

What We Believe, and Why it Matters  
**Part 7: Christian Holiness and  
Entire Sanctification**

COTN Article of Faith 10

**1. Sanctification**

- *Joshua 3:5; Romans 12:1*

**2. What is Sanctification?**

- *Galatians 2:20; John 14:7, 16:3, 15:26, 16:14; Acts 1:8;  
Titus 2:12; Acts 2; Jeremiah 29:13*

**3. How do I receive Sanctification?**

\* **Be Thirsty**

- *Matthew 5:6*

\* **Be Humble**

- *James 4:9-10; Psalm 10:17, 25:9, 29:19; Isaiah 57:15*

\* **Be Persistent**

- *Luke 11:5-13*

love.learn.live.

westvalleychurch.com



West Valley Church  
Michael O'Neill  
10/28/18

**What We Believe, and Why it Matters<sup>1</sup>**  
**Part Seven – Christian Holiness and Entire Sanctification<sup>2</sup>**  
***COTN Article of Faith 10***

There are important truths about the Christian faith that we all need to be sure that we *understand*, and also that we *experience* if we are going to live life-to-the-fullest that God has for us in Christ, and if we are going to carry out our purpose in this world.

So today we are looking at the next article of faith in our series, “What we believe, and why it matters.” If you haven’t been with us, I would really encourage you to go to our website and listening to the previous sermons in this series or read the manuscripts because all of these are intended to help you have a smart faith – to understand what you believe if you are in fact a Christian, and to know why what you believe matters so much – to experience the difference that it makes. So we started out the series with the Trinity – God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit – co-equal and yet distinct. Then we looked at what we believe about Scripture – the Bible. From there, we looked at the pervasive problem of sin – that we are born into it, we can’t help but choose to do it, and it has spread into everything in this world so that it is systemic. But thankfully, we next saw that Jesus dealt with sin by what he did for us on the cross, and how that brought us atonement – his death paid for our sins so that we could be “at-one-ment” with God. We next learned how God loves us so much that he reaches out to us in his grace, letting us know of his love for us and that he can save us, even long before we ever cared about him or realized we even needed him. Last week we covered a lot of ground, learning about free will, about the need for repentance (a 180 degree turn), and how God justifies us, regenerates us, and adopts us.

Now all of that is amazing and incredible. But is that *it*? Is that *all*? Did all of that lead to our being able to be saved, so that now we are just kind of in a holding pattern until we get to heaven? No way!!! Once a person is saved, they are just getting started! The roof is off of their life. The sky is the limit in what we can know about God and how we can grow in our relationship with God, and we now have the potential for supernatural power to accomplish God’s miraculous purposes in this world!

---

<sup>1</sup> Resources: Frank Moore, *Coffee Shop Theology* (Beacon Hill Press, 1998); Frank Moore, *More Coffee Shop Theology* (Beacon Hill Press, 1998); Al Truesdale, Ed., *Global Wesleyan Dictionary of Theology* (Beacon Hill Press, 2013); Gay Leonard, *Articles of Faith: What Nazarenes Believe and Why* (Beacon Hill Press, 1995); *Manual: Church of the Nazarene, 2017-2021* (Nazarene Publishing House, Kansas City, MO, 2017); Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley’s Practical Theology* (Abingdon Press, Nashville, TN, 1994)

<sup>2</sup> See notes at the end of the manuscript for articles of faith 10

BUT...there's a problem. Even though that is what we *can* experience, we *don't* seem to experience that. We *still* struggle with sin. We don't know what it is we're supposed to be doing. Our lives still seem pretty much the same, and there certainly aren't any miraculous fireworks going off in or around us.

Why is that? There's still a problem, and it still has to do with our sin. Even though we are saved, we're not as clean from sin as we think.

Several years ago, Dial Soap came up with a very clever set of commercials intended to convince Americans that they needed Dial soap. The reason they needed Dial soap, though, was not so obvious. They were trying to make the point that our everyday routines might not be as safe and clean as we think they are. So they came up with the slogan, "You're not as clean as you think." And the reasons we're not as clean as we think were, well...just watch.

Honestly, that could be a slogan that we might consider today, because the reason we are not experiencing that amazing, abundant, powerful life in Christ is because we are not as clean as we think. We are still subject to the sins in this world, the gravitational pull of the tendency to be self-focused and to sin.

