

The Covenants, Grace, And Law (Part Nine)

Sanctification, conclusion

John W. Ritenbaugh

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I am going to be continuing the series that I began a long time ago, it seems, on the covenants. Most specifically, we are going to be continuing the sermon that I began just prior to Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread in regard to sanctification.

I've been saying the past few sermons in this series that it's not been Satan's purpose merely to induce us into breaking a few laws, but rather to blow God's whole purpose right out of the water—by virtually obliterating one whole major step. And that major step is the one that is in the Bible called "sanctification." It is also called "holiness."

I'm going to begin this particular sermon by reminding us, as plainly as I possibly can, how this progressed. But please understand that this series has been approached from a doctrinal standpoint. I haven't even addressed the "spiritual malaise," called in the Bible Laodiceanism, that the church was already deeply involved in before the doctrinal changes even took place. If it hadn't been for that and the resulting sin that it produced, it is entirely possible that the church would not have had to suffer the doctrinal changes that took place. This was not done in one great giant leap. (I mean, these changes.) Rather, it was done inch by inch, subtly, gradually—forcing compromise upon us and our belief system.

The very first thing that I caught personally, by way of a doctrinal change, was actually in a rather minor doctrine; and I'm not really going to go into that. But the next thing that really caught my attention was an attack on faith. What it did is that it began making people unsure as to how it should be used in a major area of life.

This was done through the change in *the healing doctrine*. This was done all the way back in 1987. There were three publications of the booklet. Each one was different from the preceding [ones], and all of them were very different

from what we had been taught under Mr. Armstrong, which made an ideal crystal clear—so that anybody could understand how faith (as an ideal) applied in this situation.

But after that, the next major step occurred with *the born again doctrine* change. Satan, through these men, began making uncertain as to what one was to do with one's life after baptism. If one has already been "born again," what more remains to be done? It subtly begins to introduce the concept of completeness—that is, that something is finished, rather than just beginning.

When I was younger, I would see signs along virtually every road in rural areas (that I traveled in, anyway) that said, "You must be born again." The signs never gave one the impression that there was any more required. Just be "born again" and salvation was all wrapped up in one neat cliché. But the doctrine we received through Mr. Armstrong made it clear that we were **just beginning!** We were regenerated, and much growing had to follow. But Satan leaves one step out—a major step! And in the analogies that are given in the Bible, it's as though one flees Egypt and then stands there, just outside the border.

Next, the goal was made uncertain and put in question by the teaching that we are not going to be God. They finally came to a compromise—that we are going to be greater than angels, but less than God. But the Bible plainly says that we are going to be like Him. And not only that, Jesus is the firstborn of many brethren! Do you have any brothers or sisters in your family who are "less" or "greater than" you? I mean, in what we are—humanly. That defies biblical logic. That defies truth.

After that introduction of confusion came a real masterful stroke. It was decided that the gospel was really not about the Kingdom of God, but about Christ. In this Protestant world in which we live, that might sound acceptable—because this is what they have been saying all along, and because there is so much written about Him in the Bible. And He is, without doubt, the most important figure in all of human history. But, if one accepts that change, it again deflects a person's purpose away from the Kingdom of God.

We just heard a message [on an audio cassette] given by Mr. Armstrong in which he made it clear that the message came from God the Father through Jesus Christ, and that it was called by our Boss and Savior "the gospel of the Kingdom of God." You can't have any higher and greater authority than that! But these people put it upon themselves that that was not the central issue; that a Personality was.

It says about Abraham that the father of the faithful "looked for a city... whose builder and maker is God." It doesn't say that Abraham looked for a Personality. But the relationship with the Personality, the knowledge of the Personality, and faith and appreciation of the Personality, grow as we walk together towards the same destination. He's already been there. He's already been over the way. He guides us there. But the goal is the Kingdom of God. The Guide Himself said, "Seek you first the Kingdom of God."

Then came a real bombshell. It was so big that they were afraid to announce it in one fell swoop. It was *the* Trinity doctrine. They lied to us—saying that it wasn't really "the Trinity." But all the while the Protestants who were watching and listening (I mean the people from the cult watchers) were saying, "Oh yes, it is the Trinity! Regardless of what they say, it is the Trinity."

