

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

SANCTIFICATION

IN LIFE

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GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS, HOLINESS, AND GLORY

Paul was an excellent writer, and his thought was very deep. In the book of Romans Paul first covers the subject of condemnation and then proceeds to cover justification, sanctification, and glorification. As God deals with us, He always cares for three of His divine attributes—His righteousness, holiness, and glory. God is righteous, God is holy, and God is a God of glory. Righteousness is related to God's acts, to His ways, actions, and activities. Everything God does is righteous. Holiness is God's nature. Holiness is not a matter of action, but of nature. As the nature of a table is wood and the nature of a book is paper, so the nature of God is holiness. God's acts are righteous, and His nature is holiness. What is glory? Glory is God Himself expressed. When God is expressed, that is glory. Three of the sections in Romans—justification, sanctification, and glorification—were composed according to these three attributes of God:

justification according to God's righteousness, sanctification according to God's holiness, and glorification according to God's glory.

In the first stage of God's salvation we participate in the righteousness of God. This is justification in which we gain God's righteousness. In the second stage we are in the process of sanctification, a process in which God works His divine nature into us. God's righteousness is reckoned to us in justification, but it is not wrought into us. However, in God's sanctification His holiness is wrought into our being. Although we have obtained and participated in God's righteousness outwardly, God's holiness needs to be wrought into us inwardly. The second stage of God's salvation is that He works His holy nature into our being.

In order to accomplish this, God has been processed into the available Spirit of life (8:2). Before being processed He was not available to perform this subjective work of sanctification. Before He was processed He was able to create the world, but He was unable to enter into His creature. Although He could do many things outside of us, He could not come into us until He had passed through the complete process of incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection. Since

being processed, He has become and still is the available Spirit of life. Now, like the air for breathing ([John 20:22](#)), it is so easy for Him to enter into us. As the available Spirit of life, God has come into our spirit, making it life. Since Christ, the life-giving Spirit, is in us, our spirit is life because of righteousness ([8:10](#)). The Lord has made our spirit life by regeneration. Now, as the Spirit of life in our spirit, He is spreading Himself from our spirit into our soul—into our mind, emotion, and will. Eventually, He will even expand into our mortal body. In such a way God saturates us with Himself. This saturation is called sanctification. Through this saturation God works Himself with His holy nature into our entire being, into our spirit, soul, and body ([1 Thes. 5:23](#)). Thus, our whole being will be fully permeated, sanctified, with His holy nature. We are presently undergoing this process of sanctification, the second stage of God's salvation.

In the next stage we will be raptured and glorified. That will be the redemption of our body. Glorification means to transfigure the body of our humiliation into a glorious body ([Phil. 3:21](#)). At that time we will be completely and absolutely brought into God Himself as our glory. Then we will be fully glorified.

The first stage of God's salvation, justification, takes care of our spirit; the second stage, sanctification, mainly deals with our soul, with a slight amount of saturation in our body; and the third stage, glorification, concerns our physical body. In [Romans 8:10](#) Paul says that if Christ is in us, our spirit is life because of righteousness, meaning that in God's justification we have gained righteousness. Through this righteousness our spirit has been made alive and actually becomes life. However, there is not yet the divine life in our soul. Therefore, we need to cooperate with the indwelling Christ by setting our mind upon the spirit, enabling the Spirit of life to saturate our mind with Himself. Then our mind will be life. If we continue to cooperate, this saturating and spreading One will spread Himself from our spirit even into our mortal body. Then we only need to wait for the time when our body will be brought into His glory. That will be our glorification.

Now we can understand why Paul wrote Romans in the order that he did, with justification first, followed by sanctification and glorification. These three sections cover the three stages of complete salvation and correspond to the three parts of our being. In justification our

spirit is made alive, in sanctification our soul is made life, and in glorification even our body will be full of life. When this process is completed, we will not only be justified and sanctified, but also glorified. Presently we are in the process of sanctification.

From the beginning of the book of Romans through 8:13 two main things are covered: justification and sanctification. In justification God gives us His righteousness, which is Christ Himself. God has made Christ righteousness to us. However, this is objective, for righteousness is Christ as our covering. Hence, righteousness is objective, like a roof that covers us. However, in the second stage, sanctification, God is working Christ into us to make Him our sanctification subjectively. Our whole being will be permeated with the holy nature of God. This is sanctification in life.

