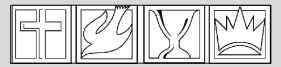


Lesson 4



The Daily Christian Life

We sin because we are born with a sin nature. We inherited it from our ancestors, going all the way back to Adam and his disobedience to God in the Garden of Eden (Romans 5:19). In the previous lesson, we learned that, when a person is born again, he or she receives the nature of Christ within. However, that does not mean the old sin nature packs up and leaves. We wish it would, but such is not the case. We now have two natures, the sin nature and the divine nature, that are totally opposed to one another (Galatians 5:17). One nature wants to please self, and the other wants to please God. That is why Christians feel such a struggle going on inside. It is also why Christians don't always live perfect lives.



If being born again does not mean either sinlessness or automatic obedience, what does it mean? It means new possibilities for the Christian--possibilities not available to the unbeliever! The human method of enforcing conformity to a standard is by compulsion, intimidation, and rewards. The Spirit's leading is much more gentle but, nevertheless, much more effective.

Overview

1 Peter 1:15-16 explains, "*just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy.'*" God desires that we walk in holiness. Though we are made right in God's eyes when we are saved, we don't always walk in holiness. We still falter and sin at times. Even after we are saved, none of us lives a perfect, holy life. However, God did not leave us without help. He has given us His Holy Spirit to assist us in our

Christian journey. This process of becoming holy in our Christian lives, is known as sanctification. The Bible refers to three types of sanctification.

The first, positional sanctification, occurs at salvation. The moment we repent of our sins and receive Christ as Savior, all our sins are forgiven, and God covers us with the righteousness of Jesus. Thus, when the Heavenly Father looks at us, He does not see the dirt and filth of our sins but the perfect life of Christ (1 Corinthians 1:30). In Him

we are made righteous, and obtain sanctification and redemption.

The second is progressive sanctification, and takes place throughout our Christian lives as we mature spiritually (Colossians 3:8-10 and Philippians 1:6). This will be the primary focus of this lesson.

The third, complete sanctification, takes place when we go to be with Jesus. We will be physically taken out of the presence of sin and will become, in experience, what we are in position -- holy (1 John 3:2).

DECLARATION OF FAITH

"We believe that having been cleansed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ and having received the witness of the Holy Spirit at conversion, it is the will of God that we be sanctified daily and become partners of His holiness; growing constantly stronger in faith, power, prayer, love and service, first as babies desiring the sincere milk of the Word; then as dear children walking humbly, seeking diligently the hidden life, where self decreases and Christ increases; then as strong men having on the whole armour of God, marching forth to new conquests in His name, beneath His blood-stained banner, ever living a patient, sober, unselfish, godly life that will be a true reflection of the Christ within."

– Aimee Semple McPherson,
Founder ICFG



God wants us to be like Jesus (Romans 8:29). When we are born again we come into new life in Christ. However, we are only young Christians and need to grow (1 Peter 2:2). From that place we need to mature in the faith (Hebrews 5:12-14). Maturity has to do with becoming more and more like the Jesus we love (2 Corinthians 3:18). It has to do with being holy and doing the right things (Ephesians 4:24). We grow up in the Lord.

THE GOD PART

(1) God the Father is involved in our sanctification (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24). God helps us to mature through His Word (John 17:17). The Bible, God's way of communicating, reveals what is right and what is wrong. It warns us, corrects us, and encourages us to live right. Sometimes the heavenly Father may even discipline us to help us grow spiritually (Hebrews 12:9-10). He will do whatever it takes to bring us to maturity while still allowing us a free will.

(2) Jesus sanctifies us by His Blood. The shed blood of Jesus cleanses us from all our sins (1 John 1:7); it's an ongoing thing in the believer's life. Hebrews 10:29 specifically says that we are sanctified by the blood of Christ. That does not mean that the blood is magical, but that Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, in which He shed His blood, paid the full price for our sins. This frees us from the power sin held over us so that we can live as we should (John 8:36; Romans 6:18).

(3) The Holy Spirit sanctifies us (Romans 15:16; 1 Peter 1:2). The Holy Spirit helps to change our

desires. He not only shifts our attitudes concerning sin but also produces fruit in our lives. *"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control"* (Galatians 5:22-23). The result of our daily Christian lives is the fruit we produce.

