

**Seeking  
the  
Pearl of  
Great Price**

**God's Call  
to  
Holiness**

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by  
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(1950-2003)

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\*Each chapter contains lessons taken from separate books or pamphlets published by Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City. The original source is noted at the beginning of each chapter.

## Preface

There are a few earnest Christians who have found themselves crying out with David, “Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.” (Ps. 51:10) They know it will require the *creative power* of God to correct the defect found within their inner nature. But can He do it? Thanks be to our Lord Jesus Christ, God can now purify the heart and provide a victorious life to everyone who believes. “God, who knows the heart, showed that He accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as He did to us. He made no distinction between us and them, for He purified their hearts by faith.” (Acts 15:8-9)

The Son has earned the right to establish His undivided Kingdom in the hearts of His disciples “so they may serve Him without fear in righteousness and holiness all the days of their life.” (Luke 1:74-75) The Lord’s Kingdom-life is the Pearl of Great Price. We receive the Pearl when He fills our soul with His Spirit. His fullness transforms our nature from self-centered darkness into God-centered holiness. This is the transformation that all Christians have been commanded to pursue. “Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.” (Heb. 12:14 NKJV)

Crossing over from a carnal state into a spiritual state of holiness is not easy. There are costs associated with receiving the heavenly Pearl. (Matt. 13:45-46) God’s truth, as it seeks to take away the self-centered ways of the fallen nature, will sometimes be painful. Everyone who hopes to enter into Christ’s Kingdom-life will need to push forward in their faith and respond to His teachings. According to Jesus, a responsive faith is the only pathway to a real deliverance from our carnal nature. “To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, ‘If you hold to my teachings, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.’” (John 8:31-32)

We need to remind ourselves that Christ’s life of holiness is the life of heaven. If we will enter into the fullness of His holy life today, a touch of heaven will enter into our soul. Christ’s *indwelling* Kingdom-life changes our nature and enables us to joyously live for God and His glory. (John 5:3-4)

Even though the following lessons come from materials published by the Church of the Nazarene, it is not our intent to promote a denomination. We believe this message of holiness should be preached to everyone. The lessons need to be taught wherever people meet in Christ’s name.

After compiling and condensing the material, we have rewritten and amplified the lessons to help provide unity to the message. At the same time, this anthology format will provide a variety of insights from different teachers. Each chapter presents a complete holiness message. While this approach has resulted in some of the basic lessons being discussed more than once, we believe the repetition is helpful to the learning process.

The message is simple: Christians are to seek out the fullness of Christ’s Spirit by dependent faith. There are many Christians who are still not enjoying our Lord’s abundantly full spiritual life. The church of our day needs believers who know what it means to receive the heavenly Pearl. As members of Christ’s body, we are expected to manifest the light of His life into the world so others will know what it means to be saved by Christ. “Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Sovereign Lord, when I show myself holy through you before their eyes.” (Ezk. 36:23)

# The Spirit Filled Life

This chapter includes material from *The Church of the Nazarene* by W. Donald Wellman. Published by Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City; 1977.

## The One Thing Needed

Let's face it. Many Christians are not experiencing a deeply satisfying life. There's a lot of confusion, frustration, fretting, disillusionment; and above all, there is a sense of loneliness and isolation. The inner presence of God's spiritual life is missing. Is this the way that God intended it to be? NO!

There is much more! Life can be satisfying, secure, purposeful and full. It is now possible, in this age of fulfillment, to continually enjoy an exulting and fulfilling personal experience with God. The Lord is saying right now, "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters... Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and *your soul will delight in the richest of fare.*" (Isa. 55:1-2 Emphasis added)

The "Spirit of life" (Rom. 8:2) is able to fill the soul of a "believer" with the presence of God. And the Church of the Nazarene, with its full gospel message, is here to make sure that everyone who truly desires to enter into Christ's abundantly full spiritual life will know how to receive the promised blessing. Jesus said, "If anyone thirsts {because of an emptiness within their soul}, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." (John 7:37-38) Our soul becomes completely fulfilled when it is overflowing with the river of Christ's spiritual life from the heavenly realms. (Eph. 1:3)

The "river" of life does not automatically flow through the soul of everyone who professes to believe in Christ. Our Lord has therefore referred to the Spirit-filled life as the "one thing needed." (Luke 10:42) Every Christian must make their own spiritual pilgrimage out of Egypt {the humanistic ways of the world}, through the desert testing period {where the old self-life is stripped away}, and then enter into the promised land of spiritual abundance. When the self-life has been given up and we have made a complete consecration to the Lord by presenting our body to Him to be a vessel of His life, the Spirit will purify our heart. (Acts 15:8-9) In the same way that God had the power to miraculously cut off the Jordan River for the purpose of taking His called-out people into the promised land, He is able to cut off the flow of our carnal nature so that we may participate with our Lord in His abundantly full spiritual life. (John 10:10)

The "light of life" we are to receive from Christ and then manifest in this world is intended to appear supernatural. God planned to demonstrate His power and His glory through the lives of His children. He desires to show forth His divine nature through our mortal bodies. (2 Pet. 1:3-4) "Whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God." (John 3:21) "For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face {or spiritual image} of Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay {our weak mortal bodies} to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us." (2 Cor. 4:6-7) In other words, God has planned to manifest the light of His divine nature through each believer "so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God."

Paul says, “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” (1 Thess. 5:16-18) We have here a description of the Kingdom-life we are to receive from Christ. But we know there are Christians who do not have the power to obey these teachings. There are many believers, like Martha, who have remained “worried and upset about many things.” (Luke 10:41) They spend their time complaining when they should be “rejoicing always.” They have not yet received the “one thing needed.” (Luke 10:42)

### **A Blessing to Be Received From God**

The Christian life is not about what we do for God. The sons of God have been designed and created to be vessels of God’s life and work. We are expected to rest from our own works (Heb. 4:9-10) and then permit the Spirit to both direct our lives and provide the power to carry out God’s preordained work. “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” (Eph. 2:10)

We cannot live right or do the works of God until Christ is manifesting His spiritual life through the temple of our body. However, we know there are many Christians who are still trying to serve the Lord in their own strength. Since they are not yet fully separated from the ways of the world and fleshly human works, they are still unable to relate to the deeper spiritual principles of the Christian faith. The apostle Paul would say to them, “And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ... For...are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?” (1 Cor. 3:1, 3) Living in our own strength like “mere men” is not how God intends for His children to live.

Everyone who is still trying to live by human effort will continue to experience many frustrations in their life. Because they are depending on themselves or on other people according to the ways of this world, they must expect to be worried and upset about many things. These frustrations will naturally lead to complaining and bickering. We must expect to find this carnal nature wherever Christians are still relying on their own strength and wisdom.

But we can be changed. Thanks be to our Lord, for the sake of His own glory, we now have the opportunity to be lifted out of this carnal state and enter into the fullness of His spiritual life. Christ’s abundantly full spiritual life is still the “one thing needed.” Rather than continuing in the bondage that Martha experienced as a result of trying to serve the Lord in her own strength, we can become like Mary and receive “what is better.” (Luke 10:42) We all need to enter into the reality of a new spiritual life that is wholly under the control and power of the Holy Spirit.

God has the power to work out His perfect will in our life. When we give ourselves up to the Lord, He will begin working out all things for our good. (Rom. 8:29) By merely presenting ourselves to the Lord without reservations, the Spirit will use His power to lead us into God’s “good, pleasing and perfect will.” (Rom. 12:1-2) And even though we will be confronted with difficult situations and there will continue to be much work for us to do in furthering the Kingdom of God, *it will not be our work*. We are expected to live under the control and power of the Holy Spirit so He can do His work through our life. “‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ says the Lord of hosts.” (Zech. 4:6)

## **Carnal Christians and Spiritual Christians**

Not every Christian has come to know the victorious life of the Son. The apostle Paul said there was a “mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints...which is Christ in you... Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ.” (Col. 1:26-28) If we hope to present “every man {and woman} perfect in Christ,” we will need to encourage all Christians to “diligently” go forward in their spiritual pilgrimage until they enter into the “rest of faith” that enables Christ to manifest the fullness of His spiritual life through the temple of their body. (Heb. 4:9-11)

Paul was referring to a spiritual life that enables Christians to have a “perfect” heart toward God. The Lord has promised to do the work by purifying the heart through a work of His Spirit. (Acts 15:8-9) “I will give them an undivided heart.” (Ezk. 11:19) When the carnal or self-seeking nature has been cut off by the power of God, the Spirit will then enable the believer to live wholly for God and His glory. The new undivided heart is said to be “perfect” toward God. Although the light of our understanding will never be perfect while we remain in this world, the Spirit will enable us to joyously respond to all known light as we live in an undivided devotion to the Lord.

The carnal nature is what prevents Christians from living wholly for God. But now, because of the work of our Lord in this age of fulfillment (1 Cor. 10:11), all “spiritual” Christians will be “set free indeed” from their self-centered nature. (John 8:36)

But these scriptural teachings raise some questions. For example, where do we find preachers and teachers earnestly “warning every man and teaching every man” so they may present every believer perfect in Christ? Do we find this doctrine about receiving an undivided heart being taught in the church today? Very few believers have been sufficiently built up in their faith to enable them to even hear these teachings.

Because there are so many babes in Christ within the church today, it is difficult to open up the deeper truths from God’s Word. As Paul would say, “I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able.” (1 Cor. 3:2)

We are reaching out to those who have been blessed with a real hunger and thirst after righteousness. We know there will always be a few who are experiencing a deep desire to go forward in their Christian faith. Hopefully, as more Christians are led into the fullness of Christ’s spiritual life, the desire for holiness of heart will once again begin to spread throughout the church.

All teachings about the higher life are intended to show the believer how to enter into Christ’s spiritual life of “perfect love.” We are referring to the God-given ability to joyously lay down our life in service to the Lord without any hindrance from the old self-centered nature. It is the infilling with Christ’s Spirit of “perfect love” that makes our heart “perfect” toward God. While this “Christian perfection” does not make the Christian infallible {more on this later}, it does provide the spiritual Christian with the ability to consistently overcome the world and joyously live wholly for God’s will. (1 John 5:3-4)

Most Christians are still hindered by selfishness. There is something deep within their inner nature that prevents them from serving God as they know they should. Furthermore, they do not know how to find deliverance from their bondage to this carnal nature. It is our intent to show every believer how to receive the promise of an “undivided heart.” (Ezk. 11:19)

Obviously, we cannot deliver ourselves by human strength. According to the Scriptures, it will require the divine power of God to set a believer free from the carnal desires that cause them to selfishly serve themselves according to the ways of this world.

Fortunately, because of what our Lord has done, believers now have access to the resurrection power of His Spirit. (Eph. 1:17-20) He has the power to “lift” our soul into the firstfruits of a spiritual life within the heavenly realms. (1 Pet. 5:6; Eph. 1:3) “His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness...so that...you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.” (2 Pet. 1:3-4)

### **Power to Love**

We will be speaking about spiritual truths that cannot be understood by mere human wisdom. We are dependent on God to reveal the truth as an indwelling life. “For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power.” (1 Cor. 4:20) It requires divine power to manifest the Living Word {Christ’s spiritual life} through our mortal body.

In order to find hope in these teachings, the believer will need to seek help from God. We are dependent on Him to reveal the truth within our heart. Let us take time to pray with Paul for this divine help: “I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him...in the heavenly realms.” (Eph. 1:17-20)

If, as Christians, we do not seek to live by God’s “incomparably great power” through our dependent faith, we will never have the ability to manifest the light of Christ’s spiritual life. (John 8:12) Furthermore, God cannot begin His supernatural work in our life until we first admit that we are “sick.” (Matt. 9:12) Only then will we begin to turn to Him with the kind of dependent faith that will enable Him to heal our fallen nature. God has the power to cure our defective heart. He does this wonderful work by filling our soul with His spiritual life of “perfect love.” (1 John 3:16; 4:17)

The apostle John says that God is love. Therefore, when Paul speaks of being “filled with all the fullness of God” by the power of the Holy Spirit he is referring to God’s life of “perfect love.” As Paul has so clearly expressed, it will require a special work of God’s power to reveal His divine life of love within the temple of our body: “I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being...that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.” (Eph. 3:16,19)

Christ has the power to manifest His selfless nature of divine love within our eternal soul. After we have paid the price by presenting our old self-life to Him, He consumes the carnal nature and shows Himself to our soul as the heavenly Pearl. Only then will we have the ability to live out our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount {a manifesto of life in His kingdom} with joy in our heart.

The self-centered and willful nature, the cause of all our spiritual problems, was not in Jesus. He lived through the life of the Father by the power of the Holy Spirit. And now, in this age of fulfillment, He has made it possible for His disciples to receive this same spiritual life through the same power of the Holy Spirit.

You may question these teachings after looking at your own weaknesses. But if this is the case, you have not yet allowed your mind to be renewed. If you are still thinking in terms of what you have the ability to do in your own strength, there is an error in your thought process. This “spiritual” life we are to receive from Christ has nothing to do with human ability. We allow our minds to be renewed by turning from the worldly way of self-sufficiency to God’s way of dependent faith.

We are assured that, “What is impossible with men is possible with God.” (Luke 18:27) There is a divine spiritual life we can now enter into “by faith” through a supernatural work of Christ’s Spirit. God has the power to provide His children with a new divine nature that will perfect His life of love within their eternal soul. “Love has been perfected among us in this...because as He is, so are we in this world.” (1 John 4:17)

The apostle John was an inspired writer. His teachings are not in error. During his day there were “spiritual” Christians who had been enabled to manifest the spiritual image of God – His life of divine love – in this world. By becoming “filled” with the Holy Spirit, they were enabled to reflect the same spiritual life of love that Jesus had demonstrated while He lived in a mortal body.

We cannot afford to reject these scriptural truths because of our willful unbelief. Christ now has the power to manifest His selfless life of love through our mortal body. The only way to deny this truth is to reject God’s clearly stated Word that says – “Love has been perfected among us in this...because as He is, so are we in this world.”

Let us not limit God. He does have the power to “fill” our eternal soul with His Spirit. “Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is...be filled with the Spirit.” (Eph. 5:17-18) As Christians, we are expected to obey this command. Let us not be rebels against the teachings of our Lord.

### **A New Way of Life**

The Christian Church came into being in the first century. After our Lord had died for the sins of fallen man and was raised into glory, He then had the authority and the power to communicate His spiritual life to all “believers” through a supernatural work of His Spirit.

When Jesus was still walking with His first disciples in a mortal body, He knew that He could not use mere words to teach them how to manifest the spiritual life of God. Therefore He said to them, “I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away.” (John 16:7) He had to be glorified before He was in a position to communicate His spiritual life to their soul by the *resurrection power of the Holy Spirit*. (Eph. 1:19-20) Of course, like carnal Christians today, these early disciples did not fully understand what Jesus was telling them when He made these statements.

We need to remember that God’s spiritual life of divine love is beyond human understanding. (Eph. 3:19) It cannot be taught with words. And yet, there is a way to know the spiritual life of God in a personal way.

Paul says there is a heavenly life of love {God is love} that can be known experientially as an inner revelation of life through a work of the Spirit. “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared {in the heavenly realms} for those who love him – but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit.” (1 Cor. 2:9-10) This inner revelation of divine life {in its firstfruits} is what changes “carnal” Christians into “spiritual” Christians.



While words will supply a general understanding about God's self-giving love, the carnal mind is still unable to relate to it. Even three years of living with Jesus, daily watching the divine love of God being manifest through His mortal body, did little to help the first disciples.

Divine love {agape} must be received as a river of life from God. Mankind does not have the ability to produce God's life of love. And since most people are trying to keep their life within the control of their own wisdom and strength, Christ's divine life will inevitably remain beyond their grasp. They will never receive this supernatural life from heaven until they have given up on human effort and have come to the Father like dependent little children. Jesus said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as {dependent} little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 18:3)

In one sense, heaven is God's spiritual life of divine love. The firstfruits of this heavenly life are to enter into our eternal soul while we remain in this world. (1 John 4:17) If we will become like little children and depend on God for everything in our life, we will find our souls being lifted by the resurrection power of the Holy Spirit into the firstfruits of God's heavenly life.

The way of childlike dependence is a very important spiritual principle in the Christian faith. In fact, God purposely hides His deeper truths from everyone who refuses to give up their independent and self-sufficient nature. Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure." (Matt. 11:25-26) Little children know what it means to depend on someone else for everything. And without a similar dependence upon God, we cannot expect to have the mysteries of God's spiritual life revealed to our heart.

### **Beware of the Pharisees**

The Pharisees were a group of men who had become the leaders of God's people. Unfortunately, they remained blinded to the ways of God. They were like blind guides leading other blind people into the pit. (Matt. 15:14)

The primary problem with the Pharisees was their love of independence and self-sufficiency. Christ told them to come to Him like little children to receive His spiritual life. But because of their pride and their love for making themselves known through their own works of righteousness, they remained blinded to the way of receiving life from God through dependent faith.

We have this same problem in the church today. The only way to "put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness" (Eph. 4:24) is to die to self and enter into Christ's life of righteousness and holiness. (Gal. 2:20) But, because most people fear losing their independence, they do not want to listen to these glorious truths. Preferring the evil path of Adam, their desire for independence has caused them to miss out on the spiritual life of heaven. (Eph. 1:3) We cannot expect to enter into Christ's spiritual life in the heavenly realms until we are willing to become holy to God {set apart for His exclusive use} and dependent on Him for everything.

Like the Pharisees in the days of Jesus, most people prefer to keep their independence and then work out their own life of righteousness. They will study the Scriptures and use them to set up a personal standard of righteousness. They decide for themselves what they consider acceptable for their own life. And of course, once they

have established these standards and worked them out in their own life, they will naturally judge others by their own self-produced righteousness. This was the error of the Pharisees. Jesus said to them, “You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.” (John 5:39-40)

The religious people who live like the Pharisees will have all the outward teachings, but they will remain blinded to God’s deeper truths. They may look to the blood of Jesus and depend on God’s grace for the forgiveness of their sins, but they are still living by human effort under law. They will never have the power to manifest the Kingdom-life of God as Jesus described it in His Sermon on the Mount.

As long as someone lives by their own strength, they will find it necessary to remove many of Christ’s commands from their standards of righteousness. The reason is simple: Only God has the power to truly clean the inside of the cup. (Matt. 23:25) We will need to become wholly dependent on Him if we ever hope to have our heart purified and be filled to overflowing with His life of divine love.

We are expected to learn about our Lord’s way of life from the Scriptures. And we can understand these teachings to some extent in our mind. We can even memorize many of the verses found in the Scriptures. But this will not transform our inner nature from a carnal state into a spiritual state. We must receive the Kingdom-life into our heart as a supernatural flow of living water from the heavenly throne of our Lord. (Ezk. 47:1-12) “As the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” (John 7:38 NKJV)

When a believer receives the spiritual life of Christ through a work of the Spirit, they will no longer have a natural tendency to condemn others for not having the same kind of righteousness. They know better than anyone that apart from Christ’s indwelling presence, they cannot manifest the divine nature. (John 15:5) In other words, they do not have a self-produced righteousness which naturally becomes a standard for judging others.

Spiritual Christians, however, will judge all things. (1 Cor. 2:15) We are enabled to easily discern between the flesh and the Spirit. While we do not fault people for their unrighteous ways, like Jesus, we do place blame on them when they refuse to seek out Christ’s divine spiritual life through a dependent faith in Him.

### **The New Covenant**

Once Christ was glorified, He became a life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45). He then was able to “fill” the souls of His disciples with His “Spirit of life” and deliver them from “the law of sin and death.” (Rom. 8:2) The “law of sin and death” is the self-centered nature that causes spiritual emptiness. This fallen nature, with its self-seeking bias, is what creates the bondage of Romans seven. It prevents Christians from putting on “the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.” (Eph. 4:24)

Even after the first disciples were “clean” {justified} in the eyes of God (John 13:10), they still had to wait in dependent faith for Christ to supernaturally reveal His life within their souls. To be fully saved from their old nature, they had to wait for the glorified Lord to come as a refiner’s fire and purify their hearts. (Acts 15:8-9) Only then was He able to fill the temple of their body with His spiritual life. (Mal. 3:1-3) The Son’s indwelling presence, which He manifests as the “Spirit of life,” is what saved them from their carnal nature. (John 14:21; Rom. 5:10)

Paul has described these two different parts of redemption. Our redemption begins when our sins are forgiven. But forgiveness of sins is not the primary purpose of the New Covenant. People in the Old Testament dispensation were able to receive remission of sins {forgiveness} through their personal repentance. (Mark 1:4) Repentance and obedience {making our paths straight} are what prepares the way for Christ to manifest the fullness of His spiritual life within our soul. (Matt. 3:3, 8, 11; John 14:21)

The purpose of the New Covenant was to supply God with a means to purify our heart and fill our soul with the spiritual life of the Son. God was able to forgive the sins of people in the Old Testament dispensation by looking forward to the shed blood of Jesus Christ. But the Son's death and resurrection had to take place before God could fill the temple of our body with His spiritual life from heaven. Only then was it possible for God to recreate His children of faith into His spiritual image and begin manifesting His life of love throughout the world.

The saints of the Old Testament were fully aware of their defective heart. They had been told by the prophets to wait in faith for a Messiah to come and establish His undivided Kingdom within their heart. (Ezk. 11:19) Under the New Covenant, God's children would be enabled to live out the holy life that God has always required of His people. (1 Pet. 1:15-16) "Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Sovereign Lord, when I show myself holy through you before their eyes... And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws... I will save you from all your uncleanness." (Ezk. 36:23, 27, 29)

### **Two Works of Grace**

After being justified, the Lord still needs to "save" each of His disciples from their fallen nature. This self-centered nature is the source of all our uncleanness. He does this by filling the temple of our body with His God-centered nature {true holiness}.

