

Then that victory will be disclosed to the view of all. In "the times between" we must live by faith—knowing that we are righteous, yet still seeking to become righteous; believing that death has been destroyed, yet waiting for the sight of death to disappear; confessing that our sins have been put away, yet anxious that we feel sin no more.

It is from this separation of these two advents—Christ *has* come, and Christ *will* come—that we have the paradoxical relationship between justification and sanctification. And because we must relate the "now" and the "not yet," we must live in the tension of having and not having.

It is not in vain that the apostles frequently exhort us to faith and patient waiting in "the times between." Church history has proved that human nature wants to solve the paradox "here and now" instead of waiting for the "there and then." Antinomianism tries to destroy the tension by settling for justification and throwing out the absolute necessity of the inward process of sanctification. Perfectionism tries to destroy the tension by getting beyond forgiveness and establishing a relationship with God on the basis of sanctification. Either way, human nature wants to reduce the two parallel lines of justification and sanctification to one line this side of eternity. But this cannot be done without heresy. As a train needs twin tracks and must operate on both, so it is with a sound soteriology. And just as a train cannot jump one rail without jumping both, so it is with justification and sanctification.

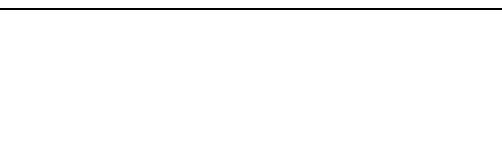
If one protests that he is not comfortable living with this paradox and this tension, then we must remind him that he is not supposed to be. Life is not fulfilled in the historical process. Here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come. We dwell in tents with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, being heirs with them of the same promise. When faith becomes sight and grace is lost in glory, sanctification will be consummated, and forgiveness of sins will be no more.

All who repent of their sins and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord have the sure promise of the forgiveness of their sins and eternal life. Will you cast yourself upon the mercy of God in Christ? Pray this simple prayer to God now and He will in no way cast you away.

Lord, I know that my life has been full of sin and selfishness. Please forgive me of my sins and cover me with your own righteousness. From this point onward in my life may I begin to always trust in Christ as my personal Savior and Lord of my life. Daily let me call upon you for your forgiveness and mercy in Christ and let me begin to love and forgive others as you have loved and forgiven me and given Yourself for me on the cross.

I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

This little Christian tract is a gift from your neighbor:



Present Truth Magazine  
[www.PresentTruthMag.org](http://www.PresentTruthMag.org)  
(760) 728.3333



**How to Live the...**

# **Victorious Life !**

# How to Live the Victorious Life

## Introduction

The church is not short of books, tracts and sermons on how to live the victorious Christian life. You could go into an average religious book shop and cart off a truck load of this kind of literature. At the present time there are seminars in progress all over the land teaching people how to turn on to dynamic Christian living.

Most of this flood of material on Christian living does not lead to victory over sin, but it actually breeds sin. Sin is egotism and self-centeredness. Religious egotism is the worst form. It sets people to gazing at their own spiritual navel and drowns them in their own victory life piety.

Four hundred fifty years ago the church was delivered from this groveling, believer-centered mentality by the mighty truth of justification by faith. We fully believe that the church is again ripe for another revolution.

A lot of people may give lip allegiance to the mighty truth of justification by faith, but they do not see how it is relevant to their daily Christian experience. The church is largely bogged down with a sort of sanctificationism which has become divorced from the gospel and justification by faith.

The following article shows how a true understanding of the Reformation principle of justification by faith is the only thing that can lead to reformatory action and successful Christian living. Justification by faith is no cop-out from the privilege and responsibility of victorious Christian living, but the only way to it. Preoccupation with something outside of man is the only thing that will correct the egotism inside of man.

The Editors, *Present Truth Magazine*,  
[www.PresentTruthMag.com](http://www.PresentTruthMag.com)  
(760) 728-3333

## 8. Conclusions

Sanctification cannot exist without justification, "for the heart of sanctification is the life which feeds on justification." — Berkouwer, *op. cit.*, p. 93. And justification cannot exist without sanctification any more than light can exist without heat.

Justification and sanctification must be seen as two parallel lines which cannot meet this side of glory.

**Justification** looks back to the finished work of God in Jesus Christ and declares, "... ye are complete" Col. 2:10.

**Sanctification** points us away to the return of Christ and says, "Not.., already perfect" Phil. 3:1, 2.

**Justification** pronounces us already pure (1 John 1:9).

**Sanctification** commands us to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit (2 Cor. 7:1).

**Justification** clothes us in Christ's victory (John 16:33).

**Sanctification** means pressing on to overcome (Rev. 3:21).

**Justification** tells us that the battle is won (Is. 40:2).

**Sanctification** nerves us on to "fight the good fight of faith." 1 Tim. 6:12.

**Justification** is resting in God's completed work (Matt. 11:28; Heb. 4:1-10).

**Sanctification** is pressing on toward the mark (Phil. 3:14).

Here is the paradox of being and seeking to become; of being righteous by faith and sinful in nature; of "possessing all things," yet "having nothing." 2 Cor. 6:10.

Why does and why must this paradox between justification and sanctification exist? It exists because of the separation of the two advents of Christ. At His first coming He redeemed us, perfected us, and gave us life and immortality (Heb. 9:12; 10:14; 2 Tim. 1:10). At His second coming He brings us these blessings to enjoy as empirical realities (Eph. 1:14; 1 John 3:3; Heb. 11:40; Col. 3:4; 1 Cor. 15:50-56). The first advent was inaugurated eschatology—for in Christ the last things have already taken place. The Second Advent is consummated eschatology—for then God will openly disclose what Christ has already done. The decisive victory has already taken place (first advent), and Christ is seated at God's right hand "expecting till His enemies be made His footstool." Heb. 10:13.

Judged by the law, the best state of the best saint is vanity. "Our purest works are no better than filthy rags, when tried by the light of God's law." — J.C. Ryle. This is why the apostle cries out, "O wretched man that I am...." That is to say, when he hates evil and does the right, his performance is wretched compared to the purity of the law's demands (or the holiness of the Son of God).

The flesh, or sinful nature, of the believer is no different from that of the unbeliever. "The regenerate man is no whit different in substance from what He was before his regeneration." —Bavinck. The whole church must join the confession, "Have mercy upon us miserable sinners."

The witness of both Testaments is unmistakably clear on this point.

And enter not into judgment with Thy servant: for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified. —Ps. 143:2.

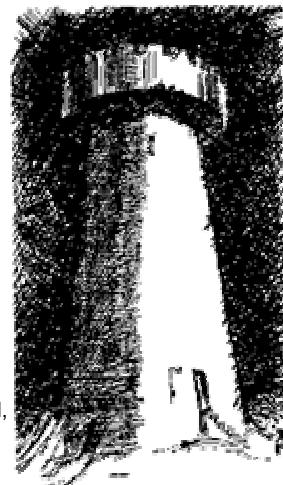
If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. —1 John 1:8.

