

The Lord Jesus said ... “My Sheep

An example of our positional sanctification *in Christ* (past event) would be a mother who sets her fine china apart in a china cabinet for display and special use. An example of our practical sanctification of *Christ in us* (present event) would be when the mother takes the dishes out and cleans the dust off for her immediate use.

God’s means for our present sanctification is the new life of the indwelling Holy Spirit. God’s method of accomplishing sanctification is renewing the believer’s soul and mind.

The Greek word for soul is “*psuche*,” sometimes translated soul, life or mind. “*Psuche*” is where our modern word *psyche* comes from. *Psyche* means - the spirit or soul functioning through the mind as the center of thought, emotion and behavior– and consciously or unconsciously adjusting or mediating the body’s responses to the social and physical environment.

It is the field of psychology that attempts to deal with a person’s psyche. The goal is behavior modification.

However, when it comes to the justified believer, God already has a behavioral program through Jesus Christ Who is the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls (*psuche*), 1Pet. 2:25

God’s program is behavior *transformation* into the very image and likeness of the Son of God Himself (2Cor. 3:18). **Modification deals with the symptoms but transformation addresses the root cause.** That is why many God-fearing believers take strong offense to psychology’s (“Christian” or secular) behavioral modification methods for Christians. Behavioral change is God’s work specifically detailed in Holy Scripture. Not only is justification of God but also sanctification.

God’s 7 Point Program for Behavioral Transformation

Counsel Power Support Group	Therapist Therapy Purpose	Hope
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hear my voice, and

The Counsel - Holy Scriptures

And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the **word of his grace**, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are *sanctified* (Acts 20:32).

Holy Scriptures exhort the believer that they are blessed when they walk not in the *counsel* of the ungodly but rather meditate in the law of the Lord (Psalm 1). It is the living word of God which, when fed upon by faith, produces counsel for every area of behavior. God claims His inspired Scriptures are **all sufficient** to *completely* perfect the man or woman of God unto every good work (2Tim. 3:15-17).

Danger! We hear today that “all truth is God’s truth, whether revealed or discovered.” Such a statement infers that there is truth to be discovered outside Scripture’s revealed *interpretation*. It is true a monkey has two eyes and a mouth as we do. The lie is the attempt to *interpret* this truth of similarity apart from Scripture and conclude evolution. When one *interprets* the observations of science or psychology, etc., and presents such “discoveries” as *truth*, as if it were the same as God’s Scriptures, is hellish. This is unhealthy and rank subjectivity. It enslaves the learner to the teacher’s opinion of truth.

Truth sets one free from self and Satan’s deceptions (John 8:32). If truth frees, what does error do? The Lord revealed this about sanctification and truth: “Sanctify them through thy truth: **thy word is truth.**” (John 17:17).

The Power - Holy Spirit

This I say then, Walk in the **Spirit**, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh (Gal 5.16).

The “flesh” is the inbred sin in every believer’s body. Things such as illicit sexual behavior, selfishness that harms relationships, substance abuse, dishonesty, idolatry, greed, and lack of ability to control one’s emotions so one’s actions are “dysfunctional” (wrath, strife, etc.) are all described as “the works of the flesh” (Gal. 5:19).

they follow me.” John 10:27

There is a sense in which we are born with a “genetic defect,” prone to certain desires. But it’s not to be compared to the genetic pool that determines one’s race and other physical traits. That is unchangeable and a nonmoral issue which should never be discriminated against. Our inbred “defect” is called fleshly *sin*. And God has provided a solution for those who want it.

The death of Jesus Christ the Lord provides full payment for the penalty our fleshly sin deserves. The sacrificial blood makes the believer fully accepted in God’s presence (Heb. 10:19-23). It is the blood of Christ that cleanses our conscience from guilt before God.

But when yielded to, it is the indwelling Spirit of God that empowers every *believer* to put to death every work of the flesh to produce behavior that is pleasing to God (Rom. 8:13). That’s why all good behavior in the believer is called “the fruit of the Spirit.”

God’s sanctification not only gives full enlightenment on how to behave but it also provides the full power to perform that behavior

It’s not that the believer won’t have the lust of the flesh. It is that he won’t *fulfill* that lust when he walks in the Spirit. The desires won’t become deeds. The fantasies won’t become fruit. The attitude won’t become action. And the “defect” won’t become “dysfunctional.” Praise the Lord!

The Support Group - Church

“The whole **church** be come together in one place ... that all may learn, and all may be comforted.” (1Cor. 14:23, 21)

One of the key purposes of the local church is for sanctification. God has given all believers a variety of gifts and callings for the building up of the body. According to Scripture these gifts are to operate within the framework and order of the local assembly.

Divinely raised up overseers are there as a pattern of good behavior. As experienced shepherds, through the Word of God, they, in mature wisdom, guide the flock to fulfill the purposes of God. Therefore, the divine

“His divine power -

objective of growth into Christ-likeness of character is accomplished in the function of the local assembly.

The average “support group” is built upon the foundation of common experience. Thus, it is dependent upon man’s worst–ungodly experiences and immature feelings as its source of support

God’s support group - the local church - is where God’s best in truth stimulates godly behavior.

God has also given the local church authority to discipline the sinning believer. This promotes the fear of God which retards sinful behavior (Pro. 16:6) and shame which induces repentance (2Thess. 3:14). This also promotes accountability which acts as a helpful check and balance on one another. When a believer comes into the fellowship of a local church, he comes under the authority of the risen Lord and is accountable to the shepherds and all the saints for his behavior and beliefs (Matt 18:15-20, 1Cor. 5).