Paul has noted how these two different works occur at separate stages in God's work of redemption. "For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, *having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!*" (Rom. 5:10 Emphasis added) We enter into the full salvation of God when Christ displaces our carnal nature with an overflowing supply of His Spiritual life of divine love.

On the day of Pentecost the tongues of fire came from heaven to purify the hearts of the first group of consecrated {and previously forgiven} disciples. (Acts 15:8-9) This was when the firstfruits of the Son's spiritual life began to well up from within their inner being.

Everyone who had patiently waited to be clothed with power were suddenly enabled to manifest Christ's life of "perfect love." Their old self-centered nature was circumcised when they were baptized with the Holy Spirit. "All the believers were *one in heart and mind*. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had." (Acts 4:32 Emphasis added)

A heart filled with God's divine life of love will joyously lay itself down for the good of the many. (1 John 3:16) This is what John meant when he said, "Love has been perfected among us in this...because as He is, so are we in this world." (1 John 4:17) We can see how the Son's indwelling life of "perfect love" was being displayed through the individual believers in the early church.

These early disciples had responded to the teaching of the Lord. Because they obeyed Him, He fulfilled His promise by manifesting His spiritual life as a new nature of love from within their inner being. (John 14:21) Christ still has the power to do the same work in our life. We have the assurance of the apostle John: "But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him." (1 John 2:5) If we will respond to His teachings and the convicting work of the Holy Spirit, He will take us into the promised land and begin to manifest His divine love through our life. Jesus prayed, "O righteous Father... I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them." (John 17:25-26)

### **The Doctrine of Perfect Love**

Once someone has given themselves to God to be "filled" with the Holy Spirit and have begun to live under His control and power, they will no longer live for themselves. Like the Son, who comes to manifest His nature within their soul, they enjoy living for the good of others.

But we can see how the church as a whole did not remain in a Spirit-filled condition. For many generations the church was living in carnal darkness. While we can thank Martin Luther for bringing the doctrine of justification by faith back into the church, we can also see how justified Christians often remain carnal. Forgiven Christians need to go on in their faith to be filled with Christ's spiritual life of "perfect love." The writer to the Hebrews explains this principle to the early Christians: "Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God." (Heb. 6:1 NKJV)

It was not until we come to the ministry of John Wesley in the eighteenth century that we once again find a Christian movement exhorting every believer to push forward in their faith until they have entered into Christ's life of "perfect love." Following the apostle Paul's teachings, the early Methodists were "warning every man and teaching every man" because they wanted to "present every man perfect in Christ." (Col. 1:28)

Wesley gave an account of how he was led during the course of fifty years to embrace this doctrine. In his book *Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, he provided a record of how his teachings developed over the course of his life. We quote the following from the end of his book –

*"In the year 1764, upon a review of the whole subject, I wrote down the sum of what I had observed in the following propositions:*

- 1.) There is such a thing as perfection; for it is again and again mentioned in Scripture. [It is a distinct and recognizable form of Christian maturity.]*
- 2.) It is not so early as justification; for justified persons are to 'go on unto perfection,' (Heb. 6:1)*
- 3.) It is not so late as death; for St. Paul speaks of living men that were perfect. (Phil. 3:15)*
- 4.) It is not absolute. Absolute perfection belongs not to man, nor to angels, but to God alone.*
- 5.) It does not make a man infallible; none is infallible while he remains in the body.*
- 6.) Is it sinless? It is not worthwhile to contend for a term. It is 'salvation from sin.' [1 John 3:9; 5:18]*
- 7.) It is 'perfect love.' (1 John 4:18) This is the essence of it. Its properties, or inseparable fruits, are, rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, and in*

*everything giving thanks, etc. (1 Thess. 5:16) [Divine love makes the believer dead to self and alive in Christ.]*

8.) *It is improvable...[The] one [who is] perfected in love may grow in grace far swifter than he did before... [He has been set free from the self-centered nature.]”*

*[There are some who still complain] ‘But this doctrine has been much abused.’ So has that of justification by faith. But that is no reason for giving up either this or any other Scriptural doctrine...*

*Therefore, all our preachers should make a point of preaching perfection to believers, constantly, strongly and explicitly; and all believers should mind this one thing, and continually agonize for it.*

*I have now done what I proposed... And I would now ask any impartial person, What is there so frightful therein? ... Why is it, that the very name of perfection [which is God’s word] has been cast out of the mouths of Christians; yea, exploded and abhorred, as if it contained the most pernicious heresy? ...*

*They sought occasion against me. ‘This is Mr. Wesley’s doctrine! He preaches perfection!’ He does; yet this is not his doctrine, any more than it is yours, or any one’s else, that is a minister of Christ. For it is His doctrine, peculiarly, emphatically His; it is the doctrine of Jesus Christ. Those are His words, not mine: ‘Ye shall therefore be perfect, as your Father who is in heaven, is perfect.’ And who says, ye shall not...*

*It is the doctrine of St. Paul, the doctrine of St. James, of St. Peter, and St. John; and no otherwise Mr. Wesley’s, than as it is the doctrine of every one who preaches the pure and the whole Gospel. I tell you, as plain as I can speak, where and when I found this. I found it in the oracles of God, in the Old and New Testaments; when I read them with no other view or desire, but to save my own soul [to find true deliverance] ...*

*Look at it again; survey it on every side, and that with the closest attention. In one view, it is purity of intention, dedicating all the life to God. It is the giving God all our heart; it is one desire and design ruling all our tempers. It is the devoting, not a part, but all, our soul, body, and substance, to God. In another view, it is all the mind which was in Christ, enabling us to walk as Christ walked [1 John 2:6] ... It is the renewal of the heart in the whole image of God, the full likeness of Him that created it [Eph. 4:24] ...*

*Now let this perfection appear in its native form, and who can speak one word against it? ... It must be disguised before it can be opposed...*

*But whatever these do, let not the children of God any longer fight against the image of God. Let not the members of Christ say anything against the whole mind that was in Christ [1 Cor. 2:16] ... What pity that those who desire and design to please Him should have any other design or desire!...*

*And why are you so hot against us, because we expect likewise to be sanctified wholly through His Spirit? [1 Thess. 5:23-24] We look for no favor either from the open servants of sin, or from those who have only the form of religion. But how long will you who worship God in spirit...set your battle in array against those who seek an entire circumcision of heart [Col. 2:11], who thirst to be cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit and to perfect holiness in the fear of God? [2 Cor. 7:1]*

*Are we your enemies because we look for a full deliverance from the carnal mind which is enmity against God? [Rom. 8:5-8] ... Yea, we do believe that He will in this world so ‘cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of His Holy Spirit, that we shall perfectly love Him, and worthily magnify His holy name.’ ”*

Not many Christians have accepted the teachings of John Wesley over the years. The carnal mind, when it does not seek help from God, will remain blinded to these truths. But that does not make them any less real. We will all be accountable for every truth we have resisted for our own selfish reasons. Therefore, “Be diligent to present yourselves approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” (2 Tim. 2:15).

God exceedingly blessed the ministry of John Wesley. There was a great holiness revival that was directly connected to his teachings. The Nazarene Manual states: “The Wesleyan phase of the great revival was characterized by three theological landmarks: regeneration by grace through faith; Christian perfection, or sanctification, likewise by grace through faith; and the witness of the Spirit to the assurance of grace. Among John Wesley’s distinctive contributions was an emphasis on entire sanctification in this life as God’s gracious provision for the Christian.”

### **Doctrines of the Church of the Nazarene**

As an evangelical church, the Church of the Nazarene teaches about the necessity of spiritual regeneration. We believe that each person must submit to the lordship of Jesus Christ through an act of repentance. When someone has been enabled to believe that Christ’s shed blood is the only means for having their sins forgiven and they have chosen through a decision of the will to follow after the Lord and His teachings, spiritual regeneration will take place. God is the one who examines the heart and grants the blessing. A regenerate heart provides the believer with a real hunger and thirst after righteousness. (Matt. 5:6) If we possess this real desire to be like Jesus Christ, we can know that we have been blessed by God with spiritual regeneration.

In addition to these basic evangelical beliefs, there are some distinctive positions that make the Church of the Nazarene a little different than many other evangelical churches. The distinctions relate specifically to the nature of sin and God’s cure for it.

To begin, sin is broken down into two different forms. The first part of sin involves every act that has been committed in violation of God’s will. These acts must be forgiven by God before He can continue with His redemptive work in our life. Once our sins have been forgiven and we have come to Christ for His saving life (Rom. 5:10), God will begin the more troublesome work of removing our willful nature – the source of all our sins.

We sin when we violate God’s known will. We are able to remain under the justifying blood of Jesus Christ as we confess and turn from our sins. But this carnal state of sinning and confessing will prevent us from truly manifesting the glory of God. God has something much more glorious planned. Christ has come to deliver His people from the carnal state. (Matt. 1:21)

God cannot do anything with our sins other than forgive them. But He can do something much more glorious with our sin nature. The Lord has come to save us from our sins by delivering our soul from the old willful nature. He comes to establish His undivided Kingdom in our heart.

Scripture says, “You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people *from their sins*.” (Matt. 1:21 Emphasis added) Jesus did not come to save us “in” our sins. His work of saving our soul has not been completed until He has saved us “from” our sins. (1 John 3:9) Christ saves us from our sinful nature {willfulness} by enabling us to enter into a real union with His submissive nature.

We, like all evangelical churches, acknowledge that after our conversion to Christ there still remains a nature or condition that regularly manifests itself in willfulness. The “will,” under the fallen nature, is inwardly focused. The apostle Paul calls our self-centered bias “the flesh” and “carnal-mindedness.” (1 Cor. 3:1-2; Gal. 5:17) The New International Version of the Bible has more distinctly called it the “sinful nature.” It is a nature that does not want to surrender completely to God’s will.

We are saved from the sinful nature when Christ manifests His Kingdom-life within our inner being. When we receive this Pearl, He uses the power of His Spirit to supply our eternal soul with a new nature that is wholly centered on God.

God established the rite of circumcision in the Old Testament as a prophetic “spiritual type” to help us understand what He planned to do with the hearts of His children in the New Testament age of fulfillment. He promised to provide His children with an undivided heart by cutting off the flesh-life through a supernatural circumcision of the heart by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is called “the putting off of the sinful nature {the willful nature}, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ.” (Col. 2:11) Only the “Spirit of Christ” has the power to cut off the sinful nature.

Since the problem of sin is twofold, full salvation will require two distinct works by God. The sinful acts must be forgiven and the sinful nature needs to be purified or removed. While the first part results in justification, the second divine work produces entire sanctification and victorious Christian living.

This is why John Wesley taught {and the Church of the Nazarene believes} that after we are forgiven for our sins, we must go on to a second level that deals with the inner nature of sin. (Heb. 6:1) Once we have been built up in our faith to the point where we have sufficient trust in God to present ourselves to Him as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1-2), we consecrate – that is, we surrender our complete selves {mind, emotions, will} to God. In this state of full surrender, we seek through faith to have our hearts completely cleansed of the old self-centered nature.

The Manual states: “We believe that entire sanctification is that act of God, subsequent to regeneration, by which believers are made free from original sin, or depravity, and brought into a state of entire devotement to God, and the holy obedience of love made perfect... This experience is also known by various terms representing its different phases, such as “Christian perfection,” “perfect love,” “heart purity,” “the baptism with the Holy Spirit,” “the fullness of the blessing,” and “Christian holiness.”

### **The Meaning of Heart Purity**

God’s work of entire sanctification does not provide the Christian with perfect knowledge. Our light of understanding will continue to increase as we are being led from glory to glory. (2 Cor. 3:17-18) However, in the “spiritual state,” we will experience a new “freedom” from the self-centered nature. A fully sanctified soul receives sufficient power from God to overcome the temptations of the world and live wholly for the Lord. (Rom. 6:14-16; 1 John 3:9; 5:3-4)

In everything we do, the primary concern of all spiritual Christians will be living for the Kingdom of God and His glory. We are enabled by the power of the Holy Spirit to follow Paul’s example as He followed the example of Christ (1 Cor. 11:1): “Therefore ...do all to the glory of God...just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.” (1 Cor. 10:31, 33)

God calls each of us to do a different work. Not all of us have been called to be pastors, evangelists and missionaries. But we have all been called to lead others to Christ. For example, the young mother will be responsible for raising her children specifically for the Lord and His Kingdom. We also know that many of the members of Christ's body will have secular work. But the one common factor of everyone who has received a purified heart is their continual desire to do everything for the glory of God. In everything they do, their thoughts will be continually focused on optimizing the use of their gifts, their time and their resources to further the Kingdom of God.

Being sanctified entirely to God does not produce a "holier than thou" attitude, but rather, it gives the believer a new heart of humility. In fact, the Spirit-filled Christian knows better than anyone that apart from the presence of Christ's indwelling life he can do nothing. (John 15:5)

The difference between the "carnal state" and the "spiritual life," which is now available through heart cleansing, is that sanctified Christians will no longer experience the inner defeat described in Romans seven. We become "more than conquerors" as we overcome the self-seeking ways of the world and begin to participate with Christ in His victorious life.

It is also important to distinguish between the carnal nature {the flesh-life}, which needs to be circumcised by the Holy Spirit, and the original human nature that was given to us by God. Both the first and Second Adam, in their perfect state, possessed God-centered appetites, emotions, and a freedom of will. There is nothing wrong with God's original creation. The problem is found in its evil bias toward self. And the Lord has the power to save us from this fallen condition.

The original human nature, once it has been purified, joyously lives under the control and power of the Holy Spirit. It enjoys offering itself to God and being subject to His will. (1 Cor. 9:24) In a sense, it is a holiness from the life of heaven taking possession of our eternal soul. Here, then, is the holiness of life that every Christian is to earnestly pursue. (Heb. 12:14)

In closing this section, let us remind you: "It is God's will that you should be sanctified." (1 Thess. 4:3) *Being sanctified wholly to God should be the first objective in your service to the Lord.* "Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed...continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you {through His convicting work} to will and to act according to his good purpose... Do all things without complaining and disputing, *that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault* in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life..." (Phil. 2:12-16 Emphasis added) Everyone who will truly submit themselves to be led by the Holy Spirit will eventually have their heart purified so they may live blamelessly in "holiness to the Lord."

Remember, God is faithful. Everything He commands His children to do He will also work out in their life by the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus, His commands become His promises. If we will truly live as His children and respond to the Spirit's convicting work, He will eventually lead us through the desert testing period and into the promised land of abundant fruitfulness. He promises to purify our heart and manifest the fruit of His Spirit through our life so we can be blameless, pure and without fault in a perversely self-centered world. In the midst of all the carnal darkness, we can, through God's power, manifest the light of Christ's divine nature. (John 8:12)



# The Purpose of Salvation

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## A Look at the Fallen Nature

God created a perfect world. That world included human beings – Adam and Eve. As the Creator, God expected them to obey Him. The children of God were designed to be led by His Spirit. (Rom. 8:14) He planned to direct their lives according to His “good, pleasing and perfect will.” (Rom. 12:2)

God set up a plan to keep His lovely world under His divine order by issuing a simple set of instructions. He said to His creation, “You must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.” (Gen. 2:17) Eating from this tree would enable man to become independent of God and enter into a self-directed life. And, according to God, whoever directs their own life according to their own wisdom will surely die.

When Adam turned to his own ways and became separated from the will of God, he also became separated from God’s spiritual life. God’s creation cannot expect to receive divine spiritual life from Him {enabling them to manifest His spiritual image} while they are separated from His will.

As our Creator, God chose to be the One who would tell His creation what was right and wrong for their individual lives. According to His original plan, God reserved for Himself the right to direct the steps of His creation. And if mankind would listen to God’s word and respond to the leading of His Spirit, He would keep their life and His world in a heavenly order.

Can we understand why God would reserve the right to be God? His knowledge of His world and the people He created is perfect. As our All-Knowing Creator, He planned to remain in control of our lives for our good. This was to be an everlasting truth that could not be violated without leading to spiritual death. “I know, O Lord, that a man’s life is not his own; it is not for man to direct his steps.” (Jer. 10:23)

The children of God were to be led by the Spirit of God in everything they did. According to God’s plan, which is designed to keep everything under a heavenly order, the Spirit would supply divine spiritual life to everyone who lived under His control and power.

However, sin slipped in like a snake in the grass. The serpent came as a deceiver. These created beings were tempted into doubting the integrity and goodness of God’s word. The “evil one” then led them into believing that it was possible to get away with rejecting God’s truth. In spite of God’s contrary word, Satan said, “You will not surely die.” (Gen. 3:4) But it was a lie. And so their desire for independence led to rebellious disobedience and spiritual death.

Spiritual death occurs when the Holy Spirit does not dwell within the eternal soul. The Spirit will only dwell in people who want to obey the word of God. The departure of God’s indwelling presence {His Spirit} from the soul of Adam is what left a real emptiness within the inner being of fallen man. Because of the original rebellion by Adam, everyone is now born into the world with the seed of his emptiness.

Here, then, is the root of the sin nature. As long as this inner emptiness exists within the soul, there will be a bias toward serving ourselves at the expense of others. Even

when we do serve others, we will naturally expect some kind of return because we are always looking for fulfillment. Of course, when we are living in this carnal condition, we will find ourselves resenting whatever and whoever does not meet our needs as we had expected them to. The emptiness within the soul, the element that generates a self-seeking nature, has a tendency to bring poison into all our relationships. Even our good intentions become twisted by the evil of selfishness.

The devil's work of turning mankind from a fulfilled God-centered life to an empty self-centered life is what brought all this chaos into the world. Of course, all is not lost. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." (1 John 3:8)

### **The Spirit of the World**

Here was the temptation that was brought into our world by Satan: You should not totally depend on God for everything, because if you wait on Him, you will surely miss out on many of the good things of this world. Since you are individuals with the right of self-will, you should become your own master and sustainer. You cannot take the risk of trusting in God to sustain your temporal {of the physical universe} and spiritual life. While it is okay to accept God as the Creator, only a fool would continue to depend on Him to be their Sustainer.

The "spirit of the world" (1 Cor. 2:12) is still teaching this same message. The people of the world, according to their own "wisdom," actually believe they have the ability to do a better job than God when it comes to directing their own lives.

In effect, people prefer to eat from the tree of knowledge and live by their own opinions. We might also refer to the tree of self-knowledge as "the opinion tree." And thus, as the temptation goes, by becoming a self-directed individual, and by living according to the knowledge you have developed from your own worldly wisdom, you can then make decisions about what is right and wrong for your own life. In other words, as the devil has led you to believe, "You will be like God." (Gen. 3:5 NKJV) You can be someone with your own independent will.

We swallowed the line and have been choking on the lie ever since. Even though we must usurp God's authority and will {and be left in darkness}, we still believe there is a possibility of doing a better job of directing our own affairs.

Once we take things into our own hands and become the king of our own kingdom, we set out to make ourselves into something great. This is how the world has become filled with independent kings who all live as they see fit in their own eyes. (Judges 21:25) It is the evil that God must condemn because of the way it destroys His divine order.

Once man had taken on this fallen nature, where everyone was independently living for themselves, it was only natural for heartache to also enter into the world. The fallen world has become completely reversed from God's perfectly planned creation, where everyone was to remain in His heavenly will by living under the control and power of His Holy Spirit.

Human beings were simply not designed to have their own independent kingdoms. With everyone wanting to be a king, and with each individual wanting to have his own opinions and desiring to follow his own ways, is there any wonder why "the whole world lieth in wickedness." (1 John 5:19) "For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there." (Jam. 3:16)

## The Adam-life and the Christ-life

The Son, who was called the Second or Last Adam, came to show fallen man how the first Adam was designed to live. The true Son received everything from the Father in heaven through the power of the Holy Spirit. He did not *do anything* or *say anything* until He was led to do so by the Holy Spirit. (John 5:19; 8:28-29; 12:49-50) In effect, every true child of God has been predestined to become conformed to this same form of life. (Rom. 8:29) We are to depend on our heavenly Father to provide our guidance in all matters of life.

If we hope to receive an abundantly full spiritual life from Jesus Christ, we will need to understand how the Son was enabled to receive His spiritual sustenance from heaven. Once He was living in a mortal body, He too had to receive His spiritual life {as well as His temporal sustenance – provisions to sustain physical life} from the Father in heaven. And fortunately for us, He did not follow the first Adam into sin by choosing to direct His own steps. “My food {the way I sustain Myself spiritually},” said Jesus, “is to do the will of Him who sent me and to finish His work.” (John 4:34)

In contrast to the first Adam, Jesus chose to receive His spiritual life from the Father in heaven. He knew that, as a Son, He could only be sustained from heaven while He remained in His Father’s heavenly will.

The Father expects each of His children to depend on Him for everything. He will use His omnipotent power to work out all the affairs of our lives when we have fully entrusted ourselves to Him and are walking daily by dependent faith. “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose...to be conformed to the image of His Son...” (Rom. 8:28-29)

Jesus did not have to fret and worry about His daily life because He knew that as long as He remained yielded to the Spirit, His heavenly Father would work out everything in His life according to the divine will. He was able to pray to the Father and receive whatever He needed. This constant help was available to Him because He was willing to remain in the Father’s will. Everyone who has been called according to God’s purpose will be conformed to this same kind of life.