But what does the Trinity doctrine do? It totally confuses **the nature of God** by transforming a very clear biblical revelation—that God is a Family, Kingdom, with form and shape (after which we are patterned)—into what essentially amounts to little more than ethereal nothingness. Some people said that it turned God into a blob. Again, you see, subtly (sometimes flagrantly) **the goal** is made indistinct. If you don't know where you are going, you aren't going to know how to get there. Abraham looked for a city!

By the time that [change] was done, we were ready for the *coup de grace*: Do away with sanctification by teaching people openly or subtly that either (1) the law is done away or that (2) one or more of the Ten Commandments are done away. Never mind that the Bible itself says that if one breaks one of those laws of the perfect law of liberty then one has broken them all. Never mind that the Bible clearly shows that the law is the basic guide for how we are to live. That is, it is the foundational rules of how one conducts

relationships. Never mind that the Bible says that the law of the Lord converts (changes) the soul (the life). Never mind that God says clearly that the law of God in the New Covenant is going to be written in our hearts.

That being "written in our hearts" is not something that occurs without effort—without yielding on our part, without sacrifice, without exercise. It is accomplished through the efforts of both God and each individual in cooperation with each other. It is not merely something miraculously infused within us. And yet, brethren, by eliminating this step, it assures that we will never be transformed into the image of God. We will never be the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. We will never be in the image of God because we will never agree with God's character, and thus, we will be unable to walk together with Him.

Sanctification is that step in God's plan that shows on the outside of a person. **Justification** cannot be seen, because it is a judicial declaration on God's part (by His grace) because we believe, because we have confessed our sins. But sanctification is the **witness** to the world that we are led by God's Holy Spirit! Spiritually, sanctification is the only certain evidence that one has the Spirit of God and has been regenerated by Him. That is because in sanctification the fruit of God's Spirit is produced.

Romans 8:9 But you are not in the flesh [that is, in union with the flesh], but in the Spirit [that is, in union with the Spirit], if so be that the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.

I am not qualifying this by judging how fast growth will appear. But I do know this: Our God is a very active God. He is a creator. Yes, He is patient. But He is a builder, and He is building a family. He is building a kingdom. And that Spirit is from Him. He directs it within us. That Spirit is not going to lie dormant within us. Things begin to happen **immediately!**

But in the spiritual process—even though that Spirit does not lie dormant—we have the power to exercise some control over it. By using our free moral

agency to **quench it**, we can choose to do wrongly. We can choose not to yield. We have the power to quench that Spirit, or to **stir it up**. We can fan it into a flame. We can burn it—blow it red hot! Or we can hold it back.

Galatians 5:13 [Paul says:] For, brethren, you have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

Connect this with the thought in Romans 8:9. It says that we are not in union with the flesh. We are now in union with the Spirit. But Paul means us to understand that we exercise a **power** here—a **control**. So he says here, "Make the right choice! Don't use your liberty as an occasion of the flesh, but by love serve one another."

Galatians 5:14-15 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." But if you bite and devour one another, take heed that you be not consumed one of another.

He's saying this to Christians. We have a choice to make—many choices to make!

Galatians 5:16 This I say then [a concluding statement for this short context], "Walk in the Spirit [Choose to do that! Walk in union with the Spirit. Be joined with it.], and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."

So Paul is clearly saying that we have a **choice** in this process. If we choose correctly, the fruits of that Spirit (because that's where the context goes right on to show)—the fruits of the correct choices—will begin to give evidence of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:24-25 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Many of us here in the Chicago area these past couple of days have been staying at a Marriott Courtyard. I noticed the young lady who was at the desk when we checked in had a big badge on her lapel that said, "Walk the talk." Guess where that came from. The Courtyard people are trying to encourage their people to act—to conduct themselves—in the way that Marriott is teaching them to be good servants in a Courtyard Motel. Walk the talk! Walk the teaching. That's what Paul is saying here. We can choose to do that. The Courtyard employees can choose to do that. Or they can choose to act like an ignoramus. I don't think that Marriott wants them to do that. God doesn't want us to do that either.

Romans 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

Now, sanctification is the *seal*. Do you know what a seal is? Anciently, it was the stamp of authority—the stamp of approval, the stamp that verified that this was authentic. In regard to whether or not we have the Spirit of God, **sanctification** is what authenticates that we have the Spirit of God. It stamps us as His children. Do you know why? (It's such a simple thing.) We begin to look in character like God. We begin to look like Him in terms of character because we are beginning to live life like Him—**holy**.

