

Sanctification

By Arthur Whiting

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It is indeed a joy to greet you once again in the name of our Saviour as we welcome you to another session of Dr. Talbot's Bible study hour. And now friends we come to the first of three studies on what the Bible reveals about sanctification. And today we are going to consider the question what is sanctification. A very very important question it is indeed. I'm sure you all realize that the Bible is full of big words. I mean big words not so much in length as in meaning and friends I would always advise you never to be afraid of the Bible language. We are being asked today to discard the language of the Bible. Get rid of it and substitute the language of the street. Friends I want you to recognize that the Bible is theology.

Don't be afraid of that word either theology you know is the science of God and every science has its own peculiar terminology. No one thinks of asking medicine or chemistry or biology or for that matter any other ology to change its language. Why then should men insist on tampering with theology? The very queen of all the sciences. It has a language all of its own. And instead of substitution and attenuation what we really need is investigation. Instead of discarding these great Bible words we need to discover the richness of their meaning that of course is the sensible thing to do. Now take for instance this Bible word sanctification that is a word which is in disrepute. Like many other good words of the infallible book Words like Pentecost and Saint do not enjoy the glory that very properly belongs to them to use the phraseology of another the

queer have cleared the pitch. What I mean is that many fanatical things have been done in the name of sanctification. Consequently many Christians studiously avoid this word sanctification.

It has become the focal point of so much misunderstanding and so much misstatement that many believers give it a wide berth while some act as though the word never existed at all. Others who do not shun it so frequently are led astray because they have never seen it in the clear light of God's Word but instead have been content to rest upon some fancied experience. Now to make experience the key to the Bible is indeed a most perilous and tragic mistake in God's plan. The Bible is to be the key to experience not experience. The key to the Bible. Did you get that. I said that according to the plan of God the Bible is to be the key to experience and not experience. The key to the Bible truth must always be first. Then comes the experience in the application of the truths you see friends. Truth never varies but unfortunately experience may and when experience is made the basis for doctrine. We are led into endless confusion. This is one reason why there are so many different views about sanctification. Even in the ranks of evangelical Christians some think that sanctification is a definite and specific second work of grace whereby the saved person surrenders to the Lord and experiences such uprooting and renewal of the sin nature that he no longer has any inward disposition to sin.

On the other hand there are those who will not accept that teaching. But instead they believe that sanctification is a constant struggle to improve and refine the sin nature. Until that sin Nature is finally brought to perfection they like to express themselves in the chorus that we so frequently sing let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me all his wonderful passion and purity oh thou spirit divine all my nature refined till the beauty of Jesus be seen in me even some otherwise well

taught believers will use this chorus in spite of the fact that the Bible teaches that the new nature does not need refining and the old nature certainly cannot be refined friends if you're going to sing this chorus. I'd like to suggest a little change. I'd like you to sing it this way.

Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me all his wonderful passion and purity all thou spirit divine fill this temple of thine till the beauty of Jesus be seen in me that would be a whole lot better than asking the spirit to refine that nature surely every thinking believer will agree that it would be very unfair to discard a word simply because it has fallen into bad company simply because it has been so much misunderstood and abused. The Bible certainly leaves no doubt about God's feeling with reference to Sanctification for first Thessalonians Chapter 4 Verse 3 very clearly says for this is the will of God even your sanctification as First Thessalonians 4:3 This is the will of God even your sanctification when the born again believer faces this statement He quickly realizes that here is something God requires of him and he would be wise indeed to discover just exactly what God expects of him. We asked then what does the Bible mean by its reference to sanctification. Let us consider first of all the origin of the word itself. The careful Bible student knows that in our English Bible there are three words which are translations of words derived from the same root. This is true of both the Hebrew of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New Testament in both testaments the words sanctify holy and Saint with their various forms of course come from the same root word. Thus in arriving at the proper understanding of the word sanctification consideration must be given not only to those passages where sanctification occurs but also to those references where the words holy and Saint are used.

Sometimes these different words from the same root word are found together as for instance in Leviticus chapter 21 verse 8 thou shalt sanctify him that is referring to the priest thou shalt sanctify him. There you have the word sanctify for he offers the bread of thy God he shall be holy unto thee for I the Lord which sanctified you am holy both the word sanctify occurring twice and the word holy also occurring twice come from the same Hebrew root thus showing the identity of meaning. Scholarship is agreed that the primary meaning of the root words in both languages is that very simply of separation. Thus that which is sanctified or made holy is fundamentally that which is separated so much now then for the origin of the word. Let us consider briefly the usage of the word. There is a great body of biblical references which establish beyond question that the word sanctify is used to indicate a setting apart for a very definite purpose. I want you to take your Bible now as we're going to turn to a number of passages if you don't have your Bible handy perhaps you have paper and pencil handy and can just jot these down.

