

CrossRoads Baptist Church
November 7, 2007 6:30 p.m.
I Thess. 4: 1-6
Will of God Series #4

The Will of God is for You to be Sanctified

1. To be sanctified means to be “set apart, consecrated.”

The word “sanctification” is *hagiasmos* (hag-ee-as-mos) which comes from the root word *hagios* (hag-ee-as) which is the word for holy: to be set apart, consecrated. Thus *hagiasmos* includes the idea of consecration, purification, dedication and holiness. This word does not denote the state of holiness but the process of being made holy in character and conduct. Contrast this with I Thess. 3:13 where *hagiosune* is used and that is the state of being holy.

This word is only used ten times in the New Testament and three of them are here in seven verses (verses 3, 4 and 7). The one in verse seven is translated “holy.” Of the ten references in the NT to this exact word, five of them are translated “sanctification” and five are translated “holy.”

The idea of sanctification is that something or someone is set aside for the use intended by the designer. For example, a fountain pen is “set aside” or “sanctified” for the purpose of writing. A pair of glasses is “set aside” for use in improving one’s sight. A human being is “set aside” when they live according to God’s design and purpose, walking in a manner which is pleasing to His and worthy and of His great Name.

Wuest writes that this word was used in the pagan word to be “set apart for the gods.” The worshipper of the pagan god acquired the character of that pagan god and the religious ceremonies connected with its worship.

So we see why the Greek gods of sexual perversion and the acting out of sexual pervasive acts were seen as religious.

2. Sanctification is used prominently throughout the Bible.

Numerous things are “sanctified.” Old Testament the word is used 144 times. A day is sanctified (Sabbath), the first born son in Egypt, priests, garments, utensils,

Do you know where the largest number of references to holiness is? The book of Leviticus. I did a study that found over one-third of all the references to holiness in the OT are found in two books: Exodus and Leviticus and the largest number of those is in Lev.

Nancy Lee DeMoss said she took it a step further. He counted every verse that had to do with holiness using such words as clean, unclean, holy, sanctified, purity, wash, defile. Using that, she found 386 times those words used in Leviticus. Why Leviticus? Its where God details his will for every aspect of daily life and worship and ceremonial cleansing.

In the New Testament it is used 28 times translated “hallowed, sanctify, and in Rev. 22:11 “keep himself holy.”

3. This sanctification is evident in two primary expressions:
 - a. Sanctification in the area of sexual purity

In verse 3 the word for sexual immorality is *porneias*. It is no accident that the first instruction designed to produce greater holiness is abstinence from sexual immorality.

We often say that we are defeated in this area. But Jerry Bridges said, “It is time for us Christians to face up to our responsibility for holiness. Too often we say we are ‘defeated’ by this or that sin. No, we are not defeated; we are simply disobedient. It might be well if we stopped using the terms victory and defeat to describe our progress in holiness. Rather we should use the terms obedience and disobedience.”

But *porneia* is the comprehensive term denoting any and every form of sexual practice that lies outside the circle of God's revealed will, including adultery, premarital and extramarital intercourse, homosexuality, bestiality, pornography, masturbation, and any other perversion of God's design.

Times are different, but the human nature is not. The same type person Paul wrote to in I Thess 4 is the one hearing me preach today.

Paul tells us that God will avenge immorality, and especially taking a wife or a daughter from a brother.

Sex glands are a God-given part of our bodies but using them in a wrong way is very hurtful.

But Jesus took it beyond the act (or should I say, before the act). "Everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart." Matthew 5:28

The word "lust" is describing something beyond the boundary of God's design for sex. The word for lust is *epithumos*. The prefix *epi* means "to add to," signifying that something is being added to a normal drive. We do not have to add something onto the God-given sexual drive.

The only way to control your sexual drive and keep it within the limits of holiness is to control your thoughts.

For sexual acts will never occur if sexual thoughts are brought into subjection.

b. Sanctification in the area of love and work

The concept of loving one another is seen as holiness (verses 9-10) as well as working and providing. It is believed that some had stopped working due to their belief of the soon return of Christ, but Paul tells them three things:

1. To live a quiet life – a peaceful life, free of conflict
2. To mind your own business

3. To work with your hands.

4. It is true to say, "I have been sanctified."

I Corinthians 6:11 "But this is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."

Hebrews 10:10 By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Phil 1:1 "To the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi..." I am already a saint. To be a saint means you are a "holy one."