We aren't given the privilege of reading the Book of Life to see whose names are entered. But God clearly shows us, in His Word, that those who have His Spirit are distinguished. They give **evidence** of—they are shown, they are revealed, they are manifested by—**holy lives**. Remember what Jesus said. He said, "If you've seen Me, you've seen the Father." Why? Because He lived His life like the Father would have.

I Peter 1:1-2 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

Let's follow this thought in a few of these letters. We are identified through sanctification, because justification, of and by itself, can't be seen. But sanctification can't be missed—any more than a pregnant woman can be "missed" either, because her body shows the evidence.

II Thessalonians 2:13 But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.

Ephesians 1:4 According as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy [It's the same word, brethren—only here translated "holy."] and without blame before Him in love.

Romans 8:29 For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

This step of sanctification cannot be left out of God's purpose, because it is the step whereby we are **transformed** into the image of His Son, into the image of the Father. It is in this step where we begin to take on the characteristics of the Family—where we begin to look like the Family, because we act like the Family. I'm not talking that we look like Them physically. Each one of us has our own distinguishable characteristics. But the character, the mindset, the attitudes, the perspective, the way we think, the way we look at things begins to become just like the Family's. And Jesus said that a city set on a hill can't be hidden. He said to let your light so shine before men that they *see* your good works. (We'll get to that in just a little bit.)

Sanctification—if it is taking place—cannot be hidden. So why is God so concerned about this? Because (1) this is the step in His purpose in which the major portion of the transformation takes place, and because (2) it can be seen. This is how **the witness** is made! Thus, when Paul saw the working faith, and the laboring love, and the patient hope of the Thessalonians, he says:

I Thessalonians 1:3-4 Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father. [When he saw those things, he then said:] Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.

He saw the fruits of their life, and he knew that these people had been regenerated by God—that they had the Spirit of God—because they were looking like the Family. Therefore, if a person claims to be a son of God, but habitually lives in sin, that person is deceiving himself. Those qualities that identify a spiritual ancestry begin to show. The Family ties can be seen.

Turn with me to Luke 6:44, and here comes a principle. Apply this to human beings.

Luke 6:44-45 For every tree is known by its own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

What did Jesus say there? He is saying that sanctification will be **seen**. Sanctification will be **heard**—because "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." If the heart has been regenerated by the Spirit of God, the mouth will begin to speak like God does!

A person's works produce the fruits, and the heart then is known by what it produces. It's interesting because this produces a peculiar effect within the converted person. That is, while good fruit is showing, the converted person sees himself thoroughly encompassed by weakness.

I'll give you an example of this. Whenever Moses came down from the mount, after being with God, his face radiated the reflected glory of God. Do you know what? He didn't know it! He himself was unaware that his face was glowing with the reflected glory of God.

Now there is a New Testament equivalent of this. It occurs in Matthew 25. In the parable of the sheep and the goats, He separates the sheep on the one side and the goat on the other. And what do the sheep say to their lord and master? "When did we feed you? When did we clothe you?" They weren't even aware that they were producing the right fruit and reflecting the glory of God.

This has a very interesting application to what is going on within the church of God today. I want you to think about what they have said is "done away." What have they said has been done away? [It's] the Sabbath, the holy days, tithing, clean and unclean. I want you to think about that. All of these have something in common. That is, each of them is part of the group of the most clearly seen—publicly understood—aspects of the truth of God.

This is why God said that the keeping of the Sabbath is **a sign**. It can be seen by your friends. It witnesses of the fact that God is working in your life. You can't hide it. It's the same thing with the holy days. You take off to go to the Feast of Tabernacles, and your neighbors know it. They may not know it the first year; but they begin to recognize that you go off at the same time of the year, and you know that scuttlebutt goes through the neighborhood. "Where was this family?" "Well, they go here. They go there." You are witnessing that the Holy Spirit is working in your life.

The same thing is true in regard to clean and unclean [meats] as well. The same thing is true in regard to tithing. That's one that gets a little bit closer to the family. Maybe your neighbors don't know that you are tithing, but usually your relatives do. You just begin to extrapolate on this principle, and you begin to see why Satan wants these things to be done. Not only do they **stop** your development, but they also **stop** the witness before the public of your life. They **stop** the process of sanctification very cleverly.