Again, the Son demonstrated how the children of God are to live. We too are to depend on God for everything. After we have entrusted ourselves to God for His keeping, we have the right to turn to our Father in dependent prayer as Jesus did. The apostle John assures us that if we are being led by the Spirit of God and our needs are in harmony with the Spirit, our prayers will be answered as effectively as the Son’s prayers were answered. This is how God intended for man to live. “Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him.” (1 John 3:21-22)

If we will live for the glory of the Father as the Son did, and rely on Him in dependent prayer for all our needs, we can expect to have our prayers answered. In fact, there is no other way to live acceptably before God. “A man can receive only what is given him from heaven.” (John 3:27) On the other hand, for “those who are self-seeking” and refuse to wait on God in dependent faith, there will be “tribulation and anguish.” (Rom. 2:8-9) “For whatever is not from faith is sin.” (Rom. 14:23)

Everyone who chooses to eat from the tree of knowledge (Gen. 2:17) will tend to become more and more independent and self-seeking. They will have a natural aversion to waiting on the God of heaven to guide and direct their steps. They prefer to live by their own sufficiency {"self"-sufficient} and go after whatever they want according to

their own will {"self"-seekers}. This is the evil tree that fallen men and women have been using to develop their own kingdoms throughout the ages.

The only time worldly people want to depend on God is when their own plans and spiritual lives have begun to fail. There is a natural tendency for everyone to begin throwing up prayers to God when they are trying to escape from the "tribulation and anguish" that comes from a self-directed way of life.

The fallen nature is the thing that wants to serve itself. All the sins that rise up in attitudes and actions come from the evil bias that is centered on self. It is the source of all greed, envy, strife, fights and wars. "For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there." (Jam. 3:16) Is there any wonder why Christ has come to save us from our fallen nature?

### **Salvation from Sin**

Self-will is "the sin" that must be removed from fallen man before he can be restored to God's original order. If you continue to live by self-will, which will naturally cause you to independently serve yourself, you will surely die. (Rom. 8:13-14)

The self-directed life is what keeps people separated from the Tree of Life. The Son has always been the Tree of Life for God's creation. He was in the Garden providing the eternal life to Adam and Eve at the beginning. (John 1:3-4; Col. 1:15-17) But when they chose to separate their will from God's will, they were cut off from the Tree of Life. "In Him was life" (John 1:4), but they lost their access to His divine spiritual life when they began to live by their own will. In other words, the self-directed life is the evil that keeps everyone separated from Christ's spiritual life in the heavenly realms.

Self-will is "the sin" that leads to the daily sins in our life. Everyone who is still trying to be a king with rights over their own kingdom will naturally display a carnal nature. A king never likes to find his will being crossed.

*Jesus is the One who tells us to examine the words that people speak in their daily lives to determine if they are living by the Spirit or by the flesh.* "For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man {the Spirit-controlled man} brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man {the self-directed man} brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned." (Matt. 12:34-37)

Most people can be nice when they want others to like them. Kings are willing to provide services to others and speak well of their enemies if it will enable them to become elevated in the eyes of the world. But when their self-serving wills are crossed, they will show the real selfish nature that remains in their heart. If we find ourselves becoming upset and saying careless words when someone has interfered with the plans of our kingdom, then we can see what a precarious condition we are in. The words from a selfish nature will one day condemn everyone who has refused to give up their own kingdom so they may enter into our Lord's Kingdom-life. Jesus said, "A good tree cannot bear bad fruit... Therefore by their fruits you will know them." (Matt. 7:18, 20)

What was a holy Creator to do with a people who were no longer holy to Him and did not want to be subject to His rule? Since this independent darkness cannot be permitted to mix with the light of His holy life, He needed a way to bring His people back into a life of "God-centered" holiness.

God has not turned His back on us. Jesus Christ is able to set us free from our carnal nature and manifest the Kingdom-life of heaven within our eternal soul. He has the power to fill the temple of our body with His life of perfect love.

God's plan of redemption has made it possible for all "believers" to receive the submissive life and nature of the Son through a faith that trusts in Him for everything. The people of the world, in their darkness, attempt to work out all things in their own strength. Since they are unwilling to enter into the life of faith, they remain dependent on themselves to work out their own lives. Is there any wonder why they remain "worried and upset about many things"?

It is difficult to enter into the life of faith. In contrast to the way that Adam chose to go, it will be necessary to believe in God's Word. He says that if we will devote ourselves to living for His Kingdom and righteousness, He will take care of all our needs. And even when the fleshly human wisdom wants to rise up to challenge God's truth and then insist on remaining in control, we say, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths." (Prov. 3:5-6)

God has the power to control all the providences of our life. If we will give ourselves fully to Him to be led by His Spirit, we can expect the Father to work out everything in our life for His glory and our eternal good.

If we entrust ourselves to our Creator, He will use His Spirit to manifest the spiritual nature of Christ through our soul so we will have the power to joyously overcome every trial of life. "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!... Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God... And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4:4-6, 19 Emphasis added)

Christ is still the Tree of Life and the Light of the World. All divine spiritual life is still "in Him." When we are willing to give up our self-will to the cross, we will once again have access to His heavenly life. Jesus said, "He who follows Me {by giving up their own will to the cross} shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." (John 8:12) When our eye is single toward God and our whole body is filled with the light of the Son's life (Matt. 6:22), then we will be enabled to "walk as Jesus did." (1 John 2:6) He did not have to worry about His life because He trusted in His Father to guide and direct His every step.

Once we have overcome the self-life {the source of sin} through a total submission to Christ, a touch of heaven will enter into our soul. "To him who overcomes I {the risen Lord} will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." (Rev. 2:7) The Paradise of God is a spiritual life that enters into our eternal soul when we have died to self. When we are eating from His life {depending on Him for everything}, we are enabled to receive a wholeness of life from heaven in the same way that Jesus {while He lived in a mortal body} received His life from the Father. He said, "As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. This is the bread which came down from heaven... He who eats this bread will live forever." (John 6:57-58)

Those who will die to the self-willed ways of life can once again eat from the Tree of Life and begin experiencing within their soul the firstfruits of the spiritual blessings found in the heavenly realms – the paradise of God. (Eph. 1:3) It is given to those who

turn away from the tree of knowledge {a will driven by human wisdom} to feed only on the will and life of God.

Holiness is the life of heaven. If we want to be truly fulfilled and happy regardless of our surrounding circumstances, we must enter into a life of holiness to the Lord. He is still saying, “Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare.” (Isa. 55:2)

### **The Terms of Credited Righteousness**

In the moment you look to Christ and trust in His shed blood as the source of your salvation, the sins from your willful past are forgiven. The record of all your past sins are completely blotted out and you are adopted into the family of God. At the point you entrust yourself to God, with a belief that Jesus has come to save you from your life of sin {self-will}, the Spirit slips through the door and enters the soul. He will then begin His work of leading you toward the promised land of Christ’s abundantly full spiritual life.

There is a need to help new believers understand the truths about our justification and credited righteousness. Because not long after spiritual regeneration has taken place, every Christian can expect the Spirit to begin His work of stripping away the hidden parts of the old self-life.

Earnest Christians sometimes begin to question their relationship with God when He begins to take them through this painful process. New Christians need to be taught to persevere in their faith and rest in their justification when they find themselves being taken through the furnace. Therefore, even when you find yourself stumbling into sin or when your spiritual life appears very bleak, remember that God is faithful. He will never let you fall away while you are depending on Christ to save you from your life of sin.

God’s Word has provided a clear explanation of how we are to receive “credit” for Christ’s righteousness. When God gives credited righteousness to a believer, it means that He looks at their life through Christ’s life of true righteousness.

When we believe the Lord has come to save us, and we have entrusted ourselves to Him to do the work, He does not hold us accountable for our sinful nature. In this justified state, we live in dependent faith in what our Lord has the power to work out in our life according to His promises.

Faith includes yielding to the light of His truth as it is revealed to our heart by His Spirit. If we will humble ourselves under God’s mighty hand, with our will entirely yielded to Him, God will still look at us through the righteous life of the Son regardless of how many times we may stumble into sin. “If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin... If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:7, 9)

We receive credited righteousness through our faith in the same way that Abraham was justified before God in the Old Testament. Abraham is called the father of faith because he believed in God’s word. (Gen. 12:4) Because his faith was real, he also responded to His Lord’s word. “He {Abraham} did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. And therefore ‘it was accounted {credited} to him for righteousness.’ ” (Rom. 4:20-22) Credited righteousness

was given to him in advance of actually receiving the promised blessing because he was fully persuaded that God would be able to fulfill His promise. The same principle applies to us. (Rom. 4:23-24)

Our work is to believe in Jesus. He is our Savior. If we have faith in His ability to save us from “all unrighteousness,” and we are appropriately responding to His teachings as we wait on Him to fulfill His promise, we will be credited with His life of righteousness. “According to your faith will it be done to you.” (Matt. 9:29)

God is faithful. He will always fulfill His covenant promises. All we have to do is learn to wait on Him in dependent faith. “And now, Lord, what do I wait for? My hope is in You. Deliver me from all my transgressions.” (Ps. 39:7-8) “Then you will know I am the Lord, for they shall not be ashamed who wait for Me.” (Isa. 49:23)

### **The Way of the Cross**

The whole world is said to be “under the sway of the wicked one.” (1 John 5:19) They prefer to follow his self-serving and self-elevating way of life. As God’s Word has so clearly depicted, their flesh-life has a real aversion to Christ’s lowly, submissive and self-giving nature. “The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.” (Rom. 8:7-8) By recognizing the evil in the flesh-life, it becomes easier to understand why it must go to the cross.

While there is a tendency to try to lead people to Christ without telling them about the way of the cross, this kind of Christianity will never lead anyone into His spiritual life. It permits them to remain in their self-serving nature. While they may have a form of religion, their flesh-life will prevent them from entering into Christ’s way of life.

Because the doctrine of the cross is seldom taught in these last days, we should not be surprised at the amount of worldliness in the church today. The apostle Paul predicted there would be a day when the “me” generation would greatly influence the church: “But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come {to the church}: For men will be lovers of themselves {and their personal opinions}, lovers of money, boasters, proud...headstrong, haughty, lovers of {worldly} pleasure rather than lovers of God {His self-giving way of life}, having a form of godliness {an outward self-produced righteousness} but denying its power. And from such people turn away!” (2 Tim. 3:1-5)

If we want to become a disciple of Jesus Christ and enter into the true family of God, we must give up our self-life to the cross and follow our Lord into His spiritual life of divine love. Jesus said, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself {his self-life}, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.” (Matt. 16:24-25) According to the Word of God, we will not find Christ’s life of divine love until we have lost our old self-elevating and self-serving way of life.

Every Christian will be taken to their own Garden of Gethsemane if they are truly being led by the Spirit. They will need to make their choice between God’s will and their own will. Every Christian is expected to die to their own will so they may enter into God’s “good, pleasing and perfect will.” (Rom. 12:1-2) It is our decision to follow Christ through the cross that will enable our soul to enter into His divine spiritual life. We need to be able to say in living experience, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.” (Gal. 2:20)

If we hope to manifest the perfect love of God in this world, we cannot by-pass the cross. Jesus is still saying, “Anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.” (Luke 14:17)

We follow Christ into the heavenly realms by dying with Him on the cross. Without a dying to the old self-life {this carnal nature will not be permitted to come into the presence of God’s holy life}, we will not be in a condition to manifest the glory of God. “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone {without the life of God}; but if it dies, it produces much grain {to be a blessing to others}. He who loves his life will lose it {to darkness}, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me {by becoming a life of blessing to others}, let him follow Me {through the cross and into the spiritual life of the heavenly realms}; and where I am, there My servant will be also {in the divine will}...him My Father will honor.” (John 12:24-26)

First there must be a dying to self. Only then are we in a condition to receive resurrection life from Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit: “For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death {a death to self-will and the self-life}, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection.” (Rom. 6:5) If we will present the temple of our body to God for His exclusive use, the Father will honor our sacrifice by using the resurrection power of the Holy Spirit to raise our soul into His spiritual life of divine love.

Here is where faith is needed. The first objective is to build Christians up in their faith and teach them about the life of Christ. Only then will they possess sufficient trust in God to present themselves to Him without reservation to be a vessel of the Son’s life. “It was he who gave some to be...pastors and teachers...so that the body of Christ may be built up...in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God *and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*” (Eph. 4:11-13 Emphasis added)

### **The Need for Persevering Faith**

Many people fall away because they do not understand the purpose of God’s plan of redemption. Jesus said, “They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away.” (Luke 8:13) If Christians were able to understand why suffering takes place in God’s redemption process, and they understood the glorious results that will occur by persevering in their faith, less of them would fall away.

God is faithful to everyone who truly entrusts themselves to Him and then depends on the Lord to save them from their sinful nature. But for many, when God begins to permit certain providences to cross their path, they show their unbelief by turning back to their old willful way of life. They are unwilling to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Jesus into a participation with Him in His divine nature.

God uses His daily providences to show people how they have not been willing to give up the worldly way of living for self. He cannot save us from our self-centered nature if we do not learn from the lessons. Every time the selfish nature is exposed, we need to give it up to God so we may become “partakers of His holiness.” (Heb. 12:10-11) “if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)

The individual’s refusal to turn from the self-life in each of these tests will become a record against them on the Day of Judgment. God will continue to expose their selfish nature through the years so there will be a very clear record of how they have chosen to



remain in the darkness of this self-seeking world. It is a terrible thing, but “Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.” (Jam. 4:4)

Following Christ through the cross will result in a period of suffering. The way of the cross presents a spiritual type that helps us foresee a slow dying to self. But we cannot focus on the dying. We must keep our eyes on the hope and the joy that is set before us. “Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body {by dying to self} is done with sin {self-will}. As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God.” (1 Pet. 4:1-2) And remember, when we become partakers of His holiness, we also become partakers of His heavenly spiritual life.

The Spirit must separate every believer from their independence and self-sufficiency. He is always working to lead God’s called-out people back into a life of daily walking by faith through a childlike dependence on the Father. Do not expect to find any form of salvation that will permit you to willfully cling to your carnal nature: “For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God.” (Rom. 8:13-14)

Therefore, when the trials become difficult and the spiritual cross is doing its work of bringing an end to the old independent nature, look forward to the blessing of Christ’s spiritual life. “Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.” (Jam. 1:12) “He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me...and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.” (John 14:21)

As our pilgrimage into Christ’s life of holiness begins to become more difficult, we will need to keep focused on the hope set before us. (Heb. 6:19) “For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise.” (Heb. 10:36) And since the promise of entering into the spiritual life of our holy God is for today, “do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” (Heb. 6:12)

The humility that responds to the convicting work of the Holy Spirit will be rewarded in due time. (1 Pet. 5:6) God will use an *abundant provision of His grace* to lift our soul out of the Adam-life and into the Christ-life. “For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God’s *abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life* through the one man, Jesus Christ.” (Rom. 5:17 Emphasis added)

In other words, this abundant provision of grace and the gift of Christ’s life of righteousness can overcome the fallen nature we have received from Adam. It is the “promise of the Father.” This is the second work of grace that John Wesley encouraged every believer to earnestly seek. “Therefore, all our preachers should make a point of preaching perfection [the life of perfect love] to believers, constantly, strongly and explicitly; and all believers should mind this one thing, and continually agonize for it.”

The Spirit will experientially replace your old willful nature with the submissive nature of the Son after you have passed through the time of testing. “But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, *after you have suffered a while* {as the cross is doing its work on the “old man”}, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.” (1 Pet. 5:10 Emphasis added)

The spiritual suffering will not go on forever. You will soon be enabled to “rejoice in everything.” Therefore, “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience {a trusting faith in God}. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.” (Jam. 1:2-4)

### **The Reality of the Spiritual Life**

John Wesley, a practical theologian, had a four-step process for working out his thinking about God. He would go to Scripture, to church tradition, then to the test of reason, and finally he wanted something that was true to experience. The promises of God had to become real in his life. Someone once asked him, “What if you found a doctrine in the Bible and in church tradition that was reasonable but not true to experience?” He replied, “I would go back and see where I had misinterpreted the Bible.”

Let us take the same course. If we have not yet experienced the abundantly full spiritual life that has been promised to every believer, we too need to begin reexamining the Scriptures to find out where we have misinterpreted God’s Word. The life we are to receive from heaven is designed to satisfy our spiritual thirst. Once the inner emptiness has been replaced with the presence of God’s life of love, we can easily overcome the self-seeking ways of the world and “walk as Jesus did.” (1 John 2:5-6)

As long as the soul continues to experience emptiness, the heart will continue to be drawn back to the temporal realm. An empty soul will have a tendency to enter into idolatrous relationships with the things of this world. But when Christ fills the inner being with His spiritual life, He is then able to keep our heart in heaven with Him. Only then will we truly experience complete freedom in Christ.

*Everyone who perseveres in their faith will receive His thirst-quenching life in “due time.”* (1 Pet. 5:6) “Whoever drinks the water I give him will *never thirst*. Indeed, the water I give him *will become in him* a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” (John 4:14 Emphasis added)

## The Way of Holiness

This chapter includes material from *What is the Church of the Nazarene?* by William Greathouse. Published by Nazarene Publishing House; 1973.

### Our Heritage of Holiness

The Church of the Nazarene was formed for one basic purpose: The Lord needed a body of believers who would emphasize the doctrine of entire sanctification. The church teaches not only justification and spiritual regeneration through faith in Christ, but we also emphasize both the need and the possibility of the heart being cleansed from sin {self-centeredness}. We believe in stressing the urgency of being perfected in Christ's sacrificial life of love by the power of the Holy Spirit.

John Wesley, the eighteenth-century founder of Methodism, is the man whom Nazarenes feel was perhaps the most scriptural interpreter of the Christian faith and life. William Booth, who was a Methodist before he founded the Salvation Army, is another important figure whose understanding of doctrine and experience were similar to those of the Nazarenes. George Fox, founder of the Quakers, also held similar views.

The distinctive teaching of the holiness movement is that, subsequent to Christian conversion, there is a need for a further experience of grace through a baptism with the Holy Spirit. This baptism is understood to be an infilling of the Holy Spirit in power. His indwelling presence – the glory of the Lord – cleanses the Christian's heart from its inborn sinfulness {the self-centered and willful nature} and empowers the believer for a holy life of service to God. Without this second work of grace, even earnest Christians will remain in or periodically be pulled back into their old self-serving nature.

Jesus Christ has come to establish His undivided Kingdom in our life. He has the power to purify our heart and “To grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies {our sinful nature and the fruit it produces}, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.” (Luke 1:74-75) Glory be to our Lord, he “gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed {every sin} and purify {a real heart cleansing} for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.” (Titus 2:14)

### The American Revival of Holiness

The roots of the holiness movement in America reach back into the early decades of the nineteenth century. The literature devoted to this theme increased rapidly after 1825. Those who addressed the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal church in 1832 began to make a great plea for a revival of holiness.

In 1835, Mrs. Phoebe Palmer, the wife of a young New York physician began to conduct her famous “Tuesday Meeting for the Promotion of Holiness.” Charles G. Finney and Asa Mahan, founders of the Oberlin School, also began to exhort Christians to seek this deeper work of grace. These two preachers ranged the cities of two continents teaching believers to consecrate themselves wholly to God for the purpose of receiving power from the Spirit for a life of purity and holy living. According to their teachings, *the empowerment of the Holy Spirit was given to form a harmonious union between man's will and God's will. This establishing of the undivided Kingdom of God within the heart is the essence of true holiness.*

In 1858, William E. Boardman published his book *The Higher Christian Life*. Boardman, who was instrumental in the Keswick movement, sought to make the experience of entire sanctification – heart holiness – more appealing to all denominations. He described it in terms that neither the Methodists nor the Oberlin preachers had ever used.

In 1867, the first general holiness camp meeting was held in Vineland, New Jersey. It was out of this movement that the National Association for the Promotion of Holiness was formed. In 1886, Bishop Mallalieu wrote that God's people were seeking the blessing of a pure heart more than at any time in the history of Methodism.

Because there were a number of spiritual movements developing during this period, the holiness life overflowed into all the major denominations. Congregationalists like Finney, Mahan, and A. M. Hills; Presbyterians like Boardman and Pearsall Smith; Quakers like David B. Updergraff, Prof. Dougan Clark, and Hannah Whitall Smith; Baptists like A. B. Earle, J. Q. Adams, A. P. Graves, George Morse, and E. M. Levy; and the outstanding Episcopalian layman, Dr. Charles C. Cullis, gave the movement breath.

The aging Finney preached on "The baptism with the Holy Spirit" during the National Conference of Congregational Churches in 1873. In the same year, D.L. Moody, who in 1871 had experienced the baptism, opened his famous meetings in London. His name became a household word on two continents. It was the prominence of men like Finney and Moody in the holiness movement during this period that gave added significance to the experience of heart-holiness and made it all the more desirable.

It would be false to suggest that the preaching of holiness received unanimous support during the revival. Even in Methodism, which was founded on this doctrine, a hard core of resistance continued to surface. *There will always be people in the church who do not want to be separated from their self-centered nature.* The flesh-life has a natural enmity against the ways of Christ. "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh... Because the carnal mind is enmity against God" and Christ's way of life. (Rom. 8:5, 7) Those who live by the flesh refuse to follow Christ through the cross. And so resistance to this great movement of the Holy Spirit continued to intensify as the century drew to a close.

