

# FOLLOWING JESUS

*If any man serve me, let him follow me... (Jn 12:26)*

## Lesson 2

### The Three Keys of True Discipleship

#### Outline

#### An Introduction to the Three Keys of Discipleship

#### The Three Keys of Discipleship

I. Depending

II. Asking... in Faith

A. Clarifying the difference between Key 1: **Depending** and Key 2: **Asking**?

B. Asking honors God in at least four ways...

C. The critical life principle of **ASKING**

III. Sanctification (Separating)

A. What is sanctification?

B. Sanctification, like a coin, has two sides (senses)

1. Positional Sanctification

2. Personal Sanctification

IV. Summary

In our last lesson (Part 3) we studied the definition of Key #3, Sanctification. We learned that sanctification simply means to set something apart for a particular use. In the spiritual application we are to be set apart from the World and unto Christ. And now this week in Part 4 we will learn that the Bible speaks of sanctification in two senses: Positional (God makes sanctification possible; He sets us apart), and Personal (a.k.a., Practical or Progressive). This is our part of the deal. God makes it possible, but we, through the power of the Holy Spirit, have to make separation a reality.

#### PART 4

B. Sanctification, like a coin, has two sides or senses

1. Positional sanctification — a discrete, once-for-all-time, work of God at salvation

- At salvation, God makes every born again believer a vessel of honor (one of those golden or silver bowls in that grand home); He equips us with the indwelling Holy Spirit, and then says, “Serve me as my as my special *purchased possession*” (Eph 1:14).

Think of positional sanctification like this: God puts us into a “**position**” to succeed in the Christian life. He sets us up for success. He makes available every advantage, and every needed resource, to serve him successfully; hence “positional” set-apartness.

- Positional Sanctification can be understood using these analogies...

- **The new truck** — When God saves us He makes us like a brand new truck on the showroom floor. There is no dirt, there are no dings and everything is operating correctly. It has the necessary horsepower and all you need to accomplish your daily work. But what often happens when you take that new truck out into the real world?

- It can get very dirty... depending upon where we take it!
- It can get dinged up... depending upon how we treat it!
- It can get bent up and broken... depending upon how we drive it!
- It can even be destroyed... depending upon how we maintain it!

Keeping a new vehicle in “like new” condition requires constant maintenance, cleansing and carefulness! God makes us like that new truck; this is positional sanctification. But Personal sanctification is what we DO with the truck.

- **The Waterford crystal bowl** — Think again of the analogy of the Waterford crystal vs. the garbage can. God takes filthy, beat up, smelly garbage cans and turns us it into a piece of fine, sparkling clean, Waterford crystal!

And so what are you going to put in your vessel? What are you going to store in this set-apart vessel? We all know that what we put in a vessel and where we put a vessel will eventually determine what kind of a vessel it will become! If we put garbage in a vessel and leave it in the alley... well, it soon becomes polluted, dented, scratched, stained and broken.

God sets us, as newly cleansed vessels, apart from the World System and puts us into an empowered position to serve Him, to honor Him, and to achieve His plan for our lives: hence, **positional sanctification**.

- BUT... just because God puts us into a position to serve, honor, and achieve does not mean that we automatically DO serve, or honor or achieve... does it? It only means that by His grace and empowerment, and through His resources such as the Holy Spirit, the spiritual gifts, the preserved Word and the local churches, we are made ABLE to become productive discipostewards (fruit bearers, John 15:8).
- The Lord was referring to **positional sanctification** when, speaking of Saul of Tarsus, He said to Ananias, “...*he is a chosen vessel unto me*” (Acts 9:15). And Paul writes of positional sanctification in I Cor 1:2 and 6:11.

- **I Cor 1:2** *Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours....*

- **I Cor 6:11** *And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*

The author of the Hebrew epistle makes it clear that the “positionally sanctified” are very simply born-again believers set aside, “...*once for all.*”

- **Heb 10:10** *By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

- So **positional sanctification** is one side of the “sanctification coin”. It is a work of God that occurs at salvation. But **positional** sanctification is not the end for believers, is it? It is only the beginning. There is another side to that “sanctification” coin. Does God simply want us to believe for salvation and then go into hibernation awaiting the resurrection and rapture? Or does God save us just put us on display such as a lady of the house might display her good tableware in a hutch or china closet? Are we trophies of God’s grace in the sense that we are to be set upon a shelf? Obviously, “No!” God didn’t save us just to set us on a shelf; He saved us to put us to work in His kingdom bearing spiritual fruit and serving as His mouthpiece in the harvest of souls.