No work or deed of the saints in this life can meet the severity of God's law. Apart from God's merciful judgment, the good works of the saints would be "mortal sin" (Luther), and nothing is acceptable to God unless mediated through the covering cloud of Christ's merits. Because of "indwelling sin," we need mercy at the end as much as at the beginning, for the old nature is as evil then as ever. Growth in grace, therefore, does not mean becoming less and less sinful, but on the contrary, it means becoming more and more sinful in our own estimation.

It is this conviction of the wretchedness of even our sanctified state — which conviction comes by the law —that keeps sanctification from the rocks of self-righteousness. It keeps the Christian's little bark constantly pointed toward his only star of hope — justification by faith in a righteousness that stands for him in heaven. The refuge of the sinner must ever also be the refuge of the saint.

The name of the Lord is a **strong tower**:  
the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.  
—Prov. 18:10.

...and this is His name whereby He shall be called,  
**THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS**.  
—Jer. 23:6.



## How to Live the Victorious Life

The mainspring of Christian existence is *justification by faith*. Here is the pulsating heart of biblical revelation and all true evangelical religion.

Sanctification is what God does *inside* the believer. Important as it is, it is neither the basis of salvation nor the foundation of the Christian's hope. Sanctification, of course, is a work of grace, but it is fed from the springs of a higher, more primary work of grace. Unless sanctification is rooted in justification and constantly returns to justification, it cannot escape the poisonous miasma of subjectivism, moralism or Pharisaism.

Human reason would tell us that what grace does in changing the heart of the sinner is the most important thing God could possibly do in the salvation process. This contention is the heart of medieval soteriology, and it must be admitted that the overwhelming preoccupation of evangelicalism today is its message of being saved by "letting Christ come into the heart," by being born again, etc. It is sheer evangelical medievalism.

The great truth of justification by faith, however, does not deal with the acts of God within the believer, but with the saving acts of God *outside* the believer.

First, the ground of a man's acceptance with God unto life eternal is sheer unmerited grace. . . . "being justified freely by His grace" Rom. 3:24. The Greek word here translated *freely* is elsewhere translated *without cause*. Grace is not conditioned on any quality in the human heart. So far is it from relating to a quality within man that the apostle declares that this "grace. . . . was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." 2 Tim. 1:9. It is a quality in God's heart, His disposition to be kind and merciful to those who are lost and undeserving. Grace means *God's attribute of accepting those who are unacceptable*.

Yet God cannot allow His *grace* to override His *justice*. The rule of law must be upheld. God must have valid grounds to forgive sinners and to accept them as righteous. Those grounds are also completely *outside* of us.

. . . being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus [through His (God's) act of liberation in the Person of Christ Jesus N.E.B.] . . . — Rom. 3:24.

Christ's doing and dying are the sole grounds of God's being able to judge us and treat us as righteous. This is being "justified by Christ." Gal. 2:17. The gospel proclaims that sinners are saved by the objective, concrete acts of God in history. This is an action which is so far *outside* the sinner that it happened two thousand years ago. This is Christianity. It is the only truly historical religion. All other religions teach that salvation is found in some process within the worshiper, and consequently the worshiper's supreme preoccupation is with his internal experience. Christianity alone proclaims a salvation which is found in an event *outside* the believer.

This truth, of course, is a great offence to human pride. Cannot we at least sympathize with the children of Israel in the wilderness? Many were bitten by serpents and were facing certain death. Moses put a likeness of a **deadly serpent on a pole** and invited the dying to *look and live*. Whoever had heard of such a thing as this? The poison was inside, and how could something completely outside bring them any help? So they were inclined to reason.

To us who are bitten by that old serpent, the devil, Jesus declares:

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.... — John 3:14.

The basis of salvation is not a *subjective* process. If the way of salvation were simply a matter of inviting Christ into the heart or being born again by the Spirit, then Christ need not have come here to suffer and die. No amount of sanctification or inward holiness can bridge the gulf that sin has made and put us into right relationship with God. Fellowship with God cannot rest on an internal process of being made holy. Perfection is not something that God requires at the end of the road. He demands perfection and absolute holiness before any right relationship can begin.

So we say again, salvation and right standing with God rest on what God has already done outside of us in the Person of Jesus Christ.

...and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. Romans 3:24

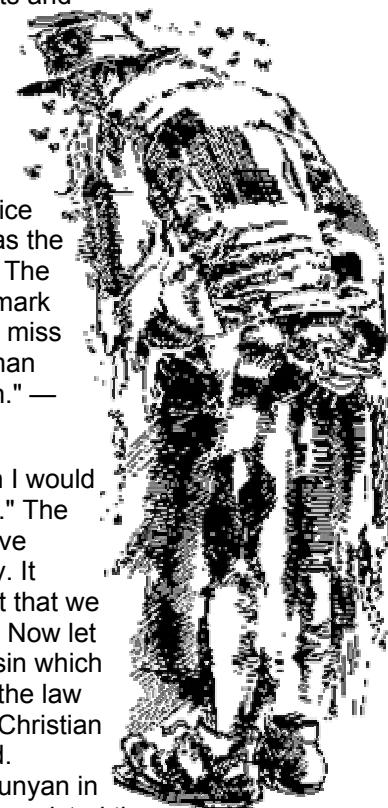


Unfortunately, it has often been used to justify a low standard of piety and a defeatist view of the Christian life. In short, Romans 7:14-25 has often been made into a soft pillow on which hypocrites rest their heads. A.J. Gordon well says:

If the doctrine of sinless perfection is heresy, the doctrine of contentment with sinful imperfection is a greater heresy... It is not an edifying spectacle to see a Christian worldling throwing stones at a Christian perfectionist. — A.J. Gordon, *Ministry of the Spirit*, p. 116 (see A.H. Strong, *Systematic Theology*, p. 881).

Paul is not describing himself at his worst, but himself at his best — i.e., "...the good that I would I do not This is not a description of a man who loathes God's commandments and counts them grievous. Here is a man who delights to do God's will. With the psalmist he rejoices to run the way of God's commandments. But when such deeds are judged by the law with its demand for absolute righteousness, they fall short. Judged by the strict justice of that law, this man would be judged as the son who said, "I go, sir," and went not. The law knows one standard. To miss the mark partially, even by a hair's breadth, is to miss entirely. So the best deeds of such a man could only "merit death and destruction." — Calvin.

Again, Paul declares: "... the evil which I would not, that I do." "... what I hate, that do I." The law of God requires not only that we love righteousness, but that we hate iniquity. It requires that we not only resist evil, but that we hate it inwardly, instantly and radically. Now let the best Christian bring to the law the sin which he manfully resisted. The demands of the law are so rigorous that it would judge the Christian as having done the evil which he hated. This point is beautifully illustrated by Bunyan in *The Pilgrim's Progress*. "Faithful" nobly resisted the temptation of the "Old Man" to marry his three daughters — "The Lust of the Flesh," "The Lust of the Eyes," and "The Pride of Life." But he was soon met by man "Moses," who beat him unmercifully for having a secret inclination to agree with the "Old Man." "Moses," who represented the law, would have killed him except for the mercy and intervention of the Man with the nail prints in His hands.



