

Holiness (Part 3) and Devotional Life Introduction

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Date: 27 February 2013

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[0:00] We're going to finish up tonight on the subject of holiness, positional and practical holiness.

! Not very much left to do with that. I gave you the notes for that. And I'm pretty sure that we'll be able to finish that and maybe get into a little bit of the discussion or teaching.

On the devotional life. That will be our next subject. We're going from positional holiness to practical holiness. And moving into the very practical side of our participation with God in our spiritual development.

Under the heading of the devotional life. So we'll hopefully get to that. Some of you got the notes for that. But I pulled them before the rest of you got them. Because I just didn't trust you to bring them back next week.

No, I'm not sure. No, it's a terrible thing to say. But if we get that far tonight, and if I don't shut up or at least get to it, we won't get there.

[1:08] I'll have the notes and I'll give them to you. Now, I asked the question. I kind of closed our session last week by asking the question that man has no holiness himself.

And that's absolutely true. In ourselves, we have no holiness. If that's the case, then how can we speak of man in terms of holiness? And we might even add to that, how can we even hope to obey the command?

Or why is there even a command to be holy if there's no holiness in us? And so that kind of moves us to these two kind of a two-prong consideration of holiness, our own personal holiness.

Because the Bible certainly commands us to be holy. And the Bible certainly speaks of man in terms of holiness a number of times throughout Scripture. And so how can that be? Well, we understand that through these two aspects or features of holiness.

The first one is positional holiness. And the second one is practical holiness. And that's just a very simple way of putting it this way, that positional holiness is who you are in Christ.

[2:27] That's who you are. I mean, the very moment you were saved by the grace of God, you were placed in Christ. At that very moment, you were granted a position before God of holiness.

Holiness. You didn't have anything to do with it. You didn't work for it. You didn't somehow earn it. There wasn't some kind of formula that you went through, say, you know, some catechism or some, you know, some study from the Bible so that you could have this.

God granted this to you in Christ by His own will. This is what He did. So that's positional, who you are in Christ. And then the other side of that, practical holiness, is what you are becoming in Christ. And this feature or aspect of holiness is what we do participate in. We're expected to participate in it.

Now, it's not all man and no God. I mean, God is still at work in this. Positional holiness, certainly. And practical holiness, as well. So let's look at those two things.

[3:38] Let's start with positional holiness. Now, let me just make several points about this. The word saints. Do you think there are still people, even in Baptist churches, that when you use the word saint, that they think of some sainted person like St. Francis of Assisi or one of the many saints that the Catholics have sainted?

Is that what you think people think about when you use the word saint? I think still there are some. You do. But when it comes to true biblical Christianity, all believers in Christ, all those who have been redeemed by the Lord Jesus Christ are saints.

We're saints. And all that in the world means is we are set apart people. Set apart from something and for someone. We are saints.

All right. So now, the word saints, or in some translations, by the way, you'll have the terms holy ones. These terms are used to describe all born again believers.

And the term saints or holy ones denotes or signifies our position in Christ. So when you find the word saints in reference to God's people, that is, I would say, always.

[5:12] I would hedge that a little bit and say almost always refers to our position, our position, our positional holiness. And, by the way, not necessarily our practice as believers.

We can be positionally holy, and if you're born again, you are. But maybe not necessarily practically holy as you ought to be as a believer.

A couple of verses that I might highlight for you. Philippians 1.1 is a good one. This is kind of the introduction to the letter, of course. Paul and Timothy, bond slaves of Christ Jesus, to all the saints. All right. So Paul is writing the letter, and he's addressing the readers of the letter. They're the members of the church there at Philippi, and he calls them saints. But he doesn't stop there. The very next word is very crucial. In fact, the next several words. But especially this preposition, saints in Christ, in Christ Jesus.

[6:21] In. You know, it's always amazing to me, the more I study Scripture, and the more I pay close attention to not just sentences and phrases, but even single words.

