

Having considered last week the NECESSITY of a Gospel or Christian holiness—this morning I want to consider the NATURE of Gospel Holiness—now, let me state at the outset that understanding the nature of holiness or sanctification (these are synonymous terms), is extremely important, highly practical, and thus absolutely necessary...

A.W. Pink—"How can it be discovered whether or not we have been sanctified, unless we really know what sanctification actually is? How can we truly cultivate holiness, until we have ascertained the real substance or essence of holiness? A right apprehension of the nature of sanctification or holiness is (1) a great aid to the understanding of much in the Scriptures, (2) to the forming of right conceptions of the Divine perfections, and (3) to the distinguishing of true religion from all that is false..."

#### I. A Definition of Terms

#### II. A Practical Definition

#### III. Lessons

##### I. A Definition of Terms

1. The Scriptures use several related words in relation to Christian or gospel holiness—sanctification, righteousness, and purity...
2. But—before I briefly examine these three terms—let me clarify—these are all closely related to each other...
3. [1] Righteousness—this term refers to—"a rightness before God"—in relation to our sanctification it refers to—"a right living as defined by God's law..."
4. Dear brethren—let us be very clear on this point—there can be no holiness without right living before God...
5. Rom.6:19—"For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness..."
6. Notice—how "righteousness" is the very opposite of "lawlessness"—righteousness is lawful or right living as defined by the law...
7. Thus—true holiness entails a "right living before God"—right living as defined by God's righteous commands...
8. Thus—"righteousness" and "holiness" are intimately related—there can not be one of these without the other...
9. Every person is a slave—they are either a slave of lawlessness or righteousness—but every person is a slave...
10. Christians are to "present their members as slaves of righteousness"—just a slave presents himself to his master...
11. Christians are slaves of righteousness, slaves of Christ, redeemed for the purpose of living or walking righteously...
12. But—this is my main point—we are slaves of righteousness FOR HOLINESS—that right living IS holiness...
13. [2] Purification—this word is also rendered cleansing—thus—to cleanse or purify are one and the same thing...
14. 2Cor.7:1—"Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God..."
15. Notice the motive or incentive to holiness—"therefore, having these promises"—"let us cleanse ourselves..."
16. The imagery is to the OC practice of purification—all throughout the OT priests and people were cleansed by water...
17. That ceremonial cleansing typified or shadowed our need for moral cleansing—from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit..."

18. That is—moral uncleanness that defiles our soul and body—it's very similar to Romans 6—"present your members..."
19. Paul says that such cleansing or purifying amount to—"perfecting holiness"—that is—in continuing the process...
20. Now—as we shall see in a minute—this cleansing describes the negative part of sanctification—called mortification...
21. [3] Sanctification—the Hebrew and Greek words rendered sanctify or sanctification are also rendered holy or holiness...
22. The Greek word rendered "holiness" literally means—"to sanctify, or set apart for honorable use, or to make holy..."
23. Thus—sometimes it refers to a positional holiness—a setting something apart from the rest for divine purposes...
24. For example, the utensils used in the temple are described as sanctified or holy—that is—set apart for divine purposes...
25. Furthermore, we find that God Himself is said to sanctify His name—that is—set it apart from all other names...
26. Ex.36:23—"And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I *am* the LORD, says the Lord GOD, when I am hallowed in you before their eyes..."
27. Thus—in both of these cases—"to sanctify" doesn't entail any moral change with the thing sanctified or set apart...
28. The temple utensils were not made morally holy, and God's name, can never be made pure—it's already holy...
29. But—when this word is used of Christians, it entails two things—setting apart from sin for God, and the process of making us holy...
30. Historically, or theologically, these two aspects of sanctification have been called definitive (initial) and progressive (ongoing) sanctification...
31. [a] Definitive (initial) sanctification—this refers to the act of God wherein He liberates us from sin's dominion and power...
32. This takes place simultaneous to our effectual calling and regeneration—it's God taking us out of this world...
33. Thus Christians are often referred to as "sanctified" in the past tense—which refers to this initial setting apart...
34. 1Cor.6:11—"And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God..."
35. [b] Progressive sanctification—this refers to the process of God, whereby He continually makes us like Christ...
36. Thus—the same Scriptures that describe Christians as "sanctified"—also describe them "being sanctified..."
37. Heb.2:11—"For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified *are* all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren..." Heb.10:14—"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified..."
38. Thus—usually, we use the term "sanctification" to refer to the ongoing process of setting apart of making holy...
39. Thus—righteousness and purification are closely related to sanctification—which is another way of saying—holiness...
40. Righteousness is right living as defined by the law—it's the rule or standard of true, Christian, gospel holiness...
41. Purification is cleansing the soul from all that's unholy—it's one very important aspect of the work of holiness...
42. Sanctification and holiness are synonymous—and entail being set apart from sin and being made holy or pure...
43. Joel Beeke—"Holiness means to be *set apart*. But what does *set apart* mean? Two things. The negative sense of *set apart* is the call of holiness to be *separate from sin*. The positive sense of *set apart* is the call