This is what the Reformers called "the third use of the law"—the law as the rule of life for the justified believer. Although it cannot tyrannize the conscience of the believer, it is a radical and rigorous demand for utmost perfection in every act, word, thought and motive—a spiritual law (Rom. 7:14) that desires "truth in the inward parts." Ps. 51:6. As believers, we will "delight in the law of God after the inward man" (Rom. 7:22), and the Spirit works within us "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us." Rom. 8:4. But alas, there is another factor which we must contend with—something which causes us to cry out in anguish. This brings us to our next point.

**c. The Radical Sin of the Believer.** ".....by the law is the knowledge of sin." Rom. 3:20. Conversion to Christ does not do away with the bitter knowledge of our sin, but it rather puts us where we may endure its increasing revelation. It is not from immature believers that we hear startling confessions about the corruption of human nature, but from holy prophets, apostles and mature saints. We may even be surprised that they cry out of the depth and bitterness of soul anguish, "Woe is me!...", "O wretched man that I am!", etc. Giddy spirits who have soared up to heaven in high and mighty experiences (and like to testify of their "victory life of piety") find these testimonies of prophets and apostles hard to understand. They think, for instance, that when Paul delineated his state of wretchedness in Romans 7:14-25, he must have been talking about his pre-conversion days or at least his pre—"second blessing" days. But in the light of the radical demands of God's law, Romans 7 is not so hard to understand — certainly not to him who has honestly sought to come to terms with God's holiness in day-to-day existence. In Romans 7:14-25 there is too much evidence to the contrary to deny that it is really Paul the apostle speaking about himself. But what does he mean when he confesses:

For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? —Rom. 7:1 5-24.

The apostle is not confessing overt aberrations in Christian conduct or moments when faith falters and sin gets the mastery of him. (If that were what he means, then we would agree that Romans 7:14-25 is not describing the high calling of a Spirit-filled saint.) This is not a passage to excuse falling (much less, rushing) into known acts of disobedience.

Two thousand years ago there was an objective, concrete, historical event. God Himself broke into human history in the Person of His Son. He became our representative Man. He bore our nature and became so identified with us that all which He did was not only for us, but was exactly the same as if we had done it. He strove with sin, the devil and death. He utterly defeated them and destroyed their power. His victory was for us. It was really our victory. When He lived that holy life, which measured with the claims of God's law, it was for us. It was exactly the same as if we had lived it. When He bore the punishment for sin, justice saw us punished in Him.

"...if One died for all, then are all dead" 2 Cor. 5:14.

When He arose and was accepted with joy into the presence of God, honored and exalted to God's right hand, all that was for us. It was our humanity that God embraced in the Person of His Son. As certainly as God came to this earth in the Person of Christ, just so certainly have we gone to heaven in the Person of Christ. The gospel does not proclaim the good things that God *will* do, but it proclaims the good things which He *has* done. By His glorious acts outside of us, He has actually accomplished our liberation. He has forgiven, justified and restored us to glory and honor in the Person of Jesus Christ.

<sup>3</sup> Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. <sup>4</sup> For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love <sup>5</sup> he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— <sup>6</sup> to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. <sup>7</sup> In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace. Ephesians 1:3-7

<sup>4</sup> But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, <sup>5</sup> made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions-- it is by grace you have been saved. <sup>6</sup> And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus. Ephesians 2:4-6

<sup>25</sup> He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification. Romans 4:25

<sup>8</sup> But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. <sup>9</sup> Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! <sup>10</sup> For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!... <sup>18</sup> Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men....<sup>19</sup> For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. Romans 5:8-10, 18-19

Justification is not only *by grace* and *by Christ*; it must also be *by faith*. That which God has done outside of us in His Son must be *believed* and *received*. Faith comes by hearing this message of Christ.

<sup>17</sup> So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Romans 10:17

Faith does not bring salvation into existence. It does not produce the righteousness by which God justifies us. Faith does not *make*; it *takes*. It is becoming conscious of something already in existence.

Faith is completely objective in its action. It is not affixed to anything horizontal, to anything which is on earth, or to anything which can be seen. Therefore, it is not faith in what the Holy Spirit has done *within* us. It is not faith in our sanctification or in some past experience of being born again. Faith is affixed to what is in heaven, to what we have in Christ at God's right hand (Col. 3:1-4).

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. <sup>3</sup> For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup> When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Colossians 3:1-4

Therefore, we must decisively say that sanctification, being on earth, being in the believer, and being seen, is no part of the righteousness which is *by faith alone*. The righteousness which is of faith alone is the *doing and dying* of Christ. It is that life of perfect holiness which Christ now presents at the bar of justice on our behalf. The only righteousness which we have before God is the righteousness which is actually before God. Our righteousness, therefore, is where we need it most—in God's presence, before God's law, at the Father's right hand. For our righteousness is Christ Himself (Jer. 23:6),

<sup>6</sup> In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely; Now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Jeremiah 23:6

who is absent from us on earth. As John Bunyan declared, the sublime mystery of the Bible is "that a righteousness that resides with a person in heaven should justify me, a sinner, on earth." This is righteousness by faith. It is a righteousness which the Reformers declared to be "an alien righteousness"—a righteousness completely outside of man and so foreign to human reason that it can be known only by the gospel.

Justification, therefore, is no mere filling station along the way or no mere door that we enter but once. To accept God's justification in faith is our whole work for our whole life. We never get past it. We never get beyond it. And certainly (as Luther warned many times) we never learn it too well. So we may diagram this concept as follows:



This diagram illustrates how sanctification constantly lives under the primary and preeminent grace of justification.

**b. The Radical Demands of God's Law.** If there is one reason above all others why justification by faith has little significance in today's church, it is because the church has not been taking the law of God with the radical seriousness that Calvary demands. If God was not taking the demands of His law with utmost seriousness, then what was the death of Christ all about?

Justification itself is a legal term. It has no meaning apart from law. It means to be set right before the law (A.H. Strong). If Christ died and set aside the claims of the law, then we do not need to be justified. If the law is still in force to make demands upon us, then we need to be justified by the blood and obedience of Jesus Christ.

The strength of Reformation theology is that it recognizes that man today is still obligated to render to God the obedience that God required of man in his sinless state. This demand for perfect righteousness cannot be annulled, modified or relaxed. Christ did not die to make a lower or easier standard acceptable to God. Christ lived a sinless life in order that our faith might grasp the virtue of His obedience and be able to present to the law the perfect obedience which it rightfully demands. This does not mean that the believer, being justified by a vicarious righteousness, can become secure and lazy, not caring if he obeys or disobeys the holy commandments. He sees the law as an expression of the kind of man God wants him to be. In the gospel he sees that this is now the kind of man he is in Jesus Christ. Now the law becomes an expression of the kind of man he wants to be in daily, concrete existence. God's ideal has become his ideal.

