

GRACE BIBLE CHURCH
Robert R. McLaughlin Bible Ministries

The Tree of Life is a weekly teaching summary.
The Tree of Life from the week ending 06/11/06
What it means to be initiated into the secret of the mystery. Part 33.

We are noting the relationship between adoption and sanctification as it relates to Roman culture where adoption meant privileges and advantages. We have noted the different words that refer to sanctification as members of the Royal Family of God. Believers are **set apart** in three ways from salvation to the eternal state. **Phase one** is positional sanctification, which refers to salvation where the baptism of the Spirit enters every believer into union with the person of Jesus Christ. **Positional sanctification** means you have eternal security; there is no way you can ever get out of your relationship with God. Heb 10:10-14, *By this will [the will of TLJC to fulfill the Father's plan] we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet. For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.*

Positional sanctification is a reference to the Church-age believer's union with Christ which is accomplished at the moment of salvation through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The phrase *in Christ* found throughout the N. T. Epistles is a technical term for the Church-age believer's fantastic union with Christ. Church-age believers are positionally superior to all angels (including Satan and both elect and fallen angels). This is brought out in such passages as Heb 1:3-6, *And He [TLJC] is the radiance of His [God the Father's] glory, and the exact representation of His nature [TLJC is exactly like God the Father in His deity], and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high; having become [as a member of the human race] as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name [title - King of kings, Lord of lords] than they. For to which of the angels did He ever say, "Thou art My Son, Today I have begotten Thee"? And again, "I will be a Father to Him and He shall be a Son to Me"? And when He again brings the first-born into the world, He says, "And let all the angels of God worship Him." Heb 1:13-14, But to which of the angels has He ever said, "Sit at My right hand, Until I make Thine enemies A footstool for Thy feet"? Are they not all ministering spirits [the angels], sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation? Heb 2:9-11 says, But we do see Him who has been made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren.* This part of the mystery doctrine points to the elevation of the Church over both elect and fallen angels and announced the total defeat of Satan. This is why Christ's unexpected announcement of the Church, just prior to the cross, had such a powerful impact on angels. This is all a part of the privileges of **positional sanctification**.

So, **positional sanctification** occurs at salvation through faith in Christ, and qualifies the believer to live with God forever. There are two reasons for this: **First**, the believer possesses the righteousness of God the Father (through imputation), and we share the perfect righteousness of Christ through our **positional sanctification**. If we are going to live with God forever, we have to be as good as He is, and we are, by having his perfect righteousness. 1Jo 3:9, *No one who is born of God sins, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.* This

means that once we are born again we have received a nature that cannot sin. Therefore, when we sin, we agree with the apostle Paul in Rom 7:17, *So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which indwells me.* So, we receive the very righteousness of God at the moment of salvation. Rom 3:21-22, *But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;*

The **second** reason we are qualified to live with God forever is that the believer possesses eternal life (1Jo 5:11-12). If we are going to live with God forever, we must also have His life, which is eternal life, and we do. This comes from the Father, through imputation, and from the Son through **positional sanctification** which belongs to all believers. 1Co 1:2,30, says that even the worst of believers (those in the Corinthian church) are sanctified in Christ Jesus.

The characteristics of **positional sanctification** are as follows: 1) It is not an experience; it is neither emotional nor ecstatic. You were positionally set apart for God at the moment of salvation. 2) It is not progressive; it cannot be improved in time or in eternity. You will never be holier to God than the day of your salvation. 3) It is not related to human merit. We are not in Christ because of what we do or did, but rather because we believed in Him and God the Holy Spirit did the work of entering us into union with Him. 4) It is obtained *en toto* at the moment of salvation through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. 5) It is understood only through cognition of the pertinent doctrine. 6) It is eternal in nature; it cannot be changed by God, angels, or mankind.

