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B0909 – March 1, 2009 – The Phases & Aims Of Sanctification

All right, we want to turn now to the doctrinal consequences of the Conquest and Settlement. What we want to do now is move from the event we've been studying, the Conquest to the doctrinal distillation we get from this event, the doctrine of sanctification. This is where we're headed. We've covered a lot of the basic doctrines of the Christian faith. I hope you see these doctrines against the events of the historical framework. You want to be able to see the events, the doctrines and then link them together. That's crucial for the faith-rest drill.

What event is it that deals with the Scriptures? How we got the Scriptures? Mt Sinai and we talk about inerrancy, revelation and canonicity because that's when two million people heard God speaking in the Hebrew language. Let's take a common doubt that can float into the human heart, "Is the Bible really inerrant?" When you're troubled about that go back and read Exod 19-20, put yourself at the foot of Mt Sinai, pretend you're one of the Israelites at the foot of that mountain and God speaks. You hear, your neighbor hears, everybody hears the voice of God. Then ask yourself the question, does God speak into history? Does He speak clearly? If He did then is He putting us on, telling us lies, this God of truth, or not? If you can visualize that you won't have any problem with inerrancy because God obviously spoke and He obviously spoke clearly and He obviously spoke truthfully. And nobody could stop it. So Mt. Sinai becomes a picture of all that's wrapped up in those doctrines. That scenario in your imagination is what God wants lodged up here so you can think correctly as a Christian.

We're coming to the doctrine of sanctification and we're looking at it through the eyes of the Conquest and Settlement because that was a struggle. Sanctification is a struggle. They were struggling to remove evil from God's

land, they fought real life physical battles against real life physical soldiers and they were called to have complete and total victory. We too have enemies in the Christian life. Paul said “our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenlies” and we are naïve if we don’t enter into the conflict with the goal of total victory. It’s a struggle because the powers that be are powerful indeed.

We want to make a few points before we go to the Scriptures. When you come to the doctrine of sanctification you want to think of it as an historically valid truth and not as a personal experience. The tendency when we come to sanctification is to build doctrine out of somebody’s personal life testimony, their experience, a biography or something. There’s a new book published every week claiming the “secret” to the Christian life. Finally after 6,000 years of history someone finally figured it out. No one before them had a clue. This is the kind of arrogant literature under the guise of spirituality we have today. The Christian bookstores are littered with this. What we want to remind ourselves is that just like all doctrines, the content that fills them has to come from the Scriptures, not experience.

Take the experience of those soldiers under General Joshua. It didn’t matter how they won the prior battle, what mattered was how God said they needed to fight the next battle. So being soldiers of Christ in the struggle of sanctification we better do what He says in His word. Because of the military parallel we want to quote from one of the greatest military strategists, B.H. Liddell Hart. Hart studied every military engagement in the last 2,500 years and out of this he developed what is called the indirect strategy of warfare. He wrote, “Even in the most active career, especially a soldier’s career, the scope and possibilities of direct experience are extremely limited....Direct experience is too limited to form an adequate foundation either for theory or for application.” That holds true in combat and that holds true in the Christian life. Your personal experience isn’t big enough for you to formulate conclusions about how God is going to grow you, or grow your children, or grow your parents, or grow your church. You’ve got to go back to the Scriptures because only in the Scriptures do we have a broad enough experience base to see how God really works. I thought it was interesting to see how General Patton interpreted his superiority as a military man. Because he believed in reincarnation he believed he’d served under

Alexander the Great, the Roman Legions, he believed he'd fought in the Revolutionary War and the Civil War, and out of that he thought he had built a large experience base, and though he didn't do that he saw the principle that no one lifetime supplies a sufficient experience base for theory or application. So we turn to the Scriptures to get a broad base for theory and application.

As we go through the doctrine of sanctification we'll break it into five points. The first point we want to deal with under sanctification is what we call **The Phases Of Sanctification**. Traditionally, there are three phases or stages in sanctification. All we're doing is trying to distinguish a few things before you get confused, and this is just a way of developing care in how we talk about it.

We've gone through the Call of Abraham, that was the first salvific covenant we read about and we said when God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees, what was the environment God called him out of? Abraham was in a pagan society, he was a part of the world system, God called him out to start a new society. What is the implication historically for God calling Abraham out? Something was wrong with society, the world system was distorting the truths of Gen 1-10 and therefore to salvage those truths God called Abraham out. From that point forward He concentrates His revelation in a subset of the human race, the Jews.