We submit that both of these approaches fail to keep justification at the center. We suggest that Paul sees the atonement of Christ (objective justification) as the once-and-for-all-time event. The believer is subjectively (personally) justified (declared righteous) when he receives Christ in faith.

..... being justified [present continuous tense] freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus... through faith Rom. 3:24-25.

This is not just something which happened "back there when I became a Christian." The law always demands perfect righteousness. We always find ourselves falling short of the law's demand (Rom. 3:20, 23. In Romans 3:23 the verb translated "come short" is in the present continuous tense.). Hence, we must always confess ourselves as sinners and must always flee in faith to lay hold of that "righteousness of One," with which the law is well pleased. Believing unto justification is not a once-and-for-all action, but in the New Testament (John 3:16 for instance) it is generally written in the present continuous tense. As Luther writes in his commentary on Romans, the believer always waits and asks to be justified, and as he keeps counting himself a sinner and imploring God's mercy, God keeps counting him righteous.

The present continuous nature of justification was the genius of Luther's emphasis. In "The Disputation Concerning Justification" (1536), he says:

...forgiveness of sins is not a matter of a passing work or action, but comes from baptism which is of perpetual duration, until we arise from the dead. — *Luther's Works* (American ed.; Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press; St. Louis: Concordia, 1955-1, Vol. 34, p. 163).

... Forgiveness of sins is not a matter of a passing work or action, but of perpetual duration. For the forgiveness of sins begins in baptism and remains with us all the way to death, until we arise from the dead, and leads us into life eternal. So we live continually under the remission of sins. Christ is truly and constantly the liberator from our sins, is called our Savior, and saves us by taking away our sins. If, however, he saves us always and continually, then we are constantly sinners. — *Ibid.*, p. 164.

On no condition is sin a passing phase, but we are justified daily by the unmerited forgiveness of sins and by the justification of God's mercy. Sin remains, then, perpetually in this life, until the hour of the last judgment comes and then at last we shall be made perfectly righteous. — *Ibid.*, p. 167.

For the forgiveness of sins is a continuing divine work, until we die. Sin does not cease. Accordingly, Christ saves us perpetually. — *Ibid.*, p. 190.

Daily we sin, daily we are continually justified, just as a doctor is forced to heal sickness day by day until it is cured. — *Ibid.*, p. 191.

We have seen that God justifies by grace, on the grounds of Christ's work, and applies the blessing to the sinner who receives it in faith. The grace that justifies is *outside* of man. The righteousness which justifies is outside of man. And the faith that accepts the blessing is affixed to that which is outside of the believer. We must press this radical truth further and consider that God's act of justifying the believing sinner is also outside the believer. This may be seen in two different ways.

**1. The Meaning of Justification.** Justification is a *legal* word having reference to *trial and judgment*. It does not mean *to make a person subjectively righteous* any more than condemnation means *to make a person subjectively wicked*. Justification is simply a verdict of the court *declaring*, or pronouncing, a person to be righteous. In the case of God's verdict, He declares the believing sinner to be righteous because the sinner's Representative is righteous. Or to put it another way, when the sinner claims the righteousness of Christ as his own and presents it before God, the Judge acknowledges that the debt has been paid, and the sinner is set right before the law.

Justification, therefore, is not an act of God *within* the sinner, but it is an act of God *outside* the sinner. It is God's verdict upon him. It is a forensic, declaratory act. It is not based on the holiness of the one who believes, but on the holiness of Him in whom the one believes. This point is crucial. In this matter of our acceptance with God, we are *not to be anxious about what God thinks of us, but about what God thinks of Christ, our Substitute*. If we confuse justification with the internal sanctification process, faith totters, and we find it impossible to stand before God with a pacified conscience. Justification pertains to what God does *for us*, not what He does *in us*.

**2. The Method of Justification.** In Romans, chapter 4, the apostle not only declares that God justifies the ungodly (v. 5).

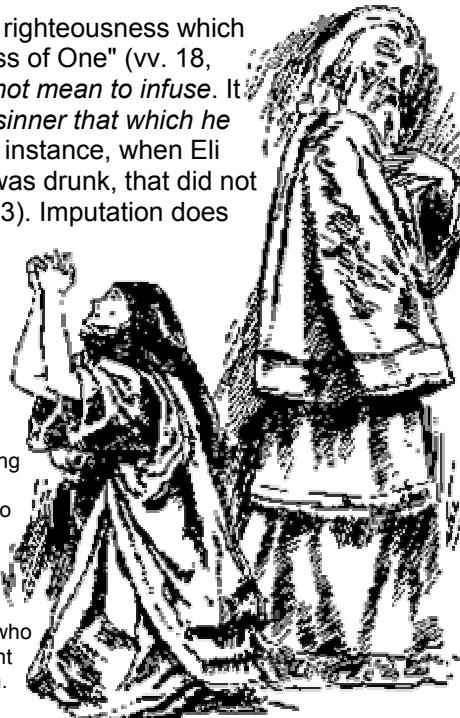
<sup>5</sup> But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies **the ungodly**, his faith is accounted for righteousness. Romans 4:5

but that God does this by *imputing* righteousness to the one who believes (vv. 3, 5-7).

<sup>3</sup> For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." <sup>4</sup> Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. <sup>5</sup> But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, <sup>6</sup> just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: <sup>7</sup> "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; Romans 4:3, 5-7

In chapter 5 Paul shows that the righteousness which God *imputes* is "the righteousness of One" (vv. 18, 19). Now the word *impute* does not mean to infuse. It simply means to attribute to the sinner that which he does not possess in himself. For instance, when Eli thought (imputed) that **Hannah** was drunk, that did not make Hannah drunk (1 Sam. 1:13). Imputation does not change the object, but it changes the way the object is regarded. The supreme illustration of this is Calvary. Our sins were imputed to Christ (2 Cor. 5:19-21).

<sup>19</sup> that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup> Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup> For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. 2 Corinthians 5:19-21



This did not subjectively make Him a sinner. But it did change the way God regarded Him. It had a decisive bearing on the way justice treated Him.

**3. God's act of justification depends on perfect righteousness.** Yet it does not depend on this righteousness being *in us*, but on it being interceded for us in God's presence. God reckons it to us simply because Christ performed it for us and we accept it in faith.

