

July to September 2017

“A Sanctified Christian Life”

by
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About the Author



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SATURDAY, JULY 1

1 PETER 4:12-19

1 PETER 4:16

“...if any man suffer as a Christian,
let him not be ashamed...”

A SANCTIFIED CHRISTIAN LIFE

Many think that they are Christians because they have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, have been baptized, and go to church on Sundays. They may be very active in their church and fellowship groups. They may even serve the Lord as church session members, pastors, missionaries, evangelists, lecturers and professors at Bible colleges and seminaries, and so forth. Many “Christians” read the best-selling “Christian” books, surf the most visited “Christian” websites, listen to popular “uplifting” messages and “Christian” songs, watch popular live “Christian” TV programs, etc, thinking that they are edified and their “Christian life” is growing! Are they true Christians? How do we know for sure that we are true Christians? We must follow the Lord Jesus Christ’s words of wisdom: “*Ye shall know them by their fruits*” (Matt 7:16).

Many others blindly follow their church leaders and popular “Christian” speakers, church planters with their leadership networks worldwide, or scholars and theologians with their credentials acknowledged and accepted by most Bible colleges and “Christian” churches. Their success and credentials are measured by number and size! Many regard them as God’s servants whom God has blessed with their mega churches, big membership, big church buildings, big funds for social works under their names or their churches’ names, etc. However, are they God’s true servants living a true Christian life? How do we know? “*Ye shall know them by their fruits.*”

True followers of Christ or Christ’s “*disciples were called Christians first in Antioch*” (Acts 11:26). They were not popular in terms of number or size. Contrarily, they were despised and hated by the world, and they were still willing to “*suffer as a Christian*” (1 Pet 4:16). However, through their holy life they were recognized as Christians. What about yours and mine? Are we living a sanctified Christian life as “*the salt*” and “*the light*” in this dark, sinful, and ungodly world (Matt 5:13-14)?

THOUGHT: A true Christian must live as Christ lived (1 John 2:6).

PRAYER: O Lord, help me live a true Christian life as Thou lived.

LORD'S DAY, JULY 2

1 THESSALONIANS 4:1-12

1 THESSALONIANS 4:3

*"For this is the will of God,
even your sanctification..."*

GOD'S HOLY WILL AND PURPOSE

Many church leaders and members fail to see God's holy will and purpose for His people, so they just focus on God's love and material blessings for them. That is why many want to join the church to hear about love and material blessings! They feel that God has blessed them and their church! They are deceiving themselves or being deceived by their own feelings and by teachings full of half-truths if their lives are not sanctified and holy as God is holy!

God never saves us so that we can live any way we like. We must see God's purpose for us when He so loved mankind that He gave His only begotten Son (John 3:16). His holy purpose is for the saved ones to be like His Son Jesus Christ: *"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren"* (Rom 8:29). Is your life more like Christ in faith, love, humility, meekness, godliness, holiness, and obedience to God and His Word each day?

What is Christ's purpose when He so loved us that He gave His life for us, died for our sins, rose again for our justification (Rom 4:25), and is ever living to make intercession for us? That is to wash us, cleanse us, sanctify us and present us to Himself as His holy and chaste Bride! *"... Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish"* (Eph 5:25-27). Are we holy and sanctified "as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Cor 11:2)?

Truly, God has loved us, called us and *"chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love"* (Eph 1:4), and *"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification... For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness"* (1 Thess 4:3, 7).

THOUGHT: God has saved me so that I should be holy like Christ.

PRAYER: O Lord, I thank Thee for Thy holy will and purpose for me.

MONDAY, JULY 3

1 PETER 1:13-25

1 PETER 1:16

"Be ye holy; for I am holy."

BE YE HOLY!

A Christian life must be a holy life. A Christian must be separated and sanctified unto the Lord; otherwise, the name of Christ may be despised, disgraced and blasphemed. Sadly, many "Christian" leaders and members have stumbled others through their financial or sexual scandals and through their worldly and ungodly life! They have really *"shut up the kingdom of heaven against men"* (Matt 23:13) so much so that many are "fed up" with "Christianity" and they do not want to hear the Gospel nor believe in the Lord Jesus Christ! If you are stumbled by these ungodly "Christians," please remember that the Lord Jesus Christ is your Creator and Saviour who is always holy, good and right, and His teachings are always holy, good and right, so His true followers should be holy, good and right; otherwise, they are not His true followers or true Christians. Moreover, only the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and not men, is able to save you and make you holy, good and right in His sight when you wholeheartedly believe in Him, depend on Him, and submit to Him. Truly, *"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them"* (Heb 7:25). Thus, you must trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for your own good!

Many deceive themselves by thinking that they are saved and will go to heaven as long as they "faithfully" attend the services and keep religious practices, whereas their life is not changed and sanctified! They are only "Christians" by name because they have not exalted Jesus Christ as Lord and Master of their life! They still see, watch, read, listen to, say or do what they like regardless of the Lord and His Word! The Apostle Paul had to remind believers in Corinth to examine their spiritual life: *"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"* (2 Cor 13:5). We must not deceive ourselves or be deceived by others. God is holy, and He commands His people to be holy: *"Be ye holy; for I am holy"* (1 Pet 1:16). What about you?