That might be the better thing to do. So if you have your Bible you might you might miss one and this way you'll get them all down and then you can go back and check your references later. Here is the record then that I want you to have first of all. Genesis 2:3 Genesis 2:3. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it. Now I want you to notice that this verse is reminding us that a day is sanctified that is a day is set apart. That was in Genesis 2:3 where we have the sanctification or the setting a part of a day.

The next references Exodus chapter 19 verse twenty three Exodus nineteen twenty three and Moses said unto the Lord the people cannot come up to Mount Sinai for thou charges saying set

bounds about the Mount and sanctify it. Now did you get that set bounds or limitations boundaries if you please? A fence about the mound and sanctify it. Here we see then from Exodus nineteen twenty three that a mountain is sanctified that is a mountain is set apart for a very definite purpose also now in the book of Exodus but this time in Chapter forty Exodus forty verses 9, 10, and 11 the fortieth chapter of Exodus versus 9 10 and 11 and thou shalt take the anointing oil and anoint the Tabernacle and all that is there in and shalt hallow it and all the vessels thereof and it shall be holy and thou shalt anoint the altar of the burnt offering and all his vessels and sanctify the altar and it shall be an altar most holy and thou shalt anoint the labor and his foot and sanctify it.

Now these verses are reminding us that the tabernacle furnishings are sanctified that is they are set apart for a specific purpose. Our next reference is found in the book of Exodus again. Also in Chapter 40. But this time Verse 13 Exodus chapter 40 and the 13th verse and thou shall put upon Aaron the holy garments and anoint him and sanctify him that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. That is what the Lord said about Aaron the high priest. So Exodus Chapter 40 Verse 13 is telling us that Aaron is sanctified for the priest's office. That is he is set apart for this particular purpose of being a priest. Our next reference is found in the Book of Leviticus Leviticus chapter 27 verse 14 Leviticus 27 verse 14. And when a man shall sanctify his house to be holy unto the Lord then the priest shall estimate whether it be good or bad as the priest shall estimate so shall it stand. So here we discover that Leviticus 27:14 is telling us that a house is sanctified unto the Lord. That is the House is set apart for this particular purpose. Our sixth reference is found in Leviticus chapter 27 verses 16 and 17 Leviticus 27 versus 16 and 17.

And if a man shall sanctify under the Lord some part of a field of his possession then thy estimation shall be according to the seed thereof. And Homer of barley seed shall be valued at 50 shekels of silver. Now listen to this and if he sanctify his field after the jubilee according to thy estimation it shall stand. Did you get that? If he shall sanctify his field. So here we learn from Exodus from Leviticus I beg your pardon. Leviticus chapter twenty seven versus 16 and 17. That a field is sanctified unto the Lord. That is the field is set apart. Our seventh reference now is found in the Book of Numbers. Chapter 8 verse 17 numbers 8:17. For all the first born of the children of Israel are mine. Both man and beast on the day that I smote every first born in the land of Egypt. I sanctified them for myself. Now this is the Lord speaking and he is speaking about the first born of man and beast and he says I sanctified them for myself.

So from numbers 8:17 we learned that the first born of man and beast are sanctified for the Lord set apart for a particular purpose for our eighth reference. We turn to the prophecy of Jeremiah Jeremiah. Chapter 1 verses 4 and 5. Jeremiah 1 verses 4 and 5. Then the word of the Lord came unto me saying before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee and before thou came this forth out of the womb I sanctified thee and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. So here we learn that Jeremiah the weeping Prophet is sanctified even before his birth. The Lord set this man apart for himself. Our ninth reference is found in the New Testament First Corinthians chapter 7 verse 14 First Corinthians 7:14 for the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband. Else were your children unclean. But now are they holy the unbelieving partner has been brought outwardly into a new relationship to God through the believing partner so that even the children are said to be in a new relationship under the law.

Such a situation would have meant the putting away of the partner and also of the children but under grace the situation is different.