Increasingly, the people who had espoused the doctrine, which was never meant to be a "theological provincialism" {narrowness of outlook making one to appear sectarian or outside the fundamentals of the group}, found themselves unwelcome in their parent denominations. They were finding themselves increasingly isolated within their own churches. Carnal people simply do not want to hear the message of holiness. "Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecutions." (2 Tim. 3:12)

The devout Christians who loved the way of holiness were naturally drawn into holiness fellowships where the full gospel message was being preached. They wanted to be where they could "speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority." (Titus. 2:15) They knew there would be a need for boldness when exhorting people to "put off the old self" and then to "put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness." (Eph. 4:22-24)

### **The Mission of the Church of the Nazarene**

In 1883, Dr. Phineas F. Bresee was appointed pastor of the First Methodist Church of Los Angeles. In 1886 he moved to the Pasadena First Methodist Church. In 1891, Bishop Mallalieu appointed him presiding elder over the Los Angeles district and encouraged

him to promote holiness revivals throughout the district. The following year, however, a new bishop, opposed to holiness, came into jurisdiction, and Bresee found himself in sudden disfavor. In 1895, unable to promote scriptural holiness as he knew that he must, he reluctantly withdrew from the ministry of the Methodist church.

On October 6, 1895, Bresee began services in a building on Main Street in Los Angeles and announced that he was starting a new ministry to take the message of “full salvation” to the poor. They called their fellowship the “Church of the Nazarene” because the Spirit had given them an affinity with Jesus’ lowly life and His association with the “toiling...sorrowing heart of the world.”

Dr. Timothy Smith, the principle historian of the church, identifies five characteristics of the early Nazarenes:

- ) The government of the church was thoroughly democratic.
- ) The chief aim of the church was to preach holiness to the poor.
- ) Its discipline depended primarily on the work of the Holy Spirit.
- ) The church’s creed was brief and it made the doctrine of perfect love central.
- ) Its worship was joyously free.

It is the abiding conviction of Nazarenes that God raised them up for a special purpose. They were to bear witness to the fullness of God’s truth and demonstrate to the world how everyone has an opportunity to receive a purified heart in this age of fulfillment. “Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Sovereign Lord, when I show myself holy through you before their eyes.” (Ezk. 36:23)

Recognizing God’s purpose of redemption, we have made the blessing of heart purity a part of our creed. Our Manual clearly states the reason for our fellowship: “In order that we may preserve our God-given heritage, the faith once delivered to the saints, especially the doctrine and experience of sanctification as a second work of grace.”

The term most commonly used to describe this empowerment is “entire sanctification.” But this same divine blessing has also been described as “Christian perfection,” “perfect love,” “heart purity,” “the baptism with the Holy Spirit,” “the fullness of the blessing,” and “Christian holiness.”

In common with historic Christian faith, Nazarenes believe that justification is the gateway to sanctification. Following the doctrines taught by John Wesley, we believe that within the process of sanctification there is a second “moment,” a distinct and critical stage of Christian faith and life, when, by the Holy Spirit, God cleanses the believer’s heart from inbred sin {the willful nature} and establishes him in a life of selfless love.

*The believer is set free from his self-centered nature when the Spirit manifests the Son’s submissive nature within his soul.* With this new undivided heart, the sanctified Christian is enabled to live wholly for God and continue to grow from glory to glory. Once the carnal nature has been removed, there is nothing to hinder growth into the infinite light of God.

We further believe that this second crisis experience, which is similar to the instantaneous work that God does through spiritual regeneration, is a sudden work done by the resurrection power of the Holy Spirit in response to believing faith. (Eph. 1:17-20) We associate this sudden transformation with the radical change that occurred to Christ’s first disciples on the day of Pentecost. They were “suddenly” changed from a “carnal” state into a “spiritual” state. Even though they did not yet have the kind of knowledge we can expect to receive in a glorified state, they were enabled to live wholly for the will of God as He continued to increase their light of understanding.

The glorious riches of “this mystery” is the submissive nature of “Christ in you.” (Col. 1:27; Eph. 4:13) Because the Church of the Nazarene wants everyone to enter into an experiential understanding of “this mystery,” like Paul, “we proclaim him {Jesus Christ}, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.” (Col. 1:28) *We know the heart can be made perfect toward God when the soul is filled with Christ’s spiritual life of divine love.*

### **The Work of Grace**

Our redemption is worked out by the Spirit of God from beginning to end. The initial pull of God on our heart has been called “prevenient grace,” “awakening,” or “the God-shaped vacuum in every person.” The Spirit will continually expose the need within our soul so we will continue to look for fulfillment. *But only by entering into the holy life of our Lord will this inner emptiness ever be truly satisfied.*

Grace is not merely an “attitude of forgiveness” in the mind of God. When His grace is working in our life, it will teach us to live in godliness. “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age.” (Titus 2:11-12) If this universal grace was withdrawn, the world would fall into chaos.

More specifically, it is through the grace of God that our hearts can be purified. As a work of God’s grace, Jesus Christ “gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself *His* own special people, zealous for good works.” (Titus 2:14) In other words, Christ came into the world to make it possible to sanctify a people to Himself so they would have the power to live exclusively for the glory of God.

This work of grace that purifies the heart is similar to God’s instantaneous work of providing spiritual regeneration in that it happens “suddenly” and is accomplished by the resurrection power of the Holy Spirit in response to believing faith. (Eph. 1:17-20) We associate this sudden transformation with the radical change that occurred to Christ’s first disciples on the day of Pentecost. They were “suddenly” changed from a “carnal” state to a “spiritual” state.

If someone does not sense the Spirit of God pulling them toward a life of holiness, either their heart has not yet been regenerated or they have “quenched” (1 Thess. 5:19) “the Spirit of grace.” (Heb. 10:29) In either case, it calls for repentance.

Even though the grace of God has gone out to “all men,” only “the few” have ever been willing to fully yield to God’s call to holiness. (Matt. 7:14) Most people refuse to give up their willful nature so they may be led by the Spirit of God as sons of God. (Rom. 8:14) As Paul has noted, it is possible to receive God’s grace in vain. (1 Cor. 15:10) The pull of grace toward Christ’s life of holiness has been without effect on many people.

All Christians will sense the pull from God’s “Spirit of grace.” But most of them do not trust God. They still have the perverse opinion that they can do a better job than God when it comes to directing their own lives. They are still operating in the same “unbelief” that Satan beguiled Eve with and that ultimately led the human race into sin {rebellious “self”-will or “self”-determination}. It is their lack of faith in God that keeps them out of the promised land of spiritual abundance. They simply do not realize that holiness is the gateway into a glorious walk in union with Christ’s life and nature. *They need to learn that holiness is the life of heaven.*

Our Lord wants His disciples to be filled with all the goodness that He has now made available to them in the heavenly realms. (Eph. 1:3) That is why it is so important to help people understand the full purposes in God's plan of redemption. He "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works." (Titus 2:14) He has the power, the authority, and the willingness to enable each member of His body to participate with Him in His divine nature. (2 Pet. 1:3-4) Of course, we must "receive God's *abundant provision of grace* and the gift of righteousness" if we hope to "reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ." (Rom. 5:17 Emphasis added)

George C. Cell has convincingly argued that everyone who has experienced spiritual regeneration will have a "homesickness for holiness." The regenerate heart has a new pull toward holiness that constitutes "the innermost kernel of Christianity." It is a work of God's grace that everyone must receive before they will have a desire to seek out the fullness of Christ's spiritual life.

Jesus said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they will be filled." (Matt. 5:6) Only those who have received this initial blessing will have a desire to seek out God's "abundant provision of grace" so they may be filled with "the gift of righteousness." If we do not experience this enabling grace through spiritual regeneration, we will not be motivated to follow the way of Christ into His life of holiness.

Jesus said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled them." (John 6:65) The Father will continue to supply enabling grace to everyone who yields to His truth. Everyone who begins to challenge God's teachings, which can only come from a position of pride, will find themselves losing their desire to follow Christ into His life of holiness. (John 6:60-69) They effectively cut themselves off from God's enabling grace when their pride causes them to challenge divine truth. (1 Pet. 5:5-6)

Again, we are saying that spiritual regeneration will provide the Christian with a desire for Christlike righteousness and holiness, "no more, no less." When this inner desire is not present, it means the individual does not have a properly functioning regenerate heart. Either the heart was never regenerated or the Spirit's fire as been put out. (1 Thess. 5:19)

We quench the Spirit when we resist His leadings. When Christ gave the command to "be perfect," He meant it. (Matt. 5:48) Yes, the calling is high. But nothing that God commands us to do is beyond the power of His grace. Christ expects every one of His disciples to go on in their faith until they have become all that God requires of them. Since the Spirit is always leading us toward this goal, we have one of two options: Either we are going to resist the Spirit, or we are going to press forward until our heart has been made perfect according to the Scriptural requirement.

The only thing that can prevent God from completing His work in our heart is our refusal to yield to His Spirit. We must cooperate with the grace of God or our beliefs will have been in vain. (1 Cor. 15:2) God expects a complete surrender, and if we eventually resist His requirement, we will end up returning to the self-seeking ways of the world.

C. S. Lewis once compared the work of sanctification with a bird's egg. He said we all begin our Christian life like the egg. We cannot go on indefinitely being just an ordinary egg. One of two things will happen to every egg in the nest. Either it will go on to be hatched or it will go bad. If we remain in our carnal state, we will eventually go

back to worldliness and go bad. If we press forward until we are hatched, we can one day “soar on wings like eagles.” (Isa. 40:31) While the egg that is seeking to be hatched is in a justified state, we continually go forward in our faith until our heart has been perfected in love so we can stand before our Maker on the Day of Judgment with true confidence. (1 John 4:17)

We can begin to see why it is so important to permit the Spirit to lead us into the blessing of heart purity. We make our “calling and election sure” when we permit God to establish His undivided Kingdom {the heavenly Pearl} within our heart. (2 Pet. 1:10-11)

### **The Spirit-filled Life**

God’s Spirit is called the Holy Spirit because His work is to bring the Lord’s life of holiness into our soul. His work is to bring the heart of fallen man into a God-centered way of life.

Jesus Christ, as the Last Adam, came to demonstrate how God’s children are supposed to live. The Son of God lived in complete submission to the will of the Father in heaven. After choosing to give up His own glorified life in heaven to live in a mortal body as a man, He voluntarily became nothing in self and lived by dependent faith. He relied upon the Father for everything. (Phil. 2:7-8, John 5:30) In this condition of childlike dependence, He was said to be well pleasing to the Father.

It was not until after the Spirit came to Jesus representing the Dove of Peace that we find Jesus being led into the desert testing period. (Matt. 4:1) The same principle applies to all of His followers. The Spirit is breathed into our soul at spiritual regeneration to provide our heart with a sense of peace with God. He then leads us into the desert wilderness to begin His work of stripping away the old worldly ways of self-sufficiency. In the desert we are to fast from all other sources of spiritual sustenance until, in our weakness, our dependence on God becomes complete. When we have come to the end of our own strength and have learned to live wholly by faith in God, we will find that we have found the secret for perfecting the power of God in our life. (2 Cor. 12:9)

It was not until after Jesus had been tested in the desert wilderness and had lost all strength of His own that He was clothed with a new power from heaven through a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. (Luke 4:14) This was God’s preordained way to enter into a Spirit-empowered life. He came to show God’s creation how the sons of God are able to both enter into a life of spiritual power and live in the redeemed state under the control and power of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus followed the plan of the Father. Then He says, “if anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also.” (John 12:26) If we will follow His way through the desert and be willing to give up the strength we have in our flesh-life, we will also receive power from on high. The tests that God will permit us to pass through are designed to take away all our strength. When we have lost all hope in the ways of self-sufficiency and have learned to depend wholly on God as our only hope, He will use the resurrection power of the Holy Spirit to lift our soul into the Son’s spiritual life. Therefore, “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience {and reliance on God}. But let patience have its perfect work {leading to total dependence}, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.” (Jam. 1:2-4)

The Son’s life was set apart from the self-directed ways of the world. His only purpose in this world was to do the will of the Father. He sanctified Himself, which



means He set Himself apart for the Father's exclusive use, so that He would have the right to provide His followers with His sanctified life. "And for their sakes I sanctified Myself, that they also may be sanctified..." (John 17:19) The presence of His sanctified life in our soul will write God's way of life on our heart and enable us to "walk as Jesus did." (1 John 2:6)

The Spirit of our Lord comes to remake each believer into a God-centered child. Once the Spirit has purified our heart and brought us back into a state of holiness, He is able to fill our inner being with the Lord's spiritual life from heaven. (John 10:10; Eph. 1:3) Thus, the command goes out to all Christians: "Pursue...holiness, without which no one will see the Lord." (Heb. 12:14)

### **The Evidence of a Spirit Baptism**

We do not believe the gift of speaking in tongues is the conclusive evidence that someone has experienced the baptism with the Holy Spirit. The supernatural baptism that purifies the heart is designed to immerse the consecrated believer into the spiritual life of Jesus Christ. Many of the Corinthians were still carnal after receiving the gift of tongues. Their self-seeking nature exposed the fact that they had not yet been immersed into the spiritual life and nature of Jesus Christ. Paul told them they had not yet become "spiritual." (1 Cor. 3:1-3)

Nazarenes are agreed in their view that the true evidence of being baptized or filled with the Holy Spirit is a new spiritual life of sacrificial love. Rather than recognizing the blessing by any particular gift, we believe the Spirit-filled life will show itself through a manifestation of Christ's spiritual nature. "Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them." (Matt. 7:20) "Love has been perfected among us in this...because as He is, so are we in this world." (1 John 4:17)

A Christian must become "filled with the Spirit" before it is possible to become an effective witness to the spiritual life of Jesus Christ. Christians will not be able to "walk as Jesus did" until they have been empowered to joyously lay down their life, including all their personal rights, for the good of the many. (1 John 3:16) We receive the same spiritual life from Christ that was manifest through Paul, who said, "Just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved." (1 Cor. 10:33) It is through the infilling with the Spirit that we experience a cleansing of the heart, a new devotion to God, and an empowerment for sacrificial service.

Every "spiritual" Christian will find themselves motivated by a new indwelling life. They are enabled to continue in their Spirit-assigned work without the need for compensation or recognition. God's indwelling life of love becomes the source of all their motivation. "For the love of Christ compels us...that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again." (2 Cor. 5:14-15) As Paul has indicated, spiritual Christians no longer act like "mere men." (1 Cor. 3:3)

After Dwight L. Moody received the baptism with the Holy Spirit, his whole ministry changed. Before his infilling with the Holy Spirit, he used to take pride in having the largest attendance in Chicago at his Sunday night services. But when he received power from on high after months of earnest longing and prayer, he said, "I was filled with a sense of God's goodness, and felt as though I could take the whole world into my heart... This happened years after I was converted... I have been growing younger ever since. I used to be very tired when preaching three times a week; now I can

preach five times a day and never get tired at all. I have done three times the work I did before, and it gets better and better every year. It is so easy to do a thing when love prompts you. It would be better, it seems to me, to go and break stone than to take to preaching in a professional spirit.” “For the {indwelling} love of Christ compels us...that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them.” (2 Cor. 5:14-15, Col. 1:29)

We know there are many Christians today working in a professional spirit. They act like they are breaking stone. Everything they do depends on their own wisdom and resources. We should not be surprised when they become “worried and upset about many things” and they continue to run out of energy. And if their egos are not properly fed or the compensation is not enough, they will walk away from the work they are doing. There are many people who need to receive the power that Moody experienced after he was baptized with the Holy Spirit.

### **The Nazarene Fellowship**

Nazarenes believe with Dr. Bresee “that holiness conduct {Christ-likeness} cannot be legislated.” And therefore, the “rules for membership should be as few as possible. Right living should be the natural outcome of a total commitment of one’s life to God.”

We consider ourselves to be a holiness body within the broader Church. Following the great commission of our Lord, we have been called to spread scriptural holiness and preach the full gospel message to the ends of the earth. While this may appear to be sectarian to outsiders, especially to those who prefer to direct their own lives and oppose the holiness doctrines of our Lord, we take our stand on it as the most important part of His gospel message.

We know our Lord “gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.” (Titus 2:14) We know that “without holiness” a believer will not be able to see and know the spiritual life of the Lord. (Heb. 12:14) And without manifesting the Lord’s holiness (Ezk. 36:23), the world will not be able see the glory that is now available through His saving life. (John 17:21-23)

The *Manual* states, “The Church of the Nazarene is composed of those persons who ...seek holy Christian fellowship, the conversion of sinners, the entire sanctification of believers, their upbuilding in holiness, and the simplicity and spiritual power manifest in the primitive New Testament Church, together with the preaching of the gospel to every creature.” Nazarenes have been called to manifest the divine fruit of Christ’s Spirit and to thereby demonstrate to the world the glorious riches of the life that is now available through God’s work of entire sanctification.

# The Doctrine of Sanctification

This chapter includes material from *What is Sanctification?* by Leslie Parrott. Published by Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City; 1952.

## A Testimony by Leslie Parrott

Though sanctification is the distinguishing doctrine of our church, there are many sincere people in our congregations fighting carnality in their lives. Seemingly, they have not grasped God's plan for "purity and power."

More than 30 years ago I received the Holy Spirit into my life in His sanctifying power. It was not easy to receive this gift. It had been difficult for faith to overcome the contradicting dilemma that I could see taking place between holiness theology and the lack of observable holiness experience.

Finally, one night in the little second floor apartment near Willamette University in Salem, Oregon where I was a graduate student, I was on my knees praying with the Bible open before me on the bed. The pages had been dampened by my tears. In the depths of my spiritual frustration I finally cried out, "Dear Lord, If there is no one in the church who is sanctified, I still believe the experience is taught in the New Testament and I want to be entirely sanctified."

That night, God the Holy Spirit came into my life in a way that I have never forgotten... Spiritual victory in my life is dated from the time God sanctified me entirely.

I had been saved in childhood and had never indulged in the popular vices. Spiritual defeat in my life came from the sins of the spirit, not the passions of the flesh. It was at the time I was sanctified entirely that the problems of resentment, self-pity, negativism, and other manifestations of the sinful nature within me were translated into a great new life in the Spirit.

## The Meaning of Sanctification

In the New Testament we read that Christ not only died for our sins, He also died for our sanctification. "Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp {leaving all worldliness behind}, bearing His reproach." (Heb. 13:12-13) Christ sanctified Himself {set Himself apart for the Father's exclusive use} so that He would have a fully sanctified life to give to His disciples. Now we must come out from the ways of the world, accepting the reproach it will often bring from our neighbors, friends and family, so we may enter into His sanctified life.

We cannot enter into Christ's life of holiness without being separated from worldliness. Jesus said, "I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!... Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three." (Luke 12:49-52)

Since our Lord is holy, it should be obvious why we cannot experientially know His spiritual life until we are willing to come out from the self-centered ways of the world and enter into His life of holiness. "Splendor and majesty are before Him; strength and joy in His dwelling place... ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name. Bring an offering {by placing the self-life on the altar of sacrifice} and come before Him {into the Holiest of All}; worship the Lord with the splendor of His holiness." (1 Chron. 16:27, 29)

After we have presented ourselves to Him as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1-2), the Lord will take us into the presence of His holy life. “This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil.” (Heb. 6:19)

When I turned to the dictionary for a definition of the word sanctify, I found this: “Sanctify is a transitive verb that means to make holy; to cleanse from impurity, pollution, or sin.” Added significance is given this definition when we realize that it was not written by a “holiness theologian” but by a secular scholar whose sole interest was to correctly define the term.

We can see that a person who has been entirely sanctified by the Holy Spirit should become quite different in their way of life. Entire sanctification will purify the believer’s heart, separate him from the old self-centered bias, and thereby enable him to live wholly for God in His heavenly will. The fullness of the Holy Spirit provides a God-centered heart that is enabled to do His will here on earth as it is done in heaven.

While we must begin our spiritual pilgrimage by striving with the Spirit for an outward holiness, it is the inner holiness of the heart that we must then seek from God as a second work of grace. “Therefore, ‘Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you {within the veil}’...Therefore, having these promises beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” (2 Cor 6:17-7:1) We respond to the convicting work of the Holy Spirit by putting off the self-seeking and self-sufficient ways of the world so we can receive the blessing of heart purity.

God will “acknowledge” our faith after we have given up our heart idols and consecrated ourselves wholly to Him. (Acts 15:8-9) He rewards those who “earnestly seek Him” in this age of fulfillment. (Heb. 11:6) Through an “abundant provision” of His grace, He purifies their heart and fills the temple of their body with His life of divine love.

### **A New Kind of Righteousness**

The transformation of the inner nature is an important part of the New Testament life of faith. Jesus said: “Unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. 5:20) The Pharisees were like many modern church members who regularly attend services. These devout men consistently went into the temple to worship God and to pray. They fasted certain days of the week. They returned a tithe to God on everything they received. We therefore need to ask, in what way must our righteousness exceed the righteousness of these zealous men who claimed to be devoted to God?

The answer is simple, and it carries over into the modern church. Their righteousness was all from human effort. It was nothing more than a self-produced righteousness. They cleaned up the outside of the cup without seeking, through faith, to have their inner nature changed by the power of God. Jesus said to them, “You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them {by your outward obedience to them} you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me {and the divine spiritual life that is needed}, yet you refuse to come to me {through the cross} to have life.” (John 5:39-40)

These men had devoted themselves to God. According to Jesus, they would go to great efforts to make a convert, but they would then lead them into their way of self-

produced righteousness. Jesus said, “You travel land and sea to win a convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are.” (Matt. 23:15)

The problem with the Pharisees was related to their unwillingness to die to self and become totally dependent on receiving a new form of life from God through Jesus Christ. Because they would not give up their independence and self-sufficiency {Satan’s way of pride}, their inner nature still had the evil bias toward self-centeredness. Even though they had tried to obey God’s teachings by human effort and had worked out an outward change in their moral character, they were unwilling to do anything with the self-centered darkness within their heart. This evil could be seen by the way they still desired to raise themselves up in the eyes of the people and by the way they were always bickering with others who opposed their will. Like Satan, they wanted to have their own glory. And they did not like to see anyone standing in their way.

