



THE REQUIREMENT OF A HOLY LIFE

KEY VERSE :

Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord (Hebrews 12:14).

- 1 **Thessalonians 4:3.** For this is the will of God, even your sanctification that ye should abstain from fornication:
4. That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;
5. Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:
6. That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.
7. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

Hebrews 12:9. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

10. For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.
11. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.
12. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;
13. And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.
14. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:
15. Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;
16. Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birth right.

Background Scriptures

Deuteronomy 10:12, 13; Jeremiah 31:31-34;
Romans 8:9-17; 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13;
1 John 1:5-8

Devotional Reading

Psalm 51:1-7



Central Truth:

Holy living is not optional; it's a necessity in the life of every Christian.



THE LESSON EXPOSITION

BACKGROUND

There are many who seem to think that any emphasis on *holiness* is a sure mark of identification with the lunatic fringe of society. Since they have never experienced holiness of heart and life, they know that being holy is impossible. In their unreasonableness, anyone who would seek or even desire what they know to be so impossible must surely be pitied for simple-mindedness.

Some seek to give the impression that holiness is the idea and ideal of some of the little unnoticeable sects from across the tracks. The ideal gives its adherents a challenge to strive for and talk about, but surely a kind, sympathetic God would not make such an ideal a requirement for everyone, even doctors, lawyers, their companions and children.

Regardless of what so many think about holiness, God does require it and He requires it of everyone. In the Bible, the subject of holiness is one theme about which no one need be uncertain. Its message is quite simple. If one would enjoy the bliss of heaven, he must be holy (**Heb. 12; 14; Matt. 5:8**).

The requirement of holiness is not just some arbitrary rule which God thought up and zapped onto people. Holiness is required because:

1. God is holy and by His very nature can't tolerate sinfulness.
2. Christ, in His atoning death, has made possible holiness of heart and life. If God had not made it possible to be holy, He would be a tyrant to require it. Since He has made such a state possible, and declares it to be His good pleasure to impart such a grace, He is very benevolent to require it.
3. Heaven is a holy place and its inhabitants must be prepared to fit into such an environment.

4. Christians can't be what saving grace will cause them to want to be until they are made free from sin and filled with the Holy Spirit or with all the fullness of God.



I. THE WILL OF GOD (1 Thess. 4:3-7)

1 Thessalonians 4:3. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification. "Paul here anticipated an emphasis which he developed more fully in chapter 5 (vs. 23, 24), namely, that the entire personality of the believer must experience the sanctifying power of God. At this point, since the Thessalonians lived in an immoral society in which sexual license was the rule, he found it necessary to emphasize a drastic purification of life in the relationship between the sexes. It is unquestionably God's will that the Thessalonians and us as well, live 'soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world' (Titus 2:12). A separated and holy life is God's norm for all believers, whether they are in the first century or the twentieth century. God is absolutely holy and He can be satisfied with nothing less than a moral likeness in us that corresponds in kind to His own holy nature" (Terry Pollard).

4. That everyone of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour. "Through the sanctifying process the believer may come to know this. The will of God is admittedly 'good ... and perfect' (Rom. 12:2), and must of necessity cover every part of the Christian life. It then becomes the governing principle in every action and in every relationship. The entire man - body, mind and spirit - is to be sanctified wholly (1 Thess. 5:23). So, every relationship of life, both natural and legal, must measurably manifest the spirit of Jesus Christ" (Terry Pollard).

5. Not in the lust of concupiscence. "Paganism did then, even as it does now, place a premium upon sensuality. Customs and practices which were utterly foreign to the will of God and abhorrent to the Christian mind were generally approved by society. Indeed, immorality was a vital part of pagan religions. It is the express will of God, said the apostle, that men should be lifted out of that reeking slough of moral depravity and delivered from all entangling sinful relationships and debasing practices. God demands the sanctification of manhood and womanhood alike, the purification of all human affections and the restoration of both to the holy status which He originally designed for man" (Terry Pollard).

6. That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter. "Other human relationships are brought under divine direction. We understand Paul to say, 'Brethren, pursue your social business affairs as sacred, as men separated unto God. The heathen are motivated by covetousness and greed; you are to shame them by motives of fairness and justice.' The broad field of relationships with our fellow men becomes a sphere in which the sanctified believer demonstrates the reality of his faith and the integrity of his character. Unworthy conduct toward one's neighbour is just as wrong in God's sight as dishonourable conduct within one's home" (Terry Pollard).

7. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. "God has, in fact, called us, His people, to total separation from all uncleanness, from all forms of impurity that are common in any age. On the positive side, God has called us **unto** sanctification. Sanctification is the characteristic life-element of the Christian life. The tense of the verb **called** connotes definite and completed action. There's a definite contrast between the carnal, sensual course of the worlding and the sanctified, purified pattern of life which God requires of His people" (Terry Pollard).



II. THE FRUIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS (Heb. 12:9-11)

Hebrews 12:9. Furthermore ... shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? "There is an analogy here of the human father-son relationship. The apostle points up that the wise and obedient son submits to his father's discipline for a short period of time until he attains maturity and that he pays due respect and reverence to his father in these matters. How much greater is our responsibility to respect and reverence the Heavenly Father, to whom we owe our very spiritual personality, when He disciplines for the spiritual welfare of the son" (Terry Pollard).

10. That we might be partakers of his holiness. "The earthly father disciplines the son for a brief period of time that he may become a good citizen of this world and make the best of his life. The Heavenly Father disciplines His children that they may become partakers of His holiness of character and enjoy life everlasting as good citizens of the kingdom of heaven" (Terry Pollard).

11. Afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness. "The order of discipline in the Christian life suggested here is suffering, endurance and fruit. Suffering is severe and hard to take if the purpose is not clearly grasped. Endurance requires patience in suffering. Suffering patiently endured for Christ's sake never fails to produce the **peaceable fruit of righteousness** in our lives. Man is not saved by the discipline of suffering, but he is seasoned thereby. So, the whole outcome depends on the attitude taken in the experience of discipline" (Terry Pollard).



III. THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY (Heb. 12:12-16)

12. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees. In this verse the writer probably had **Isaiah 35:3** in mind. **Wherefore** is prompting an immediate response of courage in the wake of trials and

conflicts. However, drooping hands and paralyzed knees are indicative of the carnal nature in an unsanctified heart. When conflicts appear in the maze of life, humanity can never respond courageously so long as the sin nature is permitted to remain in the heart. Dispositional traits such as the above or a great host of similar ones will stunt, hinder, or eventually defeat all efforts to live a victorious life in Christ.

13. Make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. "In regeneration the omnipotent Christ raises the sinner from the dead. Yet he is affected with multitudinous ailments transmitted from Adam the first. It is the subsequent work of entire sanctification to eliminate all of these ailments and restore perfect soul-health. Since heaven is a perfect world, nothing can enter there which has the slightest spiritual ailment. The great panacea, the infallible elixir, the cleansing blood, was not shed in heaven but on earth. Hence it must be applied here or never" (W.B. Godbey).

14. Follow peace with all men, and holiness. The term **follow** does not mean, as some think, to strive for an ever receding goal. Rather it is to realize a pattern of life and that with diligence. It is a call to have one's life conformed to and expressive of that holiness which God produces within one by His sanctifying act.

Holiness, therefore, is a life lived by a sanctified heart "Always abounding in the work of the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58), and exhausting all possibilities to "live peaceably with all men" (Rom. 12:18). **Without which no man shall see the Lord.** The two former objectives in question are to **follow peace with all men, and holiness.**

This is a severe warning, showing that if any fail, for whatever the reason, to do their part to live peaceably with their fellow men, and if any fail to acquire holiness, they cannot see God.

15. Lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled. "The author of this letter suggests that carnality is a bitter, poisonous root, capable of springing forth into an active injection of its deadly venom into the spiritual blood stream, thus making the whole body violently sick, with resultant spiritual paralysis and death" (Wesleyan Bible Comm.). "If we do not have the bitter roots of inbred sin eradicated by the cleansing blood and consumed by the refining fire of entire sanctification, they will certainly sooner or later spring up and grow a crop of actual transgression, forever choking out the new life imparted by the Holy Ghost in regeneration, thus confirming you in final apostasy and dooming you to damnation" (W.B. Godbey).

16. Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau. "One writer has observed that Esau's defect was a lack of appreciation for spiritual blessings. The word **profane** is the antithesis of hallowed or sacred, and consequently it means unspiritual, secular, or common. Esau's spiritual sensibilities were so far deadened that he could equate things spiritual with things secular, and was unable to distinguish between their essential natures or worth. He had lost his spiritual discernment. So, total apostasy may not be so much the withdrawal of God's favour and presence from the soul as it is a person's inability any longer to perceive spiritual realities. The sinful nature, if allowed to remain and assert itself, will deaden and ultimately destroy the spiritual sensibilities and leave man incapable of sensing, responding to, or knowing God (cf. Rom. 1:18-32)" (Terry Pollard).



"KEY" COMMENTS

Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord (Heb. 12:14).

Follow peace with all men. Included here are the cantankerous as well as the congenial, the overbearing as well as the humble, those of a different religious or political persuasion as well as those with whom one agrees, the in-laws and the less-than-desirable neighbours. Peaceful relations with his fellow men are the Christian's prerogative and duty. To fulfil this command, one must be humble enough to submit to personal injustice and mistreatment, yet courageous enough to stand for truth and right principles. Jesus is the prototype in this area. To the Romans Paul wrote, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (12:18). If there be an impossibility to live peaceably with some, it must not be on the part of the Christian. Christians are called to peace and Jesus pronounced blessing upon the peacemakers. However, one must not forsake truth of a good conscience for the sake of peace, but even then, a Christian spirit must be maintained.

Especially is this exhortation to peace needed within the community of believers. Paul strongly condemned the party spirit and schisms within the Church (1 Cor. 3:3-6), and called attention to the fact that these conditions are the result of carnal traits (the lack of holiness).

Holiness. (This same Greek word is translated "sanctification" in 1 Cor. 1:30; 1 Thess. 4:3, 4; II Thess. 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2). Holiness qualifies one for heaven. "Without holiness a person has no more fitness for heaven than a blind man has for the enjoyment of a beautiful picture-gallery or a glorious landscape" (Pulpit Comm.). While some follow afar after holiness with no hope of obtaining it in this present life, sincere Christians must adopt no such attitude, but they should seek it definitely, consciously and expectantly in faith. The experience is both demanded and obtainable here and now. For this very purpose Jesus went to Calvary (Heb. 13:12).

From the moment of the new birth, the babe in Christ begins a gradual development toward holiness (separation from evil and consecration to God), but to be sanctified wholly (1 Thess. 5:23) he must experience the climactic death of "the old man" (original sin).

Although dying may involve a process of time (not necessarily a long time), there comes a moment of death in which the work is complete and final. The victim is consciously and gloriously delivered "from the body of this death" (or, this dead body). (See Rom. 7:24) In error, some believe that physical death must be involved in the sanctifying process. The blood of Christ alone is the sanctifying agent (Heb. 13:12).

The Bible strongly implies that Christ is ashamed to identify with those who are not sanctified (Heb. 2:11). And why shouldn't He be? He "made peace through the blood of his cross" (Col. 1:20) between a sin-offended God and sinful men. He has made every provision "to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his (God's) sight" (Col. 1:22). Therefore, to endeavour to get by with less is to vainly presume upon the mercy of a holy God. Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.



EXPLORATION

DOCTRINAL DISCUSSION

It is said that Augustine was very much under conviction as a result of his mother's prayers. At those times he would pray, "Lord, make me pure, but not now." It is a sad day in Christendom when the Church is very concerned with its pet deviations from the Word of God rather than seeing the absolute demand by the Word that holiness is a **requirement** that is inescapable.

"Holiness is not an option. No matter how many times he has heard Hebrews 12:14, the student who takes the Bible seriously can never escape being jolted by the flat ultimatum that without holiness 'no man shall see the Lord.' But this ultimatum is repeated over and over in different forms. In Roman 6:22, Paul sees 'everlasting life' as the legitimate end of that 'fruit unto holiness' which characterizes him who has been 'made free from sin' as a servant to God. It is not without reason that in II Cor. 7:1 where Paul urges the Corinthian believers to purge themselves from 'all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness,' he adds 'in fear of God.' It is perilous not to! For he has just reminded them in chapter 6 that their sonship absolutely depends on separating themselves from all ungodliness. The unclean thing is not even to be 'touched.'

"It is important to understand (and any student of the Greek text will confirm this) that 'seeing the Lord' is not dependent on achieving peace with all men, but only on the possession of holiness. As valuable and desirable as is harmony with men, it is not of supreme importance; there is something even greater" (**Life in the Spirit**, by R.S. Taylor).