So what is the solution? Thankfully, God already has a plan for that, too, and it really can be found in the Trinity. God the Father creates us, loves us even though we sin, and created a plan to save us by raising his Son from the dead for us. God the Son came to born among us, be one of us and yet never sin, gave his life for us, and then rose from the dead and will rule and reign with us. That leaves the Holy Spirit. We saw last week that the Spirit regenerates us – makes us new creations when we trust and accept what Christ has done for us. But the Spirit is far from done in our lives; the Spirit sets to work helping us to become more and more like Christ in this world, so that we can carry out what is left of what Christ started until Jesus comes back again.

What we are talking about today is another word that theologians like to throw around in order to impress people with how smart they are...

## **1. *Sanctification***

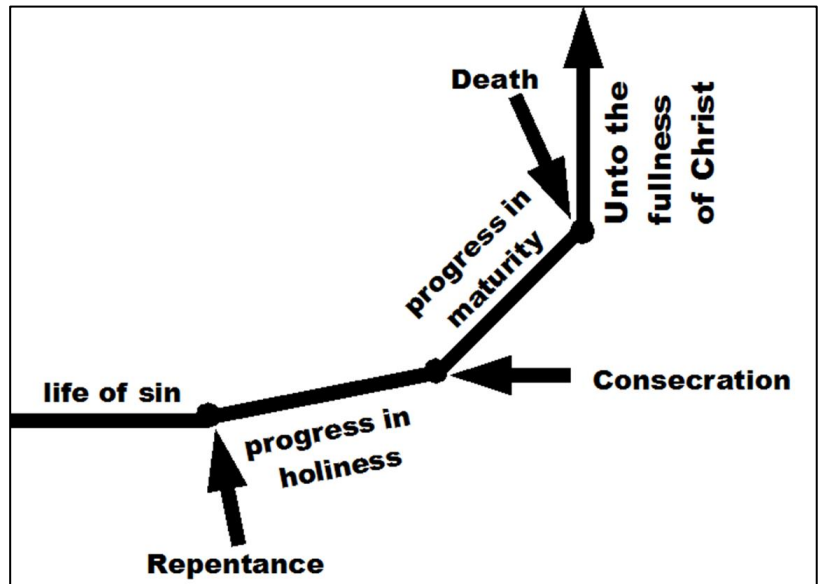
This is a *very* important word; I'll give you some time to write that in, because it will take a minute or two to make sure you get it spelled right.

Sanctification is a significant and vital turning point in our Christian life and our journey to spiritual maturity. It's at this turn in the road that we finally decide to go "all in" with Christ. As we grow in Christ, we come to the point where we realize we ultimately need to surrender our *entire* lives to God. We give our very lives as an act of consecration to God.

The word "sanctified" in its simplest form simply means to be set apart for a specific function or purpose. For example, if you have a pen or pencil in your hand right now, hold it up. You have in your hand a tool; what was it made to do? It was made to write with, correct? Now you can do other things with it; you can clean your ears

with it, you can try to pry open paint cans with it, and you might be successful, but probably not very much so, because those things are not what it was made for. It was made to be a writing utensil. It was *sanctified* – *set apart* – to write with. And it's not fulfilling its purpose until it is doing what it was created for. You were created to be in relationship with God and to be a change agent in this world for his Kingdom. God wants to sanctify you for what you were created for.

So let me explain it this way  
 Take a look at the chart. You see a kind of "time line" of the believer's life. On the far left is the life of each of us before we accepted Christ – a life of sin apart from Christ. We talked about this in our article of faith on "sin." But God's grace was reaching out to you, as we learned in the article of faith on "prevenient grace." Now, there are two steps in becoming sanctified. The first step comes with "repentance." We talked about that last week, right?



Repentance is that point in your life where you recognize your need for Christ and what He has done for you on the cross. It means recognition of your sins, and a godly sorrow for your sinful acts. It also means confession – not hiding your sins from God, but an outright confession of them to Him. It is owning up to, and taking responsibility for, your sin. Then it means forsaking your sin – turning your back on those sinful acts and that sinful lifestyle. When we have repented of sin, we accept the forgiveness that is available to us through Christ's atonement (remember?), and in simple faith we trust Him for our salvation. It is at that point that we are justified, regenerated, and adopted (remember?). We are made new, God calls us His own, and we are adopted into His family. We have been made alive in our spirit, saved from eternal punishment in hell, saved to a life of service for God and a heavenly home. You are a "believer" – it is the moment of new birth.