LIFE AND SANCTIFICATION IN ROMANS

In the first seven and one-half chapters of Romans the word life is used many times. This life is mainly for sanctification. It is by this life that Christ permeates us, saturates us, and infuses the holy nature of God into us, making us

holy dispositionally. In other books of the Bible we find mention of sanctification by the blood and are told that the blood of Christ has sanctified us ([Heb. 13:12](#)). However, we do not find this aspect of sanctification in the book of Romans. In Romans we do not have objective sanctification by the blood, but subjective sanctification in life. We need to read and consider several verses which mention this matter of life.

In [1:4](#) Paul speaks of Christ, saying that He “was designated the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness out of the resurrection of the dead.” The “Spirit of holiness” here is in contrast with the “flesh” in [1:3](#). As the flesh in [1:3](#) refers to the human essence of Christ, so the Spirit in this verse refers not to the Person of the Holy Spirit, but to the divine essence of Christ, which is “the fullness of the Godhead” ([Col. 2:9](#)). This divine essence of Christ, being God the Spirit Himself ([John 4:24](#)), is of holiness, full of the nature and quality of being holy. Christ has two natures: the human and the divine. With each nature there is an essence. The essence of His human nature, His humanity, is flesh; the essence of His divinity is the Spirit of holiness. Thus, the Spirit of holiness

here is the divine essence of Christ's Person. This essence is holiness.

The last part of 1:17 declares, “But the just shall live by faith.” “Shall live” may be translated as “shall have life and live.” For what purpose shall we have life? Mainly that we might be sanctified. Although we have been justified, we still need to have life that we might be sanctified, that is, have God’s holy nature wrought into our being. This is sanctification.

In 5:10 Paul says that “we shall be saved in His life.” This saving in His life is not for justification; that has already been obtained by His death. Although we have received justification by Christ’s death, we need to be sanctified in His saving life.

Romans 5:17 speaks of reigning in life. Paul says, “Those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.” We have received righteousness objectively, but we do not yet have holiness subjectively. We need to reign in life that we may have subjective holiness for our sanctification. Therefore, life in this verse is for a further stage of God’s salvation, mainly that of sanctification.

In 5:21 Paul says that “grace might reign

through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Grace reigns through righteousness unto life eternal for what purpose? Since this verse is in the section on sanctification, we must say that grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life mainly for sanctification.

Romans 6:4 says that “as Christ was raised from among the dead through the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” Walking in newness of life is not for justification; it is for sanctification, as indicated in [verses 19](#) and [22](#) by the phrase “unto sanctification.” Then [6:5](#) reads, “For if we have grown together with Him in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection.” This verse speaks of growing, and growing is a matter of life. We have grown together with Christ in the likeness of His death, and now we are growing with Him in the likeness of His resurrection, that is, “in newness of life.” This growing with Christ in newness of life is also mainly for sanctification.

When we preach the gospel to people in an adequate and living way, the living Christ will be transfused into them. Not only will people receive the ability to believe, but also through believing they will receive the seed of life. As we

baptize new converts, in that baptism the seed of life within them grows together with Christ. This is precisely Paul’s meaning in 6:5. As we baptize each new convert, the seed of life which has been sown into him grows together with Christ in the likeness of His death, that is, “in baptism.” Afterward, the new convert must grow together with Christ in the likeness of His resurrection, that is, “in newness of life.” Therefore, from the time that Christ is sown into a new convert he must grow in life. This growth is not for justification; it is mainly for sanctification.

Now we need to read 6:11: “So also reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.” We may render the latter part of this verse as “living to God in Christ Jesus.” We must reckon ourselves in Christ as living to God. This means that, after being justified, we, then, are living for sanctification.

Romans 6:19 says to “present your members as slaves to righteousness unto sanctification.” As we have presented our members as slaves to uncleanness unto lawlessness, now we are required to present them as slaves to righteousness unto sanctification. Sanctification is not only a matter of position, that is, to be separated from a common, worldly position to a position for

God, as illustrated in [Matthew 23:17, 19](#) (where the gold is sanctified by the temple, and the gift by the altar, in changing their position), and in [1 Timothy 4:3-5](#) (where food is sanctified by the saints' prayer). Sanctification is also a matter of disposition, that is, being transformed from a natural disposition to a spiritual one, as mentioned in [Romans 12:2](#) and [2 Corinthians 3:18](#). This is a matter of a long process, beginning with regeneration ([1 Pet. 1:2-3](#); [Titus 3:5](#)), passing through the whole Christian life ([1 Thes. 4:3](#); [Heb. 12:14](#); [Eph. 5:26](#)), and reaching completion at the time of rapture, at the maturity of life ([1 Thes. 5:23](#)).