Pharisees are not hard to identify. They establish as their standards a level of morality that is within their ability to achieve through human effort. Admiring their accomplishments, they will then judge others by the self-produced righteousness they have achieved. And when others do not agree with their judgments, they are upset and vindictive.

People who live by human effort will not have the capacity to love their enemies “as I have loved you.” (John 13:34, John 15:12) Persecution from others will result in a deep-seated animosity within the heart. And there is no way of correcting this defect in the inner nature while they continue to follow the Pharisees’ way of living by human effort. This is why Jesus said that our righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees.

When we begin our spiritual pilgrimage into Christ’s divine life, it will be necessary to follow the laws of God in an outward obedience. We must yield to the convicting work of the Spirit and use the enabling grace of God to respond to all truth. The Spirit will use this initial sanctifying work to help prepare the temple of our body to be filled with the glory of God. But remember, this outward work of pursuing holiness is only intended to prepare a believer for the infilling with Christ’s spiritual life. Until the sacrifice is accepted and the fire from heaven consumes the carcass of the flesh-life, we will not be able to consistently manifest the glory of our Lord’s divine nature.

As the dictionary has indicated, sanctification is designed to “cleanse from impurity, pollution, or sin.” Entire sanctification is really the completion of the work begun in regeneration.

John Wesley referred to reconciled believers, those who had experienced spiritual regeneration as, “merely justified.” Even though they could stand before God in Christ’s credited righteousness, they still needed to “put on the new self, created be like God in true righteousness and holiness.” (Eph. 4:24) “As yet,” he said, “they have not gone on for all that the Lord has for them.”

Sadly, not all believers persevere with a seeking faith until their heart has been purified with the spiritual life of God’s divine love. (Acts 15:8-9) While they may know forgiveness of sins, they still do not know the “inheritance among those who are sanctified.” (Acts 26:18)

In summary, we can say that sanctification is a heart cleansing. Once the self-centered nature has been removed, the Lord is able to manifest His sacrificial life and nature through our eternal soul. The new heart becomes entirely centered on God and His glory.

## **The Necessity of Sanctification**

Would Christ want to find His disciples bickering among themselves when He comes back in His glory? Would He want to find church leaders striving for position? Would he want to find church members caught up in selfish ambition? No! But this is what He will find unless the self-centered nature is removed from the heart by the power of the Holy Spirit.

This is why God's plan of redemption makes His work of entire sanctification a very important objective. Paul was constantly exhorting God's called-out people to move forward in their faith. He knew there was a special blessing each of them needed to receive if they were ever to walk as Jesus did. "Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ." (Col. 1:28) He knew this work could only be accomplished by the power of God. "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. He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it." (1 Thess. 5:23-24)

Christ died to make everyone in the body "holy...and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless." (Eph. 5:25-27) And so, if we want to be "spiritual" Christians, we must enter into this holy calling. The new covenant was given to us for the purpose of making this holy life possible. It is not optional.

In brief, carnality is the unsanctified self. You will find it being exposed in self-love, self-sufficiency, self-seeking and self-will. It clearly shows itself in anger whenever its will is crossed. This carnal life must be destroyed sooner or later. If we permit our Lord to destroy it today, we will have the fullness of His life to take with us into eternity. On the other hand, every bit of the carnal life that fills our soul on the Day of Judgment must be destroyed by the Lord's testing fires. This will leave some Christian with very little spiritual life to take with them into eternity. "If it is burned up {everything that is not from the Spirit}, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames." (1 Cor. 3:15)

## **The Results of Sanctification**

What sanctification will not do for God's people?

Heart purity will not destroy your free moral agency. You have been created with a free will. You can choose to either serve God or rebel against His will. You will continue to have a choice between either God's will or self-will; righteousness or sin. At no time will your freedom of will be destroyed.

You will have a responsibility for your salvation to "the end" of your days in this world. (Rev. 2:26) However, what He will do, if you desire it, is to purify your heart so that you can truly enjoy doing His will both today and throughout all eternity. He will establish His Kingdom-life in your heart.

Sanctification will not place you beyond temptation. Although the things of this world will not have the same pull, temptations will be real and consistent even after the experience of heart cleansing. However, once we have received power from on high, the Spirit will supply the needed strength to overcome all the temptations of the devil to the glory of God. John Wesley said of his own experience: "I was buffeted with temptations, but cried out and they fled. They returned again and again. As often as I lifted my eyes,

He sent me help from His holy place. And here in I found the difference between this experience and my former state... Now I was always the conqueror.”

Christ is able to fill our soul with His victorious spiritual life. Those who have overcome the world will find that Christ’s teachings are no longer burdensome to their soul. (1 John 5:3-4) They are enabled to freely do all of God’s will with joy in their heart. “No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God’s seed {which is the Son’s submissive nature} remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God.” (1 John 3:9)

Sanctification will not destroy your humanity. No mortal will reach the realm of “absolute perfection.” Sanctification deals with heart purity. A purified heart has the Son’s desire to walk in the known will of the Father. The *increasing light*, as it is provided by the Spirit, will continue to reveal parts of our life that must be adjusted so we may remain in the perfect will of God.

Since God’s light is infinite relative to our mortal life, there is a need to continue growing from “glory to glory” as the Spirit continues to supply His increasing light. The beauty of heart purity is that we can truly enjoy learning about the deeper ways of holiness.

God’s momentary work of entire sanctification does not transform the believer into the fullness of Christ’s eternal life. It does, however, provide the believer with His submissive nature.

Young people are often led to believe that the Lord in His sanctifying power will give them an experience equal to that of a saint who has walked in the sanctified life for fifty years. No! Your heart is purified to enable you to begin growing into the likeness of Christ’s eternal life with ever-increasing glory without ever being pulled back into the self-centered ways of this world.

Sanctification will not make us all uniform. Everyone cannot be poured into one mold.

An old gentleman in my congregation used to cause me considerable trouble because he expected everyone who sought and claimed sanctification to react emotionally as he did after being sanctified. While this divine work of God will make everyone holy in heart, we must remember that God created each of His children with a unique personality.

The Spirit will also gift each believer with different spiritual abilities to accomplish different functions within the body. For example, someone with the gift of mercy will often sense a need to protect the babe in Christ from any distress. They may even have a difficult time relating to the teacher who senses the need to boldly speak the truth for the purpose of tearing away all false coverings. But through the power of the Holy Spirit they are able to work together in Christian love with the one heart of Christ, to carry out the overall goals of our all-knowing Father. What we are saying is that two sanctified hearts may respond differently in the way they are led to express their love to their brethren, and yet they are both living under the control and power of the Holy Spirit.

### **The Need for Heart Purity**

I am perplexed when I see complacent and satisfied Christians who are not walking in the fullness of life that is now available in this age of fulfillment. They have been resisting God’s call to holiness. It is not difficult to identify a critical spirit, strife, bickering, selfish motives and spiritual laziness.

On “God’s Day of Reckoning,” everyone will come under a judgment based on the light they have spurned and the holy Christian character they have rejected because of their own selfishness. Don’t let this be your “just reward.” “Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature {his self-centered nature}, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit {by yielding to His convicting work}, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.” (Gal. 6:7-8)

For everyone who is concerned about the “remains” of a self-centered nature within their heart, you can rest assured that Christ has come to sanctify His people and make them holy. You will be in a justified state while you are fully persuaded that He can fulfill all of His promises in your life. (Rom. 4:20-24) This kind of true faith will continue to seek out all the promises of God. “Do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” (Heb. 6:12)

Our Lord is faithful. He promises to make every yielded Christian completely God-centered. Our responsibility is to place the remains of the self-life on the altar and then ask God to consume it with His sanctifying fire from heaven.

I don’t know where you work, what is taking place in your home, nor anything about the difficult persons with whom you have to deal; but I do know that the Lord has an experience that will hold you steady when the rest of the world is distraught. We can live above the world because “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” (Gal. 5:22-23) “As the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” (John 7:38) When you are overflowing with this Christian nature, the arrows of this world will no longer be able to pierce your spiritual life.

We must strive to enter into this abundantly full spiritual life. Let me encourage you to listen to the counsel of Jesus once again: “Enter by the narrow gate {of holiness}; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and *difficult is the way which leads to life*, and there are few who find it.” (Matt. 7:13-14 Emphasis added)

After passing through the “time of testing,” we can expect to receive an abundant provision of grace that will fill our soul with the spiritual life of Jesus Christ. (Rom. 5:17) He has the power to establish His Kingdom-life in our heart. (1 Pet. 5:10; 2 Pet. 1:10-11) “Blessed is the man who endures temptation; *for when he has been approved*, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.” (Jam. 1:12 Emphasis added)

Won’t you become one of “the few” who has been willing to die to self so they may enter into the fullness of Christ’s glorious life? Even though the way into this Kingdom-life is difficult, the new spiritual life you receive through the power of the Holy Spirit will make the price you pay for the Great Pearl well worth everything you have given up for Christ’s sake!



# The Spirit of Holiness

This chapter includes material from *The Spirit of Holiness* by Everett Lewis Cattell. Published by Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City; 1963 by Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

## Entering In to the Spirit-filled Life

The Holy Spirit is given to the redeemed person at his conversion. It is proper, however, to distinguish this from what is often referred to as the “fullness of the Spirit.” What is meant by the “fullness of the Spirit” is that He now fully possesses us. We only have Him in fullness when he fully controls our life. Therefore, regardless of what may be professed, if someone is still under the sway of a nature that wants to continue living by its own will {willfulness}, they are not experiencing the fullness of the Spirit.

It is the unsundered part of our will that keeps the Spirit of our Lord from taking full possession. We sometimes hate to admit it, but there are definite areas in which we resent God’s interference in our lives. That is the carnal mind. It has a natural enmity against being called into a life of absolute holiness to the Lord {completely God-centered}.

Paul’s fuller explanation is to be found in a lengthy passage in Romans 6 where he uses the master-slave relationship. He points out that sin {self-centeredness} may be the master unto death, or righteousness {God-centeredness} may be our master unto holiness. The choice of masters is ours, but we cannot serve both. We cannot cling to our self-will without finding ourselves continuing to reject certain parts of God’s will. It is this rebellion against God’s known will that separates us from the divine life of God.

Christians often think they can serve two masters at the same time. They do not mind worshipping God’s way of life at certain times during the week, as long as it does not interfere too much with their own will. These carnal believers expect to maintain control over their own life. Their Christianity is something they try to tack on to their worldly life. They insist on choosing for themselves how they are going to worship God.

But God has never given His creation the right to direct their own lives. We cannot serve God according to His perfect will and also walk in our own self-will. This is what Adam attempted to do. “When you eat of it you will surely die.” (Gen. 2:17)

Christ Himself explicitly said that no one can truly serve two masters. (Matt. 6:24) If we continue to serve self, we will always have a natural enmity against receiving the sacrificial life of Jesus Christ. And so, God has left us with only one way to enter into true worship: “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – *this is your spiritual act of worship*... Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – His good, pleasing and perfect will.” (Rom. 12:1-2 Emphasis added) We do not enter into true worship until we have offered ourselves to God as a living sacrifice so we may enter into His heavenly will.

## The Need for Victory Over the Flesh

Again and again Paul speaks of “being made free from sin” {self-will} so that we can become the servants of righteousness. Not many Christians will be able to continue struggling in the bondage of Romans seven throughout their life in this world. Either they will seek deliverance from the self-centered nature through God’s work of entire

sanctification, or they will eventually go back to the worldly way of living for themselves as they see fit.

This does not necessarily mean they leave the Church. It does mean, however, they must quench the Holy Spirit so they are not burdened by His convicting work. They lose their inner hunger and thirst after Christ's life of righteousness. Christ is saying to them, "Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works {seeking holiness of heart}, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand {the regenerate heart} from its place – unless you repent." (Rev. 2:4-5)

These people, who were once on fire for the Lord, can still be found in church every Sunday. But during the rest of the week they are living for themselves. They have chosen to hold onto their self-centered nature.

In Ephesians Paul speaks of the "old man" and the "new man." It may help us to think of these two patterns of life, one revolving around self as center – that is sin {the old man}, and the other revolving around God as the center – that is holiness {the new man}. Both of these conditions remain in the carnal Christian, and so there will be a real war taking place until one or the other has gained full possession of the soul. Since the inner conflict is not pleasant, we must either seek to be sanctified wholly or risk giving in to the self-centered ways of the world.

James was referring to this conflict when he speaks of the "double-minded man" who remains unstable. While he is periodically concerned about God's will, he is constantly being pulled back into a self-directed existence. The carnal mind is that fallen nature that remains centered around self. Its motto is "of self," "by self," and "for self" and it lives to "save" itself rather than "sacrifice" itself. The pattern it forms in life is displeasing to God because it has a natural enmity against the Son's self-sacrificing way of life. And because of this evil bias toward self, it cannot manifest the true light of God's divine love in the world.

What then is to be done? The apostle Paul uses strong language. His common terms are "crucify," "mortify," "put to death," "strip off," and like terms. The kingdom of God can only be taken {entered into} by those who are willing to do violence against their self-life. (Matt. 11:12) Remember, God's Kingdom is undivided. It is a place where there can be only one "good, pleasing and perfect will." (Rom. 12:2) Therefore, if we hope to enter into His glorious will and live within His undivided Kingdom, it will be necessary to sacrifice our own will.

We must be careful here to understand correctly. Paul wants the old self-centered man crucified. It is this pattern that is centered around self that must go out of existence as definitely and decisively as death. This is the whole purpose of God's plan of redemption. There can never be a "new life" in union with Christ's nature {"self"-sacrificing love) without first experiencing a death to the old self-centered nature. Of course, this circumcision of the flesh-life will require a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. (Col. 2:11).

Everyone agrees that something must be done decisively to eliminate the old nature. This is why we must follow the instruction of our Lord about taking up our cross and dying to self. "If anyone would come after me {into a spiritual life of divine love within the heavenly realms}, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses {sacrifices to death} his {flesh-driven} life for me will find it {the new Kingdom-life of the Son}." (Matt. 16:24-

25) Christ cannot manifest His divine life of love within our soul until we have lost our old self-centered life. (John 14:21)

### **Death to Self**

There are some who teach about a “death of self.” But the self can never die. “Self” is the conscious being within the eternal soul. It will remain forever in either light or darkness. If we are not willing to come into the light of a God-centered life, then our soul, with its eternal consciousness, must forever remain separated from all spiritual life in an absolute void – total darkness.

As terrifying as it may be, we should take time to picture the agony that would be experienced by being left in a pit that is void of all light and without any means of engaging the sensory perceptions. A conscious being without the life of God flowing into the soul from heaven would soon go mad in such a condition. While we are in this temporal world we are able to create our own spiritual life by the way we use the things of this world. But one day we will be cut off from the temporal realm {this physical world}. And if we do not turn away from the temporal world as a means to quench our spiritual thirst and begin receiving our spiritual life from Christ, which should begin flowing from the throne of God into our eternal soul today, we are going to be left in our self-seeking darkness without any way to occupy our mind throughout eternity. The lake of fire is an eternal thirst of soul.

If you cannot sit alone and enjoy the presence of the Lord in your soul today, or you are not at least earnestly waiting on the Lord for the blessing of His spiritual Life with a capital “L,” then you are not in a condition to pass out of this world. Christ is the one who said that if we are trying to save our life in this world, we will lose it for eternity in darkness. (Matt. 16:25) We know He does not lie. Be willing to die to self so you may enter into the heavenly life of Jesus Christ. Then you will have confidence on the day of judgment. (1 John 4:17)

While it is inaccurate to speak about a “death of self,” it is entirely proper to speak of a “death to self.” Even though the conscious self must continue to exist forever, selfishness must die if we want to escape from darkness and manifest the light of Christ’s life. (John 8:12) Self-centeredness is the darkness that Satan has fostered on the world. And it must be given up. Because no one, if they really think about it seriously, wants to be left in the misery of a self-centered nature throughout all eternity.

Carnality will remain a pattern of life as long as some part of the self-centered nature remains alive and active. The only life we can take with us into the heavenly realms is the spiritual nature we have received from Christ through dependent faith. Nothing that is carnal – the works of the flesh – will pass through the testing fires. Our reward of eternal spiritual life will be based on how much of the self-life we have given up in order to possess more of Christ’s spiritual life. In other words, the spiritual life we receive today is directly proportional to the spiritual life we will experience throughout all eternity.

We must permit the flesh-life to be removed, with the old carcass being consumed by the fire from heaven, before we can live in the presence of the Lord’s spiritual life. Jesus said, “On that day {the day of entire sanctification}, you will realize that...I am in you.” (John 14:20) Once He has shown His spiritual nature to our heart, we can then begin growing with ever-increasing glory. By permitting Christ to live out His heavenly life and will through our body, we are storing up our treasures in heaven.

The conscious self will continue to remain after we have entered into a union with Christ's spiritual life. But then the eternal soul is made "as one" with the holy life of God. We can say with Paul, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me..." (Gal. 2:20) The wills are now united, and the pattern of life is one.

When Christ's Spirit fills our soul, we can have the same harmony of life with the Son that Jesus had with the Father when He walked in a mortal body. Jesus said to the Father, "And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one..." (John 17:22-23) We can become "one in spirit" with the life of the Son if we will present our body to Christ as a living sacrifice. Only then will we begin to know "His good, pleasing and perfect will" for our life.

This integration cannot take place without something going out of existence. Not the self, but the pattern of life that was centered around self. We must permit the Spirit to make our life completely God-centered through His work of entire sanctification. "May God himself...sanctify you through and through." (1 Thess. 5:22)

In effect, this killing of the "old man" becomes difficult only in the measure that our self-will is strongly fixed. For some this surrender seems simple and easy. But for the many who have a strong will, which can be recognized by its inflexibility and by its tendency to press its own will on others, this dying to self becomes a real fight. This is why, for a few, this complete surrender of the will takes place in an instant of decision; but for many it occurs only after a long struggle.

But regardless of how strong-willed we have become in this evil world, we must go forward with this struggle until our will has been completely given up to God. Our Lord has described how there is a need to press into His Kingdom-life, even though it will mean doing violence against that "old man" who wants to live for himself.

No mere wishful thinking will do. Neither is an earnest desire sufficient. God must bring us to the point that we voluntarily make a decision to give up our willfulness forever. There is no other way into the undivided Kingdom of God. Nothing can be held back. We must present ourselves as a living sacrifice so that we may live in the will of God both today and for all eternity. This calls for a clear and distinct decision by the believer.

### **Surrender Comes Through Faith**

Our surrender must be recognized by the all-knowing eyes of God as absolute and final. He will not accept a blemished sacrifice. Every last reservation must go. He will not bargain or make terms. Paul used words like "crucifixion" and "death" to emphasize the decisiveness and absoluteness of the action. This is the same principle that was taught by Christ when He told His disciples to take up their cross and lose their life in a death to self.

Christians will need to be built up in their faith before they are able to make this decision of complete surrender. Sanctifying faith must be of a quality that is able to give up on human effort and then look to God for Him to use His power to complete the work. In the end, we are dependent on the Holy Spirit to lift our soul into the Kingdom-life of God and provide the singleness of heart that enables us to live wholly for the will of our Father in heaven. And so we pray, "May your undivided Kingdom-life come into our eternal soul so that we may do your will here on earth as it is done in heaven."

When the sacrifice is accepted and the fire from heaven consumes the carcass {the remains of the self-life that only God can remove}, the glory of the Lord is able to fill the temple. (2 Chron. 7:1) This means that all of our capacities, our urges, our abilities, both physical and mental, all that God made to reside in our bodies, shall be free from the old self-centered nature. The presence of God's perfect love disperses the bias toward self and the world. The sanctified man is set free to live wholly for the glory of God "in true righteousness and holiness" (Eph. 4:24) as God had originally planned for all of His children. "You have been set free from sin {self-will} and have become slaves to righteousness." (Rom. 6:18)

It is wrong to include our liability to temptation as a part of our fallen or sinful nature. The capacity to be tempted is a part of our original nature. This was true of Adam and Eve before the fall, and it was true of the sinless Christ. God does not take away the temptation, but He will enable us to escape the temptation through our participation with Christ in His overcoming life.

God does not remove anything from us that is a part of our legitimate human nature. He removes only the evil bias toward self-centeredness. He does it by purifying our love for Him so that we can live in holy obedience within His undivided Kingdom both today and throughout all eternity.

## The Results of Sanctification

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### Be Ye Holy

The Book of Leviticus teaches us about holiness {the basic word} and sanctification {the act or process by which something or someone is made holy}. The motto of this book is "Be ye holy for I am holy".

One of the central truths we learn about holiness in the Book of Leviticus is that different classes of things can never be mixed. Animals were considered unclean if they were a result of mixing two different kinds. We also find that mixed seeds could not be sown together; nor could mixed cloth be used in the same garment. (Lev. 19:19) Another kind of example was to forbid a deformed man from serving in the tabernacle. The book is teaching us about God's requirement for holiness and completeness. Our life must become completely God-centered. According to these teachings from God's word, when even a little self-centeredness remains mixed in, it continues to deform the whole man.