No sanctification—no transformation! No transformation—no Kingdom of God for you, because you don't fit in the Family. You aren't like the Family. Satan is trying to blow this whole thing right out of the water, and he has done it inch by inch, very cleverly suggesting little compromises all along the way. "Oh, I can live with this. Yes, they're teaching that; but I don't believe it." And then the next change comes. "Oh, I can live with this.

They're teaching that, but I don't believe it." And then the next change comes. "Oh, I can live with this." And the first thing you know, you are backed into a corner; and you *are* believing it.

So all the while, on the outside of the sanctified person the fruit is showing, but the person sees himself thoroughly encompassed by weakness. (We'll get on to this subject a little bit more later on.) So whether or not the Christian himself sees it, others will see it. And so the witness is made.

Again, we are not talking about the quality or the intensity of the reflected glory. A little spark in a dark room may not be much, but it can still be seen. The person is not completely dead until their pulse stops. But if nothing can be seen but worldliness, then that person is **not** a Christian.

A major portion of sanctification is **our responsibility!** Let's go back to Matthew 26, and we'll begin to pick up on a principle here. Remember how we read that scripture in John 13:17, where Jesus said, "Happy are you [or, blessed are you] if you do these things." We have to do it in order to produce the fruit.

Matthew 26:26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."

Now, what if they chose not to do it? What if they decided, "Well, Jesus, You say that, but I'm not going to do it." Then what occurs? Well, let's look at John 6—where Jesus makes this principle even plainer.

John 6:47-51 Verily, verily, I say unto you, "He that believes on Me has everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever."

It's a question. A choice has to be made. It's something that we are responsible for.

John 6:51-53 "The bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Then Jesus said unto them, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you have no life in you."

You see, "except." Except we **choose!** That's our responsibility. We can choose to *intensify* the sanctification process, or we can choose to *stop* it. That's our choice. God says, "*See, I have set before you this day **life** on the one hand and **death** on the other. Therefore, choose life!*" We can choose to go along with the program. And if we do, we cannot hide the fruit. It will be produced. But we can choose to reject it. That's our responsibility—to make the choice.

John 6:57-58 "As the living Father has sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eats Me, even he shall live by Me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eats of this bread shall live forever."

John 6:63 It is the spirit that quickens; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

So sanctification is produced through the Holy Spirit by means of our works of yielding to God. So every one of us has the power to *lose* our eternal life. But we are under the obligation to *choose* life! We are obligated because, by our choice—by the exercise of our belief in the broken body of Jesus Christ and His shed blood—we have chosen to ask God to forgive our sins. God gives us grace. He therefore purchases us. He redeems us from the power of death. He redeems us from our captivity to Satan the devil. We are then obligated to give Him our life. And so He gives us His Spirit and then tells us (I'm going to add something here), "Choose to be sanctified. Choose to be transformed. Choose life. Choose to produce the fruits of God's Spirit." And we have very great power given to us.

Philippians 2:12-13 Wherefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my

absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

There is no question that God can save us. There is no question that He can make us inheritors of the land. There is no question that He can give us eternal life. That's beyond question! He has the power to do it. He has the will to do it. He wants to do it. It's part of His purpose. But we can stop the process. We can choose not to be sanctified. That's why He says, "Work out your own salvation."

You see we learn from the analogy of Israel in the wilderness, how that the first generation that came out chose—they made the choice—to die in the wilderness. It wasn't God's purpose that they die there. He had the power to get Israel into the land. Indeed, He did it.

But their lack of faith, their disbelief, their stiff necks, the fact that they never got rid of their Egyptian thinking, they wouldn't yield, they wouldn't make the right choices (like Joshua and Caleb did)—so their bodies were scattered all through the wilderness. That's a lesson to us. That's what Paul meant there in I Corinthians 10. He was saying, in effect, "Choose, please. Don't choose to do what these people did—in lusting, tempting God."

Those things are examples to us. So who can we possibly blame if we don't make it? Has not God called us? Hasn't He given us His grace? Hasn't He given us His Spirit, a new heart, the divine nature, access to Him, the promise that He will never give us any trial that is too great for us? The additional promise (there in Hebrews 13:5), "I will never—never, never, never—leave you nor forsake you."