It's always amazing to me the depth of Scripture that you discover. Every word means something. Now, we can use a lot of words, say a lot of words, even write a lot of words if you do any writing. And people do write a lot of things. They don't mean anything. They don't really stand for much. But every word of Scripture is full of meaning.

And this word in is a perfect example. It's just a preposition. But it is in a certain form that means literally in the sphere of.

In the sphere. That is, you have been placed in the sphere of something. And what is that something? It's Christ Jesus.

[7:24] We've been placed in Him. That's a wonderful doctrinal truth that really the implications of, we could spend the rest of the evening talking about.

Our security in Him. Our righteousness. The way God views us and sees us. So many things are ours.

So many blessings belong to us because of this one thing, this one truth that we, the moment we believed, we were placed in Christ. So we are saints in Christ Jesus.

It goes on to say who are in Philippi. In fact, the very same word and meaning of the word is used again.

So just like these believers there in the city of Philippi were in the city. I mean, they're inside of it. In that same sense and similar sense, all believers are in Christ.

[8:27] It's a sphere of location, a sphere of existence. In the one sense, in Philippi, that's a physical existence. In the sense of being in Christ, that's a spiritual and eternal, by the way, existence.

We are in Christ. Also, Ephesians 1.4. Just as He chose us in Him. There's the same concept, same meaning of the preposition.

In. In fact, in the Greek it's and. In or and. He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before Him.

Chose before the foundation of the world that we would be positionally holy before Him. You see, so it doesn't have anything to do with us or any decision we have made. This is the grace of God. And He is, from the foundation of the world, He has chosen us to be in Christ that we would be holy and blameless before Him.

Now, how is this possible? Is it because of works? No. He chose before the foundation of the world. Well, you might think and some might argue, well, it's because God is sovereign.

[9:45] He can see all things. And He looked down through the corridors of time and saw that you would do some wonderful things for Him. And so He chose you based on that. No, not according to that either. It's all according to grace.

Let's read on. In love. How did He choose you? On what basis did He choose you to be holy and blameless before Him? In love He chose us. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself according to, according to what?

The kind intention of His will. To the praise of the glory of His grace. See, He gets all the praise and all the glory. Because He's the one who chose us in Him.

Which He freely bestows on us in the Beloved. All right. All this is talking about our positional holiness. All according to the, on the basis of God's sovereign grace, God's love for us.

Second thing I would say about this positional holiness is this. Just as the righteousness of Christ is imputed or credited, maybe a word that's a little easier to get a hold of, credited to us.

[11:00] Just as the righteousness of Christ is credited to us, so His holiness is also credited to us or imputed to us. 1 Corinthians 1.30 By His, that's God's doing, you are in Christ Jesus.

There's that position again. A statement of position. By His own doing, you are in Christ Jesus who became, that is Christ Jesus became for or to us.

To us in the translation, really the idea is for us, our behalf. The wisdom from God. And not only that, but righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

And I'm not going to take time to pick apart every one of those words, but I want you to focus on the word sanctification. By His doing, God's doing, you are in Christ.

You've been placed in Christ Jesus who became for us sanctification. And we just take one of the words in the list, sanctification. What is this?

[12:09] This is a reference to the beginning point. The actual setting apart, setting us apart for Him, for Him, and also to set us apart from the world, from sin, and for Him.

That's holiness. And that's what we have as a result of being placed in Christ. Also, 1 Peter 2.9. We are declared to be a chosen race.

A royal priesthood. A holy nation. There's our position. A reference to our position. A holy nation of people for God's own possession. Third, we've been made holy.

That's, again, positionally in that sense, positionally. We've been made holy according to the will of God, which was accomplished through the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 10.9 and 10. Then He said, Behold, I have come to do your will. Whose will? God's will. By this will, this will, we have been sanctified.

[13:18] We've been sanctified. We could say made holy. Sanctified is hagiadzo in the Greek. It means to set apart. To be set apart by the will of God and not by our own will.

So we've been sanctified through or accomplished through, or this has been made possible through what? The offering of the blood of Jesus Christ once for all.

And it's a done deal. We're not hoping to be holy before God. We are holy before God. You say, Well, I don't feel very holy. That's not the point.