E.C. Blackman says, "Man's chief requisite is not warning against sinful actions so much as purification of heart where the overt sins are motivated (Matt. 5:21-32; 6:22, 23; 7:17, 18; 12:34, 35). Jesus understood His mission to be to cleanse men from that inward uncleanness which vitiates their life, issues in wrong deeds to their fellow men, and makes them unfit for fellowship with God. To this purpose He devoted His life, even to the ultimate sacrifice of death, believing that God would make this sacrifice potent for the emancipation and sanctification man needs (Matt. 26:28; Mark 10:45; 14:21-24)" (as quoted by Purkiser in **Exploring Christian Holiness**, Vol. 1).

"It is tragic beyond telling when, by any theory embraced, one is induced to postpone the hour of complete deliverance, for the crux of the matter is not clocks and calendars, but carnality. The same carnal nature that leads the sinner to postpone forgiveness lead the believer to postpone cleansing. If the sinner could be forgiven a few sins at a time, he would not be so rebellious. (Perhaps this accounts in part for the appeal of Romanism.) And if believers could be sanctified a little at a time, they would not object, for some of sinful self would remain always. But we are not forgiven by fractions nor sanctified by sections. It is all or nothing in both cases, therefore it is instantaneous in both cases" (**Holiness the Finished Foundation**, by J. Paul Taylor).

Another writer, in relation to Matthew 5:48, says: "It has nothing to do with what we might call the abstract, philosophical, metaphysical perfection ... A thing is perfect if it fully realizes the purpose for which it was planned and designed and made... *Teleios* is the adjective formed from the noun *telos*. *Telos* means an end, a purpose, an aim, a goal. A thing is *teleios* if it realizes the purpose for which it was planned; a man is perfect if he realizes the purpose for which he was created and sent into the world" (**Gospel of Matthew**, by William Barclay).

It has been our purpose to establish beyond a reasonable doubt that holiness is required of the believer. For that goal we have quoted at length from various exegetes. While some of them may not be clear as to the time in this life that we attain this holiness, there is unanimity in saying that the believer will attain this experience in this life or at the time of death. It is a sad commentary on some writers that they ascribe to our enemy death the ability to sanctify or at least to bring us to the time when we are sanctified! God's grace that would be extended at that time is sufficient to do the work **now!** It only remains for us to quote a few of the people of the past to establish the fact that holiness is required now. Anyone who will not believe this much material must surely be very prejudiced.

Read the following quotes. "They are called a Christian people and have the Holy Ghost, who daily sanctifies them, not only by the forgiveness of sin, but also by the laying aside, **expelling and destroying** of sin and hence they are called a holy people" (John Calvin, as quoted by Asbury Lowery in **Possibilities of Grace**).

"Sanctification is a gracious act of God by which He purifies man, who is a sinner and yet a believer, from ignorance, from indwelling sin ... It consists in the mortification or death of the old man" (Arminius, as quoted by Lowery in **Possibilities of Grace**).

It is no small thing for one to find that the Bible supports the experience of holiness and **demand**s our purity. When we have coupled this with the testimony of theologians both of the holiness position and the apparent supporting of it by those that are not of this viewpoint, we have a powerful argument for the work being required of us all. Surely a holy God would not only command us to be holy but would make provisions for us to possess it. This is stated very emphatically in Heb. 13:12, "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate."

The very next verse possibly gives the reason there are so many that oppose this doctrine. It exhorts us to go forward "bearing his reproach." The easy-going church member that wants a bed of roses and streets of gold has no love for the saying in Gal. 5:24, "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."



FOCUS
WORKING WITH THE WORD!

Follow (Heb. 12:14). This word does not indicate a long drawn-out pursuit, but rather "to turn swiftly to catch some person or thing" (Thayer). "The reference is not primarily to a path or way which is to be followed, but to a certain intensity of energy in doing what needs right now to be done ... Here in Hebrews the pursuit commanded is relevant to and immediate goal" (**Beacon Bible Comm.**).

The clause **without which no man shall see the Lord** is clearly linked to "**holiness**" and not to "**peace**." While one should earnestly and immediately seek peace with all men, yet he might be thwarted by the stubbornness of another person. On the other hand, holiness is obtainable by anyone and is therefore a reasonable requirement for all who will see God.

Holiness. (v.14). I have heard this word in this verse presented as if it were a lifestyle or lifelong aspiration with no crisis experience involved. However, the tense seems to indicate an action rather than a process. In the New Testament this word is five times translated "holiness," and five times translated "sanctification." Thayer says it means "consecration, purification," and "the effect of consecration: sanctification of heart and life."