And on the other extreme, God didn’t save us and set us apart so that we could run amuck, back into the distractions, contaminations, and indecencies of this world! God didn’t pull us out of this cesspool called “the World”, bathe us, and give us a fresh and clean heart, just so we could jump right back into that filth!

We are like that “truck” analogy. He saved us to put us to work! God saved us, and at that time positionally sanctified us (set us apart) to be soldiers of the cross. We were set apart to be used and, yes, even used up by our Commander in Chief if he deems it needful! Paul was used much. He wrote in Gal 6:17, *From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.*

Yes, the Christian life and discipleship is more than just salvation and we are to be much more than just polished trophies on a shelf. The Christian life only STARTS at salvation and God’s equipping. There is much more... and everything that we do after God saves us and equips us (i.e., after He makes it positionally possible for us to serve) is rolled up into the concept of **personal sanctification**.

## 2. Personal sanctification

- a. Personal sanctification is the **ongoing** practice of living the Christian life through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit... not to stay saved, but to stay usable! Let's use another analogy to demonstrate the concept of personal sanctification.

• An analogy: **The Workman**

- Lets say you go to work for a business. This business spends a lot of money to train you, it provides all the tools needed, it provides a uniform and other protective clothing, it provides a vehicle and finally it provides the authority to do the job. And so the day comes when your business owner says, "OK! Get out there and do the job for which I have invested all this time, money, and effort; be a productive employee for me."

What would your new employer think if you showed up only haphazardly for work, and then when you did show, you didn't do much, and when you did go out to work you did it all wrong, ignoring the training and the investment the company had made in you? And not ONLY did you do it wrong, but you ended up messing up more more than you fixed.

You know very well that acting like that in the business world would quickly put you back at the Employment service looking for another job!

- Well, transfer that analogy over into the spiritual realm. God says...

"I've redeemed you (bought you back) out of a decaying, dying, disintegrating World system that is all Hell-bound,

I have justified you (made you as if you had never sinned),

I have sealed you eternally (never to be lost again),

I have gifted you with spiritual gifts that will enable you to do my work,

I have empowered you with my Indwelling Spirit, the Greatest Power Source in all of the Universe,

I have preserved my written Word to guide you in consort with the Holy Spirit. The Word will *...guide you into all truth* (Jn 16:13),

furthermore, I have given you the authority to do my work (the Great Commission),

and finally—and so very important—I have placed you inside one of my local churches, a support system, so that you might be taught (edified or built up), encouraged and protected.

**Now... how will you use all of this wonderful potential?"**

So... personal sanctification is what we do with all that God has done for us and given to us! **God has positioned us to succeed and personal sanctification is the road to spiritual success!** It has NOTHING to do with salvation or preservation or sinlessness. It has EVERYTHING to do separation for service!

- Personal Sanctification is sometimes heard by two other names..

- **Practical** sanctification — You may also hear personal sanctification called **practical** because it is hands-on. It is applying the principles of Godly living in real life. Remember... life is not a drill! Life is real! It is practical.
- **Progressive** sanctification — Personal sanctification is also **progressive** because it is an ongoing, never ending warfare as long as we are living as mortals. While we are in the flesh and combating its lusts, we will never achieve complete spiritual maturity and we will never be completely victorious over the carnal mind and body. Living the Christian life is continually learning, changing, cleaning, and attempting to become more like Christ through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

- Personal Sanctification is a choice! Let's look at some scriptures...

- God is a gentleman; He will never force worship, obedience, OR separation. Like Joshua we must make the daily choice (i.e., a commitment) to serve God and keep ourselves set apart, dedicated, i.e., sanctified! Joshua challenged his people...

