

## **THE DOCTRINE OF SANCTIFICATION *by Arthur W. Pink***

### **Chapter 28**

#### **The Process of Sanctification (completed)**

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When the young believer first realizes the dying love of Christ for him and the amazing grace of God unto him, his heart cries out, What can I do for Him who has done so much for me? The answer is, live to Him and for Him: "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead" (Rom. 6:13). "The believer is to give himself up to God without any reservation. He is to employ both body and mind in every work that God, by His Word, requires of him. He must decline no labour that God sets before him, no trial to which He calls him, no cross which He lays upon him. He is not to count his life dear to himself, if God demands it of him" (Robert Haldane). We are not our own, but bought with a price. The faculties of our souls and the members of our bodies, which previously were used only for self and to serve sin, are now to be used only for Him.

"Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead" (Rom. 6:13). An adequate development of the truth of vivification and a proper exposition of Romans 6:13 really calls for a detailed consideration of the whole of Romans 6--one of the most important chapters in the New Testament. In the first part of the chapter (vv. 1-10) the Apostle dwells upon the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as God's provision in grace for lost sinners--His way of meeting the dire need of His people and securing their salvation. The death of Christ exhausted the penalty of sin on the elect, and His resurrection secured their present title and future position of eternal glory. The Son of God incarnate was the Surety of God's people, making

Himself responsible for their debts, undertaking to fulfill all righteousness on their behalf, and putting away their sins by the sacrifice of Himself.

On the Cross Christ met all the demands of Divine justice in reference to the iniquities of His people. In rising again from the dead, "after the power of an endless life," Christ secured their full discharge, and in that endless life He "liveth unto God" (v. 10)--fulfilling all of God's will in reference to us, performing all God's pleasure concerning us, securing all God's purpose of grace toward us, becoming the Author of eternal salvation to all that obey Him. By revealing to us these wondrous and blessed facts the Holy Spirit has transferred from self all ground of confidence and hope, fixing them upon Christ, and on Him alone. And because of this we are exhorted, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:11)--account yourselves to be so identified with Christ, so legally one with Him, that His death was your death, His resurrection your resurrection.

"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." This is a Divine command, equally binding on all believers, at all times--in every phase of their experience and under every circumstance. To "reckon" means to act faith on the same, to unquestioningly accept God's testimony thereto. It is not to be a mere passing influence on the mind when we are undisturbed by active temptations, no mere happy frame of spirit when under a refreshing from the presence of the Lord, but an abiding conviction and assurance. But someone will at once object, Alas, I have the daily evidence that I am not dead unto sin, and to ask me to believe that I am, is an impossibility. Ah, God does not ask us to reckon or regard ourselves as being dead unto sin practically, but judicially so--dead to its guilt, dead to its condemnation, dead to its penalty, because Christ received the wages of sin on our behalf.

See how God has anticipated and met this very objection here in Romans 6:11. "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." In verse 10 the

Apostle had affirmed that Christ Himself "died unto sin once; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God"; and now the command is "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be," etc. Like as Christ died unto sin, so the Christian is (by faith in what God has declared) to reckon himself also "to be dead indeed unto sin"; and, like as Christ lives unto God, so is the Christian to consider himself as being alive to God. Now how did Christ die unto sin? You say that you cannot believe yourself to be dead unto sin while the presence and pollution of it plagues your daily experience. My reader, Christ did not die unto sin in that sense. No, He never had the coldness, hardness, inconsistency, and failures you complain of--for He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." Christ died as suffering the penalty of it; He died to expiate it, to blot it out of God's sight by His precious blood, and to so blot you out of God's sight as one against whom not a single sin can ever be charged.

The general subject of the first half of Romans 6 is the believer's justification or deliverance from the guilt of sin; the subject of the second half is the believer's sanctification, or his deliverance from the power of sin. The dividing line is verse 11, where we are exhorted to set to our seal that God is true and acts faithfully in our federal union with Christ in His death and resurrection. On that foundation we are then bidden to "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof" (v. 12). You have been judicially freed from sin: see to it, then, that you are practically delivered from its domination. Watch unto prayer, lest ye enter into temptation, for though the spirit be willing, yet the flesh is weak. Settle it in your minds that unless sin be mortified daily in your hearts, it will assert itself and more or less obtain the mastery over your members. Sin is still in you, and if permitted, will reign over you. But remember also there are resources in Christ to help in every difficulty, strength enough to overcome in you, grace enough in Him to be sufficient for you.

"Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the

dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" (Rom. 6:13). This is the practical response which the believer is required to make unto the amazing grace which God has exercised toward him through Christ. Having been judicially delivered from death when his Surety rose again, having been quickened by the Spirit, he is to act to conduct himself as one who is spiritually alive--he is to yield himself unto God. It is very striking to observe the variation of language in the two clauses: "neither yield ye your members . . . but yield yourselves . . . and your members." The Apostle does not say "neither yield ye yourselves as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin," for, thank God, that is no longer possible--Christ standing at God's right hand prevents the believer yielding himself to the service of that from which He has redeemed him. But he can "yield his members unto sin"--his thoughts, his impulses, his eyes, his hands, etc. To prevent that, he is to yield himself unto God, that is, unreservedly consecrate himself to His service.

"Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." The general dedication is the ground of the particular outworking of the same. I am God's, and then I use my time and strength for Him. We are to give up ourselves to Him not in part, but in whole; to serve Him with all our hearts and might. We are to give up ourselves to Him in order to be governed and disposed by Him: to be what He would have us be, and to do what He would have us do; to subject ourselves to His disposing will, and submit ourselves to His commanding will. "Let Him (the Lord) do unto me as seemeth good unto Him" (2 Sam. 15:26) is to be the Christian's attitude--"Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (Acts. 9:6) is to be our readiness to obey. God has given Himself to us in the Person of His Son: the least we can do in return is to give ourselves up to Him, spirit and soul and body.

"But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life" (Rom. 6:22). This order is unchangeable: mortification, vivification, fruitfulness. There is a

direct antithesis from what has been said in verses 20, 21: "For when ye were the servants of sin . . . what fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death." In the service of sin is nothing to be had but shame and death; but in the service of God the fruit is holiness, and the issue everlasting life. The more we serve God the more holy shall we be, and the larger will be our capacity for happiness in the life to come. Here, then, is the secret and essence of practical sanctification: the measure in which we really yield ourselves to God, is the measure in which we shall be fruitful and pleasing to Him. Obedience carries its own reward in itself, for holiness is the same in the soul as health is in the body.

Vivification, or living unto God, is a miraculous change of the heart by Divine grace, and then the acting out of that grace which was received at regeneration. They that have received grace are not to sit down in idle contentment, but see to it what remains of their earthly existence be entirely yielded up to God. As the first act of faith is a surrendering of ourselves unto God in Christ (2 Cor. 8:5), so a life of faith consists in a continued devotedness unto God. We began by receiving Christ as Lord (Col. 2:6), and we are to continue in the exercise of entire dependence on Him in all His offices: His prophetic to enlighten us, His priestly to intercede for us, His kingly to rule over us. God's Law is our rule; and we delight in it after the inward man. Experimental sanctification is a deliverance from the tyranny of sin into a life of righteousness: begun at regeneration, continued by mortification and vivification, completed at glorification.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1). Under the Law those beasts which were offered to God were first separated from a common use--singled out from the flock or herd for this specific purpose. So the Christian has been called out from the world, and is no more to live unto himself--"For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles" (1

Peter 4:3). Then those animals were solemnly offered to God in sacrifice. In like manner, the Christian is to dedicate himself to the service of the Lord; to love, live unto, and glorify Him: "As ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness" (Rom. 6:19). The Christian is to walk in newness of life, delighting himself in God, seeking to please Him in all things, being completely submissive to His will.

Vivification or living unto God was, by many of the older writers, called "new obedience," in reference to that obedience which God requires from His people according to the tenor of the new covenant. The rule of our performance of this obedience is the revealed will of God, but the rule of its acceptance is its sincerity and impartiality. Because God does not yet (in this life) renew us perfectly to His image--leaving in us a contrary principle--He accepts an imperfect obedience, namely, an obedience which is rendered to Him in all known instances of duty, and sincere in the manner of its performance. It is not that a lower and inferior righteousness answers the ends of God's glory under the new covenant than was the case under the old, but that our evangelical obedience does not hold the same place which obedience did under the (Adamic) Covenant of Works. Under the former our obedience would have been our righteousness, absolutely, before God, whereby we should have been justified in His sight--but that place is now filled by the obedience of Christ, our Mediator.

God has appointed this evangelical obedience (which is required by the new covenant), as the means whereby we show our subjection to Him, our dependence upon Him, our fruitfulness and thankfulness unto Him, and as the only way of converse and intercourse with Him. It is by our submission, service, and devotedness unto God, that we improve the effects of His love unto us, the benefits of Christ's mediation, and whereby we glorify Him in this world. Vivification, then, is the living of a holy life unto God, constrained by the love of Christ, regulated by the Divine commands. In the outworking of vivification, the Christian is no longer greedy to catch at every opportunity

of pleasure and profit in worldly concerns, caring not how he obtains them-- but is occupied with God's will for him, and is careful to follow it out, so that he may be "filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God" (Phil. 1:11).

