken from Z.T. Sweeney, *The Spirit and the Word...*

- a. ☞ The Spirit might give us faith, but it is done by the Word (Romans 10:17; Acts 15:7).
- b. ☞ The Spirit might enable us to enjoy a new birth, but He does this through the Word (1 Peter 1:23).
- c. ☞ The Spirit might give us light, but it comes only via the Word (Psalm 119:130, 105; Proverbs 6:23).
- d. ☞ The Spirit gives wisdom, but only via the Word (Psalm 19:7; Acts 28:27).
- e. ☞ The Spirit may open our eyes, but only through the Word (Psalm 19:8; Acts 26:17, 18).
- f. ☞ The Spirit gives us understanding, but it is only through the written Word (Psalm 119:104; Acts 28:27).
- g. ☞ The Spirit will quicken, but only via the written Word (Psalm 119:50; John 6:63).
- h. ☞ The Spirit saves those who are receptive, but only via the written Word (James 1:21; Ephesians 1:13; Romans 1:16).
- i. ☞ The Spirit sanctifies, but only through the Word (John 17:17; 2 Thessalonians 2:13).
- j. ☞ The Spirit purifies us but only as we follow the Word (1 Peter 1:22).
- k. ☞ The Spirit cleanses us, but He does it through the Word (John 15:3; Acts 15:9).
- l. ☞ The Spirit frees us from sin but only as we follow the Word (John 8:31, 32; Romans 6:17, 18).
- m. ☞ The Spirit imparts a divine nature, but only to those who follow the Word (2 Peter 1:4).
- n. ☞ The Spirit fits us for glory and immortality but it is done only via the written Word (Acts 20:32; 26:18).
- o. ☞ The Spirit strengthens us but only through the written Word (Psalm 119:28).

🔑 *NOTE:* While the Holy Spirit is the *AGENT* in each of these, it is the Bible that is the *MEANS* through which each is accomplished! Without Scripture none of these would be possible!