Therefore, whichever way we look at it and whichever way we turn it, justification is an act of God's grace that is wholly outside the experience of the one who believes. We are aware of those objections, hoary with age, which rush in, crying derisively, "Legal fiction!", "Divine make-believe!", "Celestial bookkeeping!", "As-if, pasted-on righteousness!" etc. We will answer these objections by considering the inseparable relationship between justification and sanctification. Indeed, it is now our purpose to show how due emphasis on this outside work is the only thing that can lead to the experience of God's *inside* work. The kind of justification we have considered is the dynamic mainspring of sanctification. The doctrine of imputed righteousness under girds all ethical and reformatory action.

**3. That justification must always remain the center of the church's attention.** It must always remain the major chord in the soteriological melody. If sanctification is allowed to drown out the dominant New Testament note, Christian teaching degenerates into sheer moralism or Pharisaism.

There are three basic principles necessary to keep justification at the center and dominant.

**a. The Present Continuous Nature of Justification.** Much evangelical theology tends to relegate justification by faith to an initiatory action in the soteriological process. This is because it contends that the subjective (personal) justification of the believing sinner is a once-and-for-all, nonrepeatable act. Hence the relationship between justification and sanctification is seen as justification succeeded by sanctification:

### Justification - Initial and Final

Sanctification

The tendency is to celebrate justification as something which happened "back there when I became a Christian"—or to have a memorial of it perhaps once a year. Admittedly, the Reformed doctrine of "the perseverance of the saints" puts some stern backbone into the necessity for sanctification. But where this is lost in the more popular "once saved, always saved" version, justification by faith really ceases to be vitally relevant in daily Christian existence.

Another alternative is to regard justification as mere forgiveness for past sins, then sanctification as the higher stage in the soteriological process. Final justification is conditional on sanctification, as illustrated:

### Justification - Initial and Temporary

Sanctification

### Final Justification (at End of Life or Judgement [?])

The triumph of the Christ event is concrete, irreversible, immutable. This is where Paul rests his case in his triumphant Romans 8 passage. He entertains no fears for "things present, nor things to come" (v. 38), because he remembers what has happened in the past (v. 34). And when he had occasion to exhort the immature Christian communities whom he found lapsing into such "fleshly" things as quarreling, lying or sloth, he saluted them as saints (1 Cor. 1:2). With words fresh from glory, he took them by the ears and reminded them what had happened in the Christ event and that by faith they were sharers in all that Christ had done and suffered. Yes, he told these faulty, fumbling, stumbling believers that they were dead (Col. 3:3; Rom 6:6), risen (Eph.2:1-6) and free (Rom. 7:4). Having shown them what they were, he showed how their unchrist-like behavior was inconsistent with their privileged position. Then he warned them that those who continued in Christ-denying behavior would not inherit the kingdom (see Eph.5:3-6). The factious Corinthians had to be reminded of the gospel. The apostle wrote to them:

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. —1 Cor. 15:1-2.

The Epistles of Paul were written to encourage growth (sanctification) in people who were already believers. This point is very significant. Yet how did the apostle go about to promote such growth in grace? Every Epistle was a mighty call to remember what had happened in the Christ event and how believers are justified by faith in God's redemptive action in Jesus Christ. Every Pauline Epistle, therefore, is an immutable testimony that the church can make progress in sanctification only in proportion to its grasp of justification. Each Epistle is a call to remember. The church is never led away from the first blessing to look for a "second blessing."

It [the church] must feed on the first blessing, the forgiveness of sins. The warfare of the church, according to Scriptural testimony, springs from the demand really to live from this first blessing. — *Ibid.*, p. 64.

## 7. Other Principles Necessary to Keep Justification at the Center

We have shown:

1. That justification and sanctification must always be kept together.
2. That sanctification must constantly return to justification.

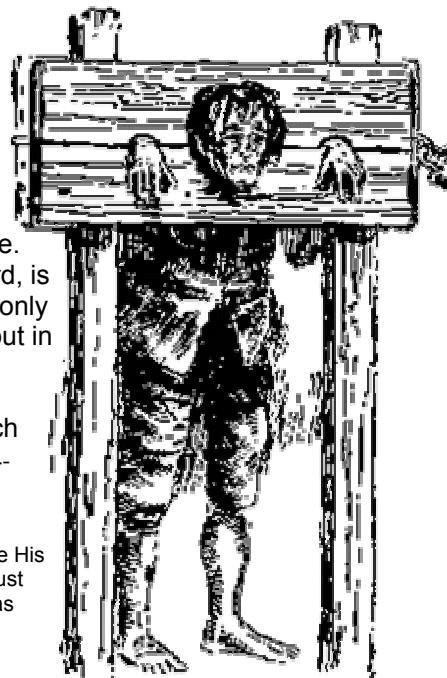
Under four heads we will consider how God's *outside* act of justification makes the *inside* process of sanctification possible. The four vantage points from which we will view this unique relationship between justification and sanctification are the *legal*, the *psychological*, the *efficient* and the *positional*.

### 1. Legally

Let us not be afraid to think in *legal* categories, for the whole of the Hebrew Scriptures moves in this atmosphere. God is Judge and Lawgiver. He is the God of law and order. Unlike the unpredictable gods of the heathen, we can depend on Him to act in harmony with His own law of eternal rectitude.

*Justification*, that great Pauline word, is a word of the law court. God is not only in the business of saving sinners, but in the business of vindicating His law. Paul argues that our salvation is grounded in law and justice as much as in grace and mercy (see Rom. 3:24-26).

to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Romans 3:26



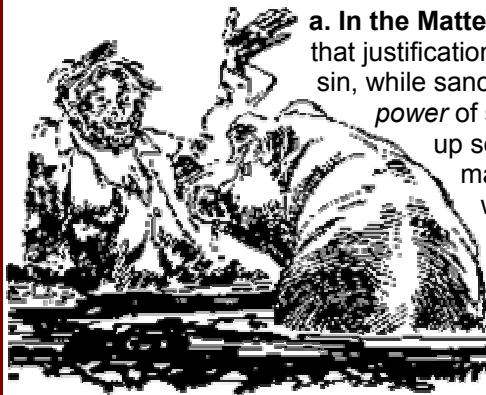
Our own consciences demand justice and cannot be pacified unless God's fellowship with us is grounded on justice.

God was not play-acting at Calvary. If He were not bound by His own law of eternal rectitude, then Christ need not have died. Calvary was not a legal fiction. It proves that divine law is inexorable. It gives us a *legal* (lawful) basis of salvation.

We accept the legal principle in the most sacred of human relationships. A woman who ignores a legal relationship and tries to establish a relationship with a man by experience alone is prostituting a fundamental law of life. In the Revelation of St. John, Babylon (which represents all false religion) is called a harlot (Rev. 17:5). Babylon is every system that tries to establish a relationship with God on the basis of *experience*.

Sanctification is living a life of fellowship with God. Justification is its *legal* basis, and without justification *no fellowship can exist*.

Let us examine this legal basis of sanctification from the *negative* aspect of sin and from the positive *aspect* of holiness.