of holiness to be *consecrated to God*. These two concepts—separation *from* sin and consecration (or separation) *to* God—comprise holiness..."

## II. A Practical Definition

Gospel holiness consists in (1) the radical restoration of the whole soul to the image of God, (2) the continual conformity of the whole soul to the image of Christ, and (3) the hearty compliance of the new man to the law of Christ.

### A. Its beginning

1. Now—in speaking of the beginning of gospel holiness, I am referring to what I called above "definitive sanctification..."
2. That is—that act of God's free grace, when He unites us to Christ, crucifies the old man, and resurrects a new man...
3. Simply put—gospel holiness has its beginning with the death of the "old man" and resurrection of the "new man..."
4. This new man is recreated after the image of God—it reflects the moral image of God as found in Jesus Christ...
5. John Colquhoun—"In initial sanctification, the Spirit of Christ enters the heart with all His train of spiritual graces, and implants them there. He introduces spiritual life, impresses the soul with the image of God, creates new inclination and motions, or, in other words, forms the new creature..."
6. Thomas Boston—"Initial sanctification is the implanting of the seeds of grace in the soul at first, and is the same with regeneration, wherein the Spirit of Christ comes into the man's heart with his graces, and takes possession of him for God. The whole soul is cast into a new mould and frame, and the image of God is drawn anew upon it..."
7. Thus—essential to a right understanding of Christian holiness, is a right understanding of its radical beginnings...
8. This is very important—holiness is not merely DOING something, but it's first and foremostly BEING something...
9. Christian or gospel holiness lies in the soul—it consists in the soul's restoration to the righteous and holy image of God...
10. Shorter Catechism—"Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, AND are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness..."
11. Rom.6:4-6—"Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be *in the likeness of His* resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with *Him*, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin..."
12. Rom.6:11—"Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord..."
13. Eph.4:20-24—"But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God [according to His image or likeness], in true righteousness and holiness..."
14. I want to suggest that the best commentators are correct in saying—this passage describes something that has happened NOT needs to happen...
15. Many of our translations suggest that Paul is telling these Christians to put off the old man and put on the new...
16. But—every other parallel passage in the NT—renders the passage in the past tense—you have put off and have put on...

17. Christians have "put off the old man", they have "renewed their minds", and they have "put on the new man..."
18. Now—notice how Paul describes this new man, v24—"which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness..."
19. Col.3:9-10—"Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him..."
20. [1] Understanding—in definitive or initial sanctification—the understanding or mind is made holy and pure...
21. [2] Affections—in definitive or initial sanctification—the heart or affections is radically made holy and pure...
22. [3] Will—in definitive or initial sanctification—the desires or will (the faculty of choice) is radically made holy and pure...
23. Benjamin Beddome—"Does sanctification imply an universal change? Yes. *Old things are past away, and all things are become new* (2Cor.5:17). Does it extend to the inward man? *We are renewed in the spirit of our mind* (Eph.4:23). Is the understanding enlightened? Yes. *You were darkness, but now are you light* (Eph.5:8). And the will subdued? Yes. *Your people shall be willing in the day of Your power* (Ps.110:3). And the affections spiritualized? Yes. *They are set on things above* (Col.3:2). Does it also extend to the outward man? Yes. *Having our bodies washed with pure water* (Heb.10:22)..."