Now, if you're living in Joshua's day, put yourselves in their shoes. Their life was controlled by the Abrahamic Covenant. God made certain promises in that contract. If we depict that as a shaded circle there are things about the Abrahamic Covenant that God hasn't yet revealed. There are things embedded in the terms that most of us can't see. Jesus inferred from it the doctrine of resurrection, other things like the virgin birth are implied and I don't think if you ask Abraham he'd have known about that. So as history unfolds God reveals more and more about how He pulls off the terms of that contract. So we shade the circle, that's how we diagram it. Out of the Abrahamic Covenant came three promises: land, seed, and worldwide blessing; that's Gen 12. That's a sovereign statement about where history is going. It's a statement about the fact that the seed of Abraham will be the means to bless the world. God isn't just going to bless the world, He's going to bless the world through Abraham, from that point on, and so that covenant is the key to history and prophecy.

What is the practical side of this if you are a student of history? You read about history and what does that say about the shape of history as far as we see the outworking? It says first of all, there's going to be a group of physical seed of Abraham called Israel. And Israel is going to survive forever. If you have a man like Hitler or Ahmadinejad who want to exterminate the Jews, what do you know immediately about their program? It's going to fall flat on its face; nobody is going to exterminate the Jews, period. It's impossible. Why? Because God swore on His own nature; that's why. So, history can be viewed through the lens of this covenant. If you don't read through this lens and you only consider political and economic factors you'll miss the mark and the reason is because those things aren't the governing factor of history. I don't care how many degrees you have after your name, I don't care if you've been a political and economic analyst for 100 years. If you leave out the Abrahamic Covenant as the key dynamic in history then you can't interpret the data correctly. So this Jewish covenant is the key to history. In fact, people talk about world peace; we want world peace, anything for peace. Well, the Abrahamic Covenant does structure history to include a long period of peace. But there's a road to get to the peace and it's not the Roadmap of Western politicians. It's the roadmap of Jesus Christ. He said I'm not going to come back until the Jewish people welcome Me. So in the peace arena the Jew is the key to history because it will not be until they say, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord," that He will come back. So in a sense the Jewish people are impeding world peace. Not until Israel receives Jesus as the Messiah can you get there. But to get there the world has to go through a period of wars unheard of, unparalleled destruction.

But that peace will come is the promise of the Abrahamic Covenant, and it's powerful, it's elective, it controls everything, it's a guarantee. What might you be thinking as a Jewish soldier in Joshua's day? You fight all these battles, you might say "Why do I have to go through all this?" What is the big answer? The big answer as to why these things are happening in your life comes out of the Abrahamic Covenant; this says my destiny is in the land and there is blessing in the land so to get to the blessing there has to be a removal of the evil and that requires military conflict. Evil is not removed by negotiation, it's removed by destruction. And so the bigger picture is the Abrahamic Covenant.

The second thing you have is if the Abrahamic Covenant defined Israel's destiny in history then Israel would forever be at cultural odds with her surroundings. If you look at the Jews in the European theatre, after Napoleon about 1800, the Jews thought, finally we'll get some rest around here. Napoleon was the ticket, he had some pro-Jewish sentiments, but you follow them in the 1800's and by the end of it they can't get accepted, no matter what these people do, they're rejected by the nations around them. The Dreyfuss Affair is the defining event, Theodore Herzl sat in that court room and saw the corruption against that Jewish officer and said this won't work, we will never amalgamate with the nations, they won't accept us. Why were they at odds? Why couldn't they get lost? Because God elected them in history to not get lost. We call that positional truth. This is the first phase of sanctification, sanctification has three phases and the first one is positional sanctification. No matter what else happens in our lives, the moment we believe in Christ the meaning and destiny of our life is set in motion, we are positionally sanctified, and nothing can ever change that.

Moving on to the next phase we can relate back to the Sinaitic Covenant. "The Sinaitic Covenant, rather than specifying what Israel could expect of God, revealed what God expected of Israel. If the Abrahamic Covenant was written in the indicative mood, the Sinaitic Covenant was written in the imperative mood." What we're saying is these two covenants differ in a fundamental way. If we draw the Mosaic Covenant as sort of a circle, lying down on the ground, a circle of light that tells us where God wants us to walk. He's telling us do this, don't do this, do this, don't do this, it's all experiential sanctification and that's what we call that the second phase of sanctification to distinguish it from the position. Our experience is in either obeying or disobeying, this is the day to day, we're faced with what God requires of us, but we want to carefully distinguish our position from our experience.