THOUGHT: God is holy, and His people must be holy.

PRAYER: O Lord, sanctify me and keep me holy as Thou art holy.

TUESDAY, JULY 4

JOSHUA 7:1-13

JOSHUA 7:13

*"Up, sanctify the people, and say,
Sanctify yourselves..."*

SANCTIFICATION IS A MUST FOR GOD'S PEOPLE (1)

As God's will, purpose and command for His people is to be holy as He is holy, we must be holy to enjoy His holy presence and blessings, to be meet for His use, and to see the Lord when He comes.

If we are used to living in a clean, pure and hygienic environment, we shall not want to stay in an unclean, impure and unhygienic place. God is perfectly holy, pure, and true so He will surely not condone anything sinful, untrue, unholy, unclean, ungodly, or unrighteous; neither will He stay with His people when they turn sinful, ungodly, and worldly. The people of Israel could defeat their mightier enemies when God was with them, helped them, and blessed them; but when there was sin in their midst, God was not with them, and they were defeated before their enemies, even their weaker enemies. When this happens, praying and fasting cannot get back the holy presence of God. There is no way to enjoy God's holy presence except by separating oneself from sin and humbly returning to the Lord in repentance. *"Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you. Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against to morrow: for thus saith the LORD God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you" (Josh 7:12-13).*

Sadly, many so called "Christian" leaders, members and churches nowadays do not want to be separate unto the Lord. Instead, they criticize and condemn those who practise biblical separation as unloving, unkind, unfriendly and narrow-minded believers who do not support their unbiblical unity and harmony for their worldly ecumenical mindsets which welcome all kinds of faiths, doctrines and religions! Is the holy God with them? Definitely not! If we truly want God's holy presence to be with us, we must be separate and sanctified!

THOUGHT: Without holiness I shall not enjoy God's holy presence!

PRAYER: Lord, make me clean, separated and consecrated to Thee.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 5

2 TIMOTHY 2:15-26

2 TIMOTHY 2:21

“...be a vessel unto honour,
sanctified, and meet for the master's use...”

SANCTIFICATION IS A MUST FOR GOD'S PEOPLE (2)

If we are truly clean and hygienic, we will not want to use unclean and unhygienic cups and plates for our food or drink as they will bring germs and harmful things into our body. Spiritually speaking, the holy God will never use unclean vessels for His holy work and glory. Some may argue, “How about Judas Iscariot? God also used him, and without him the Lord Jesus would not be arrested!” Many are deceived by “The Lost Gospel – The Gospel of Judas” claiming that Judas was Jesus’ favourite disciple who helped Jesus to fulfil God’s purpose! Be not deceived! The Lord Jesus called Judas “*a devil*” (John 6:70) and said it would have been better if “he had not been born” to betray Him (Matt 26:24). With the Jews’ intense envy, hatred and evil plan to kill Jesus, they could have killed Him by some other means. Judas was just an unclean vessel for an unclean job, like a dustbin, not to honour but to dishonour. *“But in a great house 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. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work”* (2 Tim 2:20-21). What about you?

Sadly, many today do not care about holiness and godliness! They still believe and claim that they are God’s children and servants and that God has been with them, helping and blessing them with their church growth in size and number. But certainly not in holiness and godliness! It is the most dangerous self-deception! Moreover, they have fellowship with charismatic, ecumenical and neo-evangelical leaders and churches and invite popular speakers and church planters to speak to their churches to help their churches grow in size and number! They even advertise that those popular speakers are God’s great servants, whom God mightily used to plant and help the churches grow fast, far and wide! They are used by unholy and ungodly people, but not by the holy God! Do you want to be used by the holy God as His holy vessel unto honour? You must be sanctified!

THOUGHT: Without holiness I shall not be a clean vessel for God

PRAYER: O Lord, purge me, sanctify me and use me for Thy glory.

THURSDAY, JULY 6

HEBREWS 12:1-17

HEBREWS 12:14

*"Follow... holiness, without which
no man shall see the Lord."*

SANCTIFICATION IS A MUST FOR GOD'S PEOPLE (3)

If we want the holy God to be with us and use us for His glory, we must be sanctified and holy. If we keep walking with the Lord in His narrow way of sanctification, we shall see Him when He returns. *"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure"* (1 John 3:2-3). What about you?

Sadly, many are deceiving themselves or are being deceived by others into thinking that they are saved and will surely see the Lord because they are active and are "faithful" members or pastors of their churches for years, when their life is unholy, ungodly and worldly! Will they see the Lord when He comes? Disappointingly, they shall be left behind in shame! The Lord Jesus has warned His followers: *"I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left"* (Luke 17:34-36). Many may be greatly respected and admired for their leadership, preaching, writing, prophesying, speaking in tongues, casting out demons, or performing miracles, and they expect great rewards from the Lord at His coming. But, without holiness they shall be shocked when the Lord Jesus professes to them, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt 7:23). What about you?

God's Word confirms, *"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord"* (Heb 12:14). "No man" refers to any person without discrimination against age, gender, social status, denominations, religions, long service, etc. The holy and righteous God *"will render to every man according to his deeds... For there is no respect of persons with God"* (Rom 2:6, 11). Do you really want to see the Lord? You must be sanctified!

