

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 parts 1 and 2 of Lesson 2 we studied the first two keys of discip-stewardship: **Depending** and **Asking**. The third key, **Sanctification (separating)**, is next. We'll break this lesson into three parts.

PART 3

III. **Sanctification** (Separating) —We must set ourselves apart from the World not only in how we live (our lifestyle) but also in how we think! I'm speaking here of our worldview (our way at looking at life and its purpose), our attitudes, and our motives.

A. What is sanctification?

- Sanctification is a \$10 word that really has a very simple and easy-to-understand meaning. Sanctification, in the simplest sense, is **setting something apart for a special or a particular use**.

- For example, you might have a special pitcher that you use for iced tea; it's your iced tea pitcher. You use it for nothing else. You have set it apart—you have sanctified it—for making and serving iced tea.

- And perhaps you have some clothing that you set apart for special occasions or special purposes. For example, I have a suit. But surprise... I don't mow the lawn in it. I don't wash the car in it. I have set my suit apart for special or particular use. I have sanctified my suit.

I also have a very worn out pair of walking shoes that I wear only when I mow and weed-eat the yard. I don't want to subject my good shoes to the dirt and grass stains. And so, just like my suit, these beat-up old shoes are sanctified: they are set-apart for a specific or particular purpose.

- And when I was a boy at home my mother had an old, beat-up cooking pot that she used to collect the daily meal scraps. She would scrape plates into it and occasionally clean out the fridge and dump moldy leftovers into this vessel. This old pot was known in our house as the "dog pan" (even though it was a pot). At the end of the day it was my responsibility to mix the contents with some dry dog food and feed it to my dad's bird dogs. Like my suit, and like my worn out yard-work shoes, that old pot was sanctified; it was set apart for a particular purpose.

So, I hope it is clear that the general concept of sanctification is very simply this: **setting something apart for a special or particular use**.

- But in Bible usage, another concept is understood in regard to sanctification, and that is the concept of first **cleansing** or purifying and THEN **separation** for special service.

The Biblical concept of sanctification is anchored in a Divinely-inspired analogy given by Paul in II Tim 2:20, 21. This analogy talks about storage vessels (e.g., bowls, cups, containers, pots, and etc.) and their respective uses in a *great house*, i.e., a wealthy man's mansion.

- **II Tim. 2:20, 21** *But in a great house (a mansion) there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. 21 If a man therefore **purge himself from these** (Paul is referring to the dishonorable, ignoble, contaminating and corrupting things) he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.*

So here is the picture that Paul was painting in the minds of his 1st Century readers. In that *great house*, that affluent home of Paul's day, everyone would naturally expect to find elegant *vessels*—prized bowls, dishes and containers—made *of gold and of silver*. But to no one's surprise there would also be common vessels made *of wood and of earth* (earthenware or pottery). Paul's thesis is that people naturally expect these two classes of vessels to be used and treated differently.

- How would we expect the gold and silver vessels to be used? Obviously, we would expect these expensive containers to be reserved for, and then used for, very special and honorable uses. Paul calls these the vessels of *honor*.

- And how would we expect the wooden or earthenware containers to be used? We would expect the wooden or earthenware vessels to be reserved for and then used for common, menial or even ignoble uses. Paul called these the vessels of *dishonour*.

Let's move Paul's analogy into a grand home of our day and time. If you entered the kitchen of a grand home and watched the staff, I can almost guarantee that you would never, ever observe a staff member scraping meal scraps, or emptying out moldy leftovers (that which is intended for the garbage) onto a sterling silver serving tray or into a Waterford crystal bowl. You would never see the chef collecting bacon drippings in a Wedgwood, Lenox, or Noritake china cup! These vessels are very expensive; they are considered elegant! And so they are reserved for much more noble usage. In like manner my mother would never store food in or serve food from that old, beat up "dog pan" of my childhood home. The dog pan was dedicated for ignoble usage; it collected the day's meal scraps.

Here is Paul's point: **just as scraping table scraps onto a costly silver tray or into a crystal bowl is UNNATURAL, and really even unthinkable, so is filling our set-apart minds and bodies with the crude, vulgar, offensive, contaminating and debilitating offscourings of this World!** Believers ARE those *vessels of gold and of silver*; God has set us apart as vessels of *honor*. But we will not remain vessels of honor in God's eyes IF we fill ourselves up with the world's filth, trash, contaminants, and offscourings!

Here is God's command in II Cor 6:17 (based upon Isaiah 52:11):

*...come out from among **them**...* [In the context the *them* refers specifically to unbelievers (II Cor 6:14) and their *idols* (II Cor 6:17)],

and be ye separate, saith the Lord and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you (II Cor 6:17). The word *unclean* refers to whatever is impure, morally lewd or especially, demonic.

In our physical lives we always match the vessel with the content. Why would it be any different in the spiritual realm? It just isn't natural to put garbage into a vessel of honor. And my mother, even in her most relaxed or inattentive moment, would never have served you as a guest, or any of her family, from that old, beat up, stained, smelly "dog pan". In like manner then, God will not serve up the precious Gospel to the lost world from a dishonorable vessel. God will not use a base, dirty, contaminated "vessel" (i.e., a Christian) to store and disseminated His precious things!

So, with this picture in mind, Paul wanted Timothy, and us, to understand that...