**a. In the Matter of Sin.** It has often been said that justification is deliverance from the *guilt* of sin, while sanctification is deliverance from the *power* of sin. But we must not split them up so that we would conceive of a man enjoying one blessing without the other. This often happens in "holiness" theology where it is postulated that there are two types of Christians — the *elect*, who are delivered from the guilt of sin, and the *very elect*, who

are also delivered from the power of sin; or those who only (?) know Christ as *Saviour* and those who also know Christ as *Lord*. The Bible knows nothing of this kind of separation between justification and sanctification. It is thoroughly mischievous in its results. If it does not lead to spiritual pride among those who imagine they are out of Romans 7 and into Romans 8, it leads to the Christ-denying notion that a man can be saved from the guilt of sin and yet continue to wallow in its pollution—as if sanctification were *optional* as far as salvation is concerned.

There is a direct relationship between the *guilt* of sin and the *power* of sin. If the guilt of sin is *removed*, the power of sin is *broken*. This is Paul's point in Romans 6:14: "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." That is to say, as long as a man is "under the law," sin will be king over him, and he will be forced to surrender to its reign. But if he comes under grace, sin has no more power to rule and tyrannize.

In Romans 7 Paul goes on to explain this mystery of the relationship between the law and sin's power. The strength of sin is not in sin itself, for "the strength of sin is the law." 1 Cor. 15:56. The law — yes, the holy, just and good law of God — binds a man to the service of sin by the power of omnipotent justice. Sin is the master ("the husband") that man chose to serve, and the law binds him in this relationship just like a woman is bound by the law to the husband of her choice. As the good law keeps the criminal in jail, so it is God's law which binds the sinner to the miserable service of sin. In fact, "...sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment,

Or worse yet, if in our zeal for sanctification we fail to keep the preeminence of justification before us, we will get lost in a "minute concern with inwardness." —*Ibid.*, p. 86. "History shows how easy it is to get lost when one treats of internal grace." — *Ibid.* Our only safety is a constant return to the objective truth of salvation by the outside-of-me righteousness of Christ.

Therefore, we must affirm that the essential mainspring of sanctification is to remember. The way of sanctification is to remember what has happened and what has been given to us. It is amazing how often this point is emphasized both in the Old and New Testament. Israel's ethical action was to be constantly under girded and inspired by her remembrance of what had happened and what had been given to her (see Deut. 5:15). As long as Israel remembered God's redemptive acts in the beginning of her history, she would persevere in the way of holiness. If she forgot what had happened and lost sight of what was given her, she was sure to swerve from the way of holiness.

Our fathers understood not Thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of Thy mercies; but provoked Him at the sea, even at the Red Sea. Nevertheless He saved them for His name's sake, that He might make His mighty power to be known. He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it was dried up: so He led them through the depths, as through the wilderness. And He saved them from the hand of him that hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. And the waters covered their enemies: there was not one of them left. Then believed they His words; they sang His praise. They soon forgot His works; they waited not for His counsel.... They forgot God their Saviour, which had done great things in Egypt; wondrous works in the land of Ham, and terrible things by the Red Sea.... Yea, they despised the pleasant land, they believed not His Word.... — Ps. 106:7-13, 21, 22, 24.

When the prophets exhorted Israel to put away her sins and live in holy obedience, they based their appeals to ethical conduct on the fact that God had delivered Israel from Egypt. Israel's future success depended upon remembering her past.

The New Testament church is also founded on a concrete, historical act of deliverance. The deliverance from Egypt serves as a type of God's real act of liberation in the Person of Jesus Christ. Christ has died and has risen again, and by faith the church has become a participant, a sharer, in all that Christ has done. By the work of Jesus Christ on her behalf, she is free from sin and justified in the sight of God. Yet she must remember what has happened and what has been given to her. As Christ Himself broke the bread and divided the cup, He said, "...this do in remembrance of Me." 1 Cor. 11:24. God's people have nothing to fear for the future except they forget what has happened in their inaugural history.

Perhaps the most striking illustration of how redemption under girds all ethical action is found in the Old Testament-right in God's own preface to the Ten Commandments: "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. [Therefore] thou shalt have no other gods before Me. Thou shalt not.... Thou shalt not.... Thou shalt not...." etc. Ex. 20:2-17. God's redemptive acts back there (which are an illustration of His liberating acts in Christ and justification by faith) made the new life of obedience a right as well as a responsibility for the redeemed people. Appeals to live the good life which are not based on the truth of justification by faith can only lead to moralism and legalism. But justification puts the believer on vantage ground-legally, psychologically, efficiently and positionally. It makes the yoke of sanctification easy and the burden of holiness light. "The eternal truth is that the law never stands by itself but can be found only, as under the old Dispensation, in the ark of the Covenant." — G.C. Berkouwer.

## 6. The Need for a Constant Return to Justification

Since the life of holiness is fueled and fired by justification by faith, sanctification must constantly return to justification. Otherwise, the Christian cannot possibly escape arriving at a new self-righteousness. We cannot reach a point in sanctification where our fellowship with God does not rest completely on forgiveness of sins.

This is why Luther called justification the article of the standing or falling church. He confessed that his whole soul and ministry were saturated with the truth of justification. This is why he bitterly complained against the evangelical radicals who regarded sanctification, or the new life in the Spirit, as the higher stage in the soteriological process. The man who thinks he can get beyond justification by grace falls from grace (Gal. 5:4).

In fact, the major aspect of sanctification is a growing appreciation of our need of God's justification through Jesus Christ. Growing toward Christian maturity does not mean being weaned from our dependence on imputed righteousness. The man who is strong in faith is strong in the doctrine of grace. He becomes more and more overwhelmed and bowed down with the sense of God's mercy and increasingly affixed to justification by the merits of Christ alone.

Says G.C. Berkouwer:

The believer's constant "commerce" with forgiveness of sins and his continued dependence on it must — both in pastoral counseling and in dogmatic analysis — be laid bare, emphasized, and kept in sight. Only thus can we keep at bay the specter of haughtiness — "as if we had made ourselves to differ". —G.C. Berkouwer, *Faith and Sanctification*, p.84.

produced in me every kind of covetous desire." Romans 7:8 That is to say, sin gets its legal right from the law to take control of any man who is under the law and work in him all manner of evil desires.

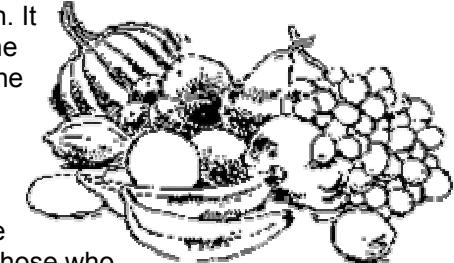
Freedom from the power of sin is only found in coming to terms with the law of God. As long as we are in debt to its righteous demands, we are "under the law" and will surely be kept in the prison house of sin. But as soon as faith takes hold of Christ's doing and dying as ours, we are justified, or set right before the law. Indeed, that is the reason why the law kept us shut up—until "faith came".