THOUGHT: Without holiness I shall not see the Lord!

PRAYER: Lord, sanctify me and keep me holy that I may see Thee.

FRIDAY, JULY 7

1 CORINTHIANS 1:26-31

1 CORINTHIANS 1:30

*"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus,
who of God is made unto us...
sanctification..."*

MEANING OF SANCTIFICATION (1)

*"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification (hagiasmos)... For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness (hagiasmos)" (1 Thess 4:3, 7). "Sanctification" in Greek is *hagiasmos*, which has ten occurrences in the New Testament, and the King James Bible translates as "holiness" five times, and "sanctification" five times (*Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*). *Hagiasmos* means *holiness, consecration, sanctification*; the use in a moral sense for a process or, more often, its result (the state of being made holy) (BAGD). *Hagiasmos* means *separation unto God* (Zodhiates).*

Thus, Christian sanctification is a process of separation and dedication unto the Lord with their positional sanctification in Christ, *"who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption"* (1 Cor 1:30). Although they are not perfect yet and are still in their process of sanctification each day, they *"are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints"* (1 Cor 1:2).

Hagiasmos is from the Greek verb *hagiázō*, which has twenty-nine occurrences; KJB translates as "sanctify" twenty-six times, "hallow" twice, and "be holy" once (*Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*). *Hagiázō* means *to make clean, render pure* (Heb 9:13). Metaphorically, *to render clean in a moral sense, to purify, sanctify; to consecrate, devote, set apart from a common to a sacred use; spoken of persons to consecrate as being set apart of God and sent by Him for the performance of His will* (John 10:36); and *to regard and venerate as holy, to hallow* (Matt 6:9; 1 Pet 3:15) (Zodhiates).

Thus, to sanctify is to make clean, to separate and consecrate unto the Lord for His own will and use. Only through a sanctified Christian life will God's holy name be hallowed with reverence, and the holy Lord be exalted! Thus, sanctification is not an option but a commandment. *"... Be ye holy; for I am holy"* (1 Pet 1:16). Are you sanctified each day?

THOUGHT: God commands me to be holy as He is holy!

PRAYER: Lord, sanctify me and keep me Thine for Thy glory.

SATURDAY, JULY 8

2 CORINTHIANS 6:14-18

2 CORINTHIANS 6:17

*"Wherefore come out from among them,
and be ye separate..."*

MEANING OF SANCTIFICATION (2)

To illustrate the meaning of sanctification, we can observe the Tabernacle or the Temple of the Lord. First, it is separated unto the Lord. Second, it is dedicated or consecrated unto the Lord. And finally, it is filled with the holy presence of the Lord as His pleasant approval and acceptance of the dedication.

Be Separated unto the Lord: The Tabernacle is of the Lord, and as the Lord is holy, it must be separated from other tents, from uncleanness and from other common use. It is a holy place where God's people come to meet Him and worship Him. *"And Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the Tabernacle of the congregation"* (Exod 33:7), and *"Thus shall ye separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness; that they die not in their uncleanness, when they defile my tabernacle that is among them"* (Lev 15:31), and *"And when the tabernacle setteth forward, the Levites shall take it down: and when the tabernacle is to be pitched, the Levites shall set it up: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death"* (Num 1:51).

If we are truly God's people, we are His holy temple. *"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are"* (1 Cor 3:16-17), and our "body is the temple of the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor 6:19). Therefore, we must be separated unto the Lord as without biblical separation there is no true sanctification. *"... I am the LORD your God, which have separated you from other people... And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed (separated) you from other people, that ye should be mine"* (Lev 20:24, 26), and *"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you"* (2 Cor 6:17). Thus, we must never follow any compromising stance, but be separated unto our holy Lord.

THOUGHT: Without separation, there is no true sanctification.

PRAYER: O Lord, keep me separated unto Thee always.

LORD'S DAY, JULY 9

1 CORINTHIANS 6:12-20

ROMANS 12:1

“...present your bodies a living sacrifice,
holy, acceptable unto God...”

MEANING OF SANCTIFICATION (3)

Separation is the first step of sanctification. There is no sanctification without separation. However, separation alone is not enough. Many religions teach followers to separate themselves from sinful deeds and worldliness and to confine themselves in shrines, temples, or in a place far away from the world. By so doing, they think they are saints, and others also regard them as saints with much respect! However, without dedication to the Lord, their hearts and minds are still full of *“evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness”* (Mark 7:21-22)! Thus, the next step of sanctification, i.e. dedication to the Lord, is a must too.

Dedicated unto the Lord to be His: The Tabernacle and everything in it were dedicated to the Lord through anointing. *“And thou shalt take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle, and all that is therein, and shalt hallow it, and all the vessels thereof: and it shall be holy”* (Exod 40:9), and *“This was the dedication of the altar, after that it was anointed”* (Num 7:88). The temple or the house of God was also dedicated to the Lord. *“So the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the LORD”* to be His (1 Kings 8:63; 2 Chron 7:5). God’s people are His holy temple, not only separated unto Him, but also dedicated unto Him to be His. *“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”* (Rom 12:1), and *“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?”* (1 Cor 6:19). Many professing Christians and leaders may think they have dedicated their lives to the Lord, but they are not truly the Lord’s! They still believe, think, desire, see, watch, listen to, read, say, sing or do what they like regardless of the Lord and His Word! They still worship and serve the Lord any way they like! Their dedication is vain! What about you?

