
The Thessalonian Epistles 17

Supplication for Sanctification

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

As this epistle comes to a close, a prayer for doctrinal and practical sanctification, especially as it relates to the content of this epistle, is offered up on behalf of the church at Thessalonica. After instruction there should follow intercession as the Spirit and the Scriptures pattern here for us. If not, we but quench the Spirit and our labor is vain if we do not ask God to bless the preaching of the Word. It is a fine example to the Thessalonian church to show them that we must totally depend upon God for our every need. Thus, we should pray for one another in this regard.

Supplication for Sanctification should be the top of the prayers we should offer for the glory of God, the souls of others, and our own soul. Yet, because it involves radical plucking out of right eyes and cutting off right hands if they offend us, or the painful cutting out of some cancerous sin, we seek to avoid pain at all costs.

Sanctification is a much misunderstood principle. Some speak of the need of a second work of grace such as being baptized with the Holy Spirit that will ensure total eradication of sin and thus result in sinless perfection or sanctification. Others refer to a long list of works to produce sanctification.

While I was stationed in Ft. Riley, KS, there was a Pentecostal group that required that the men, especially, wore long sleeve shirts only, in order to be sanctified.

The word *sanctification*, *αγιασμος* *hagiasmos* *hag-ee-as-mos*, simply means the act of setting apart. In terms of religion, it refers to a person or object set apart for holy, sacred religious purposes unto God that results in additional holiness, when applied to the person. It could refer to one's calling into the ministry, to be a deacon, etc...or could denote one's salvation, and all that word entails.

There are essentially three categories of sanctification: positional sanctification which describes our permanent

standing before God in our election of grace, regeneration, and atonement (**Hebrews 10:10**).

Secondly, progressive or experiential sanctification which involves our present sanctification process.

Thirdly, there is future or eternal sanctification which refers to our perfect, entire, and everlasting sanctification in glory.

As we consider this *Supplication for Sanctification*, we want to first consider, *The Source of our Sanctification*; second, *The Scope of our Sanctification*; finally, *The Seal of our Sanctification*.

I. The Source of our Sanctification

- A.** It is not in us to sanctify ourselves unto God properly. Our wills, our flesh, our mind, our souls, nor any part or combination of parts of our being are sufficient to sanctify us to God aright, even if we are converted.
- B.** No system or program of men or even angels can produce the setting apart unto God that is necessary for giving glory to the Most High God as we ought, nor to be of true benefit to others or even ourselves.
- C.** Looking at **Colossians 1:28-29** *Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: 29 Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.* Also, in **Philippians 2:12-13** *Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.* We see the mystery of human effort and God's power in our sanctification. We are to yield ourselves

to God and diligently pursue holiness with a humble dependence upon God.

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23 ¶ *And the very God of peace sanctify you,* this particular benediction is often used in the Pauline epistles, not vain repetition. We often consider such a pastoral blessing as common and merely traditional, and maybe we've heard it given without genuine expression. It is a shame because both are far from the original intent and implication of this verse.

1. ***And the very God of peace,*** the One Who reconciled you in the first place, and made peace through the blood of the cross, Who will see to it that He will be there to sanctify you.

2. ***sanctify you,*** without the God of peace, there will be no sanctification. Until we have been reconciled unto God through the blood of Christ, there is no peace, but we are at war and rebellion against God. No peace, no sanctification. No sanctification, no peace. For the Christian at the time of disobedience, and for the wicked, period.

3. It is first by the power of God that we are sanctified positionally; then, we are progressively sanctified through the divinely and sovereignly appointed means of God's grace in prayer, in the study of God's Word, and the obedience to God's Word.

II. The Scope of our Sanctification

A. Many Christians will agree that God sanctifies us, but the scope in which He does so is where the disagreements begin.



wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There is no part in time, nor any part of our being that is not covered in this supplication for sanctification.



Wholly; to be only partly sanctified leaves open the door for sin to enter in. This word, ***wholly***, is the Greek word ολοτελης holoteles hol-ot-el-ace', meaning, perfect, complete in all respects. We should not be satisfied with being partially sanctified in our sojourn in this life on earth, but ever-striving to be made conformable to the image of Christ our Saviour.



And pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless, here we have come to the dichotomist (two parts, body and the soul/spirit) versus the trichotomist (three parts, body, soul, and spirit) views as man's being.



Dichotomist: They believe that man is composed of non-material and material which both views would affirm. They say that the soul and spirit are synonymous terms that are used interchangeably.



Trichotomist: This view is confirmed by ***Hebrews 4:12 For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of***

the thoughts and intents of the heart. This indicates that the distinction is there, but difficult to discern. There is no need that we put these entities of our being into watertight compartments.

(1) The word ***spirit***, πνευμα pneuma pnyoo'-mah, refers to the highest part of our being that enables us to know and communicate with God Who is Spirit, and worship Him in spirit and in truth. In the fall, man, as a spiritual being was separated from God and spiritual death resulted. The impartation of a new spiritual nature in the new birth is necessary so that man can again have direct communion with God.

(2) The Greek word, ψυχη psuche psoo-khay', refers to and is translated, the mind, ***soul***, or heart, and involves our personality. It derives its information for the body and has an awareness of the spiritual and the reality of God, but cannot discern spiritual things aright, until made spiritually alive through the Holy Spirit.

(3) The word ***body***, σωμα soma so'-mah is the physical body, a psycho-somatic illness is one that is imagined in the mind that there is something wrong with the body.

(4) This sanctification cannot refer to the Holy Spirit in the believer for such a prayer for sanctification for the Holy Spirit would be sacrilegious.

ⓔ) Holochotomist: my own coined word (holo-Greek, meaning entire, whole, complete, e.g., holograph—a document entirely handwritten by its author; especially a manuscript, a letter, or an unwitnessed will.) A holochotomist, then is one who look at this passage and say that this prayer is for our entire being, for every fiber of our being to be sanctified.

ⓓ) The word, **blameless**, ἀμεμπτως amemptos am-emp'-toce, this is the same word found inscribed on the tombs of those in ancient Thessalonica.

Ⓩ) **Unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.** This prayer goes from their present progress sanctification unto their eternal and ultimate sanctification. We need such sanctification each and every split second of every day unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

III. The Seal of our Sanctification

A. The classic hymn, *Great is Thy Faithfulness*, come to mind here.

B. **24 Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.** This transcends from eternity past to eternity future, the call originated in election and is culminated in glorification.

1. Faithful is He that calleth you, aren't you glad it doesn't depend on our faithfulness? But, because God is faithful, there will most certainly be some faithfulness evident in our lives,... God will see to it.

2. Who also will do it. Not only is God able, and not only is He faithful to call us, He is faithful to make His call effectual unto salvation all the way unto glorification. There will be growth and progress or such a profession of faith is spurious and not genuine.

Pests—bugs and rodents—even the thought of them makes our skin crawl. But pests find their way into everyone's home at one time or another. The question is, do we hate these pests enough to do what it takes to get rid of them?

One survey says, that depends on what sort of pest is in the house. Researchers have found that people will dish out their hard earned money for an exterminator—meaning sin is a pest that we should hate so much that we would gladly have the Holy Spirit and the Word of God, exterminate it, unto the next wave of pests come. Let us not be content to harbor or welcome any pest or sin.

As a matter of fact, in Florida, it is necessary to spray for pests year round, especially in some environments, so we must have our Heavenly Exterminator to rid us of sin in our lives until the return of Christ.

Philippians 1:6 Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.