"**In verse 14** the word is from *hagiasmos*, an action noun, meaning the state resulting from an action, a being-made-holy, or a becoming holy" (Arndt and Gingrich). "It is a definite work of grace, as a study of the tenses will indicate" (**Beacon Bible Comm.**). It seems so clear that God demands holiness of life and since a bitter fountain cannot send forth sweet water, one must of necessity have a heart that is cleansed and made holy. This verse is the negative side of the positive truth enunciated in Matt. 5:8, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

Having run swiftly and obtained this holiness, has one "arrived" on a plateau of care-free spiritual life? No, one must exercise **diligence** at all times in the journey to heaven. This indicates a watchfulness or an inspection. There may be those who take spiritual inventory too often and so are robbed of their victory and grow morbid, but most would do well to have more check-ups. This should not only involve a periodic examination, but a continual watchfulness against the subtle dangers that would corrupt the soul.

"**Lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you (v. 15).** Weymouth is illuminating: 'that no root bearing bitter fruit spring up and cause trouble among you and through it whole brotherhood be defiled.' This root of bitterness mentioned here suggests that carnality is the bitter poisonous root, capable of springing forth into an active injection of its deadly venom into the spiritual blood stream, thus making the whole body violently sick. This sinful working in the soul of the unsanctified believer may be likened to the effect of the poison of serpents on their victims.

"**Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau (v. 16).** One person has observed that Esau's defect was one of a lack of appreciation for spiritual blessings. The word 'profane,' as here used, is the antithesis of hallowed or sacred and consequently it means unspiritual, secular, or common. Esau's spiritual sensibilities were so far deadened that he could equate things spiritual with things secular, and was unable to distinguish between their essential natures or worth. He had lost his spiritual discernment.

"The sinful nature, if allowed to remain and assert itself, will deaden and ultimately destroy the spiritual sensibilities and leave man incapable of sensing, responding to, or knowing God (cf. Rom. 1:18-32)" (Terry Pollard).

DICTIONARY

Concupiscence – verse 5 – *Strong sexual desire.*; **Fornication** – verse 3 – *Illicit sexual relations.*



POINTS OF SPECIAL INTEREST
One Thing Lacking

Two young women went out West to take up homesteads near a small village about forty-five miles from the railroad. Their cabins had been built only a few feet apart and they arrived on a certain day to furnish them and prepare to keep house.

A minister later told the story. After about three days of arranging and fixing up, the former schoolteachers were doing their last shopping at a village store. The carriage was loaded with provisions for their new homes. As they left, the storekeeper asked if they had everything they needed. They were sure they had.

The boy who drove them out to their new cabins asked the same question, "Are you sure you have everything you need?" He received the same reply.

It had been an unusually mild January, but by six o'clock that evening it was much colder and by ten o'clock that evening an old-fashioned blizzard had set in. The storm roared all night with increasing fury. The next day, Sunday, nobody ventured outside without tying a rope about himself and fastening the other end to the house.

The wind shrieked and roared and the thermometer registered thirty degrees below zero. It continued through Monday, though by evening it began to abate.

Tuesday morning, as soon as breakfast was over, the minister and the young man drove the team out to where the young women were. They had often wondered about them during the storm. As they reached the place, a vague uneasiness came over the two men, for they saw no smoke coming from the chimneys. As they alighted from the carriage, they called, but heard no response.

They forced the door of the first cabin; it was cold and forsaken. Then, rushing to the other, they forced that door too, and there under the bed covers, in each other's arms, were the two young women, frozen to death. Abundantly supplied with food, fuel and everything else, they lacked one needful thing – matches to start a fire.

We can have all the things of this world, but if the Holy Spirit is lacking in our lives, it will mean spiritual death.
- W.C. Roberts



Cleansing the Inside

While walking down a street one day, I passed a store where a man on the pavement was washing the large plate-glass window. There was one soiled spot which defied efforts to remove it. After rubbing hard, using much soap and water and failing to remove it, he found out the trouble. "It's on the inside," he called out to someone in the store.

Many are striving to cleanse the soul from its stains. They wash it with tears of sorrow; they scrub it with the soap of good resolves; they rub it with the chamois of morality; but still the consciousness of it is not removed. The trouble is, "It's on the inside." Nothing but the blood of Jesus, applied by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, can cleanse the inside.