THOUGHT: Without dedication, there is no true sanctification.

PRAYER: O Lord, keep me dedicated unto Thee always.

MONDAY, JULY 10

2 CHRONICLES 7:1-14

EXODUS 29:43

“...the tabernacle shall
be sanctified by my glory.”

MEANING OF SANCTIFICATION (4)

Without separation and dedication unto the Lord, there is no true sanctification. However, separation and dedication are still not enough! Many have separated and dedicated themselves to the Lord like the priests, or the Pharisees in Jesus' days, or the monks, priests and brothers in the monasteries and the nuns in the convents; but without God's holy presence, their hearts and minds are still full of sinful thoughts, sexual lusts, pride, envy, deceit, covetousness, etc. (Mark 7:21-22). Thus, the final step is the most important, and that is to have God's holy presence. Because we want to have God's holy presence in our hearts, minds, life, family and church, we must separate and dedicate ourselves unto Him!

Be filled with the Lord's holy presence: After the Tabernacle or the Temple was separated and dedicated unto the Lord, God's holy presence filled the Tabernacle and the Temple with His glory. Its majestic splendor was too awesome for Moses and the priests to enter. *“And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory”* (Exod 29:43), and *“Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle”* (Exod 40:34-35), and *“Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the house. And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD'S house”* (2 Chron 7:1-2). God's people are His holy temple, and they must be filled with God's presence; otherwise, their sanctification is vain. *“... be filled with the Spirit”* (Eph 5:18). When we are truly filled with the Holy Spirit, there is no room for self, sins and worldliness. Sadly, many professing “Christians” nowadays deceive themselves by thinking that they are filled with the Holy Spirit with their speaking in tongues, but their hearts and minds are still filled with self, sins and worldliness! What about you?

THOUGHT: Without God's presence, there is no true sanctification.

PRAYER: O Lord, may Thy holy presence be with me always.

TUESDAY, JULY 11

MATTHEW 21:1-17

1 CORINTHIANS 3:17

*"If any man defile the temple of God,
him shall God destroy..."*

MEANING OF SANCTIFICATION (5)

The Tabernacle and the Temple were sanctified because of God's holy presence and glory. "*The tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory*" (Exod 29:43), and it was called the "*holy temple*" (Ps 65:4). However, when the people of Israel turned away from the Lord and His Word, they provoked Him to anger due to their sins and idolatry; and God's holy presence and glory departed from the temple. "...*the glory of the LORD departed from off the threshold of the house...*" (Ezek 10:18). Something must be seriously wrong when they could still deceive themselves that the Temple was of God, that God was still with them, and that God would protect them from their enemies! God had to remind them through His servant Jeremiah: "*Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD... Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the LORD*" (Jer 7:4, 11). Because they failed to repent, the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed and they were taken into captivity to Babylon!

In Jesus' days, the people of Israel were so proud of the splendid Temple in Jerusalem. Due to their sins, ungodliness and hypocrisy, the Lord did not worship with the priests or the Pharisees in the Temple, but "*cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves... And he left them, and went out of the city into Bethany; and he lodged there*" (Matt 21:12, 13, 17). Sadly, because they failed to repent, but even crucified their Lord and Messiah, the Temple was destroyed by General Titus in AD 70, and the Jews were scattered all over the world until 1948 when God graciously brought them back to their land to fulfil His promise to their forefathers (Isa 11:11-12). It was a spiritual disaster when Samson did not know that "*the LORD was departed from him*" due to his toying with sins (Judg 16:20). What about you?

THOUGHT: I must be sanctified unto the Lord always.

PRAYER: O Lord, keep me sanctified unto Thee always.

MEANING OF SANCTIFICATION (6)

It is so important to treasure and maintain the Lord's holy presence in our hearts, minds, life, family and church because as long as the Lord's holy presence is with us, we are holy and sanctified, and are called "saints" (1 Cor 1:2), "holy brethren" (1 Thess 5:27), "holy people" (Deut 7:6), and "holy nation" (1 Pet 2:9). The ground which Moses stood on was holy ground because of God's holy presence. *"Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground"* (Exod 3:5). But later that ground was trampled by people and animals as normal.

Truly understanding that we are sanctified not only by separation and dedication unto the Lord alone, but also by His holy presence and glory, we shall humble ourselves before God no matter who we are or what we have done for Him. Neither shall we despise others the way the Pharisee despised the tax-collector, thinking that he was holier than others (Luke 18:9-14). Sadly, there are so many modern-day Pharisees who also think that they are holier than others due to their continence, celibacy, abstinence, mysticism, strict self-discipline, more years in the Lord's service, higher degrees in theology, or observance of religious practices. Some may think that they are holier than others because they do not celebrate Christmas or Easter, or because they do not eat out on the Lord's Day! It is most blasphemous when a human being like the Pope thinks that he is qualified to canonise the dead who had done many good works and had performed at least two miracles! Despite many good works and miracles in Jesus' name, many will be rejected when Jesus comes due to their lack of submission to the Lord and His will and Word (Matt 7:21-23). Thus, we must never think that we are holier than others. We are nothing and not holy at all without God's holy presence! *"... if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom 8:9), and "Examine yourselves... how that Jesus Christ is in you..." (2 Cor 13:5).*

THOUGHT: Am I holy with God's holy presence?