So, **positional sanctification** is divided into two parts theologically: retroactive positional truth and current positional truth. This whole concept is presented in Romans as analogous to the believer being divorced from the Old Sin Nature (OSN) and now married to the Lord Jesus Christ. In **retroactive positional truth**, the believer is identified with Christ in His spiritual and physical deaths and burial. Rom 6:3 *Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?*

Identification with Christ in His **spiritual death** is rejection of good and evil, tantamount to separation from the first husband, the OSN, Rom 6:4, *Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.*

Identification with Christ in His **physical death** is separation from good and evil, tantamount to separation from our first husband, the OSN. Identification with Christ in his **Burial** is tantamount to actual divorce, where there is death between the two involved. In **current positional truth**, the believer is identified with Christ in His resurrection, ascension, and session at the right hand of God the Father, tantamount to our second marriage which demands *walking in newness of life*. Rom 6:5, *For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection, we are new creatures; the old things have passed away.* Old things refers to our past marriage to the OSN.

So, who are the sanctified ones? They are the backsliders, carnal believers, new believers, and the mature believers; they are all Royal Family; they are all sanctified in Christ Jesus. **Positional sanctification** is the status of the new spiritual species, Eph 2:10, *We are His creation, having been created in Christ Jesus for good of intrinsic value achievements which God has prepared in advance, that we should walk by means of them.* **Experiential sanctification** takes place only when the believer lives and functions in the Pre-designed Plan of God (PPOG) for their life; it is the function of the spiritual life after salvation. The function of the spiritual life depends on the three spiritual skills: 1) The filling of the Holy Spirit. 2) The metabolization of metabolized doctrine. 3) The utilization of the ten problem-solving devices. This produces experiential or spiritual righteousness. Living in the divine plan that God has designed for your life is the only way that experiential sanctification is accomplished. This is important; 1Th 4:3 says, *For this is the will of God, your sanctification;* Therefore, God the Holy Spirit energizes the believer so He can fulfill the Christian way of life. This is how true experiential sanctification takes place. Joh 17:17 *"Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth."* It is through the

communication of doctrine that experiential sanctification takes place. Experiential sanctification has to do with the believer in time. This is also called godliness (eusebeia = the spiritual life). This is the objective of each member of the Royal Family of God in this dispensation. After salvation the believer's objective is to receive doctrine. The believer is to have personal love for God the Father and occupation with Christ which results in proper momentum in the Christian life. After salvation and doctrinal intake, the believer's objective is to reach spiritual maturity. This is accomplished by doctrinal intake resulting in spiritual growth or godliness; it is doctrine resident in the soul that produces experiential sanctification.

Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1Co 3:16; 1Co 6:19-20). You are indwelt by God the Holy Spirit, but remember that it is your body that is indwelt, not your soul. The Holy Spirit seeks to control the soul, but that depends upon the believer's understanding of certain doctrines, like the doctrine of the filling of the Spirit or the doctrine of rebound. The filling of the Spirit simply means that God the Holy Spirit controls your soul. Grieving and quenching the Spirit means God the Holy Spirit does not control the soul. But, whether you are grieving the Spirit, quenching the Spirit, or are filled with the Spirit, God the Holy Spirit still indwells you. Unless a believer is filled with the Spirit and learning Bible doctrine, experiential sanctification is impossible. Once the believer has the filling of the Spirit and maximum doctrine resident in the soul, you will have Experiential Sanctification, godliness, and spiritual maturity.

Experiential Sanctification is taught in such passages as 1Th 4:1-8, *Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that, as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you may excel still more. For you know what commands we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; and that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is the avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification. Consequently, he who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you.*

Between salvation and eternity, the believer spends a certain amount of time on earth determined by the sovereignty of God (Psa 31:15). The purpose of this time spent on earth is to reach spiritual maturity or **experiential sanctification** and glorify God (Rev 4:11). This results in temporal, spiritual, dying, and eternal blessing. When God can bless the believer in the devil's world on the basis of residual doctrine, God is glorified. God can give wealth, success, prosperity, and happiness to any believer He chooses; His only prerequisite is capacity! Therefore the reason for keeping the Royal Family on earth is to bless them in every category. Believers are left on this earth to be blessed; God is glorified as the provider; we are blessed as the beneficiaries. God's objective therefore for us in time can only be accomplished through doctrine resident in the soul of the believer; this is **experiential sanctification**. The issue in this life for you as a believer is the influence factor. Either doctrine is going to influence you or the evil of the cosmic system. Doctrine is the manifestation of the genius of God and His grace. Evil is the manifestation of Satan's genius and Satan's policy, while grace is God's policy. We cannot change doctrine but doctrine can change us, just as we cannot change evil but evil can change us. The issue for each of us then is, which one influences us, doctrine or evil? After salvation, we never remain the same; either we become worse or better, doctrinal or filled with evil.