The Jewish believer in Joshua's army had his position defined by the Abrahamic Covenant. That covenant revealed God's plan for them, and it's not going to go away, and there's nothing they could do to change it, there's nothing that Satan can do to change it, there's nothing sin can do to change it, that is forever certain. So it's important that we recognize that we have a position that God's word defines for each of us. If we have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ we share the same elective plan that a Jewish believer in

the OT shared under that Abrahamic Covenant, nothing can undo that. We share a similar fixed position.

What's different is that the Jewish believer in Joshua's day was obligated by a certain set of commandments in this Law of Moses so his experience was an experience of obedience or disobedience to that set of rules. Our experience of obedience or disobedience is to the Law of Christ set of rules in the NT. But whether it's the OT set of rules or the NT set of rules, the point is that it's in the realm of our daily experience. But in either case our daily experience is to be conformed to the prior position that we have. So we can talk about positional sanctification and we can talk about experiential sanctification and we should distinguish between the two.

Let's contrast them a little bit more. The NT says, "Love one another." Is that talking about experiential sanctification or positional sanctification? Watch it because we're really talking about both, but there are nuances to this. In an ordinary sense of the word, when we're supposed to love one another, isn't that in the area of our experience. We can obey that or disobey that. But why does God tell us to do that? It's because of our position. So the command to which we can be obedient or disobedient is rooted in our position. God has a right to expect that of us because He gave us the position. So the position sets up and gives the motive for the experience and that's what we want to look at in the phases of sanctification.

If you get nothing out of this lesson, get this. The understanding and the meaning of everything that happens in your experience is controlled and depends upon your position in the elect plan of God. Just as the Jewish believer in Joshua's army could have been at Ai when they got slaughtered, he could have been at Jericho when they were victorious. The fact that in one instance, at Ai that army was disobedient and were collectively losers, or at Jericho they were obedient and collectively winners, didn't change their position in God's plan for history, because after Ai God worked with them, they recovered and went where? What was the next big event we studied after the disaster at Ai? The Longest Day at Aijalon. And God stopped the sun and the moon because they were obedient.

Experience fluctuates, up and down, up and down. And if you get your eyes completely on your experience you're in for a roller coaster ride. It's your

position that gives stability in the Christian life. If you think in terms of the roller coaster, any time you get totally preoccupied with experience you're going to go downhill. It's a very discouraging thing to just sit there and look at experience upon experience upon experience, failure after failure after failure. So you get out of operation roller coaster by looking back to your position. Just as, if you can imagine someone in Joshua's army thinking after Ai, what are we doing here? Think back, this is 1390 BC and in 2000 BC God said "You're My people, you have a unique roll to play in history," "He promised our father Abraham that we were to come in here and we were to destroy these Amorites. It's not going smoothly but do we have any doubt about the ultimate outcome?" That's what gives the strength. We have no doubt about the ultimate outcome, regardless of the experience of the moment. That's a comforting thought and you have to keep going back to that. So that's the second thing we say about the phases of sanctification, position and experience are distinct but associated.

There's a third phase we're not covering now because we get into that in the prophecy section of the biblical framework, but there's a third phase of sanctification. We've talked about positional sanctification, we've talked about experiential sanctification and the third phase is ultimate sanctification. In ultimate sanctification that's the grand time when our experience finally does line up with our position and our salvation is complete, the resurrection. Obviously we're not there yet so we're not going to emphasize that one, we'll just deal with the first two.

There are some fine details about them and we want to look in terms of the way the covenants are structured. Gen 12:3 takes us back to the Abrahamic Covenant, it's a positional thing, and we want to look at two areas of the Bible, one has to do with position the other has to do with experience. We're going to look at this Call of Abraham, in particular we're going to look at how God's anger is expressed when it comes to our position. What does God say He will do in Gen 12:3? This is the protection clause for the Jewish existence in history. "I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse." In other words, there's a protection. So God curses those who oppose His salvific plan in history. They will always fail; they may have victory for a moment, for a fleeting time, but they are doomed to failure because God curses them. "I will curse him that curses you." Notice it's the enemies of Israel getting cursed in Gen 12:3.