The Therapist - High Priest

“We have a great high priest ... Jesus the Son of God ... come ... that we may obtain mercy, and find **grace to help** in time of need. (Heb. 4:14, 16)

There are times of trial and testing in the believer’s life when he requires a source outside of himself to cope. Sometimes he needs mercy– judgment withheld to maintain his fellowship with God. Other times he needs grace– favor bestowed to help him endure and be obedient. Where should the believer go to find such?

Jesus as man has fully tasted humanity and endured the sufferings associated with obeying God. Though His pressures did not come from within for He had no indwelling sin, they did come from without–Satan. Now in heaven, the Lord Jesus lives to give help for every need to those who come in faith to God by Him (Heb.5).

Christ alone as God and man is most “professionally” qualified to guide and sustain the believer

hath given unto us all things

The Therapy - Prayer

“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by **prayer** and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and **minds** through Christ Jesus” (Philp. 4:6,7).

Anxiety and stress due to the cares of this life are known to produce troubled minds and erratic behavior. Yet the unexplainable peace of God is promised to those who bring their cares *to God* in believing prayer. This heavenly peace will safeguard the heart and mind through Christ Jesus. Minds are preserved through the peace of God. Peace that might not know the answers but knows God knows— and that He will faithfully work it out His way. As Isaiah 26:3 assures: “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.”

2 Types of Peace

“*Peace with God*” This is the basis for relationship. The believer is no longer under the wrath and judgment of God for his sins. Because of the death of Christ Jesus, God is no longer “angry” at the sinner. Thus, there is peace between the two (Rom.5:1).

“*Peace of God*” This is a quality of mind and the basis for joyful living. Our Lord referred to it in John 14:27, “*my peace* I give unto you.” It’s that inner, quiet assurance— regardless of the outward circumstances— because you know God is faithful and loves you in Christ.

A believer does have peace with God and yet might not have the peace of God

The Purpose - Sovereign Design

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his **purpose**” (Rom 8.28).

that pertain unto life and godliness,

Purpose. Without it life loses its meaning and depression will set in. God has a purpose for the believer. It is to conform him to the very image of His Son (Rom 8:29). The believer will be like Him not only physically some glad day but also internally— in spiritual character. It is in this state that we will be united with the Son in an eternal marriage: two of the same “species” coming together and co-reigning in the kingdom. This is not behavior modification but a radical transformation of the inner man by the Spirit of Christ.

In this grand goal of sanctification God is presented as the Sovereign designer of our circumstances in life. God is using them, positive or negative, to conform us to His Son’s image. He is breaking our pride and self-reliance so that we trust only Him. It isn’t that all things are good in our life, but that all things *work together* for good— for the great purpose of His calling for us.

It is this bedrock confidence in God’s sovereign workings that through the annals of time has victoriously carried those who love God through deep waters.

The Hope - His Coming

“He shall appear ... And every man that hath this **hope** in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” (1John 3. 2,3)

This world is hopeless. A person without hope is in despair— perhaps even suicidal. By hope God does not mean wishful thinking, like one might say “I *hope* I get rich.” Rather, God means anticipation of a future event. Like the *hope* of an engaged bride is her wedding day.

The great hope of the believer is the certain coming of the Lord Jesus for him and then with Him. “Looking for that blessed *hope*, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2.13). The fact that the Lord’s coming is imminent and instant is designed to cause the bride to live in joyful anticipation, preparing herself for Him (Luke 12:31-48). She is occupied with maintaining her purity for Him on the wedding day. This is sanctification (2Cor. 11:2, 3).

“Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.” (Pro. 13:12)

through the knowledge of Him.” 2Pet. 1:3

For almost two thousand years God’s sanctification has worked for believers. Nothing new is needed today. Nothing else is better. Nothing else is ordained by God— or works. Give yourself fully to God’s way.

Man’s Words

Disease - something one catches which needs treatment to cure

Compulsive Behavior - conduct that overpowers one so he can no longer help it

Denial Stage - when one has a problem but won’t admit it

Dysfunctional - inability to function rightly because of negative circumstances

Victim - one whose behavior is a result of being wronged by others

Recovery - the time needed to find a program which will produce right behavior

Therapy - the treatment given to aid one in recovering

Codependency - when one must use and control another to feel accepted

Self-Esteem - the more one loves himself, the more good one will do for self

Counselling - information by a trained professional that allows you to decide

God’s Words

Sin - acts one does willfully which need forgiveness in the Lord Jesus Christ

Lust - something inbred in one’s flesh which walking in the Spirit can overcome

Deceived - seduced by Satan so that you lie to yourself and to God

Disobedient - not behaving properly because you don’t want to

Sinner - one whose behavior is a choice regardless of environment

Repentance - the act of confessing and forsaking sin by the Lord’s grace & power

Judgment - if one won’t judge himself, then the church is to render judgment

Pride - when one values and puts self above their authorities and others

Self-Denial - denying self and esteeming Christ and others as better than self

Instruction - Scriptural truth given that requires it be followed and obeyed

Chronicle #2 of ‘*The Christian Life*’ Series looks at believers having the new lifestyle of “sons”

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The Chronicles of the

Christian Life

1

Sanctification: God’s Behavioral Change Program

The believer in God’s gospel is justified by faith alone. But God’s gospel never concludes with justification. To be declared righteous (not condemned) by faith in the propitiatory blood of Christ is to be saved from the wrath of God (Rom. 5:9). But God’s gospel also deals with the wreckage of sin in the believer (Rom. 6-8).

This process of changing the justified believer’s lifestyle into the saintly character of Christ Himself is called sanctification. Sanctification means to be set apart for a holy purpose. Every believer is sanctified in Christ Jesus i.e., placed into the body of Christ. But the Spirit of Christ is also placed into the believer.

- Being placed “*in Christ*” gives the inherited blessings of the Son.
- Christ being placed “*in you*” gives the very life of the Son.