This is why "entire sanctification" is such an important part of God's plan of redemption. There is a need to persevere in our faith until we receive this abundant provision of grace. "Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and *complete, not lacking anything.*" (Jam. 1:4 Emphasis added)

Holiness in human experience requires a purity of heart that is willing to receive all of its spiritual life from one realm. If we seek spiritual fulfillment from things in this world, we will find that these heart idols will separate us from the divine spiritual life that Christ has made available to His disciples from the heavenly realms. (Eph. 1:3)

Once we have consecrated ourselves and have agreed to receive all of our spiritual life from God, the Spirit will cut off the remains of the flesh-life and begin producing the living water of eternal life from within our inner being. This life from Christ is able to keep our soul from ever again thirsting after the things of this world. "Whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water {from within the soul} welling up to eternal life." (John 4:14) Once God has satisfied our soul with His spiritual life, we are in a condition to sacrificially serve in God's kingdom as He desires.

Believers will never have the capacity to serve God as He requires while an emptiness remains within their soul. They will keep looking to the temporal realm to find fulfillment. The mind will naturally keep thinking about things it wants to do. It is the self-seeking nature still looking for a means to satisfy "self." This will tend to continue until the soul has been satisfied with an abundant provision of Christ's spiritual life.

According to Jesus, those who keep looking back to the things of this world for their fulfillment will not be fit for service in the undivided kingdom of God. (Luke 9:62) Thus, if we hope to serve God as He requires, we will need to seek out the purity of heart that God has made available as "an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith." (Acts 26:18).

## **The Promise of Heart Purity**

The saints of the Old Testament recognized the requirement of living in absolute holiness to God. But they had a problem with their heart. Therefore, from their writings we can find them beginning to hope for a time when God would use His creative power to make their heart clean and pure. They were looking forward to the day when God would make provision for a real change within their inner nature. Instead of sanctification being merely ceremonial and external, it would be an inward, ethical transformation.

Jeremiah speaks about a new covenant in which God would write His laws on the heart. (Jer. 31:31) Ezekiel hears the Lord promise, “I will give you a new heart... And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws...I will save you from all your uncleanness.” (Ezk. 36:26-27)

God planned to sanctify His people wholly to Himself by providing them with an undivided heart. “Then I will give them one heart.” (Ezk. 11:19) David knew that it would require the creative power of God to accomplish this great work within the soul. He expressed our deep need in this way: “Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.” (Ps. 5:10)

Some of the rabbis who lived between the Old and New Testaments also understood why the Messiah was coming. Like all the real prophets of the Old Testament, and everyone who has truly heard from God in the New Testament, they desired to have a Lord who had the power to sanctify or separate their heart entirely to Him. They believed that when the new age of the Spirit had finally dawned, “The evil impulse [or the self-centered bias] would be taken out of Israel’s heart...and the Spirit, as a power for moral renewal would rest upon her.”

They knew that even the greatest prophets of the Old Testament did not have the necessary power to be holy like God is holy. But things would change when the Messiah came to deliver God’s people from their self-centered nature. In this age of fulfillment, the Kingdom of heaven would enter into the hearts of every child of God who was willing to die to self. This is the promise of our Lord. “I tell you the truth: Among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist {he had the Spirit in Him since birth}; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he {in spiritual life}. From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it.” (Matt. 11:11-12)

## **Holiness Is Christ-likeness**

The Old Testament command, “Be holy, for I am holy” takes on new significance in the New Testament. The nature of God is now given clearer definition by the person of Jesus Christ. He is described as the exact image of God. (Col. 1:15) If one desires to know what it means to be holy like God is holy, he looks at the Son of God.

Thus, we can see that the command which requires us “to be holy as God is holy” is a call to become Christlike in nature. The sons of God are to “bear the family resemblance.” Man was created to live in God’s spiritual image, and His work of redemption restores this original way of life. “For in Christ all the fullness of deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ.” (Col. 2:9-10) The Father has predestined that His children would be conformed to the Son’s spiritual image. (Rom. 8:29) Once they have received the seed of the Son’s submissive nature, they will be enabled to walk in a life of holiness to the Father “as Jesus did.” (1 John 2:5-6; 3:9)

In a number of places in the New Testament the term “glory” is a synonym for image. We bring glory to God by permitting Him to manifest His spiritual image through our mortal body. For we are told that the living “Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory.” (John 1:14) A glory from the Father {His spiritual image} was given to the Son, and this glory is what enabled a form of the eternal life to become manifest in a mortal body. (1 John 1:1-2) And then Jesus said to the Father, “*I have given them the glory that you gave me*, that they may be one as we are one {in life and nature}: I in them and you in me...” (John 17:22-23 Emphasis added) When this union of lives takes place and we are conformed to the spiritual image of the Son, we are enabled to manifest the glory of the Father. This is the living water that wells up from within our inner being as a manifestation of the firstfruits of the eternal life. (John 4:14) In other words, we are enabled to show forth His spiritual image of divine love through a supernatural work of the “Spirit of glory.” (1 Pet. 4:14)

Sanctification, then, can best be defined in the New Testament sense as the renewal of humanity back into the spiritual image of God. “Love has been perfected among us in this...because as He is, so are we in this world.” (1 John 4:17) This theme runs throughout the New Testament. When we are “made complete, lacking nothing” (Jam. 1:4) by God’s divine power and through our dependent faith, we are enabled to “become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” (Eph. 4:13)

This transformed nature is a work of God’s power that takes place in our life based on our dependent faith. It has nothing to do with our human abilities. And most Christians miss out on the promise because they have neglected to turn from human wisdom to God’s power. Each of us must learn to understand what Paul was teaching when he said, “My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power {to manifest divine spiritual life}, so that your faith might not rest on men’s wisdom, but on God’s power.” (1 Cor. 2:4-5)

The spiritual life we are to manifest is supposed to appear supernatural. Much preaching today is directed toward human wisdom and is related to the feeble spiritual life that mere men have worked out in their own strength. Is there any wonder why the life of Christ is not seen and there is so little faith in the power of God? “But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.” (John 3:21) “This all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.” (2 Cor. 4:7)

### **Filled With the Fullness of God**

Consistent with the Old Testament hope, the dynamic of this transformation is the Holy Spirit. It is not something we do, but something we seek to have accomplished in our life through the power of the Holy Spirit. His infilling with purifying power provides the child of faith with a God-centered heart that desires to receive all of its spiritual life from the Lord. Once the worldly ways of human works are removed from the thought processes, we are in a condition to be made “as one” with the glorious life of the Son.

One thing is clear: The primary work of the Holy Spirit in the believer’s life is to reproduce the character of Christ. This is Paul prayer for all believers: “I pray that out of his glorious riches, he may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ {with His spiritual nature} may dwell in your hearts through faith...*that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.* Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is



at work within us, to him be the glory...” (Eph. 3:16-20 Emphasis added) He has the power to fill our eternal soul with His life of perfect love so that “in this world we are like him.” (1 John 4:17)

John Wesley said, “Ye know that the great end of religion is, to renew our hearts in the image of God, to repair that total loss of righteousness and true holiness which we sustained by the sin of our first parents.” The only reason why people cannot manifest Christ’s life of true righteousness and holiness is because they are not “filled” with the Holy Spirit. We cannot be excused because of our own weakness. It has nothing to do with our strength. The manifestation of this divine life does not come from human effort. “ ‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the Lord Almighty.” (Zech. 4:6)

### **Christ’s Kingdom-life In the Heart**

The collection of teachings commonly referred to as the Sermon on the Mount is a description of life within the kingdom of God. This kingdom-life was embodied in the mortal body of Jesus Christ. When we enter into the holiness of the Lord’s life, which will enable us to live out the Sermon on the Mount, we will be living in the eternal Kingdom-life of God.

The spiritual life that Jesus received through the power of the Spirit helped His followers to better understand what the eternal life looked like in a mortal body. The apostle John explained how this “eternal life” was displayed by Jesus in this world: “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched – this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.” (1 John 1:1-2) John was not referring to a duration of life, but rather to a quality of life that comes from the eternal realm and can be manifest through a mortal body.

Even though this heavenly life in a mortal body is not received in the same fullness that will be displayed in a glorified body, we can know that the eternal life {Jesus Christ} can now enter into the temple of our body so that we may manifest the spiritual life of God in this world. Christians are enabled to receive and manifest the firstfruits of the eternal life after they have given up their self-life to the cross and have chosen to receive all of their spiritual sustenance from the Lord. This is the promise of our Lord: “But the {living} water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.” (John 4:14)

As Christians in this age of fulfillment, we can now enter into the firstfruits of the life of eternity. The Holy Spirit has the power to take from the life of God and reveal the same likeness of His spiritual nature within our inner being. Jesus said, “He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.” (John 16:14)

### **Choosing Between the Spiritual and the Temporal**

We will remain deformed with a carnal nature as long as we are trying to find our spiritual life from two realms. We must turn from the ways of the world if we hope to experientially share with Christ in the heavenly blessings of His spiritual life. (Eph. 1:3) “Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world {and its self-centered and self-seeking ways} makes himself an enemy of God.” (Jam. 4:4)

What then does it mean to believe in Christ? In the end, we must believe that He has the power to save us from our self-centered nature by filling the temple of our body with His spiritual life. We can only receive this divine spiritual food from heaven while we are walking in the will of God. (John 4:34) In faith, therefore, we must turn from our self-seeking will, which naturally looks to the world for its spiritual life, and then depend on the Lord to fill our soul with His spiritual life from heaven. Obviously, this radical break with the ways of the world will require true faith in God.

We can determine the source of our spiritual life by examining ourselves to see if we are continuing to thirst for the temporal things of the world. As Jesus has said, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will *never thirst*." (John 4:14 Emphasis added) "Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." (John 7:38) When the living water of Christ's spiritual life is welling up from within our inner being, the satisfied soul is thereby enabled to overcome the self-seeking ways of the world. With the soul satisfied, it is then able to pour out this river of life {divine love} as a sacrificial offering to God. If we are still thirsting after the things of this world, it is because we are not yet receiving all of our spiritual life from the Lord. Faith has not yet become sufficient to depend on Him for everything.

Power from heaven should not be thought of in terms of a force that enables us to do miraculous things for God. Rather, we must look for the power that will enable us to enter into a sacrificial life of love. The Spirit satisfies our soul and enables us to joyously lay down our lives for the good of our brothers. (1 John 3:16) The signs and wonders of God will follow this life of love.

As we all know, the carnal Christian will find it impossible to continually live in this sacrificial life of love. What is the problem? Their soul has not yet been satisfied with the life that comes from the heavenly realms. While an emptiness remains, the mind will naturally turn back to the things of this world in an attempt to find ways to feed the flesh with a temporal form of spiritual life. Of course, everything from the temporal realm will continue to die and fade away. "For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, And hewn themselves cisterns-broken cisterns that can hold no water." (Jer. 2:13 NKJV) Eventually, we will need to learn that only the life that comes from above is able to continually flow through our soul into eternity.

Jesus said, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work." (John 4:34) If you are not eating from this pure diet, do not be surprised when you keep finding emptiness within your soul. The spiritual life of heaven can only be received while we are walking in the known will of the Father. And this implies the necessity of depending wholly on the Lord to be our source of spiritual life.

Once again, listen carefully to our Lord: "Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me {by depending on God for everything} will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven." (John 6:57) There is only one Tree of Life. If we eat from anything else we will surely experience a returning emptiness. When our eyes are still on the things of this temporal world, the river of eternal life cannot begin welling up from within our inner being in its never-ending flow.

We should also mention that those who try to find fulfillment through the gifts of the Spirit will remain in the same carnal condition as those who continue to seek life {fulfillment} from this world. God's greatest gifts cannot satisfy our soul any more than a

good thing with any temporal object. They can only satisfy our temporal emotions for a season. Christ's spiritual gifts are not the same as His spiritual life. Only the eternal life of Christ can keep the soul satisfied.

The gifts of God can be genuine and important. But we can also find spurious manifestations of these temporal gifts coming from sources other than the Spirit of Christ. In contrast to the temporal gifts of the Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit is nothing but the virtuous life of Christ {His living water} flowing out of our inner being. Neither human works nor satanic influence can copy this divine nature! Only the Spirit of Christ can manifest the fruit of Christ's spiritual life. This indwelling life of divine love is the one source of true confidence when we come before our Lord. Thus, when we are like Him in our sacrificial life of love, we will possess a reason for having confidence on the great Day of Judgment. (1 John 4:17)

### **The Teachings of Wesley**

John Wesley was at his best when he discussed the experiential aspects of sanctification. He examined the experiences of many people who were able to describe God's work of entire sanctification in their life. There was a large population of these holy saints during the days of revival in his time. By his method of observation, which he also tested against Scripture, he came to some basic conclusions about how God *normally* works when He prepares to sanctify someone entirely to Himself. But we must caution, he is not saying this is how God *must* work.

Wesley learned that sanctification is a lifelong process that includes an instantaneous moment when the believer is perfected in love. The old nature that wanted to live for itself is removed to enable the believer to live wholly for God. To this moment he gave the term "entire sanctification," sometimes called "Christian perfection" or "full salvation."

Although the moment of entire sanctification was both preceded and followed by gradual growth, the actual deliverance from inward sin {self-will} was instantaneous. As we have said, Wesley understood the nature of sin to be self-will. This, he argued, is the root of all sin. Self-will is what naturally flows out of a self-centered nature. All acts of the sinful nature are expressions of this "seed."

When Wesley refers to sin in its singular form, he is referring to the universal bent of fallen humanity toward self-sovereignty. Although it does not reign completely in regenerate believers, it remains. Christ has laid the ax of the Spirit at the root of this evil bent toward self-will. "If by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live." (Rom. 8:13 NKJV)

Once we recognize this evil root, we can begin to understand Wesley's words about needing a second work of grace. There is no other hope of being set free from our carnal nature. Since his words are so precise and clear, we simply quote them: "Although we may *weaken* our enemies [the willful tendencies] day by day; yet we cannot *drive them out*. By all the grace which is given at justification we cannot extirpate them. Though we watch and pray ever so much, we cannot wholly cleanse either our hearts or our hands. Most sure we cannot, till it shall please our Lord to speak to our hearts again, to speak the second time, 'Be clean'; and then only the leprosy is cleansed. Then only, the evil root, the carnal mind, is destroyed; and inbred sin subsists no more."

Wesley was able to maintain a proper balance between the moment of heart cleansing and the process of continual growth. Unfortunately, this is something many of those who are his spiritual children have not been able to do.

## **The Responsibility for Seeking Sanctification**

How do we prepare to receive God's sanctifying grace? As we have said before, there are no magic formulas that lead to entire sanctification. But there are some clues from both Scripture and experience that can help us better understand our part.

We have noted, when looking at the Old Testament, how ceremonial practices were used to set people apart for God's ownership and exclusive use. The temple of the Lord had to be properly prepared before God would "fill" it with His glory. Considerable emphasis is laid upon the human part. We have a critical role in the sanctification process.

First of all, we must learn that resisting the convicting work of the Holy Spirit will prevent us from being sanctified and entering into the Sabbath rest of God. "So, as the Holy Spirit says: 'Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as {Israel} did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert... That is why I was angry with that generation and I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.'... And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobey?... Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it.'" (Heb. 3:7-4:1)

If we are unwilling to obey God and respond to all revealed light, the Bible says we are living in unbelief. (Heb. 3:19) If we remain in this condition, we cannot expect to be taken into the Sabbath-rest of God. "Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience." (Heb. 4:11)

Paul, in exhorting Christians who were already justified, appeals to them to yield or present themselves to God as a living sacrifice. (Rom. 12:1-2) In Romans 6:13, he says, "Offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness." This is reiterated in verse nineteen when he exhorts, "Now offer {the parts of your body} in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness." If we do not respond, the work of sanctification cannot go forward.

Every part of redemption must include an act of our free will. God will be leading us forward by His Spirit and supplying His enabling grace each step of the way. But we must be willing to give up all our self-centered and willful ways. Remember, without agreeing to enter into His life of holiness, the Lord will not be able to manifest His spiritual life within our soul. (Heb. 12:14; John 14:21) "Now offer {your body} in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness." (Rom. 6:19)

God will not force anyone to participate with Christ in His divine nature. Therefore, once we have experienced spiritual regeneration, we need to make use of God's enabling grace as we draw nearer to the holiness of God and prepare to consecrate ourselves for His exclusive use. As a warning, Paul tells us that the grace of God can be received in vain, or without effect. (1 Cor. 15:10)

Hopefully, there is now a clearer understanding of why we must permit the Spirit to lead us into a full and complete surrender. While the process may become quite painful to the flesh-life, there is no other way to appropriate the grace of entire sanctification. (1 Pet. 5:10)

Of course, before there can be a true consecration, there must be a sense of need. The believer needs to become deeply conscious of their carnal nature. Next, they will need to be built up in the faith until they are ready to depend on God's power to deliver them

from this corrupt nature. God will work out these details in the life of every believer if they will seek out the truth and respond to the convicting work of the Holy Spirit.

Once the believer has really learned about their helplessness and the depth of their corruption, they are in a condition to begin crying out to God with the urgency and persistence needed for deliverance. James has described the order: “Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your {worldly} laughter to mourning and your {carnal} joy to gloom. {In other words, stop trying to build up a spiritual life with the temporal things of the world.} Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.” (Jam. 4:9-10)

There has been an unfortunate trend in modern Christianity. We have tended to rely on social activities, following the ways of the world, in an attempt to develop a vibrant spiritual life in the members. We have resorted to using entertainment to help carnal Christians overcome the emptiness that continues to return to their soul. But, because we are using the temporal world for our source of spiritual life, we have cut ourselves off from the life that comes from heaven to all who depend entirely on Christ.

God requires believers to come out from the unclean things of this world. We must permit the Spirit to strip away our heart idols. As we have seen from the teaching of the Old Testament, God’s requirement of holiness does not permit His children to live a mixed life. As long as we are attempting to develop our own spiritual life by feeding on the things of this world, we will remain separated from the abundant fullness of Christ’s spiritual life.

“Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, *and I will receive you.*” Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God. (2 Cor. 6:17-7:1 Emphasis added)

The clearest statement of a doctrine about entire sanctification is worthless unless accompanied by a hunger for the reality. The tragedy of history is that most religious movements that began with an all-consuming passion for “the simplicity and spiritual power of the primitive New Testament church” eventually became social organizations preoccupied with their own existence. They are more interested in building their own social programs and developing forms of entertainment than they are in manifesting the divine spiritual life of God to the world. The initial impulse faded, and the ideals of the fathers became crystallized into dogma without divine spiritual life.

It is natural for people to act religious. We can see this from the many religions that men have developed in this world. We can develop forms of spiritual life that provide a sense of love, joy and peace. But it is always short-lived. Everything we produce through a temporal means is under the curse of atrophy. It will eventually die and deteriorate to nothing. Only the life from heaven is eternal. We must receive our life from above if we hope to have a love, joy and peace that never fails.

My burning desire is that there will be many who begin to have a “hungering and thirsting after righteousness” so they will be motivated to wholeheartedly pursue the ideal. My prayer is that everyone will begin to experience that “homesickness for holiness” that has marked sincere souls throughout the history of the Christian church. Let us say again, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, *for they will be filled.*” (Matt. 5:6 Emphasis added) “Blessed are the *pure in heart*, for they will see {the spiritual life of} God.” (Matt. 5:8 Emphasis added)

## Life In the Spirit

This chapter includes material from *Life in the Spirit* by Richard Taylor. Published by Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City; 1966.

### Holiness Required By God

We shall find that an honest study of God's Word will provide little comfort for either the easy optimist or the careless Christian. Jesus did not die to make holiness unnecessary, but to make the holy life possible. Anyone who continues to live in their sinful {self-centered} nature without seeking deliverance has chosen to remain in the darkness of the world. "Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God." (Jam. 4:4) Simply stated, holiness is not an option.

If we want to live as a son of God we must be led by the Spirit of God. (Rom. 8:14) This implies walking in all known light. "But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin." (1 John 1:7) Everyone who truly submits themselves to be led by the Spirit will eventually be led into a life of holiness to the Lord. His primary work is to lead people into a God-centered life.

Believers who have truly submitted themselves to respond to all the convicting work of the Holy Spirit are in a justified state. They are in a condition of relative holiness and so they possess Christ's credited righteousness. Whether they physically die while still on this spiritual pilgrimage toward holiness of heart and life, or they go on to become instruments of God's true righteousness and holiness in this world, they will go on to see the Lord in a glorified state. (Heb. 12:14)

In contrast, the called-out people of God who are not permitting the Spirit to lead them into a life of holiness are resisting God. They will never be permitted to enter into the Sabbath-rest of God while they remain in this condition. (Heb. 3:7-4:11) Their rebellion against God's call to holiness is a sign of their unbelief. (Heb. 3:18-19)

No matter how many times someone has heard Hebrews 12:14, the serious student of the Bible cannot escape being jolted by the flat mandate that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." This ultimatum is repeated over and over in different forms. It is not without reason that in 2 Corinthians chapter seven and verse one, where Paul urges the Corinthian believers to purge themselves from "all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness," he adds "in the fear of the Lord." It is perilous not to!

Paul had just reminded them at the end of chapter six that their sonship is absolutely dependent on separating themselves from all ungodliness. The unclean things of this world cannot be "touched" with our hearts. So we must say that relative holiness – walking in all known light – is the only guarantee that a believer will see the life of the Lord.

Paul says to the Thessalonians that everyone who rejects God's call to holiness "does not reject man, but God." (1 Thess. 4:8) If a Christian is not living by responsive faith and seeking to have their heart purified, they are rejecting one of the primary objectives of God's plan of redemption. If they are refusing to enter into His life of holiness, they are rejecting Him.

God must be enthroned in every aspect of life. This was the purpose of providing fallen mankind with a plan of redemption. The most important thing in life is not one's bank account, nor prestige, nor position, nor success. The most important thing in life is

God and those values that directly relate to Him. All ideas, standards, values, pursuits, and forces that prevent us from living in an undivided devotion to God and *fulfilling His purposes*, are seen as repulsive and ugly once a believer has become filled with the Spirit of God. The “spiritual man” loves the beauty of “holiness to the Lord.”