God is not demanding that we do everything perfectly from day one, but He does want to see in us that we want to be there! And that we are making efforts to walk the talk. He wants to see that we don't go backwards. He wants to see that we move off dead center. He wants to see that we begin growing on a steady, consistent basis—regardless of how fast it is. He wants to see that we are applying what He is giving to us. He will even go so far as to add whatever we lack. He will give us the gifts that we need in order to serve Him. If we do what He wants us to do, the changes will take place.

The [doctrinal] changes that have taken place within the major body of the Church of God eventually leave one with the impression that salvation is complete at justification. But that's completely out of step with Colossians 1: 22, where it says "*if you continue....*" Israel had to walk to the Promised Land. As they walked, they were **prepared** to inherit that land. They became sanctified. Again (with repetition in mind), sanctification is what gives **evidence of growth**. But do not be misled into thinking that growth is a constant. That is, that once we have grown and overcome something, that we no longer have to be concerned about that carnal characteristic ever becoming a problem again.

Is there not a very clear parallel of this in the physical? Remember the scriptures that we just read there in John 6, about "eating" Christ. What happens physically when we fail to eat at all, or we fail to eat a proper diet? If we fail to eat at all (that is, if we fast or we starve), we begin to lose strength very quickly, do we not? If we eat an improper diet, then we will begin to lose strength; but it won't show up as quickly as if we just stopped eating altogether. Eventually, we become diseased, and our health fails.

This can happen at any time in life. We could eat a good diet for thirty-five or forty years. But then, if we choose to not eat a good diet, our health begins to deteriorate. It can't be stopped. That's **a law** of this universe. You've heard people say, "*You are what you eat.*" That is very close to being true. Maybe it is absolutely true. It probably comes closer to being absolutely true, because our body has to use the material that we give it to work with. And so, if we feed it good material, the chances are going to be great that it will be able to make the best use out of it. But, if we feed it poor material, it cannot miraculously turn it into good health.

The same is true of exercise. Paul said that bodily exercise profits—"for a little while" is what is intended. Researchers have proved that absolutely. My source for this is the very first book that was written on aerobics (At least, it was the very first one that I read.) by Dr. Kenneth Cooper. This was all the way back in the '60s, when aerobics programs were just beginning to get under way. But I read in his book that laboratory tests had shown that, when you stop exercising, your body begins to deteriorate after three days.

You probably would not be able to tell that it was deteriorating after three days. But, like I said, laboratory tests show that it begins to deteriorate almost immediately. And you see the same process is at work spiritually. Our body, our mind, our spirit needs to be stirred up. It needs to be fed the right kind of material. The best material comes out of God's Word. That's why Jesus said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." They generate towards good **spiritual life**—so that we have the strength then to make the most effort towards the proper kind of sanctification. So the same process is at work spiritually as physically. It may not be an exact parallel, but it is nonetheless a parallel.

I Thessalonians 5:23-24 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly [completely]; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calls you, who also will do it.

God does not need to be persuaded to help us be sanctified. But first I want you to see—is not Paul saying (in verse 23) that we are not completely sanctified? "May the God of peace sanctify you wholly"—completely!

Now, we can never be "more pardoned" and "more justified" than when we first believed and were forgiven. We do not grow in justification. We do not become more justified than before. It is impossible to be more justified than when one is justified and declared righteous by the blood of Jesus Christ.

But a person may become "more sanctified" even as a person may become stronger or weaker, depending upon the circumstances of his life. And when we obey and follow God's way, every time we overcome something—every time that some of God's attitudes, His mind, His character becomes a part of us—we are strengthened. We are enlarged in sanctification. But not justification, as that would be an insult to the spirit of grace—to think that we could be ever more justified than to be declared righteous on the basis of the righteousness of Christ. Then we would be giving ourselves credit for "our" great works, and we would be deceived to the *n*th degree.

I Thessalonians 4:1 Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as you have received of us

how you ought to walk and to please God, so you would abound more and more.

Abound! When we really "get on" in our spiritual life, we see more, we know more, we feel more, we do more, and we repent more in proportion to our closeness to God! We are, in short, then **growing in grace** (even as Peter said).

No one who neglects the spiritual big three or four—Bible study, prayer, meditation, and occasional fasting—can expect to make much progress in sanctification, because these are the channels through which **spiritual strength** flows from God. They produce faith, and then obedience. It is through these means that fresh supplies of His grace flows. And this is why having access to God through Jesus Christ is so important. There are **no spiritual gains without the pains**.