It's who you are in God's eyes. Who you are judicially before Him. And positionally before Him. He has chosen by His grace to place you in Christ.

You are then in that sense, we are in that sense as holy as Christ is holy. I know that kind of grates us the wrong way. It almost makes it sound like, well, are we little Christs?

[14:23] No. But if we're not as holy as Christ, then we're condemned. We're condemned. And so this positional holiness is a wonderful, wonderful act of the grace of God.

All right, let's go to practical holiness so we could spend a lot more time on positional holiness. It's very doctrinal, but it's very, very important. Let's move on to practical holiness.

First of all, Hebrews 10.14 represents a scriptural bridge between positional and practical holiness. We see the two coming together here.

For, he says, the book of Hebrews, probably Paul. But he said, Tom didn't hear me. I'm not even going to look it up. Oh, we're having fun.

By the way, it was heartwarming for me in Ukraine because they're solidly behind me on this Paul being the author of Hebrews. Hebrews 10.14 represents that scriptural bridge.

[15:27] For by one offering, what's that an allusion to? The cross. That's right, I've got it written right there. But you knew that anyway.

For by one offering, that's the cross, he has perfected. Every word of this is just rich with meaning. He has perfected, made perfect.

We could even use the word complete, completed us. In going even deeper into the Greek grammar, the idea is of a completed thing, and yet it has ongoing results.

It's called a perfect tense in the verb. It's done. It's completed. This perfecting of us. It's a done deal, but it has ongoing results.

Aren't you glad? He needs to just get you perfected, and then, well, we'll just see what happens next. No, it's ongoing. Ongoing results. This is positional. And for all time, those who are sanctified.

[16:38] All right, so we have, he's perfected us. It's done, completed. That's positional holiness. It's done, but it's ongoing. For all time, those who are sanctified.

There's that word *hagiyatzo*, again, to be set apart. But only this time, it is in a certain tense of the verb that means it's a continuous action, and it's also passive.

It's something that's being done to us. It's ongoing. Literally, it could read this way. Those who are being sanctified. Being.

Ongoing. Or those who are being made holy. So, here's the bridge between the two. We have, through this one offering, by the grace of God, we have been perfected.

He has perfected us. We're positionally holy before him, as righteous as Christ is righteous. But there's also this other element.

[17:37] We are being sanctified. That is, we are being sanctified. Being made holy. This is the practical side of holiness.

This is the work that God is doing in our lives, right as we speak. He's doing that right here tonight. He does it through many different methods, as we're going to see.

So, practical holiness involves two participants. It's important to know this. It's not, you know, positional, that's God's part. Practical is my part.

I can just hope that I hold my end up. Well, you're not going to be able to hold your end up if it's totally up to you. We're just not going to. I don't care, you know, how spiritually minded you are or how zealous you are to be just like Christ.

Without God, you'll never make it. So, let's understand that positional holiness is all God. But practical holiness is God also. But we participate with Him.

[18:39] So, there's first God's sovereign, the sovereign part, God's part. And just understanding that it is fundamentally God's work to make us holy in this practical sense, just as it was in the positional sense.

And God uses whatever means necessary. And we don't always like His means, actually. In fact, to be honest, we like very few of His means.

Because of our flesh, but also because some of His means are difficult for us. God's going to use all means. And I might just give you kind of two broad categories. Enabling grace.

And grace enables us. This is part of His grace. That is, He enlivens our wills, our energies to be holy and to desire holiness.

And I think Philippians 2, 12 and 13 is prime scripture to support this. He says, work out your salvation with fear and trembling. I don't think we have to spend time explaining that, do we?

[19:48] We're not talking about being saved, you know, in the initial sense of salvation. This is the ongoing work of sanctification. So, this is our part.

Work out your salvation with fear and trembling. But here's the good part of the verse. For it is God who is at work in you. God's at work in you. And He's doing two things.

Both to will and to work of His good pleasure. This speaks of God's enabling grace in our lives.