The title which God has unto unreserved and hearty obedience from His people is an indubitable one, and it is one which He presses upon us in His Word again and again: "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:19, 20). We belong to God first of all by predestination: He chose us for Himself, as His portion and heritage, and therefore it should be our chief concern to give Him pleasure. Second, we belong to God by creation: we are the work of His hands, and therefore it should be our deepest desire to be vessels unto His honour. Third, we belong to God by redemption: we are His purchased property: the right of personal ownership is His, and our responsibility is to be used in His service. Fourth, we belong to Him by regeneration, whereby He has made us His children, and the Father has an unqualified right to demand loving obedience from His offspring. Finally, we belong to Him by consecration: this is a voluntary act whereby we have dedicated ourselves to Him.

There is nothing so pleasant, honourable, or profitable, as living unto God, having communion with Him in the path of obedience. Pleasant it certainly is to the renewed soul, for just so far as we are subject to God's will, are we in harmony with Him. Nothing so breeds serenity of mind, peace of conscience, assurance of God's favour, as when we are engaged in those things which are pleasing in His sight. All the unhappiness there is in the world is the outcome of sin, and therefore, the further we keep from sin, the more shall we discover the secret of true happiness. "The work (fruit) of righteous (right-doing) shall be peace" (Isa. 32:17). When our animal spirits keep their due proportion and temperature, cheerfulness and health of body ensues--and when the faculties of the soul are regulated by holiness,

spiritual health is secured. Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace" (Prov. 3:17).

Nothing is more honourable than to be a dutiful servant of God. "The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour" (Prov. 12:26). The judgment of the unregenerate is darkened by sin and blinded by Satan, and therefore they suppose it to be a weak and mean thing to be godly. And, on the contrary, imagine it is a sort of excellency to be free from the restraints of piety, and to live a life of pomp and ease, without any care of the life to come. The deluded worldling has no esteem for a pious man and prizes only that which is carnal and transient. But the things which are highly esteemed among men are abominations in the sight of God (Luke 16:15), whereas the things they despise He regards as of great price (1 Peter 3:4). Since God is the sum of all excellency, they are most excellent who approximate the closest to His likeness. If honour be derived from the real fount of honour, then those who are the most Godlike are the most honourable, the "excellent" of the earth (Psa. 16:3).

Nothing is more profitable than to live in subjection to God, for it gaineth His favour and fellowship for the present, and makes way for an everlasting fruition of Him in Glory. What an unprofitable drudgery is the life of an unsanctified worldling in comparison with that of a holy man who waits upon God and has access of welcome unto Him. "It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes" (Psa. 118:9). The princes of earth are very uncertain and fickle, but God changes not. The poorest Christian is never denied an audience at the Throne of Grace, never upbraided for seeking mercy, never reproached for the frequency of his appeals. What can bring greater blessing to the soul than daily attendance upon the King of kings: the heart engaged in loving Him, the tongue in praising Him, the life in serving Him! This is to secure a foretaste of the pleasures and joys that await us on High: it is Heaven begun on earth: it is to enjoy the smiles and approbation of Him who delighteth in the righteous.



What considerations are these to stir us up unto vivification! How they should persuade us to make our devotedness to God more evident! First, by manifesting the change itself: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" (2 Cor. 5:17), and then by our increase in the same: "Ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more" (1 Thess. 4:1). It is not an indifferent thing whether we be eminent in obedience or not-God makes a great matter of it, as appears from His injunctions: "Thou hast commanded us to keep Thy precepts diligently" (Psa. 119:4); as also by His promises: "O that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear Me, and keep all My commandments always, that it might be well with them" (Deut. 5:29). By our obedience Christ is glorified, grace is magnified, and God is gratified. By our obedience we are preserved from the paths of the destroyer, kept from placing a stumbling-block before our fellows, and prevented from ruining our testimony.

Vivification or living unto God is the same thing as being conformed unto the image of His Son, or emulating the example which Christ has left us: "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked" (1 John 2:6). Christ is a pattern unto us in His graces, His states, and in the special acts of His mediation. None so perfectly exemplified the graces of faith, patience, humility, self-denial, and obedience, and therefore did He say, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me" (Matt. 11:29). The states through which Christ passed were those of humiliation and exaltation, and the members follow their Head, in first suffering and then entering into Glory (Rom. 8:17). The special acts of Christ's mediation were His death and resurrection, and to these also we are to be conformed (Phil. 3:10, 11). Experimental sanctification, then, consists in Christlikeness.

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[Previous Chapter](#)

[Next Chapter](#)

[Table of Contents](#)

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**[Return to \*The Sovereign Grace Home Page\*](#)**