PRAYER: O Lord, keep me holy in Thy holy presence always.

THURSDAY, JULY 13

ROMANS 7:18-25

ROMANS 7:24-25

“...who shall deliver me...?”

I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord...”

MEANING OF SANCTIFICATION (7)

The Westminster Confession of Faith (chapter XIII) gives us more understanding about sanctification:

1. They, who are once effectually called, and regenerated, having a new heart, and a new spirit created in them, are further sanctified, really and personally, through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection (1 Cor 6:11, Acts 20:32, Phil 3:10, Rom 6:5-6) by His Word and Spirit dwelling in them (John 17:17, Eph 5:26, 2 Thess 2:13), the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed (Rom 6:6, 14), and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified (Gal 5:24, Rom 8:13), and they more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces (Col 1:11, Eph 3:16-19) to the practice of true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord (2 Cor 7:1, Heb 12:14).
2. This sanctification is throughout, in the whole man; (1 Thess 5:23) yet imperfect in this life, there abiding still some remnants of corruption in every part; (1 John 1:10, Rom 7:18, 23, Phil 3:12) whence ariseth a continual and irreconcilable war, the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh (Gal 5:17, 1 Pet 2:11).
3. In which war, although the remaining corruption, for a time, may much prevail; (Rom 7:23) yet, through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part doth overcome; (Rom 6:14, 1 John 5:4, Eph 4:15-16) and so, the saints grow in grace, (2 Pet 3:18, 2 Cor 3:18) perfecting holiness in the fear of God (2 Cor 7:1).

Thus, with a sinful, deceitful, and wicked heart (Jer 17:9), it is vain for human beings to try their best to live a holy life if they have not been first regenerated or born again with a new heart and a new spirit! Knowing this truth, we will not be deceived by those who think and claim that they are saints when they have not been born again!

THOUGHT: Without regeneration, there is no true sanctification.

PRAYER: O Lord, I thank Thee for Thy work of regeneration.

FRIDAY, JULY 14

JOHN 3:1-8

JOHN 3:7

"Ye must be born again."

YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN

You may have heard and read about the message of the Lord Jesus to Nicodemus many times: *"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God... Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God... Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again"* (John 3:3, 5, 7). However, it is still good for us to meditate on the Lord's message again to give thanks to God for His miraculous work of regeneration in our hearts and lives, as well as for new believers to know for sure if they are born again. *"Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance"* (2 Pet 1:12-13).

"There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews" (John 3:1). Nicodemus was a pure Jew who knew and worshipped the living and true God of his forefather Abraham. He was a Pharisee, a Separatist with much zeal to keep the law strictly (Acts 26:5). He was *"a ruler"* in service for many years with much experience as a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin (John 7:45-50). The Lord Jesus knew that he was *"a master"* or a teacher (*didaskalos*) (John 3:10). He had head-knowledge of God and of the Holy Scripture, and he taught God's Word to the Jews for years. Unlike other Pharisees who envied the Lord and always tried to find fault with the Lord in His words but could not, Nicodemus respected the Lord and recognised Him as his Divine Teacher. He said, *"Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him"* (John 3:2). Nicodemus humbly addressed the Lord as *"Rabbi,"* which means *my master, my teacher; a title of honor in the Jewish schools which continues until modern times* (Zodhiates). In the eyes of the Jews, Nicodemus must have been saved and would enter into Heaven, but in Jesus' eyes, he was not. What about you?

THOUGHT: Jesus' words are still the same: *"Ye must be born again."*

PRAYER: Lord, I thank Thee for Thy Word and command.

SATURDAY, JULY 15

MATTHEW 16:13-20

1 JOHN 5:1

*"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ
is born of God..."*

BELIEVE THAT THE LORD JESUS IS THE CHRIST (1)

Many may think that their church leaders or "Christian" scholars and theologians must be saved and will enter Heaven because of their knowledge of God and of the Holy Scripture, their honours degrees, their high positions in academic or church environment, their respectful titles, their recognized credentials and achievements, their mega churches and popular worldwide networks, their eloquent speaking and preaching, their teachings and writings with best-selling books, and so on. However, in the eyes of the Lord, they may not be saved or born again like Nicodemus! Then, how can we know for sure that we are born again, and what are the qualities born-again believers should have? We must search God's Word, the truth, to find out the answers.

The first sign of born-again believers is they believe Jesus is the Christ. *"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God"* (1 John 5:1a). The Jews did not believe that Jesus was the Christ, so they crucified Him. Nicodemus could recognize Jesus as a teacher from God, but he did not know and believe that Jesus was the Christ, so the Lord told him the truth that he must be born again. Thus, what does it mean to believe that Jesus is the Christ?