Now watch who is getting cursed when it comes to the Mosaic covenant. In Deut 28:15 now who gets cursed? “But it shall come about, if you will not obey the LORD your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes which I charge you today, that all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you.” The cursing is not on the enemies here, it’s on Israel. So notice the difference between these two covenants. The Abrahamic Covenant is a covenant of position, it defines the ultimate path of history, and the curse is upon those who try to alter the path. That’s the big picture. At times people or nations get cursed for messing with Israel. Bill Koenig has a whole book on correlations between foreign policy against the Jewish people and catastrophic events that come back on that country a week later. On the other hand, Israel can get cursed for violating the Mosaic Covenant. But those curses can never undo the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant. What we’re saying is the experiential sanctification is rooted in positional sanctification. The fact that God curses Israel does not mean that God is finished with Israel and He’s going to wipe them off the map. The very fact that God disciplines evidences that He loves them and they have not lost their position. And the same thing is true for us, God disciplines us, He can be pretty rough with us, but that shows that He loves us, we are His children. That’s why these two phases are so important.

We want to quote a scholar of ancient documents, Dr. Weinfeld. What he’s pointing out is when you look at ancient documents you find two different formats in history, one is a royal grant and the other is a treaty. We’ve already talked about the treaties; the suzerainty-vassal treaties are what we’ve spent so much time on. What Dr Weinfeld is talking about is that treaty structure vs the grant structure. The grant structure fits with the Abrahamic Covenant, Gen 12, Gen 15, the wording “I will do this and I will do that,” is all grant language. But when you look at the treaty documents, they go with the Mt Sinai language, “if you do this then I will do that.” So he’s pointing out the differences and he says, “While the ‘treaty’ constitutes an obligation of the vassal to his master, the suzerain, the ‘grant’ constitutes an obligation of the master to his servant.” See the difference? That’s a fundamental difference.

Sad to say there are many people in Protestant evangelical churches that mishmash these two covenants together. Yet these covenants are very

different. There are two different dispensational administrations of God's will in history, and they're seen in these two document forms. In the 'grant' the curse is directed towards the one who touches the Master's servant. Is that Gen 12 or is that Deut 28? It's Gen 12. "I will curse those who curse you." In the 'treaty' the curse is directed towards the vassal who violates the terms of his king, that's Deuteronomy. So the Bible has these distinctions, they're very clear distinctions, and they are paralleled in the NT in the doctrine of sanctification.

When you come to the NT this background gives you a tool. If you read in Eph 5 "Be filled with the Spirit," it's an imperative, verbs have mood and we'll talk about the indicative mood and the imperative mood. The imperative mood is a command. Do this, don't do this. The indicative mood is just a statement. "Having been justified..." But the imperative is a command. When we have an imperative in the NT, anywhere in the NT, are we talking about position or experience? Go back to the OT, which covenant has all the imperatives in it. The Mosaic, the Sinaitic Covenant. Which covenant is defining their experience, their obligations on a day by day basis? The Mosaic Covenant. So where you see the imperatives in the NT it's talking about experiential sanctification, it's a command, God says I want you to do this, I don't want you to do that.

But when you read, for example in Eph 1 and it talks about "you have every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ," now what are we talking about. That's an indicative, that's a statement of position, just like the Abrahamic Covenant. If you read the NT with that distinction in mind, all of a sudden it starts making sense. For example, when you read what's often read in communion, 1 Cor 11, examine yourselves, etc. and to the Corinthians it says because some of you didn't examine yourselves you are weak, sickly, and some have died. What's that talking about? That's obviously discipline. Something wasn't being handled correctly in the distribution of the Lord's Supper and it's a warning of discipline on believers. Is that experiential or is that positional? It's experiential; it's analogous to the Mosaic Covenant, those cursings in Deuteronomy, the same discipline principle. For example, if you read in the NT Book of Romans where it talks about God in eternity past foreknew us in Christ, what's that talking about? It's the indicative, it's not an imperative, there's no command involved, and He's announcing what He did for us. Can you change that? No. Could a Jew have changed the

Abrahamic Covenant? No. So to get anchored in the position we have in Christ is very important because that can't be altered, that's set in stone. Whatever happens after that, no matter what sin you do, nothing in your experience can change your position. Our experience will change, but our position won't change. That's a very important distinction to keep in mind in the Christian life. That's why we talk about these two phases of sanctification; position and experience.

