

Wonderful Words of Eternal Life

Sanctification

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Sanctification

Sanctification means the process or the state of being set apart. Incidentally, it is the same root word for the word "Holy". That's what holy means, it means to be set apart. We often associate it with perfection. We think about holiness as meaning someone is absolutely perfect. Over the years some individuals who have understood that sanctification is tied to holiness have thought, "Oh, I can't be that way." Don't mis-define the word. Generically it means to be set apart.

Now scripturally, it means to be set apart from the secular and the sinful for a sacred purpose. If you go through the Bible and look for that word, sanctify, you'll find in the Old Testament that it was used often for days and places and things. For example, in Genesis 2:3, after God created the heavens and the earth, it says that he "sanctified" the seventh day. He made it holy, he set it apart as the day of rest. I think about Exodus 29:43, referring to the tabernacle or the tent of meeting, God said "And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by My glory". But, in time the old law had fulfilled its purpose and Jesus' blood on the cross had purchased for mankind a new covenant. The use of the word "sanctify" or "sanctification" stopped being associated for the most part with days and things and began to be tied to people.

For example, Paul said in talking about drunkards, idolaters, murderers, homosexuals, and all kinds of people involved in sinful behavior, "And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Corinthians 6:11) You see it was the people that were sanctified. Or "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thessalonians 5:23) Now those are just two examples. There are many, many more. God is saying, Christian, I want you to be sanctified, set apart. It's my will that you be holy, that you be set apart, not just a day, not just a tent, I want people to be sanctified. If sanctification means being set apart, set apart from what? Why? For what purpose?

During his ministry and before he left the earth, Jesus prayed for his disciples and all who would come after them. "I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth." (John 17:15-17) Now what does that mean? Set them apart. They're in the world. He was not asking God to take them out of the world, but set them apart by the truth. Then Jesus said "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth" (vs. 18, 19). He's saying for their benefit, I've set myself apart so that they'll be set apart as well. We're not supposed to be of the world; that is, desire worldly things, such as the lust of the flesh, lust of the eye or pride in our lives.

Colossians 3:1-3 captures the message of being set apart from the value system of the world. Look at it. "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above.

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