Jesus (Iēsoûs) means Saviour. Jesus is the Lord's human name. Jesus is the only begotten of God, and is God Himself, the Creator. But out of love, He was willing to humble Himself to be a man, born of the virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit. What for? To save mankind from sins and the condemnation of sins through His life, death, resurrection, and ascension. *"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory"* (1 Tim 3:16; cf. Matt 1:20-21). Sadly, many modern Bible versions replace "God" with "He," thus undermining the Deity of the Lord Jesus! Is Jesus truly your God and your Saviour?

THOUGHT: Is Jesus my personal God and Saviour?

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, Thou art my God and my Saviour.

LORD'S DAY, JULY 16

ACTS 10:34-43

ACTS 10:38

*"How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth
with the Holy Ghost and with power."*

BELIEVE THAT THE LORD JESUS IS THE CHRIST (2)

The first step to be saved and born again is to repent of one's sins and to receive the Lord Jesus as one's personal Lord and Saviour. "... *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house*" (Acts 16:31). Once we are saved and born again, we shall know, believe, and exalt the Lord Jesus as our personal Christ. What does that mean?

Christ (Christós) means the Anointed One, the Messiah (Dan 9:25-26), *the Messiah* (John 1:41; 4:25). In the Old Testament, there are three offices which require anointing: the prophets (like Elisha, 1 Kings 19:16), the priests (like Aaron and his sons, Lev 8:12; Num 3:3) and the kings (like David, 1 Sam 16:13; 2 Sam 2:4; 5:3). The Scripture tells us that it was God (not men) who anointed the Lord Jesus and exalted Him as Saviour, Prince, Lord, and Christ. "... *God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power... God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ... Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour...*" (Acts 10:38; 2:36; 5:31).

Truly, Jesus Christ is the "*Great Prophet*" (Luke 7:16; Deut 18:18-19). If we are born again, we must submit to Jesus Christ's Word and teaching because "*every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people*" (Acts 3:22-23). Jesus Christ is the "*Great High Priest*" (Heb 4:14-16). If we are born again, we must trust and depend on Him as our Representative before God because Jesus says, "*no man cometh unto the Father, but by me*" (John 14:6). Jesus Christ is the "*Great King*" and Lord of lords (Matt 5:35; Rev 17:14). If we are born again, we must exalt Him as our personal Lord and King to reign over us because Jesus says, "*But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me*" (Luke 19:27). Sadly, many "Christian" members, leaders and scholars think they are saved, but have not submitted to Jesus Christ as their Lord and King! What about you?

THOUGHT: Jesus Christ must be my personal Lord and King!

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, Thou art my Lord and my King.

MONDAY, JULY 17

1 JOHN 4:7-21

1 JOHN 4:7

“...every one that loveth
is born of God, and knoweth God.”

LOVE GOD AND HIS CHILDREN AND SERVANTS

The second sign of born-again believers is they love God, love the Lord Jesus and love His children and servants. “... *every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him*” (1 John 5:1b). The Lord Jesus summarises God’s commandments into two: “*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind... And ... Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets*” (Matt 22:37-40). Sadly, due to man’s sinful, depraved and rebellious nature, those who are not born again can never be “*subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*” (Rom 8:7). Nor are they able to love the Lord their God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength, nor to love their neighbours as themselves. Many professing Christians may think that they love the Lord and worship Him with all their zeal, waving and clapping their hands, jumping, dancing, etc, but they are deceived by their feelings! The Lord Jesus says, “*If a man love me, he will keep my words...*” (John 14:23).

Once we are born again, we shall be God’s children, we shall know Him as our Heavenly Father, we shall be partakers of God’s nature, even His love and holiness. “*Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love*” (1 John 4:7-8), and “...ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Pet 1:4). It is amazing that “*the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us*” (Rom 5:5) so that we may love God, keep His Word, and love His children and servants. Sadly, many professing Christians hate and persecute God’s true children and servants who have a high view of God’s perfectly inspired and preserved Word! The Jews thought that God was their Father while they hated and persecuted the Lord Jesus! Jesus told them the truth: “*If God were your Father, ye would love me... Ye are of your father the devil...*” (John 8:42, 44). What about you?

THOUGHT: If I am born again, I shall love God and His people.

PRAYER: Lord, I thank Thee for Thy gracious work of regeneration!

TUESDAY, JULY 18
PSALM 63
PSALM 63:1

*"O God, thou art my God;
early will I seek thee:
my soul thirsteth for thee..."*

SEEK AND THIRST FOR GOD AND HIS WORD

The third sign of born-again believers is they seek and thirst for God and His Word. "*O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee*" (Ps 63:1a), and "*As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby*" (1 Pet 2:2). Only born-again believers are able to sincerely seek and thirst for God Himself (their Father) and His Word (their spiritual milk and food).