Would you expect a farmer to have a crop who never even looked at his fields until harvest time? That's ridiculous! The farmer has to get out there, and he has to sow the seeds. Does not God say, in James 3, that the fruits of righteousness are sown in peace by those who make peace? The fruits of righteousness have to be **sown!** That's work.

Now, what are the fruits of righteousness? [They are] love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, meekness, kindness, faith, self-control. But they have to be sown. They have to be worked at. They have to be cultivated. They have to be pruned. We see *a process*. As those fruits begin to be produced, **sanctification** cannot be hidden (any more than the fruit on a tree can be hidden). We will never attain to much **holiness** without those—Bible study, prayer, fasting, meditation, and obedience—because this is how **spiritual life** is sown, cultivated, and fertilized so that fruit is produced.

I said a little while ago that there was one aspect of this that we were going to get back to. That was when I mentioned to you that frequently the person who is **showing the fruits** of God's reflective glory is unaware that he is actually showing them.

Galatians 5:17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that you cannot do the things that you would. [That is, the things that we would like to do.]

This is very interesting. To the Christian, it is sometimes a very puzzling and distressing "side effect" to sanctification—to holiness. That is, that as he is growing, **internal conflict** frequently intensifies. This occurs *because* the person is growing, and is thus more intensely aware of how far he is from God's perfection. As he grows, he begins to "see" God far more clearly than he ever did before. And he becomes distressed, because he begins to see in himself that he doesn't even begin to shape up to what God is. He's ashamed of his dirt, ashamed that he's so filthy, ashamed that his character is so weak, ashamed that he allows his tongue to say things that he knows that he shouldn't, ashamed because thoughts go through his mind that he knows are filthy dirty. And he sees hate in his character, and he becomes distressed.

But, if he weren't growing, he would never see it! And this is the very thing that makes him want to change. An adult sees far more in a given situation than a child. It's a major mark of the adult's experience and his maturity. A professional grasps much more of his profession than does a novice. This is the same principle that is at work in the mind of the one **growing in holiness**. The expert is always more aware than the novice is.

I can remember when I was an apprentice welder. A lot of the welds that I had to make were on critical pipe joints, where maybe there was going to be 600-1200 pounds of steam pressure inside of that line. And whenever I was making a weld or assigned to a job that was on that kind of a high-pressure situation, and I was not yet a journeyman welder, my welds had to be inspected by a journeyman welder. I would make the weld, but the journeyman had to look at it. So frequently I would make the weld, and then the journeyman would look at it, with all of his experience. I would think that I had done a pretty good job. But he would tell me, and begin to point out, all the places where I had made some flaws. He could see from his experience what my untrained eyes and hands had failed to do.

That's what we are talking about here. And so the person who is really growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ—the person who is really being sanctified—they begin to become **distressed**. They see within themselves the flesh lusting against the spirit. They are pulled in each direction. Probably many years before, they would not even have been aware of what was going on inside of them. But, you see, they are beginning to become **trained in the holiness of God**, and they are distressed that they fall so far short.

Romans 7:22-25 [Paul says:] 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? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Was Paul "a novice" whenever he wrote the book of Romans? I hardly think that God would have a novice writing Scripture. I think the apostle Paul is one of the most mature Christians who ever walked the face of this earth. But he saw, even in himself, being torn—the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. And here was Paul, right in the middle—having to make the choice. If he hadn't grown, his mind would have just passed right over it; and he wouldn't even have seen it.

So, in the one hand, Paul delighted in his understanding of the purpose and perfection of God's law. Yet, on the other hand, that insight gave him much dismay—because he was able to see how far short he fell, from time to time, of its perfection. So the existence of this inward conflict is not a sign that the person is not sanctified. As long as we are in the flesh, we will never be entirely free of this struggle. Human nature does not go down without a fight. It must be overcome! And this evil entity within us actually becomes part of the means of our perfection.

Overcoming is a long process, and it requires diligent and humbling effort to subdue. But we must never allow ourselves to get into the attitude that all of this effort is somehow justifying us before God—even though it is pleasing

to God, and it is gratifying to us. The holiest of our actions, the holiest of the actions of the holiest saints, are still full of imperfections and defects. Even some of these are done from the wrong motive, or defective in some way in which they are done. They might even qualify as being nothing more than a splendid sin in God's sight. But we are saved by grace through faith. And even with that, God requires that we make effort to do what we can on our part.