The life of faith which is what the Christian life is all about, the faith-rest drill, how to handle our trials, how to prepare in advance for that and how to have victory in all that so we can mature depends upon us understanding these two phases of sanctification. *We are to obey what God asks of us in the lower circle of light, while we trust Him to provide what He promises in the open circle above.*" See the Jews in Joshua's day had to trust that this campaign of holy war is going to work. Did they really have a promise in the Mosaic Law Code? What is true of all the promises in the Mosaic Law, they're all prefixed with "if" you do this, then I will do that. So if I'm sitting here and I've really blown it, do I have leverage over any of the promised blessings? No, because I disobeyed. So if I just look at what God wants me to do or what He doesn't want me to do and I ignore His ultimate promise, my faith is weak, because I know I've sinned, I know I've displeased Him, and now all my focus is here on my failure. So what do I need to do to get out of this because this will lead to depression? Many Christians stuck in depression are in this, they simply cannot get their eyes off their failures and so they sink lower and lower and lower. The answer isn't anti-depressants, the answer is His ultimate promise of stability, you're in Christ and nothing can bother that. That's why you have to have both of these truths. Yes, we screw up but what's the BIG picture here? What would Joshua's army do, we failed at Ai, that's it, pack your bags, let's go back to Egypt! But in the bigger picture we're God's chosen people and he's going to give us the land He promised Abraham. See how the big picture didn't change, you may blow it today but the big picture hasn't changed. That's a tool you can use every day of your life.

All right, we've gone through the three phases of sanctification - very practical. A second area in sanctification that's often blurry. For this point we're only interested in the second phase, experiential sanctification. What is the **Aim of Sanctification**? A good question to ask: "What are we aiming at

anyway?" It's good to know where the target is if you hope on hitting it. So what's the goal of sanctification?" It's clear, the greatest commandment, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind," etc. That's what we're aiming for, that's what He's interested in seeing in our experience. The problem is that if we're sloppy here we're going to get confused. How does God work out this goal today? It's a struggle. Is the struggle to get there due to sin or would there have been at least some pressure, had Adam and Eve not fallen, to get there? Is the impediment to get there due to sin? That's obviously an impediment but what I'm trying to get at is if you could place yourself back in the Garden of Eden prior to the Fall, that zone when the universe had been created but hadn't fallen yet, it was very good, no evil, no suffering, no sin. A very different universe. Now we live in an abnormal world and we always have to say, "Wait a minute, I live in an abnormal world, let me think of what it would have been like in a normal world. In the normal world, in the Garden of Eden, did Adam and Eve have to learn loyalty to God? Did they have to learn to obey God?"

This aim for man to learn obedience to God was there even in a sinless environment. Adam and Eve, created perfectly good still had to be sanctified. You may doubt that, but let's look at the Lord Jesus Christ as a test case. Heb 5:8. Did the Lord Jesus Christ have a sin nature? No, He was born of a virgin. Did He ever sin? No, He was tempted to sin but He never sinned. He was the perfect man, without spot or blemish. If He was sinless then He's at least, in his humanity, the equivalent of Adam when he was created, he's called the last Adam, and if that's the case then what do we do with Heb 5:8? This is a very provocative verse, because it reveals something about Jesus Christ. "Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered." That's interesting. What are some implications of that verse? If Jesus Christ is born in 5/4BC he grows to an adult, thirty plus years, and goes to the cross, God is saying in Hebrews that during this time He learned how to be obedient, He was being experientially sanctified, but without sin... without sin. But He still had to learn.

What is true of your dog that is not true of you? As far as learning things what is the big difference between humans and animals? Animals are born with a large set of instinctive behavior patterns, we aren't. They come pre-programmed with the instructions; they don't have to learn much. But we humans, we have to learn almost everything. Do you know any animal that

the young stays with the parents as long as us, proportionally? Why do we have to stay so long with our parents? Why does our kind do that? Cats don't, dogs don't, birds don't, but we do. We're different. And it's because we're made in God's image and there's something going on there, and the something is that we don't have it all instinctively. Yes, we breathe automatically, we nurse on mommy naturally but generally speaking we have to learn almost everything, that's not so in most of the animal kinds. Animals can learn, yes, but proportionally speaking, they learn a lot less than we learn. We have to learn a whole ream of stuff.