Many professing Christians may think that they are seeking the Lord! They faithfully go to church, attend prayer meetings, join all church activities, and reach out to others through evangelism and overseas missions; not knowing that such activities are only good if they do it for the Lord Himself according to God's will, God's Word and in God's way! They may even fast and pray fervently, seeking God's blessings upon their church, their families and their business or career. However, they are like the Jews who sought the Lord Jesus just for material blessings, but not for the Lord Himself (John 6:26). Many nowadays seek the Lord for His power to perform miracles, for His sign gifts like speaking in tongues, prophesying, having dreams and visions, for His material blessings like good health, wealth and prosperity, and for their church growth in size and number! They are deceiving themselves because they have failed to seek the Lord Himself for His will, His Truth, His guidance and His spiritual blessings. They have failed to seek "*first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness*" (Matt 6:33), to have a right standing acceptable to the holy God first, which is found only in Christ and His righteousness. They overemphasize God's love to justify their compromise and unbiblical "unity" with others from all kinds of faiths, beliefs, doctrines and religions! They usually seek suitable Bible verses to support their unbiblical doctrines and practices, their ungodly worship with worldly music and entertainment, their ecumenical mindsets to have fellowship with others, but they fail to seek God and His Word sincerely and biblically to know His holiness, righteousness and "*all the counsel of God*" (Acts 20:27)! What about you?

THOUGHT: What will I be remembered for after I leave this earth?

PRAYER: One life to live on this earth. May I live it for you, Lord.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 19

LUKE 4:1-13

LUKE 4:4

“...man shall not live by bread alone,
but by every word of God.”

LIVE BY GOD AND HIS WORD

The fourth sign of born-again believers is they live by God and His Word. *“As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me”* (John 6:57), and *“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God”* (Luke 4:4; cf. Matt 4:4). Sadly, many modern Bible versions based on the corrupt texts of Westcott and Hort omit *“but by every word of God”*! Did the Lord Jesus only say to Satan, *“Man shall not live by bread alone,”* or did the Holy Spirit only move and remind Luke to record it without *“but by every word of God”*? Definitely not! The arrogant attitude of those professing Christians and scholars who dare to criticize, question, and scissor God’s Word proves that they do not have a high view of their holy God and His holy Word nor live by God and His Word!

The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Son of Man in one Person, does live by His Father and by His Father’s Word with faith and submission and without any doubt or question. When the Lord Jesus teaches that He is the Bread of Life, and anyone who eats Him will live by Him, He means that His followers cannot live without Him, but they must depend on and submit to Him, just as He cannot live without His Father, but He depends on and submits to His Father (John 5:19, 30). Sadly, many of His followers could not understand and accept that truth and they left their Master. The Lord Jesus did not lower His spiritual standard to run after them, but challenged His twelve disciples: *“Will ye also go away?”* Peter sincerely answered, *“Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God”* (John 6:67-69). Peter had the signs of a born-again believer: surely believing that Jesus is the Christ and living by the Lord and His Word. A newborn baby needs his mother and her milk. If we are truly born again, we cannot live without the Lord and His Word, but we will always live by, depend on, and submit to Him and His Word. What about you?

THOUGHT: Do I truly live by the Lord and His Word?

PRAYER: O Lord, I cannot live without Thee and Thy Word.

THURSDAY, JULY 20

1 JOHN 3:1-10

1 JOHN 3:9

*"Whosoever is born of God
doth not commit sin..."*

STOP LIVING IN SIN AS A HABIT (1)

The fifth sign of born-again believers is they stop living in sin as a habit. They will not purposely keep on living in sin. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 John 3:9). This verse does not teach sinless perfection of Christian life on earth as some believe. Paul used to be "a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious" (1 Tim 1:13). After being saved and born again by God's grace and mercy, Paul still struggled to fight against his sinful flesh or sinful nature. "If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not" (Rom 7:16-18). Paul used the verb "dwelleth" in the present tense and in the active voice, denoting that "sin" or sinful nature is still active in him although he was born again and "consent unto the law that it is good." However, Paul dealt with sin seriously and did not give up the fight until he found victory in the Lord Jesus Christ. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord..." (Rom 7:24-25). Even though Paul lived a victorious life in Christ, he did not think that he was sinless and perfect yet (Phil 3:12-15) and sincerely testified that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (1 Tim 1:15). Paul used the verb *eimi* ("am") in the present tense to show his humility and to encourage other sinners to trust in Jesus Christ, who is able to save them as He has saved Paul, the top one in rank among sinners!

Then, what was the powerful motivation that helped Paul to deal with sin seriously until he stopped living in sin through the victory in the Lord Jesus? That is God's "seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." If we are truly born again, God's holy seed or holy life in us will help us do as Paul did.

THOUGHT: If I am born again, I must stop living in sin as a habit.

PRAYER: Lord, I thank Thee for Thy holy and victorious life in me.

FRIDAY, JULY 21

PSALM 51

PSALM 51:10

*“Create in me a clean heart, O God;
and renew a right spirit within me.”*

STOP LIVING IN SIN AS A HABIT (2)

Due to man's sinful, depraved, deceitful and rebellious nature, no one can overcome his sinful nature by himself through education, religion, strict self-discipline, or even self-torture. Thus, it is vain to seek sanctification or to live a holy life if we are not truly born again first by the Holy Spirit and by God's Word (John 3:5; 1 Pet 1:23). We should not be surprised or stumbled when we see many professing Christians, church leaders and Bible college professors turn away from God's Word and Truth and turn compromising, ungodly and worldly, even with financial and sexual scandals without any sincere and deep repentance because they have not been born again! Many abuse God's grace, love and forgiveness by their repeated sins and their false repentance that are without remorse!