- Rod and Staff



Notes; Instruction tips

- 1. In order to please God, what is our twofold purpose in life to be?** (a) To love God totally, to serve Him and make it to heaven (Matt. 22:37). (b) To love our fellow man and help as many as possible make it to heaven (Matt. 22:39; Mark 16:15).
- 2. What does Satan desire for us to do?** To displease God, to follow Satan, to miss heaven, to cause others to miss heaven, to encourage no one to serve God, to live sinful lives and at the very least to be apathetic concerning spiritual things.
- 3. What tactics might the enemy use to try to convince us to serve him and not God?** (a) Accusing us (Rev. 12:10). (b) Appearing as an angel of light (II Cor. 11:14). (He tries to give us "new light" contrary to the Scripture.) (c) Blinding our minds to spiritual truths (II Cor. 4:4). (d) Spiritual cooling off (Rev. 3:14-16). (d) Deceit (Matt. 24:24). (e) Spiritual sleep (Prov. 6:10). (f) Faith in an empty profession (II Tim. 3:5). (g) Loving pleasure more than God (II Tim 3:4). (h) Various temptations to sin (1 Thess. 3:5; Jas. 1:2).
- 4. What are some battles, pressures, or temptations we may face today?** Bad attitudes toward spiritual things, bad attitudes toward others, lack of respect for authority, peer pressure, bad habits such as drug use, lust for the opposite sex, illicit sex, dishonesty, greed, hunger for power and authority, inflated opinion of self, cheating, deceit, materialism and others.
- 5. Are we a match for Satan in and of ourselves? Why or why not?** NO! "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world" (Eph. 6:12). Even Michael, the archangel, when contending with the devil would not rebuke him, but asked the Lord to (Jude 9). Satan is a fallen angel (Matt. 25:41; II Peter 2:4; Isa. 14:12-15), and the Lord has owed him a measure of power. Man is created lower than the angels (Ps. 8:4, 5), and is no match for Satan.
- 6. Since we have pressures and temptations from a powerful foe to battle and try to overcome, can we be overcomers in this spiritually lukewarm age? Can we fulfil our twofold purpose in life? If so, where can we get help?** YES! God is our only hope (Ps. 121:2; Phil. 4:13). He will make a way for us to escape in times of temptations and won't allow us to be tempted too much (1 Cor. 10:13). God's grace will be sufficient for all our needs (II Cor. 12:9). We can overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony (Rev. 12:11).

7. **We studied last week that God is a holy God and demands holy living from His people. If we must have help from this holy God in order to overcome, is salvation from sins enough of an experience to get us by? Why or why not?** No. Salvation is an experience of grace whereby we are forgiven of our acts of wilful wrongdoing (sins) and are redeemed, regenerated and justified by the blood of Jesus Christ. But, our will is still saying, "I want to do things my way – not God's." Logically, how can we expect a God whom we are struggling with over control of our life to give us any and all help we need for victory in our daily battles? Obviously, He helps saved people who are walking in the light of God to live victoriously. Yet, at some point God will likely give that person an awareness of the need for a second definite work of grace – sanctification – in which God's will becomes our will. If the person refuses to walk in this light, then he is fighting God and really cannot expect God to help in time of need.

8. **What does the Bible say concerning any requirements of sanctification for believers?** (a) For this is the will of God, even your sanctification ... that everyone of you should now how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour" (1 Thess. 4:3, 4). (b) "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly" (1 Thess. 5:23). (c) "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17). (d) "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate" (Heb. 13:12). (He wouldn't have done this for optional experiences.) (e) "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" (II Cor. 7:1). (f) "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14).

FURTHER THOUGHT

The happiness of heaven is conditioned on holiness. The holiness of God makes the atmosphere of heaven. The only happiness in heaven issues from holiness. The glorified believer is not holy because he is in heaven. He is in heaven because he is holy through the merits of the cleansing blood of Christ. A soul without holiness could not be happy in heaven. The happiness in heaven springs not merely from external environments but essentially from a pure heart and holy nature. The holiness that admits a soul to heaven and from which the happiness of heaven springs, is graciously attained by the aid of the Holy Spirit during the present state of probation. Over the archway of entry to final salvation is inscribed the dictum of a holy God: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14).

- Julian C. McPheeters