THE HUMAN PART

Only God can create fruit, but there are some things that we can do to cultivate it and help it grow. The believer does not just sit down and wait until he is sanctified. The Bible cannot help us if we do not read and obey it. The Spirit cannot sanctify if we don't yield to Him. Nowhere does the Bible say that it's easy to let the Holy Spirit rule our lives. The old sin nature keeps rising up, trying to regain control for its own selfish purposes. Thus, much of our Christian growth takes place in the day-to-day struggles of life (see Luke 9:23). We need to read and study the Bible, pray and seek His face, and keep ourselves in the place of spiritual fellowship and help. If we do our part diligently, certainly God will do His part (Philippians 2:12-13).

Even after a person becomes a Christian, the temptation to sin still exists because the old nature still exists. Romans 6:11-13 clearly tells us that, once we come to Christ, we still have a daily decision to make. We can return to habits and behavior that displeases God, or we can consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God. To be dead to sin is to acknowledge that Christ died for our sins and, therefore, we don't have to be controlled by sin anymore. That doesn't mean we will not make mistakes occasionally, but the pattern of sinning in our lives will change dramatically. Christ's death, in essence, was our death to sin, and His resurrection our resurrection in power to render us capable of overcoming sin.



Consider weaknesses in your life where sin may still be surfacing. Think of someone you might be accountable to in that area of your life. It could be a friend, relative, or pastor. It would need to be someone you could trust to be absolutely confidential, but who would also demand accountability. Contact that person before the week is over. If you cannot think of anyone, pray diligently that God will send such a person into your life.



HEART PERSPECTIVE

As we become more like Jesus in our daily Christian lives, several things will change.

- We will have the eyes of Jesus and begin to see things from His viewpoint. We will look at a lost and hurting world through eyes of compassion. We will also be able to see things for what they really are. We will see hypocrisy in our own lives.
- We will have the ears of Christ to hear the cry of those in need and to detect that which is not wholesome and right to listen to.
- We will have the lips of Jesus to encourage and strengthen. We will speak the truth in genuine love.
- We will have the hands of Christ to reach out to our fellow man.
- We will have the heart of the Savior. We will be tenderhearted, but, at the same time, we will hate the things God hates. We will hate sin and what it does to people.

God desires that every person come to a knowledge of salvation through Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 2:4). As we become more like God's Son, our desire to see people get saved should increase. In fact, we can test our spiritual growth to a degree by how concerned we are that people come to faith in Jesus.

Why would we want to see people come to Jesus? 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 explains, "*All this newness of life is from God, who brought us back to himself through what Christ did. And God has given us the task of reconciling people to him. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. This is the wonderful message he has given us to tell others*" (New Living Translation). This doesn't mean we have to go out and preach on a street corner or strike up a conversation with every stranger we meet. However, it does indicate that, when the opportunity arises, we should gladly share with others what Christ has done for us.





Lesson 4 Teaching Outline

The Daily Christian Life

1 **REFERENCE POINT** (15 minutes)

Have a volunteer read the “Reference Point.” Ask the students if they feel the struggle going on inside between the two natures. Then as you close this section, ask them which nature rules most the time in their own lives? They need not answer the final question out loud, just to themselves. This is not intended to condemn, but to help make them aware of a problem if the sin nature still prevails most of the time. Half the solution to any problem is to acknowledge that it exists.

2 **OVERVIEW** (10 minutes)

After reading through the Overview section, write the three kinds of sanctification on the chalkboard or overhead: POSITIONAL, PRACTICAL, and COMPLETE. Then, from the following list, ask the students under what heading each should go.

- The believer goes to be with Jesus in heaven.
- There will be no more temptation.
- The believer becomes more and more like Jesus.
- God credits Christ’s righteousness to our account.
- This sanctification takes place throughout our Christian lives.

Answers: (1)d (2)c,e (3)a,b.

3 **INSIGHT** (25 minutes)

List on a chalkboard or overhead two columns: The God Part and The Human Part. Assign the listed scriptures, and ask the class to define what that scripture is saying about the role that God plays in making us like Jesus. Then repeat the same activity for the Human Part.

Be sure to emphasize that no one is perfect. All of us are in the process of becoming what God wants us to be. The main thing is to continue to mature as Christians until the day Christ takes believers home to be with Him in heaven.

TAKING IT HOME

PERSONAL RESPONSE (Conclusion, 10 minutes)

After the students read the *Personal Response* section, emphasize the necessity of having someone we are accountable to. James 5:16 -- “Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.”

HEART PERSPECTIVE (Personal Devotions)

Have the students contemplate during the week all the things that would change in them if they were to become more like Jesus.

FAITH SHARING (Follow-Up)

As we grow in the Lord we will become more and more excited about people’s coming to faith in Christ. We will want to share what Jesus has done for us.