<sup>23</sup> Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. <sup>24</sup> So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Galatians 3:23-24

When by faith in Christ we stand before the law as forgiven and righteous, the law no longer binds us to that old master. Sin has no more power to hold us. Justification makes us (legally) free not to serve sin. Deliverance from sin's power is therefore the inevitable result of deliverance from sin's guilt.

**b. In the Matter of Holiness.** It has often been said (and truly) that justification is our *title* to heaven. We must not forget, however, that the life of heaven begins in the life of holiness here and now.

Sanctification is glorification begun. It is the life of heaven in the seed, the **first fruits**, or down payment, of the immortal inheritance (Rom. 8:23; Eph. 1:14). Heaven is access into God's presence. It is to partake of His holiness and to participate in His life. But this participation in the holiness of God begins *here* with those who "have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come." Hebrews 6:4-5.



In the Fall man lost all those rights and privileges. A sinner has no right to participate in God's life of holiness. Yet Christ, and Christ alone, has won for man this right of access: "... as many as received Him, to them gave He the right, or privilege [margin], to become the sons of God [to be partakers of His divine nature — 2 Pet. 1:4], "even to them that believe on His name...." John 1:12. Faith justifies, and being justified, we have legal access (rights and titles) to enter the way of holiness.

Along this route to "the celestial city" many trials lie in wait to purify our faith. There are giants to beat us, nets to catch us, and crafty men to beguile us. And along the King's highway travel such saints as "Ready to Halt," "Little Faith" and poor "Christian," who runs afoul of trouble times without number. In such times of temptation and human weakness, how could we assure our hearts before God unless we could look to our title found in the righteousness of the One who represents us at God's right hand? How easily faith would falter and we would stand disarmed in the midst of our enemies if, being challenged for our right to be traveling the road of sanctification, we put our hand (like "Ignorance") into our own bosom to find some grounds to be among the saints. Happy is the man who, in the hour of test and trial, can look outside to *atonement* instead of inside to *attainment*.

Though Satan should buffet,  
Though trials should come,  
Let this blest assurance control,  
That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate,  
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.

Thus, justification is the legal (lawful) basis of sanctification. It makes holiness possible by removing sin's lawful right to rule us and by restoring our lawful right to walk in the way of holiness.

## 2. Psychologically

Justification and sanctification are psychologically related. We may expect that He who made and understands man's nature will work to save him in a way best suited to his deepest psychological needs.

A life of sanctification (fellowship with God) is not possible unless we are first persuaded that we are acceptable and pleasing to God. This persuasion cannot be grounded on our past, present or future performance. God wants us first to know that He is fully satisfied with Jesus. He has found Him righteous, and with Him He is well pleased. What is that to us? Christ is our Representative. He bears our humanity in the presence of God, and God wants us to know that He accepts our humanity in the Person of His Son. In this matter of acceptance, therefore, it is sufficient for us to know that Jesus is accepted. It is this faith which enables us to serve God freely, gladly, and out of spontaneous love. If a believer tries to live the Christian life to either secure or consolidate his acceptance with God, immediately the springs of free, grateful and spontaneous obedience are dried up. God is more interested in the *motive* of service than the actual *performance*.

Here is another example of how the biblical command to live in holiness is under girded by the fact of justification:

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 Cor. 7: 1.

This illustrates how we must grasp the promise of justification before we can obey the command of sanctification. We cannot "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness" unless we believe that we are already washed in the blood of the Lamb (1 John 1:9). We cannot engage in the process of perfecting holiness unless we realize that "by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Heb. 10:14.

Consider this apostolic command: "...speak evil of no man...." Titus 3:2. Is there any commandment of God's Word that we so easily transgress? Who can endure this straight edge of the law? For we are not only commanded to refrain from speaking evil of good men, but we are forbidden to speak evil of any man. And what a blessed, innocent and holy congregation a pastor would have if the members carried this out! Yet if the pastor merely exhorts his congregation to live this sort of life, it is only an exercise in moralism. Obedience to this imperative is only possible as the congregation is reminded and keeps grasping the message of justification by faith. When Paul says, "...speak evil of no man..." he adds:

For [for this reason, in view of this] we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving diverse lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward men appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.  
—Titus 3:3-7.

The publican who in the parable of Christ went down to his house justified had prayed, "God, be merciful to me, the sinner!" Luke 18:13, N.A.S.B. This man was blessed because he was really poor in spirit (Matt. 5:3). He saw himself not only as a sinner, but as *the sinner*. He felt that no one could be a sinner like he. He stood before God as if he were all the world's sin. This is the man whom God counts righteous. Now when a congregation grasps this kind of justification before God, how can they speak evil of any man?

Whether Paul is appealing for humility (as in Philippians 2), a forgiving spirit (as in Ephesians 4) or dedicated service (as in Romans 12), he always does so on the *basis* of the gospel. Christian existence is *gospel* existence. Sanctification is justification in action.

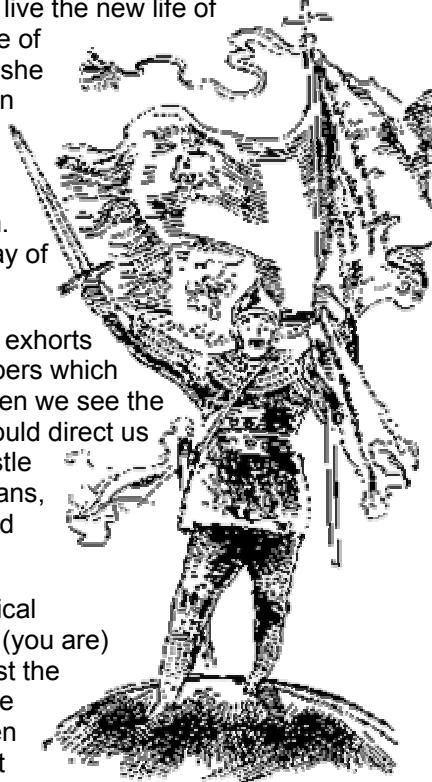
## 5. Some Practical Examples

When Christ directed the woman taken in adultery, "...go, and sin no more," He was commanding her to live the new life of holiness and purity. But this new life of sanctification was only possible as she first grasped the hope of justification that was given her in the promise of Christ, "Neither do I condemn thee." John 8:11. The liberating decree of "no condemnation" (Rom. 8:1) sets the soul free to run the way of God's commandments.

In his letter to the Colossians, Paul exhorts them, "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth...." Col. 3:5. When we see the word therefore, common sense should direct us to see what it is there for. The apostle has just finished telling the Colossians, "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." v. 3.