The Greek words, *hagios*, *hagiosune*, *hagiazo*, and *hagiasmos*, used in the book of Romans are of the same root, which fundamentally means separated, set apart. *Hagios* is translated holy in [1:2](#); [5:5](#); [7:12](#); [9:1](#); [11:16](#); [12:1](#); [14:17](#); [15:13](#), [16](#); [16:16](#), and saints in [1:7](#); [8:27](#); [12:13](#); [15:25](#), [26](#), [31](#); [16:15](#). *Hagiosune* is translated holiness in [1:4](#). *Hagiazo* is a verb used as a participle and is translated sanctified in [15:16](#). *Hagiasmos* is translated sanctification in [6:19](#), [22](#). Hence, holy means separated, set apart (to God). Saints means the separated ones, the ones set apart (to God). Holiness is the nature and quality of being holy.

Sanctification is the practical effect produced, the character and activity, and the resultant state of being sanctified (to God).

Now let us read 6:22: “But now, having been freed from sin and having been enslaved to God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end eternal life.” Here it does not say “fruit unto justification and the end the heavens.” It says “fruit unto sanctification, and the end eternal life,” referring to sanctification in life. Sanctification issues in the riches of life. It brings us into the enjoyment of the riches of the divine life.

Then 6:23 says, “The free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Eternal life as the free gift of God is given to us mainly to sanctify us, and sanctification brings us into the participation of the riches of this life.

Now we proceed to [chapter eight](#). Romans 8:2 declares, “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has freed me from the law of sin and of death.” The law of the Spirit of life has not freed us for justification; it has freed us mainly that we may be sanctified.

Romans 8:6 says that “the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.” The mind set on the spirit is life mainly for sanctification, for saturation in life with the holy nature of God.

Notice Romans 8:10: “And if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is life because of righteousness.” We need to pay attention to the words “though” and “yet”: if Christ is in us, “though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is life because of righteousness.” When Christ comes into us, our body is still dead because of sin. But, because we have obtained God’s righteousness, our spirit is life. This verse does not represent a further advance in our spiritual life; it is actually the beginning of our spiritual life. It refers to the time when we were justified and Christ came into us. At the time of our justification we obtained the righteousness of God, and Christ came into us. Although our body remained dead because of sin, our spirit became life because of the righteousness of God. In 8:11 we see a very significant “but.” “But if the Spirit of Him Who raised Jesus from among the dead dwells in you, He Who raised Christ Jesus from among the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit Who indwells you.” Once He has come into us, He needs to dwell, to make His home in us. If He is allowed to do this, He will give life to our mortal bodies. Our bodies which were dead will be made alive through the indwelling

Spirit. When 8:10 says that Christ is in us, it is referring to the first stage of our spiritual experience. When 8:11 speaks of the Spirit dwelling in us, it designates a further stage. As Christ comes into us, He enlivens our spirit and makes it life. But when Christ dwells in us, making His home in us, He enlivens our body, and saturates it with life. Remember that 8:10 refers to the initial stage of Christ's coming into us. The initial stage is that Christ comes into us, our spirit is life, and our body remains dead. However, if from that time we allow Christ to make His home in us, meaning that we allow Him to spread Himself into our mind, emotion, and will, He will impart Himself as life even to our body. At this time our body will be saturated with life mainly for sanctification.

Romans 8:13 continues, “For if you live according to flesh, you are about to die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the practices of the body, you will live.” If we put to death the practices of the body by the Spirit, we will live mainly for the purpose of sanctification, to be permeated thoroughly and fully with Christ. Verse 11 says that if the Spirit makes His home in us, He will impart life to our mortal bodies. Verse 13 says that if we put to death all the

practices of our body, we will live. This means that it requires our cooperation. Inwardly, we need to let Christ, the life-giving Spirit, make His home in our heart that He may impart life into our body. Outwardly, we need to put to death all the practices of our body that we may live. This is to apply the cross of Christ in a practical way to all the practices of our body. If we do this, we will live and enjoy Christ as life. We will enter into the riches of Christ as life. This life will then saturate our being with all that God is. It will permeate us with God's holy nature, and we will be sanctified. Paul even says in 15:16, "that the offering of the nations might be acceptable, having been sanctified in the Holy Spirit." The nations, the Gentiles, including many who were idol worshippers and sodomites, will be dispositionally sanctified with God's nature. This is sanctification in life. As we have seen, the words sanctification and life are used several times in this section on sanctification. We all have to see the relationship between them.

