

## CONCERNING HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY

### INTRODUCTION

- A. Salvation consists of three parts, justification, sanctification and glorification.
  - 1. Justification and glorification are under the sovereignty of God.
  - 2. Sanctification is a cooperative effort between God and man.
- B. Human responsibility may be best understood by an examination of sanctification.
  - 1. What is it?
  - 2. Where am I in the process?
  - 3. What can I do?
  - 4. Why me?

### SANCTIFICATION

- A. What is it?
  - 1. The meaning of sanctification
    - a. It is to be set apart to God.
    - b. It is a position and a process.
  - 2. Three aspects of sanctification
    - a. Positional sanctification
      - 1) The permanent position of every believer due to the work of Christ, punctiliar - point in time - from death to life.
      - 2) 2 Corinthians 5:21, *For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*
    - b. Progressive sanctification
      - 1) The process of maturing in life which properly reflects one's position, incremental - developmental.
      - 2) 1 Peter 1:14-15, *As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct.*
      - 3) John Stott, *...becoming a Christian is one thing, being a Christian is another.*
    - c. Ultimate sanctification (glorification)
      - 1) When position and practice are in perfect accord, a future event.
      - 2) When will that be?
        - a) At physical death.
        - b) At Christ's Second Coming,.
        - c) 1 John 3:2, *Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.*
- B. Where am I in the process?
  - 1. A key passage on sanctification, Romans 7:14-25
    - a. The main question from this passage: Is the person regenerate or unregenerate?
    - b. Some would say he is unregenerate.
      - 1) *I am of the flesh, sold under sin* (14).
      - 2) *Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me* (20).
      - 3) *Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?* (24).
    - c. Some would say he is regenerate.
      - 1) *For I have the desire to do what is right* (18).
      - 2) *For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being* (22).
      - 3) *Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!* (25).

- d. John Stott would say regenerate but...
    - 1) He asks, *Who is the 'wretched man' or 'miserable creature' of verse 24, who gives us a graphic account of his inner turmoil (15ff.), cries out for deliverance, and then immediately appears to thank God for it (25)? Is this person regenerate or unregenerate? And if the former, is he or she normal or abnormal, mature, immature or backsliding? The different schools of holiness teaching are obliged to come to terms with this chapter.*
    - 2) The man of Romans 7 is a regenerate believer, *born of the Spirit, but not indwelt by the Spirit*, pre-Pentecost believers.
  2. My progress toward sanctification
    - a. I have been a Christian for decades but I still relate too often to Romans 7 man. What about you?
    - b. I know I am regenerate - the indwelling Holy Spirit confirms my relationship to God through Christ.
    - c. Why is this process so hard? Is it just me?
    - d. Today, I believe Romans 7 relates to believers who are controlled by the flesh instead of by the Spirit.
- C. What can I do?
1. Acknowledge need
    - a. George Whitefield, *The renewal of our natures is a work of great importance. It is not to be done in a day. We have not only a new house to build up, but an old one to pull down.*
    - b. Bill Murray movie, *What about Bob?* Take baby steps. Cooperate with the Spirit.
    - c. James MacDonald asks the question, *Have you ever said in your heart that God was not enough to satisfy you?*
    - d. I would respond, *Or, is it just the way I live?*
    - e. Ask God to make you hungry for Him, Psalm 107:9, *For He satisfies the longing soul, and the hungry soul He fills with good things.*
  2. Accept responsibility
    - a. As I mentioned earlier, the Romans 7 man can be identified today as a believer who tries to live by the flesh instead of by the Spirit.
    - b. I am to actively pursue a life in the Spirit.
    - c. At a point in my spiritual life, I said, *I want to experience a life controlled by the Holy Spirit*, Romans 8:6, *To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.*
  3. Contemplate God's presence
    - a. Don't grieve the Holy Spirit.
    - b. James MacDonald, *It is impossible for the character of Christ to grow in the life of a person whose mind is filled with worldly sewage.*
  4. Meditate on God's greatness
    - a. James MacDonald, *There is in every human heart a propensity "to leave the God we love" unless we are continually gripped by His greatness, unless on a regular basis we allow our hearts and minds to be rocked with the truth of all that He is.*
    - a. Can I get complete satisfaction anywhere else?
    - b. Who else gives forgiveness of sin?
    - c. Who else is always faithful?
    - d. Can anything else give me the joy I get when I pursue God?
  5. Pursue spiritual disciplines
    - a. Study the Bible daily
    - b. Pray daily
    - c. Fellowship and worship regularly
    - d. Observe the ordinances of baptism and communion.
    - e. Serve others which includes evangelism and stewardship.
- D. Why me?
1. Too often, I fear I choose to live in the flesh instead of in the Spirit - I bounce from Romans 8 to Romans 7.
  2. Romans 12:1, *...present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.* I am a living sacrifice. I can choose to crawl off the altar.
  3. Jerry Bridges, *The pursuit of holiness is a joint venture between God and the Christian. No one can attain to any degree of holiness without God working in his life, but just as surely no one will attain it without effort on his own part.*

4. Martin Luther, *This life therefore is not righteousness but growth in righteousness; not health but healing, not being but becoming, not rest but exercise. We are not what we shall be but we are growing toward it; the process is not yet finished but it is going on; this is not the end but it is the road. All does not yet gleam in glory but all is being purified.*
5. Romans 6:13, *Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.*

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| <b>CONCLUSION</b> |
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A. Importance of my sanctification to me

1. John Stott, *There are two main spheres in which the Christian is meant to grow. The first is in understanding and the second is holiness.*
2. 1 Thessalonians 4:7-8, *For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.*
3. Hebrews 12:14, *Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.*

B. Importance of my sanctification for the world

1. Blaise Pascal, *The serene beauty of a holy life is the most powerful influence in the world next to the power of God.*
2. J.C. Ryle, *Sound Protestant and Evangelical doctrine is useless if it is not accomplished by a holy life.*

C. I want that - I want that for you - I want that for every Christian.