At this point, the Holy Spirit is helping you understand the Word of God, teaching you to go to God in prayer, and you are making progress in holiness – or, being made holy, or becoming like Christ – which are all terms for sanctification. Unlike this graph, realistically it is a time of ongoing struggle – making progress, failing, asking forgiveness, learning, and growing.

Then there comes a time in the life of the believer when he or she feels the need for a *deeper* work in his or her heart. The penalty of sin in our lives has already disappeared in the sea of God's forgetfulness. We are headed to heaven and have a relationship with God in Christ. But there are still things in our lives that fight for supremacy – even good things!

Now, we are ready to begin our consecration. Before sanctification comes consecration. Do you remember that last week we said that before forgiveness from God comes confession from us? The same thing is at work here; before sanctification from God comes consecration from us.

It happens because, as a Christian, you have a conscious awareness of your personal need for something deeper – for greater Christ-likeness, for sanctification. That’s a result of the Holy Spirit’s work in you! It is a holy unrest in your soul. So there are three complete areas of our lives, besides sins, that we consecrate completely to God:

- Our Past (not just our regrets and sins, but all the good, all the talents, all the achievements that we have taken credit for)
- Our Present (any good currently in our lives, our relationships, our careers)
- Our Future (our hopes and dreams, our plans, exchanged for his)

In the Old Testament, one of the great examples of consecration was when the Israelites were finally about to enter the Promised Land. An entire generation had passed since they left slavery in Egypt, Moses had died, and Joshua was leading them. The entire nation of people – hundreds of thousands if not millions – are encamped on one side of the Jordan River, and the Promised Land awaits on the other side. It is going to take another Red Sea miracle for them to get across, and as you read it in Joshua chapter three, you see that that is exactly what God provides. But the night before that happens, Joshua tells the people this:

Joshua told the people, “Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do amazing things among you.” (Joshua 3:5, niv)

The people are told to offer themselves or their lives to God as something holy for him. It’s the same thing we read in the New Testament book of Romans:

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.” (Romans 12:1, niv)

So do you understand the idea of consecration? The Bible expects us to offer ourselves, our very lives in their entirety, to God to be used by him and for him.

What I want us to see today is that when we do that, it is at this point that we receive the Holy Spirit in a deeper fullness, and we have His power to fully serve him, to grow in full Christ-likeness, and to fully love others, in order to share the Gospel with others.

So...

## 2. What is *Sanctification*?

Put simply, it is the time when the Holy Spirit is allowed to move into your life and you willingly give Him *full* control. It is often called “the filling of the Holy Spirit.” It

means your life is not your own; you now live for Him. I want you to see again that the Apostle Paul said:

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20, niv)

It is allowing the Spirit to live so fully in us that the Spirit is our very life.

When Jesus talked about the power of the Holy Spirit, He gave important truths as to what we can expect him to do in us. The Spirit is the Spirit of truth (John 14:7). The Spirit will guide you into truth (John 16:3). The Spirit will point you to Christ (John 15:26). The Spirit will glorify Christ (John 16:14). The Spirit will empower you to tell others about Jesus (Acts 1:8). This is what the Spirit will do in and through your life when he fills you. In short, the Holy Spirit is making you Holy.

The Spirit fills you with himself so that you have the power to say no to sin and to obey the Lord. God wants you to be able to carry out his mission in this world, and you can't do that if you continue to struggle with sin.

Here's what the Holy Spirit does. Imagine these books are like sin in the life of the Christian. Before the Holy Spirit filled you, you struggled with the weight of this – it gets tiring! Gravity is like the pull of sin in your life. But when the Holy Spirit filled you, He is like this table. The pull of gravity – sin – is still there, but He is stronger and He resists them. This is what the Spirit does:

“It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age.” (Titus 2:12, niv)

The reason the Spirit of God does this in your life is so that you can fully live out the Gospel, telling others about God's love, unhindered by sin.

If you look at *any* example in the Bible of Spirit-filled believers, you see an immediate focus on outreach and proclaiming the Word of God. The Spirit equips and empowers Christians to *do God's will*, which is to love and to tell others the truth about Jesus. In Acts 2, the apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit and immediately had the power to preach, and the boldness to stand before their enemies and proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ. Each time we see the filling of the Holy Spirit in the Bible, the immediate response of those who are filled is to go out and live this Christ-like life and tell others about Jesus. Spirit filling is never centered on us, but is always centered on Jesus Christ and his mission, and that mission is always directed toward bringing people to Christ.

Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would give the disciples (and us) the power to be his witnesses:

“What you'll get is the Holy Spirit. And when the Holy Spirit comes on you, you will be able to be my witnesses in Jerusalem, all over Judea and Samaria, even to the ends of the world.” (Acts 1:8, tmt)

The whole book of Acts is about the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers, empowering them to go out and tell others about Jesus Christ. *That is the kind of life we are talking about.*

The point I hope to make from this is that *every Christian* should pray for and wholeheartedly seek the filling of the Holy Spirit – the purpose of Christ’s death and resurrection was to make this available to us. God transforms ordinary men and women into extraordinary people of faith.

The lack of real spiritual power in the church today isn’t because God’s power is diminished, but because we no longer seek God with all our heart. Jeremiah 29:13 says:

“And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.” (Jeremiah 29:13, niv)

So...

### 3. How do I receive ***Sanctification***?

There are three key ingredients to receiving the Holy Spirit, or the second baptism.

The first is to...

#### **Be *thirsty*:**

You must have a hunger and thirst for God above all else. Jesus said that you should be happy if you hunger and thirst for this, because you will be filled!

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.” (Matthew 5:6, niv)

Every leader in the history of the church with this testimony has one thing in common – they all had that hunger for righteousness. They thirsted after God and could not be satisfied with anything less than God.

They wanted to lose their lives for the sake of being completely used for God’s will. And the evidence of the Holy Spirit is seen in their lives. They lived like Christians; they introduced people to Jesus; they helped men and women see the need to repent and pointed to the truth of the risen Savior, Jesus Christ.

Second is to...

#### **Be *Humble*:**

Humble does not mean to be meek or shy, in the Bible humility means brokenness before God. Without brokenness, we will not find God.

When we humble ourselves and are broken before God, we are given several promises (I’ve listed some references in the notes: *James 4:9-10; Psalm 10:17, 25:9, 29:19; Isaiah 57:15*). He will lift up those who make themselves low, He will hear their desire; He will prepare their heart; He will cause His ear to hear their prayer; He will guide them in justice and teach them His ways. God also promises that those

who humble themselves will not be sorrowful because the Lord will increase their joy and cause them to rejoice.

God's Spirit dwells with the humble and contrite. Unless I humble myself, *I* am all the power behind my Christian life. But when I humble myself before God, God exalts me so he can show His glory in me and point others to Christ.

Last, you must...

**Be *Persistent*:**

In Luke 11:5-13 Jesus teaches the importance of this if we are going to receive the Holy Spirit:

“Suppose you went to a friend's house at midnight, wanting to borrow three loaves of bread. You say to him, 'A friend of mine has just arrived for a visit, and I have nothing for him to eat.' And suppose he calls out from his bedroom, 'Don't bother me. The door is locked for the night, and my family and I are all in bed. I can't help you.' But I tell you this—though he won't do it for friendship's sake, if you keep knocking long enough, he will get up and give you whatever you need because of your shameless persistence. And so I tell you, keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. "You fathers—if your children ask for bread, do you give them a stone? Or if they ask for a fish, do you give them a snake instead? Or if they ask for an egg, do you give them a scorpion? Of course not! So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.” (Luke 11:5-13, nlt)

Some say this passage means that we can ask for whatever we want and if we are persistent God will give it to us. But that's *not* what this is about. This is very specific about being persistent for *one* thing: *the Holy Spirit in your life*. This teaching ties together how we ask for the promise of the Holy Spirit. What was the purpose of the neighbor asking for bread? It wasn't to feed himself, but to meet the need of someone else. Don't miss this: we seek to be filled with the Spirit so that we can meet the needs of others, especially in their greatest need, which is to know the love of God. You will continue to struggle with selfishness if you don't seek the Spirit. If you are serious and truly hunger and thirst for God, you will never be satisfied until you are filled with God's Spirit. You will find God “When you seek for Him with all your heart.” Jesus said the Father is *eager* to give us the Holy Spirit when we ask!

We know for a fact that God wants to give us His Spirit; so what's the hold up? Why don't many of us have the filling of the Holy Spirit? All I can say is, ask and keep asking. Don't stop asking. Not for yourself, but for God's glory and the need of others to know Jesus.

*My Story...*



**Benediction:**

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.  
(1 Thessalonians 5:23-24, niv)