

## Study 0036

### Scripture Text: 2 Thessalonians 2:13-15

We ended our last study, stating that there are two sides to sanctification: on one side is getting rid of sin/the separation from sinful living; and, on the other side is the making of a person holy/enabling him to obey God and His word. In other words, sanctification is not just about being holy and living holy, but it is also about being separated from sin and from sinful living. The goal of sanctification is to make a person to be like Christ by; getting rid of sin in his life; bringing him to the place where he is separated from sinful living; making him holy; enabling him to obey God and His word; making him able to serve God acceptably; and, as may be required from time to time, purging and purifying him. In fulfilling the goal of sanctification, there are two key players involved: The Godhead on one hand, and the believer in Christ on the other hand. Furthermore, sanctification takes place at two levels: the level of grace, and the level of works. In this study, we shall focus on how we can be sanctified by grace, and in the next study, we shall consider sanctification by works. May the Holy Spirit help us, in Jesus' name, Amen.

### Sanctification By Grace

Something is said to be a work of grace when it is something done by the Godhead on behalf of man, and one which man does not merit and which cannot be obtained by man's effort. Hence, being paid an appropriate salary is not considered a work or act of grace; but when you receive a reward for doing nothing, then it is a work or act of grace, a gift (of grace), or simply grace (**Romans 4:4-5; 6:23**). Salvation, for instance, is a work of grace because, it does not come to any man by reason of effort (**John 6:44, 64-65**) but by faith, which itself is a gift from God (**Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:4-7**). So, when we speak of sanctification by grace, we are talking about what God does to make us sanctified without any input from us other than our yielding to Him. Indeed, sanctification is commonly known as the second work of grace; salvation, being the first.

Sanctification begins from the time the believer is born again. The bible tells us that we are sanctified through the finished work of Christ at Calvary (**1 Corinthians 1:30; Ephesians 5:25-27; Hebrews 2:11; 10:14; 9:14**). This is the initial work of sanctification which God (**Jude 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:23**) does through Christ in the believer. By reason of the finished work, a person who just got born again is cleansed from sin and purged of sin (**Hebrews 1:3; 9:12-14; 10:1-10**). He is sanctified or separated from uncleanness and impurities, and set apart unto God (**1 Corinthians 6:9-11**). Sanctification puts the believer in a position where he can receive the Holy Spirit into his life; for the Holy Spirit cannot live within a person who is unclean and still living in sin (**2 Corinthians 6:14-16; 1 Corinthians 6:15-19**). The deposit of the Holy Spirit within the believer in Christ (**Ephesians 1:13-14; 2 Corinthians 1:22**) is what we referred to as, 'the indwelling of the Holy Spirit' or "the Holy Spirit within" during our study of Holy Spirit baptism (*Study 0019*). The indwelling of the Holy Spirit plays a very crucial role in the sanctification of the believer beyond the initial sanctification (**Ezekiel 36:25-27**).

The initial work of sanctification is pretty much like surgery; and though it is purely a work of grace, before its benefits can be appropriated by the believer in Christ, he must submit to God completely and yield to His operation in his life. In surgery, before a patient can be operated upon, his permission is first sought, and must be obtained otherwise no surgery can be performed. However, it is only when the patient grants permission to the surgeon that he can be put to sleep and all the work of removing/repairing/replacing of body parts can be

performed. Habits, attitudes, and the sinful nature, are things which God needs to remove from our lives before we can be in a position to live the Christian life, and this work is what is done in the initial stages of sanctification through the finished work of Christ. For the work of grace to be effected and effective, we must willingly submit ourselves to God and allow Him to do what He wants to do in us. Our refusal to allow God have His way holds grave consequences for our lives in that we cannot obey God, we cannot become like Jesus Christ, we cannot serve God acceptably, and, we will not experience the ultimate salvation at the end of the age (**Romans 8:1-32**).

Getting rid of sin in the believer's life and making him holy, is what the initial work of sanctification is all about, and, it prepares him for further sanctification (**1 Peter 1:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:13**).

### **Conclusion**

It was for the purpose of sanctification that the Holy Spirit came to indwell man, and it was for the purpose of service that He came upon the born again Christian! Before a believer's service can truly be acceptable to God, he must have the indwelling Holy Spirit at work within him. Before the Holy Spirit can indwell a person, he must first be cleansed from sin or separated from past sins; which is what happens at salvation, and is the initial work of sanctification. Also, before a person can offer acceptable service unto God, he must first be sanctified not only by grace, but also by works. If a believer's service is to be continually acceptable to God, he must continually remain sanctified. Sanctification is therefore not just the initial work of grace, but it is also a continuous work of grace, and it requires cooperation between the believer in Christ, and the Holy Spirit who indwells him (**Genesis 17:1; 15:6**).

### **EXERCISE**

Please answer true or false to the statements below.

1. Sanctification is the very first work of grace; salvation being the second.
2. The goal of sanctification is to make man Christ-like.
3. Two key players required to achieve the goal of sanctification are, the Godhead and the person to be sanctified.
4. Sanctification has two sides but takes place at many levels.
5. Sanctification is both by grace, and by effort.
6. Sanctification by grace does not require input from a person other than his submission to God.
7. The initial sanctification is based on the finished work of Christ.
8. Initial sanctification makes us ready for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.
9. Sanctification and Holy Spirit baptism are the same thing.
10. Holy Spirit baptism is essential for us to be able to serve God.
11. Sanctification is essential for us to be able to serve God acceptably.
12. Initial sanctification gets us ready for service.
13. Sanctification requires cooperation with the person being sanctified; otherwise it will be null and void.