The spiritual man knows that it is impossible to serve both God and mammon. Once the heart has been purified, every desire to do so has been expelled. Filled with the divine agape love of God, he finds that he has a *love that gives itself without counting the cost*. He has been enabled to recklessly abandon himself to God and then know from personal experience that his possession of God has become pure gain. He does not seek to quibble or bargain or worry about the cost. When he becomes “spiritual,” he finds that Christ’s way of life {true righteousness and holiness} becomes a pure joy.

### **Absolute Obedience Is a Sign of Perfect Love**

There is a distinct relationship between perfect love and holiness. These two terms cannot be fully defined apart from each other. Holiness becomes a state of love in the heart. It will always translate into a life of God-centered obedience and living only for the glory of the Lord. When holiness is present, the sacrificial life of love is made natural to the soul. Doing all for the glory of God is the norm.

Whatever form of love we may be expressing, it is not true Christian love if we are not living in holiness to the Lord. There is no Christian holiness without sacrificial love, and there is no Christian love apart from holiness. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit and take on the spiritual image of our Lord, we are like Him in both love and holiness. This is why Jesus rejects all professions of love for him that refuse to enter into a life of absolute obedience. (John 14:15,21,23; 1 John 2:3-6; 2 John 9)

In an attempt to express some of the limitations of perfect love in a human being, it is necessary to recognize that human knowledge and judgment will remain limited, along with our material resources. Divine love will seek to draw others into the life of God, but it will not always be aware of how to do it, nor does it always have the resources to help others as it would like to do. Love seeks to do good to all people, but our methods may not be the best response for a particular situation.

Again, we need to repeat that perfect love is not perfection of degree; that is, it is not so strong and full-orbed that there is no possibility of development. Love may be completely pure and unselfish, and yet still grow in strength. “But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him.” (1 John 2:5)

The Christian life of love continues to give of itself for God’s purposes without ever looking for compensation. Pure love is able to continue giving without regard to circumstances because the self-serving motive in the old nature has been removed. “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.” (1 Cor. 13:4-5) And this is the divine love that every Christian is expected to manifest in this world if they hope to come before the Lord with confidence on the day of judgment. (1 John 4:17).

### **The Christian’s Failure**

There is only one standard for angels, demons, and men: holiness to God. He requires that all moral agents love Him supremely and obey Him implicitly. Their rejection of this state is what makes them backsliders, sinners, or demons – or defeated

Christians who must constantly flee to the Blood in order to avoid one of the other three categories.

The truth is that all real Christians are committed to a life of holiness to the Lord. This much is implied in the initial act of true repentance. J.A. Wood says: "If a man is a Christian, and in a justified state, he has the heart of a child of God and desires to render Him a present, full and unreserved obedience. A desire for holiness is a spontaneity of the regenerate heart." If there is no desire for holiness, then there is no sign of spiritual regeneration.

Furthermore, if a Christian begins to have an aversion to holiness, his backslidden condition will soon prevent him from hearing the word of God. Jesus has explained in very clear terms why people cannot hear God's call to holiness: "He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God." (John 8:47)

Only when we are walking in all revealed light are we in a condition to receive a greater revelation of light. If a Christian is not continuing to grow in the light of truth, they cannot be responding to the convicting work of the Holy Spirit. The growth that comes from enabling grace will come to a halt when we are not responding to the truth that God has already revealed. The only reason why growth would ever stop is because the individual has chosen to rebel against God's will at some point in His call to holiness.

Those who do not strive for the fullness of Christ's life are never found seeking a deeper work of grace. But is it not a fact that those who are earnestly seeking out this blessing are on their knees precisely because of their deep distress over their failure to attain the promise of a victorious Christian life?

It is proper therefore to speak of the Christian's failure. It is not such a failure as to bar him from heaven should he die suddenly, for everyone who is truly longing for heart purity with a repentant heart will be walking in known light. This is the highway of holiness in sufficient degree to be assured of the covering Blood. (1 John 1:9) But the soul will never be satisfied when there is a constant need to be confessing sins.

It is futile to discuss what an unsanctified child of God can and cannot do. Suffice it to say that in actual fact he does not possess perfect love. There will be a self-centered darkness in all his activities. (2 Pet. 1:19) We have tried to show that (1) such failure is more or less characteristic of all Christians who are still carnal, that (2) the failure is due to an inherent defect in their inner nature, and therefore (3) the failure will persist in some measure until the defective state {self-centeredness} has been remedied through a second work of grace.

### **In Search of the Cause**

It is always possible for a Christian to pin the blame for any failure on his {or her} circumstances. The Christian begins to rationalize his behavior, and his mind is just naturally full of tricks to deceive his own heart. He will keep finding explanations for his bitterness, or sharp tongue, or other twists and turns. But the more he hides behind alibis, the more confused he becomes in his spiritual life.

The root of the problem is that he is still thinking in terms of what he can and cannot accomplish through his own strength and discipline. These Christians first turn to face-saving explanations, and then they attempt to solve their problems through their own efforts. They will study, pray, throw themselves zealously into the Lord's work and accelerate spiritual activities in general, trying to elude the wobble in the wheel.



But when Christians begin to take both God's promises and His commands seriously, and begin taking their ongoing failures to heart, they will eventually lose all hope in fixing themselves. As they begin to see that all of their increased knowledge has been unable to cleanse them from their sinful attitudes or cure their selfish traits, they are in a condition to begin giving up on the ways of human effort. At this point of brokenness, if they are truly listening to the Spirit, they will begin to see there is only one hope of deliverance – the divine power of God.

Once Christians begin to see how the cause of failure is so deep within their inner nature that it cannot be reached by human effort, they will also begin to give up hope in the elements of time, growth, and discipline as their sanctifiers. They will soon begin to recognize a crookedness in the axle of the soul that mere acceleration cannot straighten out. It is here that we need teachers to help people realize this essential truth. The only way to become sanctified entirely to God is to wait for the tongues of fire from heaven to purify the heart.

At this stage of hopelessness, the earnest seeker will probably have a sympathetic understanding for what Oswald Chambers went through. He reached the same place after four years of trying to be a New Testament Christian. He came to the desperate conclusion that if what he was experiencing "was all the Christianity there was, the thing was a fraud." The great promises of the gospel about receiving a new divine nature from Christ had not come true in his life. While the gospel had promised freedom from the sinful nature, he found himself continually stumbling into sins of the heart.

We are now reaching the crux of the matter and the answer to the problem of the Christian's failure. For while justification by faith deals with a man's personal guilt {resulting from the acts that violate God's will}, it does not cleanse him from the carnal nature {self-centeredness} that he has inherited.

Regeneration imparts a new hunger and thirst after Christ's life of righteousness and holiness, but it does not supply the power to enter into the desired life. When the Holy Spirit enters our heart as the Dove of Peace, we will experience a deep sense of peace with God. But this seed of life also gives the heart a real hunger and thirst after Christ's life of true righteousness and holiness. It is this blessing from God that drives us into the desert wilderness and eventually breaks our independent and self-sufficient spirit. A real war will be taking place for the control of the heart until either the flesh or the Spirit has complete control.

Hence it is possible for the Bible to speak of the "double-minded" man. The regenerate Christian finds himself fluctuating between two opinions. He wants to be completely God-centered, but the self-centered nature keeps rising up and turning him back to the self-seeking ways of the world. He is swinging between two dispositions, causing an inner conflict. Sometimes the carnal mind seems stronger, and at other times the new mind is stronger. But meanwhile, he still cannot be and do all that he knows God has called him to be and do. (Gal. 5:17)

It was this dual state which made the pre-Pentecostal disciples such inconsistent and unpredictable followers of Jesus. This is why Jesus could acknowledge them as true disciples, yet say they were still "evil" in nature. (Luke 11:13) The self-centered bias had not yet been removed from deep within their inner being.

This also explains why Paul could call the Corinthians "yet carnal." These Christians were still acting like "mere men." (1 Cor. 3:1-3) God's plan of redemption has been

designed to enable “mere men” to overcome the world by living through the life of Christ.

Both the early disciples and the Corinthians had experienced spiritual regeneration. They had also been gifted to do works for the Lord. But they were not yet entirely holy in heart. This lurking carnal nature imparted an element of evil {self-centeredness} to their character in spite of their good intentions and their love for Jesus. This inner disease “broke out” like measles in their “envying, and strife, and divisions.” Their self-centered nature continued to expose itself.

Pride and unbelief are inseparable aspects of this self-centered nature. Pride exalts self as the supreme value {“I” know}, while unbelief exalts self as the supreme authority {“I’ll” decide}. Men demonstrate their unbelief when they prefer to believe in themselves rather than to completely trust in God and His word. They do not mind believing in abstract truths, but when it comes down to fully surrendering their life to God and yielding to live under the control of the Holy Spirit, their unbelief continues to show its ugly head.

The real struggle is in giving up what Oswald Chambers calls “our right to ourselves.” William L. Bradley expresses this vividly: “What assurance have we that there will be anything left of us if we sacrifice every shred of selfhood, of self-respect, of that ‘I’ which at least we can claim as our very own? No one can take our last bit of pride from us, and here is Christ demanding that we give it up to God right now.”

What is the spontaneous reaction of the carnal self to this radical demand? Bradley says, “Naturally we strike back at Him. Quite normally we reject Him at this point.” We may still say “Lord, Lord” with our mouth, but we refuse to respond to His will. (Matt. 7:21)

This irrational struggle of the Christian who has once said, “Yes,” but has held on to a remaining “No,” can be seen in the concrete reactions of some representative Christians. Fred Dalzell testifies in the *Flame*, that after he was saved he became aware of his spiritual lack and of an increasing hunger for the fullness of the Holy Spirit. In a service one day, he says, “the challenge was made to seek full salvation; but my heart remained stubborn...” Although he wanted the fullness of the Spirit, he found it very difficult to give up his self-directed way of life. He was beginning to understand what Jesus was talking about, when He said, “narrow is the gate and *difficult is the way which leads to life*, and there are few who find it.” (Matt. 7:14 Emphasis added)

David Ramirez, a Harvard Ph.D. who became the founder of Nazarene missions in his native Nicaragua, heard H.V. Miller preach on holiness in Chicago. Though he had been converted as a youth and had recently been reclaimed after many years of wandering, this was his first exposure to the doctrine of entire sanctification. His trained mind {a doctorate in both philosophy and psychology} instantly grasped the radical implications of what Dr. Miller was saying. His flesh reacted violently. On the way home he protested to his friend that Dr. Miller was wrong; that no one should so completely surrender himself, not even to God! After a week of Bible study in an attempt to disprove the preacher, he ended up experiencing an intense conviction. The next Sunday found him at the public altar making the very absolute surrender that his carnal heart had so violently protested.

This state in which there are both a “yes” and a “no” struggling for final supremacy in the heart will not be a permanent state. There will be a victor. Either we will permit the Spirit to lead us into a life of holiness to the Lord or we will end up returning to the self-

seeking ways of the world. We will not be able to serve two masters for long. A close examination of the church would easily prove this point.

God will give to each person according to what he has done... For those who are self-seeking and who reject truth {Christ's life of "self"-sacrificing love} and follow evil {self-will}, there will be wrath and anger. (Rom. 2:6-8)

### **The Divine Provision**

Having seen the New Testament standard of Christian life and experience, and having seen how every Christian starts out their spiritual pilgrimage with an inner lameness, we must now ask very earnestly whether God has provided a cure for the lameness. We believe He has.

Describing the future new covenant, Jeremiah tells us what it is designed to do: "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts." (Jer. 31:33) Ezekiel says the same thing: "I will put my Spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes... I will deliver you from all your uncleanness." (Ezek. 36:27, 29) This promise is associated with a deep renovation of the inner nature. Malachi specifically points to the Messiah as the One who would come to purify the hearts of God's people so they might walk in true righteousness. (Mal. 3:1-3; Eph. 4:24)

There was already a provision for God's called-out people to be forgiven in the Old Testament. What they were missing was a provision for cutting off the sinful nature. They were waiting for the Messiah. When He came, He would provide them with the long awaited blessing of a pure heart.

When John the Baptist was sent out to prepare the people for the coming of the Messiah, he told them to repent and produce fruit in keeping with repentance. (Matt. 3:8) He came to prepare them to receive the Kingdom-life of God from heaven, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. 3:2) They were to give themselves completely to God. They would need to yield to the convicting work of the Holy Spirit as he prepared the temple of their body to receive the life of Christ from heaven.

Because of their repentance, the Scripture says these men and women of the Old Testament dispensation were receiving remission {forgiveness} of their sins. (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3) Only then were they in a condition to wait for the Messiah to come and baptize them with the Holy Spirit and with fire. (Luke 3:16)

John, teaching his baptism of repentance, was preparing God's people to receive the long awaited "promise of the Father" – a purified heart. Once they had turned back to God and had received a new spiritual life, they needed to walk in the ways of God to show fruit in keeping with repentance. (Luke 3:8-14) Again, this responsive obedience was an essential part of preparing the temple to receive the blessing of entire sanctification {a purified heart – Acts 15:8-9}. We must have a responsive faith if we hope to enter into the sanctifying presence of the Lord: "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me...and I will love him and manifest Myself to him." (John 14:21)

The Spirit is first given to the believer as the seed of regeneration This seed of life from God is what gives us the desire to come into His presence and enjoy the fullness of His spiritual life. For example, the Spirit was breathed into the first disciples well before they were baptized with the Holy Spirit. (John 20:21-22; Acts 1:2-5; 2:1-4) They were required to use their existing spiritual life to seek out the fullness of the blessing. God

will only reward those who have used His enabling grace to “earnestly” seek Him. (Heb. 11:6) “Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection...Do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises... This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil...” (Heb. 6:1, 12, 19)

This promise of entering into the “presence” of God’s life of divine love is a very startling and basic truth. It means that those Christian teachers who can only teach people how to be forgiven for their sins and see no immediate cure for the believer’s lameness are still living according to the Old Testament promises. They may ardently accept and love Jesus, but they have reduced Him to an Old Testament Messiah who will some day {after physical death} give His people a life of true righteousness and holiness. If this has been your kind of faith, don’t continue in this way because “you were taught...to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.” (Eph. 4:22,24)

When Peter testified to how the disciples had received purified hearts on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 15:8-9), he did not mean that their minds were purified from error, for the Holy Spirit still needed to provide them with much instruction. Nor did he mean that their lives were purified totally from mistaken conduct, for mistakes were still made. What he did say was that their hearts {which is the source of our will} were purified. The Lord had come to correct and heal their inner corruption by supplying them with a submissive nature that was completely God-centered. From this “moment” of entire sanctification, we can see how the glory of the Lord’s life of self-giving love began to be manifest through the temple of their bodies. They never again turned back to serving themselves.

The term circumcise is profoundly significant in both the Old and New Testaments. In the Old, it represented a temporal {physical} cutting off of the flesh. But in the New, it is representative of having the flesh-life removed by the power of God. Paul says it is “the *putting off of the sinful nature*, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ.” (Col. 2:11 Emphasis added)

Glory be to God, the sinful nature can be cut off while we remain in this world. This is made perfectly clear in Deuteronomy chapter thirty and verse six where God promises to circumcise the heart of His people so they would be able to love and serve Him perfectly. He is speaking of the undivided heart that is now available to everyone in this age of fulfillment {the period of time since Christ returned to heaven and became a “life-giving Spirit.” – 1 Cor. 15:45 NKJV}

When we come to the word perfect, many people become puzzled. Some would like to remove it from their Bibles and discard it entirely from the church of Christ. But what then would we do with the frequent usage of the term in the New Testament where it is used in *direct reference to God’s will and provision for man*? It is used this way at least thirty-two times. God obviously expects us to respond to this teaching. Jesus was not trifling when He said, “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matt. 5:48) And Epaphras was not being impractical, idealistic, or fanatical when he prayed for the Colossians that they might “stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.” (Col. 4:12) Nor was John mocking us when in the Spirit he affirmed the possibility of our love being made perfect. (1 John 4:17-18)

While we cannot afford to ignore the teachings of God, neither can we define this Christian perfection in any way other than what God has taught. God is dealing with the focus of the heart. If we are living for God according to all revealed light, our affections

toward Him are perfect in His sight. All He requires is that our heart be single toward Him.

It is important for us to remember that He has promised to do the work if we will depend on Him. “I will give them an undivided heart.” (Ezk. 11:19) He has the power to establish His undivided Kingdom in our heart. And once he has purified our heart, He can fill the temple of our body with the light from His life of perfect love. (Matt. 6:22)

Christian perfection is consistent with a thousand imperfections in knowledge and judgment. And while the apostle Paul disclaimed the perfection of a glorified life (Phil. 3:12), he unhesitatingly identified himself with those who were already “perfect” three verses later. (v. 15) And rather than thinking he was confused, we need to be asking for the Spirit’s help in understanding what this inspired writer was teaching.

Relative to our limited world, the light of God’s life is infinite. It is possible for a Christian to grow from “glory to glory” without ever falling back into sin {self-will}. This is why every believer needs to seek out the undivided heart – a perfect heart. Only then can they begin growing into the infinite life of God without being restricted by the flesh. What every Christian needs is a purified heart. When the heart is undivided, it is scripturally said to be “perfect” toward God.

While Paul never claimed the absolute perfection of glorification, he knew that it was possible to receive a perfect heart in this world. This Spirit-filled life, which immerses the believer into the submissive nature of the Son, is what makes a believer “spiritual” in this age of fulfillment.

Absolute perfection belongs to God only. Angelic perfection belongs to angels only. Heavenly perfection belongs to glorified saints only. But Christian perfection may and must belong to flesh-and-blood Christians, right here on earth, with all their limitations and shortcomings.

The Son has come to rectify man’s nature so that fallen beings might be brought back into conformity with God’s spiritual life of love. We can be perfected in love and made holy like God is holy. This full transformation includes two distinct works of God: regeneration and entire sanctification. Without the second work of grace, the believer will fall short of the abundant provision of grace that God has made available in His plan of full redemption. (Rom 5:17; 2 Pet. 1:10-11)

The Father planned for Jesus to have many brothers and sisters who would manifest His spiritual life of divine love. (Rom. 8:29). This is the primary purpose of God’s glorious plan of redemption. (1 John 2:5-6; Heb. 5:8) We are to be purified, circumcised, sanctified, and made perfect in love so we can truly display the Son’s submissive nature and live wholly for the good of others. This is the grand objective of the new covenant. Fallen men and women become fully redeemed from the darkness of this self-centered world when God establishes His Kingdom-life of perfect love in their hearts.

God’s indwelling life of love is what will provide the believer with confidence on the Day of Judgment. (1 John 4:17) When you come before your Maker fully, where you will be fully exposed to His holy life, you do not want to be standing there with the remains of a nature that has remained self-centered because you did not want to give it up.

When all self-deception has been taken away and the self-centered nature is exposed in all of its ugliness, people will be completely astonished as to why they did not permit God to purify their heart. May God help you to see the need for seeking out a purified heart before it is too late.

## **The Divine Plan of Realization**

The most satisfactory way of settling the issue of crisis versus gradualness is to recognize how God has chosen to use a baptism with the Holy Spirit to separate believers from the old carnal nature. Many theological questions may arise in our minds at this point, but we need to look at the experiential aspect of this supernatural baptism. When we look at the transformed lives of the early disciples, we are able to see the rich blessings. The great promises of the Lord were fully realized once they were baptized with the Holy Spirit. There was no disappointment, no need to modify the expectations, and no need to apologize for failing to manifest the fruit of Christ's spiritual nature.

Once they were baptized with the Holy Spirit, there were marvelous qualities that came into their life immediately and fully from another realm. There was a bursting forth of spiritual vitality, the pushing back of the horizons, the sudden spiritual understanding and insight, the deliverance from the paralyzing fears and tensions, and the selflessness in their fellowship. There was a new and unbreakable allegiance to Jesus Christ, a calm courage regardless of the circumstances, a new buoyancy of spirit in facing any peril or loss, and the total disregard of all selfish considerations in daily life.

A marvelous transformation had taken place in their lives. It was all done in a moment of time by the baptism with the Holy Spirit. They did not grow into this new character. While the life continued to grow from glory to glory, there was a wholeness to their new spiritual life of love from the day they received power from on high.

After three year of intense and personal instruction from Jesus Christ Himself, the disciples still had not been able to manifest these qualities in any consistency. Even after His resurrection, and just before His ascent into glory we find the befuddled disciples still confused about the Kingdom of God. But in the moment of the baptism with the Holy Spirit, all was changed.

Once we consider this sudden and radical transformation, we need to begin asking ourselves why so many people go on year after year still struggling against the flesh? Why do they continue seeking to grow out of their carnal nature when they could have such a dramatic change in their spiritual life by seeking out the baptism with the Holy Spirit? What we need to understand is that a real growth in the life of divine love cannot begin until after the heart has been purified.

We can find no exception in the Book of Acts in respect to anyone who genuinely and definitely experienced this Spirit-baptism. These great changes in their inner nature are what constituted the great miracle of Pentecost! And there was never a question about when the baptism occurred. It was always a definite experience. Jesus said, "On that day you will realize that...I am in you." (John 14:20) Every believer will need to experience this baptism of love before their hearts can be completely separated from the self-centered ways of the world.

The one hundred and twenty disciples who were waiting to be clothed with power by the Holy Spirit were already fervent believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. They had already given up everything to follow their Lord. This supernatural work of grace was not their first commitment of obedience. It was, however, an elevation to a new plane of spiritual living. This shows how God is able to make a sudden and radical change to the nature of earnest disciples who have already been committed to Jesus Christ for several years.

