

### Holiness Series – Lesson 2

By Joshua Nielsen

The primary focus of the Christian life once you are saved should be on sanctification to the Lord. What does sanctification mean? It means to be consecrated. And what does it mean to be consecrated? It means to be holy, which literally means to be “set apart”. The picture of its meaning portrays being divorced from the world, being severed from the sinful flesh and our old way of life (the way of the World), and being set apart (sanctified) unto Jesus for him exclusively. When Esther was brought into the King’s palace from off of the streets to perform before him, to be his potential future wife, she had to clean herself up before she could even present herself before the King. And once she was accepted as his wife and queen she would never have wanted to go back to that life of women on the streets. She probably said, “I’d gladly give up that life on the streets for this” because she knew she would have intimacy with the King in the bed chamber. Similarly we are to clean ourselves up as Christ’s bride (having “made herself ready” – **Revelations 19:7**), holy (sanctified) and acceptable unto him, “*Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own*”

#### **(1 Corinthians 6:19)**

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We are to sanctify (cleanse) ourselves for God, thus the Scripture says, “*Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God*”

#### **(2 Corinthians 7:1)**

. This is our mandate as Christians, to constantly grow and change ourselves from our old ways by the power that God gives us through his Holy Spirit. We cannot lead a lukewarm, sin filled, grace-blanketed life. Grace is not given primarily to cover over our sins when we fail to attain God’s perfect standard, rather grace empowers us to

*live*

a life that will bring us closer to the goal of “perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” Remember from the first lesson that Paul earnestly sought after this goal, pressing toward the mark

#### **(Philippians**

**3:14**

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, in pursuit of holiness and sanctification, “  
*without which  
no one  
will see the Lord*”

### **(Hebrews**

**12:14**

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Paul said this concerning the empowering nature of grace, “*And He [God] has said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’ Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me”*

### **(2 Corinthians 12:9)**

. The power of Christ is the power that his blood gives us (because of its atoning nature) by grace, through the Holy Spirit living in us, to live the sinless life that God offers us through Jesus’ blood. We will fail sometimes but God’s grace also functions as mercy, and because of Jesus’ shed blood he will not impute sin to us, and not count it against us. But Paul gives the most emphatic counter-statement to any false implications that might be drawn from the nature of God’s amazing and merciful grace given to us: “

*What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it*”

### **(Romans 6:1-2)**

? Grace is by no means an excuse to sin, in fact the opposite: it is an incentive and empowerment to trample sin under your feet, to press toward the mark in sanctification (as spoken of in the first lesson).

Dare I also mention that if one repetitively lives a life of sin after one claims to have been saved then perhaps they were never saved in the first place, but rather have merely tricked themselves into having a false form of belief as James chapter 2 mentions. This is why the Bible exhorts us, “ *Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you-- unless indeed you fail the test*”

### **(2 Corinthians 13:5)**

? Either that or perhaps they are caught in a stronghold of sin which they need to ask God to help them demolish in their life in order to progress in their Christian walk. True and steadfast believers though will strive to sanctify themselves unto the Lord, but this is by no means a simple task that is automatic. But true, persevering faith which brings about salvation will always work itself out with fear and trembling

### **(Philippians**

**2:12**

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if your heart is sincere, because the inward condition of the heart will always work itself into an outward manifestation or expression.

If the heart, which is the soil for the Word of God to grow in, took the news of Jesus Christ

on insincere grounds, not followed by self-sacrificial repentance and a life change, then it will be like the seed that was sown on stony ground of which Jesus said, “ *this is the man who hears the word, and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away* ” (Matthew

**13:20-21)**

Another possibility is that a person may be saved yet is unfruitful and does not sanctify themselves fully but is trapped because of some stronghold in their life. This would be comparable to the seed that grew up among thorns and was choked. Of this type of person Jesus said, “ *This is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful* ” (Matthew **13**

**:22**

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. The Bible has a grave pronouncement for such people, though they will be saved: “ *Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss*

*; but he himself*

*shall be saved*

*, yet so*

*as through fire*

”

**(1 Corinthians**

**3:12**

**-15)**

. But the seed (the Word) that falls on good soil (on a ready and sincere heart – as it did Mary, Martha’s sister) it will yield fruit, “ *some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty*” (Matthew **13:23**)

. They will bear good fruit that lasts (the gold, silver, and precious stones of 1 Corinthians 3:12

). Yet even here Jesus shows that there will be different degrees of reaping among believers according to how each live their life and apply God’s power in their life. This is where sanctification comes in. It would be a shame to waste the opportunity that this great salvation has provided us with, and very painful to suffer loss (through fire) for being unfruitful, in light of the freely bestowed grace that God offers to all of

us to live the Christian life with abundance and excellence. God desires to bless us as we live out our Christian life; he is not some harsh task master demanding the impossible. The only matter is the state of our heart before Him, which pleases Him most in humble submission and obedience, striving for holiness despite even disappointments or previous failure. God empowers us by his grace to continue on and persevere as we sanctify ourselves to be a spotless bride before God

**(2 Peter**

**3:14**

**; Jude 24; Revelation 19:7, 21:2)**

. Therefore we are to rejoice in God and his providence, “*Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice*” **(Philippians 4:4)!**

For any of our daily anxieties that we may have or rough times that we go through in our Christian life the Bible exhorts us, saying, “

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God*

”

**(Philippians 4:6)**

. God can and will help us if we truly seek to live a holy life, and he even understands when we are troubled and when we stumble. Even in such rough times we are told by James to rejoice (count it all joy) because “

*the testing of your faith produces endurance*

”

**(James 1:2-3)**

. So we are to rejoice in all circumstances because his grace is sufficient for us

**(2 Corinthians 12:9)**

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The Bible though goes beyond just these general exhortations and encouragements, and addresses very practical and specific matters with which we struggle in this life, which we need to stay away from and can overcome by living in holiness by God’s empowering grace. This is at the heart of sanctification to the Lord, and how it is accomplished. Those matters will be covered in depth in the next lesson but I will leave you off with these verses:

“*And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed*

”

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**(2 Corinthians 9:8)**

“*Therefore, if a man cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work*

”

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**(2 Timothy 2:21)**

“*Now unto him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen*

”

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**(Jude 24-25)**