New outward relationships are established a new position is occupied they are set apart. That doesn't mean that they're any better than any other children. It means that the children of these parents are set apart. Now what is true of the word sanctification is also true of the word holy. In Exodus 19 verse 6 for instance Exodus 19:6. We have the word holy and it means exactly the same thing as sanctification or sanctify. Exodus 19:6 says And Yee shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and holy nation. Here we are told that the nation Israel is holy that is set apart for the Lord in second Peter. Chapter 1 verse 18. Second people. Peter 1:18. And the voice which came from heaven. We heard when we were with him in the holy mount. Here we are reminded that a mountain is holy. That is the mountain is set apart. In second Peter one twenty one. We read this for the prophecy came not an old time by the will of men but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

Holy men of God the men who wrote the Bible are called holy but you know as well as I do that they had much imperfection about them. Think of the failures of Moses of David and of Peter. These men certainly were not sinless and yet the word of God says they were holy. Meaning that they were set apart for their specific task of writing the scriptures. I want you to notice that in all of these passages there is certainly no thought of any change in moral character or quality of life. There is no necessary purification involved that which is set apart might have much imperfection but it is said to be sanctified. It is said to be holy. You see the sanctification referred to is simply

a matter of relationship a matter of position. For instance I might take a book from my library shelf and place it on my desk for use in study.

That book is sanctified. Its position has been changed. It is on the desk not on the shelf. Its relationship to the other books and to me has been changed. The character of the book itself has not changed the torn binding the marked page. These will remain unchanged but it is sanctified. That is it is set apart for a particular purpose. We have seen from these passages that some things which are totally incapable of sin are said to be sanctified. A house a mountain a day. A vessel a field. These things cannot sin. These things have no moral sense yet they can be sanctified they can be set apart. You see friends it is not a question of sinlessness.

It is not a matter of moral quality. It is a matter of relationship. It is not purification it is position. Those who insist that sanctification is a matter of purification always have a real problem with a statement that came from the lips of our Lord himself. Ask the so-called holiness people this question Did Christ need sanctification invariably they answer no because in their thinking sanctification is the second blessing which when you receive it will deliver you from all inbred sin. And of course they know that Christ was without sin nature. But listen it was this sinless son of God who said and for their sakes. I sanctify myself that they also might be sanctified through the truth that's in John 17:19 our Lord very clearly says that he sanctified himself meaning that he sets himself apart for a particular purpose. That believers might be set apart for God with reference to the truth. This idea of sanctification as a setting apart for a definite purpose is made quite emphatic when we realize that the Bible even refers to something being sanctified for a bad purpose.

It is really an unusual usage all right. But it is there just the same. In Isaiah 66 verse 17 we read Isaiah 66:17 they that sanctify themselves and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst and friends I take that to be a possible reference to some pagan practice. We continue now the quotation from the verse eating swine's flesh and the abomination and the mouse shall be consumed together saith the Lord they that sanctify themselves. It is quite evident that there is no thought of moral purification here but instead something altogether wrong. Thus we see that sanctification is a setting apart for a particular purpose and that purpose is usually God ward. Times are set apart places are set apart inanimate things are set apart persons are set apart such sanctification of course is not always final and may need repeating as in the case of Israel Exodus 19:14 records that Moses went down from the Mount unto the people and sanctified the people but a few days later they committed adultery immorality idolatry. So you see that there was no necessary thought of finality about it. Now from this brief survey today enough I think has been seen to establish three great truths regarding the meaning of sanctification.

It does not necessarily indicate perfection of moral character. That's the first thing. Secondly it does not necessarily indicate a final action or state. Thirdly it does positively indicate a separation unto God for the use that he intends that which is set apart may or may not be purified. With this teaching then before us we can better understand the reference to the believer as a sanctified one and a saint and the exhortation to be holy. And without blame God has separated us from our sins unto himself and he desires us to exhibit this fact in our daily walk. He has classified us as apart one's separated ones sanctified ones I wonder are we giving the evidence of it in a close walk with the Lord in a walk of separation from sin set apart for Jesus is

not this enough though the desert prospect open wild and rough set apart for his delight chosen for his holy pleasure sealed to be his special treasure could we choose a nobler joy. And would we if we might know that the Lord has set apart him that is godly for himself.

Let us pray we thank the our father for the clarity of this biblical revelation concerning sanctification. And we do ask the that the teaching of thy word may bring every listener to right belief and lead to write behavior in the precious name of the Lord Jesus Christ. We ask it amen. And now friends we must bid you goodbye for the present. May the joy of the Lord always be your strength as you keep looking up.