God is gracious to grant us a power and a spiritual enablement that provides us the desire to be holy.

But also provides for us the power to do what pleases Him. To do what is holy. Alright, so there's the practical side. But God is getting all the glory, as He should.

[20:48] And we are participating with Him. But God is the one who is enabling us, by His grace, to want to be holy. And to do what is necessary to be holy.

That is, to do what pleases Him. Alright, so enabling grace. Then here's the other side of it, the part we don't really like. And that's God's discipline. God uses discipline. Hebrews 12.10 God disciplines us for our good so that we may share His holiness.

That's just about as simple as you can get it. What's His purpose for discipline? Because He's an angry God? Why does He spank us sometimes? Because, you know, we just make Him mad?

God is the perfect parent. I would have to admit that I've not always been the perfect parent. Sometimes we do.

Maybe I'm the only one. We would discipline our children because they made us angry. You know. But God is perfect in His discipline.

[21:52] And His desire is to make us holy. His desire is not to make us suffer. You know. His desire is not to be a killjoy. I just don't want you to have any fun.

He looks down. If you're having too much fun. He says, we're going to stop that real quick. You know. No. It's to make us holy. Now, of course, some of our fun is contrary to His holiness.

And He does want us to stop that. But His desire to make us holy. Now, the word discipline. That word appears there in Hebrews 12.10. The word discipline is a word that means or refers to the training of a child.

That's what He's talking about. He's training us as a child. So it's not discipline only in the narrow sense of punishment. Well, that's part of it. But it is in the broad sense of everything that a parent would do to train up his or her child.

You know. Sometimes it's punishment. Correction. Protection. You know. Teaching. All of these things are involved in the discipline of God.

[23:03] Then the word share. These are two words that I would just highlight in the verse.

Discipline. We know what that means now. The word share means to be a partaker. To be a partner.

And what do we share in? His holiness. His holiness. Now, this is key. Meaning that it means this. We do not have a holiness like God's. We have God's own holiness.

Now, that's an astounding thing. And we have God's holiness both positionally and practically.

Practically. One more thing about God's part in practical holiness.

Practical holiness is God's ultimate goal for us. And he will not fail to achieve it. He will not fail to achieve it. Although sometimes from our perspective it looks like he's failing.

[24:10] I perish the thought that we would even say that. Philippians 1.6. For I am confident of this very thing. That he who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ.

Christ Jesus. And we know that verse. Some of us might even know it by heart. And this is a reference to, connected with, this process of practical holiness.

God got it started. He did. And he's going to finish it. Now, I've started a lot of things in my life and never finished it. Any of you like that? I remember when I was a kid.

You know, I had a little season in my life where I thought I liked to put model cars together. Have you ever put model cars together? Got the glue. Of course, back in those days you used glue to put those things together.

They'd just snap together. And so I started a bunch of those things and got bored with it. And so I think several didn't have any steering wheels. Maybe a few tires or wheels that went on there or some part of it.

[25:14] And even if I finished the whole model, you know, you've got several pages of little decals to put on there. And in those days they didn't stick on there. You had put them in the water, you know, and they put.

Remember those? All right. And, you know, I've had several models. I didn't put any of the decals in there. I don't know why I'm going on about that.

Just to show the contrast between man and God, certainly Don and God. God always finishes what he starts. And he's going to get it done. This desire to make us holy as he is holy.

1 Thessalonians 5.23. Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you. Again, that's hagiadzo.

Separate you from, means literally to separate you from profane things and dedicate you to God.

Sanctify you, he says, entirely. Perfectly. Completely. Completely. Completely. In all respects. And may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[26:17] Faithful is he who calls you and he also will bring it to pass. That's very definite, very deliberate. Now, I'll say that some have taken this verse and have developed an entire doctrine called entire sanctification or holy perfection.

But it's pretty clear from the larger text that he's talking about God's determined will to make you holy. And he's going to finish that and he's going to finish it by the time Jesus comes or when Jesus comes.

And so, the finished product of holiness is going to be after this life. And then we will be completed and God's going to finish that work.

