

BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED – GOD SANCTIFIES US (II)!

In the Bible, *sanctification* can either refer to something that has already happened or something that is on-going. Today, we shall concentrate on this second usage of the word. In theology, we call this *progressive sanctification*.

Now, there are five things to bear in mind in *progressive sanctification*.

① IT IS GOD WHO SANCTIFIES.

God did not save you and then leave you to try and be holy. No, God is actively involved in your *progressive sanctification*. It is God the Holy Spirit who sanctifies you. *Sanctification* is not a matter of you trying to do all that you can to be holy, all on your own. It is not a matter of sheer human effort and determination. **1 Thessalonians 5:23** says, “*Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” God is clearly involved actively in this matter.

② IT IS ALSO YOUR WORK.

The Holy Scriptures is filled with exhortation to strive for holiness. For example, **2 Corinthians 7:1** says, “*Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord.*” And then again turn to **Philippians 2:12,13** say, “*Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.*” We are commanded to work out our salvation. Why? Because it is God who works in us! We are to work because God works.

③ IT IS A PROCESS.

Progressive sanctification is exactly that - progressive. It is a lengthy and slow process. Growth in holiness is never instant. We grow slowly. Nothing can better illustrate this than the growth of a human being. We don't suddenly shoot up, from a baby to a man. Rather, we all grow slowly, as we eat, drink and exercise. We don't grow by going for some special injection every month. If we do, that is not normal growth. We

normally grow slowly. But the day will come when we will become an adult.

It is similarly for our *sanctification*. The day will come when we will be perfect. For our soul, it is at death or immediately after death. For our body, it is at the resurrection, at the second coming of Christ. This simply means that we are never perfected in this life. This means that we will be fighting against sin until the moment we die.

④ IT IS ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH MEANS.

We are not made holy by just sitting still and doing nothing. God has ordained certain means to be used for our *sanctification*. They are: regular intake of the Word of God, prayer, Christian fellowship, baptism and the Lord's Supper. The Lord will also use His providence to accomplish train us in godliness.

⑤ IT HAS A GOAL.

To be *sanctified* is to be *holy*. But what does it mean to be holy? Is there a standard? How do I know if I have reached it? **1 Peter 1:15, 16** say “*But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."*” We are to be holy as God is holy. **Romans 8:29** say, “*For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.*” It ultimately means being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. It means to be like Jesus, to grow to be like Him more and more.

Are you growing more and more like the Lord Jesus Christ everyday? More like Jesus in His love, His patience, His kindness, His goodness? More like Jesus in His hatred of sin, His detest of the devil? More like Jesus in His devotion to God, in His prayer life? Are you growing to be more like your Lord Jesus?

Maybe the most important question for is this: ***Do you really know Him ?*** You cannot be like Jesus until you first know Jesus. Do not leave your seat, until you have resolved this question with God today.