#### B. Its pattern

1. While true Christian holiness or sanctification has a definite and radical beginning—it also has a continuation...
2. In other words—what is begun in our definitive sanctification—continues throughout our progressive sanctification...
3. Now—what I want to say here is very important—the pattern of our sanctification is the holiness of Jesus Christ...
4. That is—every true Christian is being conformed into the moral image of Christ—He is our pattern or mould...
5. Michael Barrett—"Sanctification is imitating Christ. The ultimate objective of our whole salvation is that we might be conformed to the image of the Lord..."
6. Rom.8:29—"For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren..."
7. 2Cor.3:18—"But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord..."
8. [a] The MEANS of holiness—"we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord"—this refers to faith in Christ as revealed in Scripture...
9. [b] The AGENT of holiness—"just as by the Spirit of the Lord"—that is—it's the Spirit who is sanctifying or changing us...
10. [c] The NATURE of holiness—"are being transformed [changed] into the same image [of Christ] from glory to glory..."
11. Michael Barratt—"If Christ is the pattern for sanctification, and being conformed to Christ is the consequence of seeing Him, it is essential that we look where He is. The only place we can find the real Christ is the Word of God. That's the glass that reveals the Lord's glory..."
12. Now—historically this ongoing conformity to the image of Christ contains a negative and positive activity...
13. Shorter Catechism—"Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, AND are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness..."
14. [1] The mortification of all that's contrary to the image of Christ—being to death—"the deeds of the flesh..."
15. Necessary to a proper view of holiness is a proper view of sin—for in a sense, holiness is the opposite of sin...

16. [2] The promotion of all that's in harmony to the image of Christ—that is—the cultivation of Christ likeness...

### C. Its rule

1. The rule of sanctification or gospel holiness is the will or Word of God—or, the moral law of Jesus Christ...
2. In other words—at the very heart of gospel holiness, is the whole-souled compliance to the moral law of God...
3. Now—before I go further—I want to briefly remind you—of the close relationship between Christ and the law...
4. By moral law of God as summarized in the Ten Commandments reduced to two—love God and love your neighbor...
5. Thus—because the law is—"holy, just, and good" (Rom.7:12)—the law shows us what holiness is—it provides the path of holiness...
6. Brethren—let me be as plain and clear as I possible can—Gospel holiness is walking in obedience to God's law...
7. Michael Barrett—"It is easy enough to say, Be like Christ. But what was Christ like? What made Him 'holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners' (He.7:26)? The answer is simply that He perfectly obeyed the law of God...Holiness is not some indefinable abstraction or man-defined code of conduct. It is a separation unto God and away from sin, the course for both being set down in God's law. Being conformed to Christ requires obedience to the law. Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man' (Ecc.12:13). Simple enough..."
8. [a] The law and the image of God—that is—God's holy image that was in Adam, was a reflection of His law...
9. Thus—in regeneration, the holy image of God is restored, in that, the law of God is rewritten within the heart...
10. [b] The law and the image of Christ—that is—being conformed to Christ's image includes obedience to the law...
11. Horatius Bonar—"What do we see in Christ? The fulfiller of the Law. He is the embodiment and perfection of Law-fulfilling. We cannot look at Him without seeing the perfect Law. God has given us these two things in these last days, the Law and the living model; but was the living model meant to supersede the Law. Was it not to illustrate and enforce it? We see the Law now, not merely in the statute-book, but in the person of the King Himself..."
12. Rom.8:3—"For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His won Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit..."
13. Shorter Catechism—"Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, AND are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness..."
14. [1] Universal obedience—that is—universal obedience to the entire law—as it concerns God and our neighbor...
15. [2] Spiritual obedience—by this I refer to the spiritual nature of the law—as it commands heart obedience...
16. This was largely the error of the Pharisees who obeyed only the letter of the law and not the spirit of the law...
17. Thus—our Savior warned—"For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven..."
18. [3] Loving obedience, Rom.13:10—"love is the fulfillment of the law"—love fulfills what the law demands...