So, that's God's part in practical holiness. What about our part? Regenerate, Holy Spirit-filled man's part. Now, that's kind of a mouthful, but I decided to expand that from just man's part because, you know, more descriptions say regenerate man.

I mean, this is only something that can be accomplished by a saved person. And not only that, but Holy Spirit-filled. That is controlled by God.

[27:35] All right, here's what we need to know. We can't do it without God. And so, we need, obviously, God's enabling grace.

But we participate with Him. Now, it is fundamentally God's work to make us holy in this practical sense. We're not to just sit back, you know, kind of idly by or passively and wait for God to do it. You know, He expects us to do something. You know, the old expression, let go and let God. Well, that's not a description of true biblical Christianity. We participate with God.

The Bible teaches us that we are to strive for holiness, pursue holiness, work at it. We're to strive after holiness of character.

I guess the best way to describe what our character is would be to say it's who we are when no one's looking. Not just when someone's looking and we put on a face, put on an air, or put on some kind of false thing.

[28:46] We're to strive after holiness of character. And that includes who we are in private when no one's looking, even our own thought life. And we're to strive after holiness of conduct.

Certainly that. And in other words, you are holy, so act like it. That's kind of putting the both together.

Positional holiness, practical holiness. God is at work totally on the one hand, and I wouldn't say partially, but He is the force behind the practical side as well.

And so, you are holy in Christ by the grace of God, so act like it. Act like it. And that kind of puts it all down in very simple terms.

All right, we've got about five minutes. I think I'll go ahead and get started on this. And then we can start there. And I'll pass it to the table, table to table.

[29:48] I want to spend some time maybe over the next several Wednesdays. I don't know how many it will take. I'll spend some time on two very important features of our practical holiness.

The part that we participate in. And that is our devotional life. And the other one is our prayer life. Now, the two really come together, but we're going to talk about the devotional life, which includes, of course, prayer.

And then spend some time just focusing on prayer itself. All right, so let's begin then with our spiritual formation in this area of the devotional life.

These notes I provided to fill in the blanks, so you'll have to listen to me now. Not that you want to do it.

Don't you just love it when preachers do that? One of the highest priorities of Christian life, I think you would agree with me, is to develop a devotional life with the Lord.

[30:57] That's our highest priority. To develop a devotional life with the Lord. A vital, regular, I mean you can jot any of this down there.

A vital devotional life, I mean one that's full of life, one that is significant. Not just a kind of five minute read, you know, the daily Bible reading.

Or, you know, I'm not discounting the value of open windows and some of those. But devotional life is more than just simply reading that one little short little paragraph or two and reading the scripture. It's much more than that. So I'm talking about our highest priority is to develop a very meaningful, very vital, regular, regular, we might even use the word habitual, though that kind of brings up other connotations, ongoing, regular devotional life.

High, high priority in life of a believer. And I hope that when we, you know, finish our discussion of the devotional life that if you didn't agree with that before, you will when we're done.

[32:14] It's vital for many, many reasons. Take Jesus as our example. I think he probably would be the best example. Not probably, he certainly is.

Mark 1.25, now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight. Have you ever done that? He went out and departed to a solitary place and there he prayed.

I had specific reasons for going to pray, but I'm not listing all of the explicit references to Jesus praying, as well as some of the many implied or inferences from scripture that Jesus regularly got alone and prayed to the Father, had a conversation with God the Father.

And this is just one reference, well, another one, Luke 5.16, he himself often, this kind of sums it all up, he himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.

Now, if it was important for Jesus, he being the Son of God, perfect, sinless, then it would be difficult to argue that we wouldn't need to do that.

[33:29] It would be silly to argue that. So, Jesus is our prime example. What is the devotional life? Well, let me give you a short answer. I mean, it's real short, I'm almost ashamed of it.

Spending time alone with God for purposes of prayer and meditation on his word. That's about as simple as you put it. Almost trivializes it.

But this is just kind of a short answer. Spending time alone with God for purposes of prayer and meditation on his word. Of course, there's a lot to the word prayer.