5. It is also true to say, "I am being sanctified."

Someone said, "Sanctification is the term that describes the process by which God takes converted sinners and transforms their character."

This is the daily process of working out what has been worked in. This is growing spiritually in personal holiness. It is a daily work of grace whereby believers are set apart more and more for the use of God.

Phil 1:6 "being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ."

Erwin Lutzer "Although we become Christians instantaneously by faith in Christ, knowing God and developing faith is a gradual process. There are no shortcuts to maturity. It takes time to be holy."

"Take time to be holy.
Speak oft with thy Lord
Abide in Him always
And feed on His Word"

Holiness is not optional. “As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do, for it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy.’” I Peter 1:14-16

Other verses that have the same emphasis:

Matthew 5:48 “Be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect.”

I Timothy 5:22 “Keep yourself pure.”

I Corinthians 15:34 “Awaken to righteousness and do not sin.”

II Timothy 2:19 “Let everyone that names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.”

Romans 12:9 “Abhor what is evil, cling to what is good.”

6. Sanctification is a call to be different from the world.

It is a call to be different from the world. G. Campbell Morgan was right when he said that the church did the most for the world when the church was the least like the world.

Warren Wiersbe said, “Our present age is not only like ‘the days of Noah,’ but it is also like ‘the days of Lot.’ Many believers have abandoned the place of separation and are compromising with the world. The professing church has but a weak testimony to the world and sinners do not really believe that judgment is coming.”

Charles Haddon Spurgeon said this about the local church, “In proportion as a church is holy, in that proportion will its testimony for Christ be powerful.”

We must not tolerate unholiness in our lives.

7. The primary means of sanctification is the Holy Spirit’s use of the Word of God.

John 17:17 “Sanctify them by thy truth, your word is truth.”

Ephesians 5:26 “to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,…”

Romans 6:19 “I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness.”

Hebrews 10:14 “because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.”

I Peter 2:1-2 Like newborn babes who long for (develop an appetite for, have an insatiable craving for) the pure milk of the work (unadulterated, no additives) that by it they may grow in respect to salvation.

Psalms 19:7 “The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.” The Hebrew word translated converting is *shuw*. It means to “return..come back to; to turn around; to turn to Jehovah..to cease from..to restore.”

God wants to convert the mind, the soul, the emotions, the will all to be like Him.

James 1:21 “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.”

II Corinthians 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.”

The Bible is not just an instruction manual for our living; the Bible reflects the very glory of God.

Scripture often makes little distinction between God and His Word:

Psalms 56:4, 10 “In God, whose word I praise…” that phrase is three times in two verses

Psalms 119:48, 120 “I will lift up my hands to your commands,

which I love...I stand in awe of your laws.”

Psalm 138:2 “I will bow down toward your holy temple and will praise your name...for you have exalted above all things your name and your word.”

“When the Bible speaks, God speaks.” Dr. Stephen Olford quoted St. Augustine.

Real, lasting, fruit producing revival occurs when the Word of God retakes priority and preeminence in the believer’s life and the church’s life.

There is an awesome revival of worship and praise happening in our land reflecting “worship that is according to the spirit and truth.” But how can we worship in truth if we don’t know truth?

“Thy word is truth.” John 17:17

I want to submit that passionate and authentic worship and praise of God ONLY flows out of revelation of His Word.

Nehemiah 8 – Ezra read on a high wooden platform the Word of the Law for 5-6 hours as the people stood, listening attentively to the reading and exposition of the Scriptures.

If there is no Bible in your hand, there will be no Bible in your heart.

8. Sanctification is primarily God’s work

I Thess 5:23 In the Greek sentence this pronoun is first for emphasis. Paul’s emphasis is that it is God who sanctifies us. We are to cooperate with His work as expressed in chapter four. But ultimately Paul wants to make it clear that sanctification is God’s work in us. Philippians 2:12-13 “Work out your salvation with fear and trembling for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.”

In 5:23 is the only time in the whole NT the *hototeles* is used meaning “entirely, completely.” He prays for our complete sanctification.

Oswald Chambers “The destined end of man is not happiness, nor health, but holiness. God’s one aim is the production of saints.” It is quite true to say, ‘I can’t live a holy life,’ but you can decide to let Jesus make you holy.”

Its not a matter of determination, but surrender.