- **Josh 24:15** *And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, **choose you this day whom ye will serve**; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.*

- Personal sanctification lies squarely upon our shoulders; we are the ones who have to rededicate ourselves daily to the Lord's service. And Paul writes that we are a living sacrifice and that separating ourselves for the work of God is not radical in God's eyes; it is simply reasonable service! It is only radical in the World's eyes!

- **Rom 12:1, 2** *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

And it is good to remember that when the Jews sacrificed to God their offering was consumed! When the animal was killed, there was no undoing the sacrifice. When the juice offering was poured out, there was no getting it back! Our lives are to be like those sacrifices, given up and used up for God!

- And in his letter to the Philippians Paul teaches a personal responsibility for holy living before God when he commanded, *...work out (i.e, USE) your own salvation.*

- **Phil 2:12** *Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation** with fear and trembling.*

Of course this is not teaching a “works salvation” but rather it is a clear command for each born again believer to USE his or her salvation, to bring his or her life to a spiritually successful and productive end. God is commanding us to put our salvation to good use! Consider again the analogy of a garden. If you establish a garden plot, plant the seeds and transplant the seedlings, and then disappear and show up 2 months later what will you find? Will you find a beautiful, vegetable-laden plot. No, you will find a Johnson grass, cocklebur, Bermuda grass, pigweed patch! Just as a productive garden requires work, in like manner so does the successful and productive Christian life. We must be constantly busy cultivating out the “weeds” of carnality, distraction, of sloth, and indifference, watering with the Word of God, and fertilizing with prayer. Philippians 2:12 is a command for us to keep-on-keeping-on, for us to SUCCESSFULLY complete our race, and we do that by continually separating ourselves FROM the World and UNTO holy living.

- Finally, the writer to the Hebrews says it like this in Hebrews 12:1, 2...

- **Heb 12:1, 2** *...let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with **patience** (this word connotes endurance or constancy) the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith...*

CHOOSING to commit ourselves to serve the Lord as disciples, and then setting ourselves apart from, as James puts it, *...all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness* (Js 1:21) on a minute-by-minute, hour-by-hour, and day-by-day basis, is practicing personal sanctification.

- So... are we? — The practical question for us about practical sanctification is this: “Are we?” Are we constantly in the process of separating ourselves from the World and then repeatedly cleansing God's vessel from whatever contamination that does occur? Are we maintaining ourselves as vessels of honor so that God might use US to dispense His Gospel? Remember! God won't serve or display His grace from my mother's old “dog pan” or from the lid of a smelly garbage can!

b. How do we accomplish personal sanctification — What must we do?

Hopefully we have a concept of what personal sanctification IS. But now we need to address the practical question: “How?” How do we successfully implement our personal sanctification? How do we accomplish it?” How do we go about to live our Christian lives so that at the end, when we stand before the Lord, **we are guaranteed to hear**, *Well done, thou good and faithful servant* (Mt 25:21)?

- First, we make a **commitment!**

- Being holy (separated) must be something we WANT to do!

- Furthermore, our desire must motivated by a deep love and appreciation for Christ (and NOT by a fear that we will get a visit from the pastor!). Separation based upon any motive other than a love for Christ is legalism! If we have no genuine love and appreciation for the sacrifice and the suffering that Jesus performed on our behalf, we are carnal, and in that state we have no hope to ever be successful in our long-term personal separation.

- Second, we must understand that **the Holy Spirit must enable and empower us**. Our personal sanctification ultimately must be a work of God. Jesus said, *...for without me ye can do nothing* (Jn 15:5). Anything we accomplish for God must be by His grace and empowerment!

This is where the first two keys, DEPENDING and the ASKING, come in. We can't live a set-apart life by towing that powerful plane with a rope around the nose gear! We have to climb in and let those powerful engines (the Holy Spirit) carry us to our destination.

- Third, **we must avail ourselves to the task! We have a part!**

- Yes, the Holy Spirit must be our power source; He must do the work through us. But he can't accomplish anything through us if all we do is metaphorically “lay in bed all day”!

- Our sanctification is a **partnership effort** with the Spirit! He leads and empowers, and then we must follow His lead. “OK, so just what IS my part? What must I do?” What are my bullet points? What are my check-off's? What is my list?” That is where we will pick up in next week's lesson.

c. Our to-do list!