Romans 3:20-21 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without [or, apart from] the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.

Do you see that? Where did righteousness apart from the law appear in the Bible? In the law, way back in the Old Testament! It's not anything new. It wasn't new with the New Covenant.

Romans 3:22-28 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness. That He might be just, and the justifier of him which believes in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No; but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without [apart from] the deeds of the law.

That doesn't exclude **our responsibility** to work for the purpose of sanctification. I hope you are getting this, brethren. *The works* are not for justification. *The works* are for sanctification. The works do not save us, but the works are essential for transformation! If I can put it bluntly (plainly), we have to **practice being God**. By that I mean "living like God." Is not that the way you become proficient at doing something? You know that is true.

There are many places in the Bible where God shows that He is very pleased with what we do. They [our works] don't save us, but they please Him. Hebrews 13:16; Colossians 3:20; I John 3:22—we could go on. He is so happy when we **work** at this sanctification. They don't save us, but they assist in the transformation process.

You ought to understand that, if you are a parent—how you are pleased by the stumbling efforts of your child to please you. So is God! He looks on the motive. He looks on the principle involved (in what the child is doing). He looks upon the intention. He's not just looking upon the quantity or the quality. He's looking at us as **His children**, who are trying to imitate Him.

Sanctification is necessary—absolutely necessary—in order to witness to God of our character and belief in Jesus Christ. We are going to conclude this sermon on this principle. John 6:29 says: "This is the work of God, that you believe on Him whom He has sent." Let's look at John 5:29. In verse 28, He shows that He is talking about the resurrection.

John 5:28-29 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice. And shall come forth; [Now, notice the qualifications here.] they that have done good...

Is it going to pay to have *works*? We have just seen Romans 3:22-28, which conclusively shows that works do not save us. Now I want to make it very clear that **we'd better have works!**

John 5:29 They that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

Why is one going to be in the resurrection of life, and the other one is going to be in the bad one? Those in **the resurrection to life** look like the Family. (And you know that I don't mean that they look in the face like the Family.)

Romans 14:10-12 But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you set at nought your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, "As I live," says the Lord,

"every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God." So then [Now notice this.] every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

"This is the work of God, that you **believe** in Him whom He has sent." We have just seen, in John 5:29, that *works* are going to play a part in those people coming up in the resurrection to life. Everybody has to give account to God for what he has done in the flesh. Now hold this in your mind as you turn to II Corinthians 5:10.

II Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he has done [Notice: "done." What action he has taken.], whether it be good or bad.

I hope that I am backing you into the corner, so that you understand that these people [making changes in doctrines] are trying to teach us lies—by confusing the issues, by blunting the incentive to keep the commandments of God and to make the right kind of choices, by trying to make people think that they don't have to do any works. I am trying to help us understand that the work is not required to save us. The work is to ensure that we are **changed!**

Revelation 20:13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

What does God want to see when we come before the judgment bar (as we are doing now, with our lives)? He wants to see **evidence**—evidence, evidence—in order to prove our case before God that we are indeed His children. And that judgment is based upon what we have done.

Again, a reminder: I am not qualifying here the quantity or the quality. God is so merciful! He tells us in I Corinthians 3 that, even though our works be burned up, we ourselves will be saved. Even though the works were of poor

quality, at least we have worked! We didn't just sit there dead in the water and do nothing. We apparently, at least, pleased Him enough to show that we wanted to be there.

Now, that judgment is in His hands. I am only encouraging us to see that He does require *works*. The works are not for justification. The works are for sanctification. The works aid in the transformation. The works aid in the growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. The works are made to help produce change. It is a cooperative effort that is done with God.

And I can guarantee you that, if a person does not make the efforts to change, they would be totally unhappy in the Kingdom of God. They would be like a fish out of water, because everybody in that Kingdom is going to be **holy**. Everybody in that Kingdom is going to do—they are going to live holy lives. (They wouldn't fit, and so they won't be there.)

Satan is trying to destroy God's purpose by subtly confusing **the necessity of good works**, and therefore stopping the process of sanctification through a perverted teaching on grace, on law, and covenants. But remember this: Hebrews 12:14 tells us that without **holiness** "no man shall see the Lord."