Paul's thought was very deep. Within Paul was the thought of God's righteousness, holiness, and glory. These divine attributes must be ours: God's righteousness must be our righteousness; His holiness must be our holiness; and His glory

must be our glory. Paul refers to these three things in [1 Corinthians 1:30](#), where he says that God has made Christ wisdom to us: both righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. (Redemption in [1 Corinthians 1:30](#) means glorification.) Thus, in [1 Corinthians 1:30](#) Paul covers these three things in one sentence, but in the book of Romans he takes eight chapters to expound them. [Romans 1 through 8](#) is an exposition of [1 Corinthians 1:30](#).

How can we have God's righteousness? In order to possess His righteousness four items are necessary—propitiation, redemption, justification, and reconciliation. These four words indicate God's work in imparting to us His righteousness. Thus, God did a great deal in order to grant us His righteousness; it was not an easy task. God had to accomplish propitiation, redemption, justification, and reconciliation.

After working objectively to give us His righteousness, God is now working subjectively to impart His holiness into us. God is going to transfuse and infuse His holy nature into our being. Thus, within our being we will have His holy, divine essence. We will be completely saturated and permeated with the holy nature of God. This is sanctification in the book of

Romans. Although sanctification does have a positional aspect, that is not the aspect we find in Romans. Sanctification in Romans is subjective and dispositional, for God's nature is being wrought into our nature. His nature will even be wrought into our disposition, changing our whole being.

GOD'S PURPOSE IN SANCTIFICATION

What is the purpose of this dispositional sanctification? The purpose is that God may produce many sons ([Rom. 8:29](#)). [John 1:12](#) tells us that we have become the children of God, that we have been born as children of God. Nevertheless, let me ask you a question: Do you believe that you actually look like a son of God? Whose son do you look like? Although some Christians want to argue with me doctrinally, prefer to inquire into what kind of persons they are. Yes, all real Christians have been born as children of God, but they need to grow into sanctification that they may look like the sons of God. So many genuine Christians, after being regenerated to be the children of God, continue to live in a worldly way. They need to be sanctified in the divine life that they may grow into the maturity of the divine sonship.

The Lord has brought us into His recovery, and His recovery is for reality and practicality. May we look to the Lord for His mercy that He may rescue us from vain knowledge. What we need is reality and practicality. In the book of Romans Paul wrote concerning reality and practicality. God has accomplished a great work that we might have His righteousness. Now He is working within us that we may be sanctified, that His holy nature may be fully wrought into our being. We will not only be sanctified outwardly and objectively, but also inwardly and subjectively. Eventually, we will be filled with His holy nature. What the Lord is doing among us today is to open our eyes that we may see our need for His sanctifying work. We need His sanctifying life. We need His eternal life to work His holy being into our nature that we may actually and practically be His sons, not in word, but in reality. Although we were born children of God, we do not resemble the sons of God. Thus, we need the subjective sanctification in life.

Sanctification brings in transformation. We need to be transformed from one form into another. However, not only the outward form must be changed, but the inward substance, the inward

essence, must also be changed. This change of inward substance requires the process of sanctification. Praise the Lord that He is working in us! We have been justified and now we are being sanctified. God is working His holiness into us, and we shall be sanctified in life.

The crucified Christ was for our justification, and the resurrected Christ is for our sanctification. Christ died on the cross primarily for our justification. Christ, as the Redeemer in the flesh, was for our justification, but now, as the life-giving Spirit in our spirit, He lives within us for our sanctification. He was the crucified One; now He is the resurrected One. He was our Redeemer in the flesh; now He is the life-giving Spirit in our spirit. As the life-giving Spirit, He is our life, and He is saturating our being with His holy nature until we are thoroughly, dispositionally sanctified. This is the reason that in Romans, unlike other New Testament books, sanctification is not positional by the blood, but dispositional by life, even by the living Lord Himself. The Lord is working within our spirit, spreading Himself from the center of our being throughout every part of us until He reaches the circumference. Then we will be completely saturated with His holy nature.

Thus, our whole being will be sanctified with His rich life by Christ as the life-giving Spirit.

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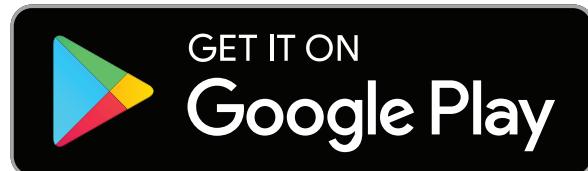
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