Doctrinal intake, inhale and exhale is the determining factor. The whole battle therefore takes place in the believer's soul. Doctrine and evil engage in the battleground of the soul; Psa 23:3 says *"He restores my soul."* This battle is also defined for us in Gal 5:17, *For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.* Every believer is in the plan of God, and the plan of God will either bless us or crush us. It all depends upon what influences your life.

To be influenced by doctrine means blessing; to be influenced by evil means cursing, discipline, and eventually the sin unto death. **Experiential sanctification** therefore depends on your consistent attitude toward Bible doctrine. Without experiential sanctification, the believer will eventually be under cursing or divine discipline. 1Co 16:22, *If anyone does not love the Lord, let him be accursed, Maranatha.* Only mature believers with Spiritual Self Esteem (S.S.E.) and maximum doctrine in their souls are able to take residence in experiential sanctification called the state of godliness, which does not come from living moral, human good, self-righteousness, or cleaning up your life. A state of godliness only comes from **experiential sanctification**. This means that one of the most important points in the doctrine of separation is to separate from human viewpoint. This is the objective of experiential sanctification found in passages like 1Ti 6:3-12, *If anyone advocates a different doctrine, and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. But godliness actually is a means of great gain, when accompanied by contentment. For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. And if we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang. But flee from these things, you man of God; and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. 2Th 2:13 says, Brethren, we should always give thanks to God for you, loved by the Lord; for from the beginning God has elected you with reference to salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and through belief in the Truth.*

It is doctrine resident in the soul that causes an individual to become *useful* to the Master. 2Ti 2:19-21 says, *Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord abstain from wickedness." Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor. Therefore, if a man cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.*

Because we are in union with Christ we now are able to be sustained, nourished, and empowered by the ministry of the Spirit. This is how we become partakers of the divine nature in experience just as we are in position. 2Pe 1:4, *For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature.* This is how the believer who is united with Christ and granted the same power in which the humanity of Christ constantly lived in, is equipped to be an imitator of God and to walk just as He walked! Eph 5:1, *Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children;* This is a reference to the believer imitating the way that TLJC totally relied on the Holy Spirit to fulfill the Father's plan for His life. Eph 5:2, *and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.* The Greek word for love here is **agape** referring to the natural life of the believer who lives in God's pre-designed plan. This is also taught in principle in Gal 5:16 which says, *But I say walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.* Or 1Jo 2:6, *the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.*

We walk in the same manner as the perfect humanity of TLJC by using the same power that TLJC operated under; it has been made available to every Church-age believer. He functioned under the ministry of God the Holy Spirit, and we are to function under the ministry of

God the Holy Spirit. This is why He said in Joh 14:11, “*Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me; otherwise believe on account of the works themselves. Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater {works} than these shall he do; because I go to the Father.*” The phrase “*greater works than these,*” doesn't mean greater in quality, but greater in quantity. The quantity is greater because the same power is now available to every Church-age believer!

Everyday that we learn to apply doctrine, 2Co 4:16 becomes more of a reality, *Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.* This becomes a reality in your life when your thinking begins to change. This is when your thinking is renovated according to the pattern of divine thinking in Bible doctrine. This is the principle of Eph 4:23, *and that you be renewed in the breathing of your mind.* This is when Rom 12:2 becomes a reality, *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

Experiential sanctification is a potential for the believer; it is commanded but not guaranteed. God will provide the resources, opportunities, instructions, encouragement, and even divine discipline, but the believer must choose to execute God's divine plan for himself. Believers will become sanctified forever when the resurrection of their bodies takes place, and this is known as **ultimate sanctification** (Phil 3:21).