Just what that entails. And certainly there's a great deal that we could expand upon and will, to some extent, expand upon concerning the word meditation.

Prayer and meditation on his word. The word of God. Objectives of a devotional life. Number one.

[34:27] To maintain an intimate daily walk of fellowship with God. Intimate. Personal. As one who loves God.

wants to spend time with the one he loves. Or she loves. And knowing that he loves us. And that's an intimate. Intimate.

And daily. Not just every once in a while. When things get tough. Or many other motivations that we might have.

Might have. It's a daily thing. And it's very important. That it be a daily thing. I don't know when it is with you. If that's early in the morning. That's how it works for me.

And it may be for some. I know my grandmother. Had her devotional time. At night. Before she went to bed. For years. In fact. Even when we would visit. Us kids. Or even if I was there by myself.

[35:51] And I was slept in grandma's bedroom. It was the upstairs of the house. Slept in the big feather bed. You know. Where you lay down in that thing. And the whole thing kind of wraps around you.

Remember? Feather beds. And I would. Before I go to sleep. I'd see my grandmother over there.

She'd be reading. The Bible first. And then she would get on her knees. And she would pray.

There by her bed. She'd do that in the evening. And. So I don't know when it is for you. But it needs to be a daily thing. So. Here it is. You know.

This is the objective. To maintain an intimate daily walk of fellowship with God. John. First John 1. Three. Truly. Our fellowship. Is with the Father.

And with his Son. Jesus Christ. And. That is descriptive. Of. Our devotional life. Let me go ahead and say right here.

[36:45] At the outset. We'll have to quit here in a minute anyway. Let me say this. That when I. Talk about a devotional life. We're not talking about. Just simply.

A particular time of the day. Though. It's important to have a particular time of the day. For a believer. A vital. Ongoing. Regular.

Devotional life. Is something that permeates. The whole day. Uh. And. Not just a. Certain time. We don't just kind of. Pigeon hole. Our.

Communion with God. Uh. In the morning. Or evening. Or some of the time. Uh. It. It is the whole. Of. Of. Of. Of our. Our existence. Really. As.

As. His children. One of my professors. In seminary. Uh. Once said. To the class. I'll never forget it. He said. Brethren. If you love Jesus.

[37:39] You will want to spend time with him. And if this is not your feeling. Do it anyway. Do it anyway. Because sometimes we don't feel like it.

Do we? Do we? Sometimes we don't. And we. We get overburdened with priorities of the day. Maybe we get up a little later than we should.

Should have. Or wanted to. Or. Whatever. And we just don't feel like it. And we're tired. Uh.

Especially if it's your habit. To. Have a devotional time with the Lord.

Before you go to bed. Sometimes we. Go to the bed. Just. Exhausted. And. We don't feel like it.

Maybe. You know. Maybe the time is going to be a little shorter. Uh. Than it normally is.

But. Uh. Do it anyway. Do it anyway. We're not talking about. He's not talking about. If you don't love Jesus. He said. If you don't feel. If that's not your feeling at the time. You know.

[38:32] That is. A love for him. That just drives you to. To long for. That. That. That. That. That. Quiet time with him. That. That. That. That. That. That. That. Time of solitude.

If you don't. You're not feeling that. Do it anyway. Do it anyway. All right. So. That's number one. Let me see. I'll just get one more in here. Number two. To allow God.

These. These are objectives. To allow God to speak to your heart. And give you instructions for your life. That's an objective for. For a quiet time.

Your devotional time. Might even add the word guidance there. To give guidance. John 10. Two to four. The shepherd. I'm kind of. Just. Piecing this together.

Taking some of the phrases. Get the gist of what I'm saying here. The shepherd of the sheep. Calls his own sheep by name. And leads them. And the sheep follow him. For they know his voice. His voice.

[39:27] So. That's an objective for. A devotional life. Not just the. Particular. Specific time. That we do it. But. Our.

Devotion to him. Throughout our day. We. We seek his guidance. Seek his instructions. Thank you.