- if any person will *purge* (remove and cleanse) *himself from these* (II Tim 2:21), i.e., the ignoble, dishonorable, filthy, detestable, contaminating, impure and lewd things of the World and

- if he will then separate himself from the contaminants of the World and shun its corrupting influences...

THEN he will be usable by God as set apart or sanctified vessels of honor.

James, without even mentioning the word **sanctified**, commands believers to BE sanctified. He writes in James 1:21, *Wherefore lay apart all filthiness (moral dirtiness) and superfluity (superabundance) of naughtiness (wickedness, evil, maliciousness)....* Only separated believers are suitable for the Master's use; only separated believers can and will be used by God for honorable and noble purposes.

- Now... one common misconception among those who have not studied out the concept of sanctification is that it has something to do with sinless perfection or living above sin. This is because the same Hebrew and Greek roots used to form the words “sanctify” and “sanctification” are also translated “holy” and after all, God commands, *Be ye holy* (Lev 20:7; I Pet 1:15, 16). The false notion of associating sanctification with sinless perfection has arisen because of the heretical use of the concept of sanctification by those involved in Charismatic dogmas.

Even a casual study of Scripture will prove that no sanctified mortal believer is capable of a sinless existence.

- The Apostle John clearly stated, *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us* (I Jn 1:8).
- The great prophet Isaiah cried out, *Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts* (Is 6:5).
- Paul in the famous Romans 3:23 writes, *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God....*

And even after our dead spirits are regenerated in salvation, we are constantly fighting our still-unregenerate minds and bodies. We call it **the sin nature**; Paul called it *the old man* (Eph 4:22; Col 3:9), *the flesh* (e.g., Rom 7:25), and the *carnal man* (Rom 7:14; 8:7). And because of this sin nature the Apostle cried out, *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin* (Rom 7:24, 25).

The only sinless people to have ever lived were Adam and Eve before the fall, and the Second Adam, the Lord Jesus. And until our redemption is completed—i.e., the redemption of our minds and bodies, which will occur at the resurrection and rapture event—we cannot live above sin.

So, sanctification is NOT living above sin. Rather, sanctification, is simply a state of separation FROM the World and UNTO Christ. And I want to stress at this point that this separation must be mental and emotional, and not just physical. Sanctification must envelope how we think and not just how we act. If we still love the world and desire to be in it and participate in its lifestyle, we will very possibly end up being pulled away as was Bro. Demas! And at the very least we will be seen as hypocrites!

[NOTE: BUT... be careful not to misunderstand. Believers cannot justify sin by the “its just way I am” excuse, e.g., “Well, I have a sin nature so I’m just going to sin now and then. I can’t help it and so God understands.” NO! God doesn’t understand! Paul writes this in Rom 6:2, *What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?* The Bible clearly teaches that once a person is born-again, the *old man* is crucified with Christ! The power of sin is broken! Recall the lyrics of the old hymn: “I am crucified with Christ; Now I no longer live. Jesus Christ now lives in me.” When we were lost sinners we had no ability, no strength NOT to sin. Sinning was our very ethology or behavior. But when we were born-again by the Holy Spirit, the old man was killed; that old nature no longer has power over us! If we sin as born-again believers, **it is our choice to do so.**]

- Therefore, depending upon the context, the concept of **sanctification** or **holiness** can connote...
 - PURITY, i.e., a separation from sin and evil and a separation unto righteousness (in this respect the Lord Jesus and the Father are ultimately holy) or

- CONSECRATION (i.e., setting something aside for dedicated usage). For example the ground upon which Moses stood when he spoke to the Lord during the burning bush incident was declared holy. God required that the vessels of the temple were to be holy, i.e., they were consecrated for the Lord's service ONLY. The special incense used in the Tabernacle and later the Temple was holy in the sense that it was to be used in no other place in the world other than in the Temple. And Jerusalem was and is called the *holy city* (Mat 4:5). Holy in these contexts had nothing to do with being sinless, or being "pure" for that matter, but rather being set-apart or dedicated to. Sanctification does not mean "sinless perfection". Sanctification means set-apart from the World System and its defilements and then consecrated to Christ!
- So as we complete this thought we must take Paul's analogy to Timothy to heart and ask a very IMPORTANT QUESTION. And that is, "Are we?"

- Are we, as God's born-again Holy Spirit-indwelt believers, maintaining ourselves as vessels of honor... or have we become vessels of dishonor?

Through the cleansing blood of Christ, God has washed us clean and then set us apart (positional sanctification). He then intends for every believer to maintain our "special-use vessel" status (this is personal, practical or progressive sanctification).

We must ask ourselves these very serious questions:

- In the Lord's eyes, am I like a fine piece of Wedgewood china or am I looking more like a Hefty trash bag?
- Does Jesus look at me and see a fine piece of Waterford crystal or does He see a Rubbermaid garbage can?"
- Does the World see me as a fine Noritake china cup or as greasy old coffee can full of bacon drippings?
- Just as you would not serve dinner guests from the lid of a garbage can, Christ cannot and will not present the glorious Gospel from a contaminated container (i.e., a body or life). Shouldn't the glorious Gospel be served up from clean, honorable vessels?

The Gospel deserves to be presented in sanctified vessels of gold and silver! It deserves to be seen lived out in vessels of honor... and not from Worldly garbage pails.

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