### III. Lessons

A. True Christian holiness has a definite beginning

1. That is—Christians can only pursue holiness because they are holy—they are to practice what they are by grace...
2. Pink—"At regeneration a principle of holiness is communicated to us; practical sanctification is the *exercise* of that principle in living unto God..."
3. [1] This beginning is RADICAL—thus it's referred to as a NEW creation and a resurrection of a NEW man...
4. [2] This beginning is COMMON—that is—it's common, or generic, to EVERY Christian without exception...
5. [3] This beginning is NECESSARY—that is—there simply can be NO true holiness without this radical beginning...
6. Rom.6:11-12—"Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts..."
7. Eph.4:22-25—"that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore, putting away lying, *Let each one of you* speak truth with his neighbor, for we are members of one another..."
8. Col.3:9-12—"Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave *nor* free, but Christ *is* all and in all. Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering..."

B. True Christian holiness lies first in BEING then DOING

1. That is—Christian holiness is far more than behavior—but it concerns the disposition or character of the heart...
2. This distinction can be illustrated by a fruit tree—which can be divided into three parts—the roots, tree, and fruit...
3. [1] The roots—the roots of a tree and very important even though they go unseen—this refers to man's soul...
4. Holiness—for the most part—remains within the soul, unseen by man—but seen and approved of—by God...
5. [2] The tree—the tree of holiness, refers to the activity of putting off and on—of mortification and vivification...
6. [3] The fruit—the fruit of holiness would be the fruit of the Spirit, or what Scripture refers to as—good works...
7. Now—let me ask you—what is necessary for a tree to bear good fruit—healthy root system, trunk, and branches...
8. In other words—the farmer doesn't any time on the fruit itself—if the tree is healthy it produces good fruit...
9. Matt.12:33—"Make a tree good and its fruit will be good"—this is the order of holiness—holy souls live holy lives...
10. Thus—we don't make good fruit—God makes us good trees, which by His grace, then produce or bear good fruit...
11. I think many Christians are unclear on this point—they think they have to DO something that makes them holy...
12. But becoming holy isn't primarily something that we DO—but it's something that we ARE—or, holy people do what they do because they are what they are...
13. For example, if a person was sinning, they need to do more than merely stop sinning—that wasn't the primary issue...
14. To help someone to change a behavior isn't holiness, and it's not Christian, it's merely behavioural modification...

15. Gal.5:22—"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control..."
16. I can illustrate this point further with the necessary distinction—between the essence and expression of holiness...

C. True Christian holiness is the restoration of God's image in man

1. There is a very true sense in which, Christ came to earth for the purpose, of restoring God's holy image in man...
2. Man alone was created in God's image—this image lied largely in a moral likeness of God's holy and pure nature...
3. Through the fall man became an unholy wretch—through the gospel this moral image is in a large part restored...
4. Thus—true Christians holiness entails the restoration of God's holy image in man—the image of the Father, Son, and Spirit...
5. [1] The image of the Father—that is—as children of God, we are exhorted—"be perfect as your Father in have is perfect..."
6. [2] The image of Christ—that is—holiness consists in the conformity of Christ as the Second Man and Last Adam...
7. [3] The image of the Spirit—that is—holiness is conformity to the mind of the Spirit as revealed in Scripture...