What this is saying is that Jesus learned, and it's a very important verse because it proves that a sinless man had to learn obedience. He had to be sanctified, which proves that sanctification had to happen regardless of the Fall, regardless of sin, in a perfect universe sanctification was still the program. And that shows that Adam and Eve were supposed to have started learning what it means to obey God. What this aim of sanctification tells us now is that the whole process that God originally designed is tougher because we now live this side of the Fall, it's hard, we have sin, we have death, we have suffering, the things which Jesus suffered, a lot of what He suffered was due to our sin, not His. So it's our own sin, it's the collective sins of humanity that all come to bear on the difficulty of sanctification. But getting rid of that is not ultimately the aim of sanctification because it was a project given to sinless people. So if getting rid of sin in my life is not the aim of sanctification what is?

Think of Jesus Christ, walking around in Israel, being tempted, interacting with human beings, eventually going to the cross and dying for us, and it was those acts of this perfect God-man that generated a righteousness that now God can credit to us. That's how much pressure was on Christ. Stop and think about it. We talk about the President of the United States or somebody with a lot of pressure on them. You have a job with a lot of responsibility. Think of the responsibility of Jesus Christ. The whole issue of an historic righteousness rests on His shoulders. Now perhaps we can understand what He was going through in the Garden of Gethsemane, because if He dropped the ball, that's it for the human race, there was a lot of pressure on Him. So the pressure was on and during his whole life He was learning obedience, up to the cross. He was learning what it meant to obey God, what it meant to

come under His authority. And He did it and it's that historic righteousness which He generated that is credited to our account.

What's so neat about this and why Hebrews brings it out, Heb 5:8, "He was a Son, He learned obedience by the things which He suffered," that's in the context of Heb 4:14, "Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶Let us therefore draw near with confidence," that is a wonderful passage if you understand this. What that means is, unlike the Muslim who worships this Allah, Allah never walked around the face of the earth, Allah never got down in the grit we have to live in, Allah never learned obedience, Allah never died for all the Muslims, Allah doesn't know what it's like to walk around in all the crud we have to walk around in. But our God does. Why? Because He took to Himself true humanity and walked around in it. That's the incarnation.

This is a central tenet of the Christian faith.. Before the Fall we still had the aim of loyalty to God. That's what history is all about. After the Fall we still have the aim of loyalty, but what's changed? After the Fall it's harder because we have the impediments that are sin, evil and its consequences. So the whole aim of sanctification is to learn loyalty to God through trusting His word.

What haven't I said? Notice what we have not said the aim of sanctification is? The aim of sanctification is not getting rid of sin in my life; we didn't say that, that may be a product of sanctification but it's not the aim of sanctification. If it was then what was the aim of sanctification of Jesus Christ? He didn't have a sin problem? Nor is the aim of sanctification living a moral life; we didn't say that. Yes, again they're somewhat related, obviously, but there can be people who can live a very moral life and have nothing to do with this. So we're not saying the aim of sanctification is morality. What we're talking about is loyalty to God the Father. We're not talking about "having a wonderful spiritual experience." There is a wonderful sense of peace and fellowship with God, undeniable, but is that the aim of sanctification? Or is that a byproduct of sanctification? That's a byproduct, a blessing here and there that we get, but to sit and demand that every week

we have to have this wonderful experience or the Lord's not blessing me is wrong. Jesus didn't have a very wonderful experience in the Garden of Gethsemane. He turns around and all his friends are sleeping. It's His last hours on earth and His friends are asleep, and then the police coming to arrest Him, half of them take off, that's not having a good day. So sanctification can proceed and advance whether it's a good day or a bad day. Having good days isn't the aim of sanctification.

Some other things: it is not getting a good reputation in front of people, that's not the aim of sanctification. Sometimes that's confused, sometimes you're not going to have a good reputation in front of people just because you're being sanctified, or you will be misunderstood by a lot of people because you're being sanctified. Was Jesus understood by His own brothers and sisters? We don't read of one of His brothers and sisters becoming a Christian until after He dies. Was that due to the fact that Jesus didn't live a Christ-like life? So, it must be that it's possible to be totally and thoroughly misunderstood by people, members of your own family, in your own church. But looking good in their eyes is not ultimately the issue. The issue is learning loyalty to God through His word. And that's why we emphasize, emphasize, emphasize the word of God. Because you can't grow apart from the word of God.

Next time we're going to get more into the **means of sanctification**. That will be our third point under the Doctrine of Sanctification and I encourage you to go back now and read the passages in Numbers, Joshua and Judges that we worked through, see if the struggles those armies faced start to ring true in your own life, see if you can detect the connection between what they were facing and what you face in the daily battles.

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