This illustrates the inseparable biblical relationship between the *indicative* (you are) and the *imperative* (you ought). First the believers are reminded that they are dead. (Through faith they have been united to Christ. God considers that when Christ died, they died.) Then they are told, "Put to death your members which are upon the earth." As if to say, "God counts you as dead men, for that is what you really are in Christ. Now this gives you the right and responsibility to act like men who are dead to sin." We are not commanded to put to death our sinful desires in order to become dead, but because we are dead. Being is not the result of doing, but doing is the result of being.

"Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds Col. 3:9. Every human religion reverses that order. The best it can tell us is to stop lying and thereby put away the old man and his deeds. But the way of the gospel is utterly contrary to human devisings. It says, "You are dead; now act like dead men. You are pure; now flee from impurity. You are perfect; now seek to become perfect. You are; therefore do!" The New Testament method and way of sanctification, therefore, is to get us to realize our position and standing, and to act accordingly." - *Ibid.*, p. 262.



When justification by faith is lost, we can only work in the Father's vineyard like the "elder son" in the parable of the prodigal. God's authority is on our *backs* instead of in our *hearts*. We keep a careful check on the years of "faithful" service. And we are more in the pigpen than the younger son who is away in the "far country."

Since love is the essence of sanctification (Rom. 13:10),

<sup>10</sup> Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. Romans 13:10

we should remember the teaching of Jesus that he who is *forgiven* much (justification) the same *loves* much (sanctification). (see Luke 7:40-47) He who hears the word of justification—"Neither do I condemn thee..."—is the only one psychologically qualified to obey the command of sanctification—"...go, and sin no more." (see John 8:3-11)

Says W.G.T. Shedd:

The strongest inducement for a Christian to obey the divine law, is the fact that he has been graciously pardoned for having broken the law. He follows after sanctification, because he has received justification. He obeys the law, not in order to *be* forgiven, but because he *has been* forgiven. 2 Cor. 5:4, "The love of Christ constraints us not to live unto ourselves, but unto him which died for us." And the love meant, is Christ's redeeming love. 2 Cor. 7:1, "Having these promises [of forgiveness], let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit." Because God has blotted out all his past sin, the believer has the most encouraging of all motives to resist all future sin. Had God not pardoned the past, it would be futile to struggle in the future. — William G.T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*.

Justification also frees the soul for true Christian service. Dr. W.H. Griffith Thomas puts this well:

It [justification] is also the secret of true spiritual service. The soul released from anxiety about *itself*, is free to exercise concern about *others*. The heart is at leisure from itself to set forward the salvation of those around. — W. H. Griffith Thomas, *The Principles of Theology: An Introduction to the Thirty-nine Articles*, p. 194.

## 3. Effectively

The Holy Spirit is the *effective* Agent of sanctification. God sends Him into the hearts of His people in order that they might be sanctified. How then can our sanctified obedience be the condition for receiving the Holy Spirit? Yet on every hand we read books and listen to sermons telling us how we may receive the Holy Spirit by "five steps", "seven steps", "absolute surrender", and other amazing feats of human endeavor.

Some even teach that the outpouring of God's Spirit will take place when God's people are fully sanctified. But if we could do these things in order to get the Holy Spirit, what would we need the Spirit for?

What is the testimony of God's Word? Simply that Christ, by His perfect righteousness, has won for us the gift of God's Spirit. The Spirit has been given to this one Man—"Exalted to the right hand of God, He has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear." Acts 2: 33—and all who receive this one Man are forgiven and receive the Holy Spirit without measure.

You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified.<sup>2</sup> I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard?...<sup>14</sup> He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit. —Gal. 3:1-2, 14.

The way of justification by faith is the only way of receiving the Spirit of God. To be justified means *to be declared righteous*. It means that God not only *regards* us as righteous, but can proceed to *treat* us as righteous. How does He treat the forgiven sinner as righteous? *By giving him the gift of the Holy Spirit*. Nothing more and nothing less than perfect righteousness is necessary for the outpouring of God's Spirit. As every believer has this perfect righteousness *imputed* to him, he may on this one infallible basis have the Holy Spirit *imparted* to him.

When the doctrine of justification by faith is allowed to languish, there is no Holy Spirit and, of course, no true sanctification — even though people spend all their time talking about getting ready for the outpouring of God's Spirit. When justification by faith is revived, the Spirit breathes new life into the church, and God's people run the way of sanctification with great joy and zeal.

These two gifts belong together — "the gift of righteousness" (Rom. 5:17), which is *imputed*, and the gift of the Spirit, which is *imparted* ("shed abroad in our hearts") (see Rom. 5:1, 5). We may separate these two blessings in the matter of thinking so that we may know where to repose in hope of salvation. But to separate justification and the gift of the Holy Spirit in point of time is a great mischief. It divides the Trinity and divides the church.

## 4. Positionally

Justification and sanctification are dual benefits which Christ won for man by His life, death and resurrection. Yet we cannot secure an interest in these benefits, we cannot share in them, unless we become one with Christ through faith-union. As Luther says, "He who believes shall possess all things, and he who believes not shall possess nothing."

Upon being united to Christ, we are justified, for "if the root be holy, so are the branches." Rom. 11:16. And if we are "in Christ," joined to Christ as the branch is united to the vine, it is inevitable that we will be "partakers of His holiness." Union with Christ therefore secures the two benefits. The legal benefit is justification, and the moral benefit is sanctification. It is impossible to secure one without the other. As Calvin says:

Christ cannot be torn into parts, so these two which we perceive in him together and conjointly are inseparable—namely, righteousness and sanctification. Whomever, therefore, God receives into grace, on them he at the same time bestows the spirit of adoption [Rom. 8:15], by whose power he remakes them to his own image.... Yet Scripture, even though it joins them, still lists them separately in order that God's manifold grace may better appear to us. — John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), Bk. 3, chap. 11, sec.6.

Why, then, are we justified by faith? Because by faith we grasp Christ's righteousness, by which alone we are reconciled to God. Yet you could not grasp this without at the same time grasping sanctification also. For he is "given unto us for righteousness, wisdom, sanctification and redemption." [I Cor. 1:30]. Therefore Christ justifies no one whom he does not at the same time sanctify. These benefits are joined together by an everlasting and indissoluble bond, so that those whom he illuminates by his wisdom, he redeems; those whom he redeems, he justifies; those whom he justifies, he sanctifies.—*Ibid.*, chap. 16, sec. 1.

Thus, whichever way we look at the relationship of justification and sanctification, they are inseparable. Says Dr. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones:

Do we realize that if we truly understand the doctrine of justification by faith we have already grasped the essence and nerve of the New Testament teaching about holiness and sanctification? Have we realized that to be justified by faith guarantees our sanctification, and that therefore we must never think of sanctification as a separate and subsequent experience? The Apostle's entire argument has been this, that if we truly realize what is meant by justification, we realize that it inevitably means that we are 'in Christ' also, and that that guarantees our deliverance from sin and our final glorification. — D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Romans: The New Man; Exposition of Chapter 6* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973), p. 190.