Once the baptism with the Holy Spirit had occurred, they were enabled to fully overcome the ways of the world and enter into the firstfruits of a heavenly spiritual life. While the providences of life continued to become more severe, the increasing spiritual

life they were receiving from heaven enabled them to overcome everything. They did it with a constant flow of Christ's love, joy, and peace coming from their hearts. Because they had humbled themselves under the mighty hand of God, He fulfilled His promise by exalting them into His elevated spiritual life in "due time."

Only true believers were eligible for the baptism with the Holy Spirit. There is not one instance in the Book of Acts where this infilling with the "Spirit of holiness" was not first evidenced by some measure of *prior* spiritual life. Even Cornelius, the first gentile, was said to be a devout man who both prayed and was heard by God. He was "one that feared God with all his house, who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always." (Acts 10:2) God-fearing men are already committed to obedience. Furthermore, Peter acknowledged that he was already one of those who had been "accepted" with God. (v. 35)

When Peter later related the event that took place in the household of Cornelius, he identified it as the same work of the Holy Spirit that purified the hearts of the first disciples on the day of Pentecost. Significantly, the essential feature of the baptism with the Holy Spirit, according to Peter, was not the speaking with tongues but the *purification of their hearts*. (Acts 15:9) But our main consideration right now is that this experience was not received by Cornelius without a measure of faith that enabled him to depend on God in prayer and submit to His ways.

The truth is, the sinner, who is without any spiritual life, does not yet see his deep inherent depravity. Neither does a joyous, happy, newly regenerated believer see his further need. Only after God has had an opportunity to begin exposing the deeper corruption of the self-life does a regenerate Christian begin to recognize his need for a greater work of God's power. And without first recognizing the need, faith will never begin its appropriating work of seeking the blessing until it is obtained.

God says He rewards those who earnestly seek Him. (Heb. 11:6) Not everyone has the desire to respond to all the convicting work of the Holy Spirit. And so God will be examining our heart as He increases the light of our understanding. For those who come to the point of wholeheartedly presenting themselves to the Lord as a living sacrifice, God will surely acknowledge this living faith. "So God, who knows the heart, *acknowledged them* by giving them the Holy Spirit {in power}...purifying their hearts by faith." (Acts 15:8-9 Emphasis added) In other words, we will know when our consecration is complete by the way God purifies our heart as an acknowledgement. God "acknowledged" their faith because they had yielded to the Holy Spirit and sought out this purity of heart by relying on His power.

The human race could not have been afflicted with the sinful nature without man's choice; neither can there be a healing of the sinful nature without man's choice. If God were content with a holiness that did not involve man's will, He could bestow His works of grace irrespective of our readiness or cooperation. But He will not do this. He may take stronger action in some people to break their independent spirit and expose their need, but in the end each individual must choose to yield their life and will to Him.

God will never force His life of holiness on anyone. It must be a holiness that is desired, chosen, sought, appropriated {taken possession of} by faith, and continuously confirmed by responding to every leading of the Spirit. Furthermore, if we choose to give up our life of holiness by turning back to a self-directed life, as the first Adam turned from his sanctified state, we also will surely die. (Heb. 10:26-31)

This brings us back to the simple fact of experience. Indwelling sin, or the inbred willfulness of the fallen nature, is not removed at conversion. It remains in all unsanctified Christians. Believers in every major denomination accept this simple fact in their creeds. Therefore, if this sinful nature is ever to be removed, it must be as a second work of grace. No one ever grows out of it. The flesh-life must be cut off by a supernatural circumcision of the heart by the Spirit. There must be a second work by God to consummate entire sanctification.

Entire sanctification entails more than the act of our will in consecration. God must acknowledge the sacrifice. He must use the fire from heaven to consume the carcass of the flesh-life. He then fills the temple of our body with the glory of our Lord's life of divine love.

Since entire sanctification is only experienced through a baptism with the Holy Spirit, and since the baptism with the Holy Spirit is only offered to believers who already possess a measure of spiritual life, it is apparent that God's plan of realization is a definite second work that is now available to all who need it and who sufficiently desire it. "But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing... Blessed is the man who endures temptation; *for when he has been approved*, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him." (Jam. 1:4,12 Emphasis added)

### **The Faith That Sanctifies**

*Regardless of where we think we may stand as Christians, our faith is spurious if we have not surrendered to God up to the light we have received. Surrender is the submission of our will to the lordship of Jesus Christ. To be a disciple of His, and living in a justified state, we must be living in submission to both His teachings and His known will for our life.*

While unsanctified Christians will continue to stumble into acts that they know are a violation of God's will, if they are true disciples of Christ, they will continue to confess the sin and return to all revealed light. (1 John 1:9) "If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth." (1 John 1:6)

The work of surrender is a joint effort involving both the Spirit and the believer. In the first work of grace, this surrender takes the form of repentance. It is a surrender from our rebellion. We give up our own kingdom and renounce the worldly way of living for self. It is an acceptance of Christ's claims upon us. We choose to live according to His standards. Without this initial surrender to Him, where God is able to recognize our desire to yield to His will, spiritual regeneration cannot take place. God is the One who examines the heart and chooses when to grant the blessing.

In the second crisis experience, our surrender takes the direction of consecration. It is not our love of sin and the world we are giving up, but rather we are surrendering our inherent right to ourselves. We now completely abandon the self-life so that Christ will be able to manifest His spiritual life through us.

In our consecration, we are no longer dealing with evil practices, but now we are giving up everything we have used to make ourselves into something. "Why should we give them up?" we whimper. Yet this and nothing less is the biblical challenge: We must present our whole being to Him as a living sacrifice to be used as He pleases and for His glory. (Rom. 12:1; Luke 18:22)



Our attitude must be like that of Jesus. He made Himself “nothing” and a servant to all. Because He was willing to have no reputation of His own and give Himself up to the cross, His Father was able to highly exalt Him. (Phil. 2:5-9) Then He asks us to take this same path through the cross. (Matt. 16:24-25) There is no other way to enter into the light of His life. “He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.” (John 8:12)

Most Christians will find that it is far easier to give up their outward sins than it is to give up their self-life. In this struggle the carnal mind feels that God is asking too much. For this reason, it often takes time for our faith in God to reach the point where we can trust Him enough to completely surrender ourselves for His purposes.

We should begin to see why making a thorough and honest consecration, one that God can acknowledge by purifying the heart, will generally require a little time. This does not mean there should be an emphasis placed on the time factor. There is no virtue in accumulating hours of prayer and fasting. But the soul does need a deep view of its own corruption. It does need to count the cost. It does need to specify the items of yielding – money, job, family, ambitions, affections, reputation – the “known bundle,” as well as the “unknown bundle” as the old-timers used to call it. (Luke 14:25-33)

We must genuinely come to grips with the practical, personal, down-to-earth issues that we do not want to let go of. What if God should ask us to ... or require us to...? Yes, we must surrender everything relating to our self-life before we can be filled with the Holy Spirit in power. We cannot receive the Pearl without first paying the asking price. (Matt. 13:45-46)

Jesus said, “Any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.” (Luke 14:33) We will never enter into an experiential relationship with the Son’s spiritual life until we can say from the depths of our heart, “Not my will, but thine, be done.” The old self must die before we can be raised up into Christ’s resurrection life. (Rom. 6:5) God, who knows the heart, is the one who will search it and “acknowledge” the faith that leads to absolute surrender.

The big “I” must be crucified. This is not the death “of self,” but a deliberate and voluntary death “to self.” The self, with all of its “rights,” must be submerged in God for the Spirit’s unhindered habitation and control. This is the Kingdom-life – the life of eternity. If you rebel against entering into this way of life today, what makes you think you would ever be able to enjoy heaven?

God expects each one of His children to voluntarily give themselves up to His heavenly life while they remain in this world. He will acknowledge our absolute surrender by providing an abundant entrance into the joyous Kingdom-life of our Lord. “Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (2 Pet. 1:10-11)

This process of searching the heart and seeking to enter into God’s undivided Kingdom will bring about the disclosure of one’s motives in wanting to be sanctified. There are many who want the power of the Holy Spirit for their own selfish ambitions. They have no desire to die to the pride that wants to be recognized. But God will never share His divine power with someone who wants to steal His glory.

God knows when people are seeking advantages for themselves through the power of the Holy Spirit. Many people in the church look at their Christian work as a grand way to

exalt self. But by following this path of Satan, they are effectively cutting themselves off from the Kingdom-life of God.

What we need to realize is that true power for holy living is never separated from the life of Christ. He is our sanctification. If we want power from God, we must be willing to die to self and live through the selfless nature of the Son.

There will generally be at least one sensitive issue, one dearly loved “Isaac,” which will wrench the soul. This is what we mean by “dying out.” Unless this kind of self-surrender is deep and genuine, faith will not be complete. We must have a faith that is able to surrender wholly to God before it can release the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit.

We must say, however, that no matter how sincere or thorough we are in our attempt to “die out,” there will always remain that lurking objection of the flesh, deep down, until it has been cut off with a supernatural circumcision of the heart by the power of the Holy Spirit. Some people have never dared to exercise their full faith because they have never gotten through their struggle with that inner objector. They thought they had to quiet every contrary voice in their soul before they could have this full faith. This is a terrible mistake for it constitutes an attempt to sanctify ourselves. Only God has the power to cut off the flesh-life. Ours is to say yes even when there is something in us that keeps rising up to fight against our agreement with God’s requirement for our complete surrender. Ours is to be willing to be made willing. Ours is to completely trust in God’s divine power.

We do have a responsibility to confess this lurking rebellion to God. We must recognize it as evil, deliberately renounce it, lay it up on the altar of sacrifice, and then ask God to consume it with His fire from heaven. It is the “carcass” {the last remains of the self-life} that we are asking God to eliminate. We must simply wait in faith for the purifying fire to come down from heaven.

This commitment of our sinful heart to God to do what we are unable to do, and what even our consecration cannot do, is part of faith itself. God’s work of supernaturally eliminating that resistance is the very thing we are turning to God to do. Our faith turns to Him in childlike dependence. It is His supernatural work of purifying the heart that removes this stubbornness.

These truths begin to underscore the necessity of holding steady in our act and attitude of faith. Sooner or later the sweet awareness of His cleansing power will surge into our soul. If we will humble ourselves under His mighty hand and entrust our full salvation to Him, He will faithfully lift us up in His due time. (1 Pet. 5:6) “And now, Lord, what do I wait for? My hope is in You. Deliver me from all my transgressions.” (Ps. 39:7-8) “Behold, this is our God; We have waited for Him, and He will save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for Him; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.” (Isa. 25:9) “Having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.” (Rom. 5:10) “Then you will know that I am the Lord, for they shall not be ashamed who wait for Me.” (Isa. 49:23)

If faith seems paralyzed, we must search until we find the cause. Look for some source of rebellion against revealed light. We cannot choose to hold anything back. It may simply be the love of ease or the inherent desire to remain in one’s “comfort zone.” If there is anything we are unwilling to give up to God, this is the unclean thing. Everything belongs to Him and can only be used according to His will. If we truly believe in the promises of God and trust in Him to do what is best for our lives, we will

be willing to offer up everything to Him. As the Scriptures have taught, there is no other way to receive the fullness of His spiritual life into the temple of our body. “For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: ‘I will dwell in them...’ Therefore, ‘Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.’” (2 Cor. 6:16-17)

### **A Life of Power**

The line of the old hymn which reads, “Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,” was twisted by some discerning wag to say “Judge not the Lord by feeble saints.” Too many “saints” are feeble, and feeble saints do not glorify God.

But there need be none. Abundant provision has been made for a life that always has the power to manifest Christ’s love, joy and peace. Every Christian can and should be an example of divine grace, a wonder to angels and demons, an amazement to watching men. And the more the Christian recognizes his own weakness and becomes dependent on God’s power, the more pronounced the “power of life” will surge through his soul.

Each one of us will need to have a deep understanding of the important lesson that Paul learned from our Lord: “My strength is made perfect in weakness.” (2 Cor. 12:9) It is this weakness in self, which causes us to turn to God in absolute dependence on Him for everything that will enable us to live by His divine power. “Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead.” (2 Cor. 1:9) Remember, the power for divine spiritual life must come from Him. “His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness...so that...you may participate in the divine nature...” (2 Pet. 1:3-4)

Saints have radiated Christ’s spiritual life and blessed others from prisons, from broken homes, in poverty and from beds of pain. Since weakness in self is not a hindrance to the work, no one will ever have an excuse for not manifesting our Lord’s glorious life. After all, everyone has the ability to become weak in self and dependent on the power of God.

Remember, this is not a “package” of power given to us to use as we please. It is a resource of power in the Holy Spirit that we will experience only as we abide in the will of our Lord. Our spiritual food comes from doing the will of the Father in heaven. (John 4:34) He will supply the precise power that we need to accomplish everything He has already planned to do through our lives. (Eph. 2:10)

What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit? It means a complete penetration of the Holy Spirit into the whole man, followed by complete and continued control of the whole man. The man thus becomes spiritually-minded. He is only concerned about the Kingdom of God. He becomes so God-conscious and God-possessed that there is unceasing communion between the inner spirit and God through the Holy Spirit. Because he is “strengthened” with the resurrection power of the Holy Spirit “in the inner man,” Christ is able to dwell fully through the temple of his body. (Eph. 3:16-19) He is rooted and grounded in divine love so that He may become “a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” (Eph. 4:13)

This is what we call establishing grace. “May the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while {in dying to self}, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. To Him be the glory and the dominion {in your life} forever and ever. Amen.” (1 Pet. 5:10-11)

The power of Pentecost purified Christ's disciples' motives and made them *saints* {meaning sanctified or holy – set apart for God's exclusive use} in the richest sense of that word. It cemented them in bonds of perfect love, established them with unshakable assurance, and fired them with unquenchable zeal and sacrificial living. This made them into true *witnesses* of Christ's resurrection life. They had taken on the nature of love found in their risen Lord. And this kind of power, available to all both then and now, is the real hallmark of the Spirit-filled life.

It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of this "power of life." In comparison to this living water welling up from within our inner being, spiritual gifts are secondary. Without divine love everything we say and do will become like "sounding brass or a clanging cymbal." (1 Cor. 13:1)

Divine love is what purges out the self-centered nature. However, the emotional manifestations of an unsanctified nature are easily recognized and will continue to spoil the testimony of all carnal Christians. Paul said, "The acts of the sinful nature are obvious." Among these are "hatred {includes grudges}, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy... I warn you...those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God." (Gal 5:20-24) Since the self-centered nature is the root of all these sins, every believer will need to rely on the Spirit of Christ to cut out this root of selfishness. This evil is what separates everyone from becoming a part of God's Kingdom-life of perfect love.

As Spirit-filled Christians, we can expect to be buffeted, oppressed, and slandered. But God is able to supply our soul with sufficient grace to overcome everything the world throws at us. Through it all He will enable us to experience the love, joy, and peace of Christ's victorious spiritual life.

In fact, His grace is sufficient to enable us to live out the Sermon on the Mount. He has the power to enable us to love our enemies and pray without any ill will for those who spitefully take advantage of us. As our Lord demonstrated, He will even enable us to give ourselves up to serving those who treat us poorly. If the Holy Spirit reigns, this kind of power will be unbroken and increasingly manifest. It becomes a clear manifestation of God's power, light and glory.

But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly what has been done has been done through God. (John 3:21)

For God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face {or spiritual image} of Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay {weak mortal bodies} to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. (2 Cor. 4:6-7)

It works something like this: the supernatural fruit of His divine nature, by His sanctifying power, becomes impregnated into our total character so that we can say that our whole being is under the control of the Holy Spirit. Then increasingly, these graces begin to work their way out from the heart through our life so that we are changed into Christ's spiritual image from glory to glory. (2 Cor. 3:17-18) The fruit of this new spiritual life, which will flow from within like a continuous river of spiritual life, is made up of Christ's love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. We truly share with Him in all the blessings of His spiritual life in the heavenly realms. (Eph. 1:3)

Holiness is the foundation of all spiritual power. True goodness, which reminds men of Jesus, will be seen clearly when we are living in true holiness. As Christians, we all need to seek out the special grace of entire sanctification so that we will have the power to carry out our divinely appointed tasks.

When the church becomes filled with sanctified Christians, the world will begin to recognize the power of God. “But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.” The Spirit’s ability to make every believer “as one” in life and nature with the Father and the Son is what proves to the world that Jesus Christ is the only true Savior. (John 17:21-22) Let us permit the Spirit of Christ to sanctify us wholly to Him so that others will begin to have a real fear about remaining in their carnal darkness. “Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Sovereign Lord, when I show myself holy through you before their eyes.” (Ezk. 36:23)

We beckon everyone who wears the name of Christ to seriously take up this scriptural call to holiness. The Lord needs people who are willing to become vessels of His glorious life. “And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place until the day dawns and the Morning Star {Jesus Christ} rises in your hearts.” (2 Pet. 1:19) He will manifest His spiritual life within your heart in due time.

## Concluding Remarks

This section includes material from *Sanctification in the New Testament* by Ralph Earle. Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1988.

### Holiness – Our True Calling

My main field of teaching over a period of fifty years has been the New Testament, in Greek and English. My primary purpose and deep concern has been to help people see the light of this glorious truth about entire sanctification and then to show them how to receive this gracious experience. Truly, “It is God’s will that you should be sanctified.”

Back in the eighteenth century John Wesley was concerned about people drifting away from the light of holiness. He wrote: “I am not afraid that the people called Methodists should ever cease to exist either in Europe or America. But I am afraid lest they should only exist as a dead sect, they will have the form of religion without the power. And this undoubtedly will be the case, unless they hold fast to the doctrine, spirit, and discipline with which they first set out.”

Throughout history God has experienced this same dilemma with His people. They start out well, but they eventually turn back from His teachings about holiness. God periodically raises up a people to enter into His promised spiritual life, but succeeding generations tend to fall away. While God has always had His sanctified remnant, most of His called-out people generally fall into sinful unbelief.

Shortly before Dr. J.B. Chapman died he was asked, “Do you think the day will ever come when the Church of the Nazarene will cease to teach and preach old-fashioned, second blessing holiness?” His reply was, “No.” But then, with tears in his eyes he added: “The thing I fear is that the time will come when our people will have the theory but do not possess the experience.” Is this going to be the fate of our generation? We surely need to begin praying for the Lord to raise up men like Joshua who can lead God’s people out of the desert wilderness and into the promised land of spiritual abundance.

In his book, *Holiness, the Heart of Christian Experience*, Dr. Chapman wrote: “Regeneration and entire sanctification are the two crises in which God deals with the sin problem in us and by which He takes us out of sin and then takes sin out of us.” Here was the heart of the Nazarene message. This being the case, we have a very special role in leading people into this victorious life. As a group of people who have gathered together to promote scriptural holiness, he concludes: “We have the task of bringing the people of God into the grace and blessing of Bible sanctification.” May God Himself call us back to this glorious mission.

The emphasis of this book has been to both show the need for holiness and to exhort God’s children to go on in their faith until they become “filled with the Spirit.” We pray that everyone who reads these pages will now seek to be “purified from all sin.”

In closing, we will share a vivid picture of what it means to have the “the carnal mind” removed by the Spirit. It occurs in C.S. Lewis’s striking book, *The Great Divorce*.

C. S. Lewis pictured a man standing nearby with a red lizard on his shoulder. The red lizard was a type of inbred sin, or “sinful nature.”

The lizard was talking into the man’s ear. Lewis could tell by the look on the man’s face that he was very much annoyed by the presence of the red lizard.

Just then Lewis saw “the Flaming Spirit” – his very appropriate designation for the Holy Spirit – come near and say to the man, “Would you like me to make him quiet?”

“Yes!”

“Then I will kill him.”

“No, I think the gradual process is better.”

The Flaming Spirit answered: “The gradual process is of no use at all.”

The man countered: “Some other day, perhaps.”

The Flaming Spirit answered: “There is no other day.” What a profound truth!

Then the man exclaimed: “Get back! You’re burning me.”

The Flaming Spirit replied: “I never said it wouldn’t hurt you.”

Then the man whined: “Why didn’t you kill it without asking me?”

The Flaming Spirit answered: “I cannot kill it against your will. Have I your permission?”

“Do what you like; God help me.”

The man screamed as the Burning One closed His crimson grip on the lizard, twisted it, and flung it dead at his feet.

Then C.S. Lewis writes these words: “There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, ‘Thy will be done,’ and those to whom God says, ‘Thy will be done.’ ” Of course, if God gives us over to our own will, it also means hell, both here on earth and forever in outer darkness.

Fortunately, he gives us an opportunity in this world to have a taste of the spiritual suffering that occurs when we live for our own will. He wants us to experience the spiritual emptiness that occurs when we try to hold onto our own kingdom. His desire is to draw us into His undivided Kingdom before it is too late.

Have you said that final, full yes to God: “Not my will, but Yours be done”? If you haven’t, I would urge you right now to get down on your knees and say an everlasting “No!” to self and an everlasting “Yes!” to God. Then seek to have Him do whatever is necessary to sanctify you “through and through.” (1 Thess. 5:23)

You will never have complete victory in your life until you have received a purified heart through a dependent faith in the power of God. And for those who delay, if they are not careful, there will soon be a day when they will deeply regret not having pursued the blessing of heart purity. (Heb. 12:14) “So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this {which is a reference that includes the destruction of everything that is carnal}, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.” (2 Pet. 3:14) Remember, the only thing that will survive the testing fires of Judgment is the spiritual life that we have received from the Lord while we are in this world.