God's true children may sometimes fall into temptations and sin due to their self-pride and self-complacency. *“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall”* (1 Cor 10:12). Or due to their lack of trust in and dependence on the Lord, who says, *“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing”* (John 15:5). However, once being convicted of their sins, they feel so miserable and remorseful that they have to repent right away, confess their sins to the Lord, and humbly implore the Lord for forgiveness with a broken heart and a contrite spirit. They will humbly ask the Lord to help them not to fall into that sin again. What about you?

David acknowledged not only his sins but also his sinful nature. He cried to the Lord, *“Have mercy upon me, ... blot out my transgressions... Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me... Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me”* (Ps 51:1, 5, 10). After his deep and sincere repentance, David stopped living in sin as a habit. He did not commit that sin again. Peter also repented bitterly after denying the Lord three times, but after that he did not repeat that sin, but was willing to be martyred for the Lord. What about you?

THOUGHT: Do I still repeat the same sin without any remorse?

PRAYER: Lord, help me to trust in Thee and rely on Thee always.

SATURDAY, JULY 22

LUKE 15:11-32

LUKE 15:18

"I will arise and go to my father..."

STOP LIVING IN SIN AS A HABIT (3)

God's true children may sometimes backslide into worldliness due to the appealing attractions and strong seductions of the world with its worldly values and pleasures like *"the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life"* (1 John 2:16). They have not known much about their heavenly Father and their Saviour Jesus Christ! Therefore, when tempted and drawn to the world, they may stop going to church or reading God's Word for a while or for years, but like the prodigal son in Luke chapter 15, they cannot find true happiness and satisfaction from the world. In the end, unable to bear with their empty, wretched and miserable worldly life any more, they will remember God their Father and their Saviour Jesus Christ, and decide to return home. Once they are in their Father's home again, they will appreciate their heavenly Father's presence and loving care as well as their Saviour's grace and prayer for them, and they will never want to leave their Father's home again. They are able to say like Paul: *"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ"* (Phil 3:8).

Many may think that they are born again and can backslide. They may think that they can always return to their Father. But later if they leave Him again, it means that they have not truly returned to God the Father Himself. They have merely returned to a church!

The parable in Luke 15 speaks of the grace and love of God, and the prodigal son can be applied to both the believer and the unbeliever. For the born-again believer, he used to be in his Father's house and has tasted of His goodness, but has left Him. Later, as he remembered his Father and His goodness, he stood up and knew the way back home. For the unbeliever, because of the grace and love of God, God will receive him when he genuinely receives Jesus as his Lord and Saviour, and repents of his sins.

THOUGHT: Am I backsliding, going away from God the Father?

PRAYER: My Father, I thank Thee for Thy warm welcome home!

LORD'S DAY, JULY 23

2 CORINTHIANS 6:14-18

2 CORINTHIANS 6:17-18

"...be ye separate, saith the Lord...

And will be a Father unto you..."

BE SEPARATE UNTO THE LORD

The sixth sign of born-again believers is they separate themselves unto the Lord, for there is no true sanctification without separation. *"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty"* (2 Cor 6:17-18). These commands are not from men or the church, but from the Lord God Almighty, the Creator! Those who ignore or are against the doctrine of Biblical Separation and compromise and worship with the ungodly and unbelievers cannot be God's *"sons and daughters"* no matter how big their faith is with their signs and wonders as their faith is not founded on God's Word. God did so love mankind that *"he gave his only begotten Son"* (John 3:16), that He desires *"all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth"* (1 Tim 2:4), and that He is *"not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance"* (2 Pet 3:9). Then, why does God command His children to be separate? Because of His holiness and righteousness!

The incarnation, the death and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ show not only God's love but also God's holiness and righteousness. Because of His holiness, God hates sins and never condones sins. Because of His righteousness, God has to deal with sins and condemn sins. And because of His love and righteousness, God let His only begotten Son die to bear the sins of mankind and rise again to save those who repent and believe in Him. The Lord Jesus Christ lived in this world with the purpose to glorify His Father and to finish His Father's work, even God's salvation for mankind. God also puts His children in the world to glorify Him and to do His work as witnesses unto Christ (Acts 1:8). They are in the world, but are *"not of the world"* (John 17:15-16) and are *"not conformed to this world"* (Rom 12:2). Rather, they must be His holy temple, *"I will dwell in them, and walk in them"* (2 Cor 6:16), and be *"ambassadors for Christ"* to help others be reconciled to God their Creator (2 Cor 5:20). What about you?

THOUGHT: Am I separated unto the Lord?

PRAYER: Lord, keep me separated unto Thee always.

MONDAY, JULY 24

1 JOHN 2:18-29

1 JOHN 2:29

“...every one that doeth righteousness
is born of him.”

DO RIGHTEOUSNESS (1)

The seventh sign of born-again believers is they do righteousness. “If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him” (1 John 2:29). Righteousness, (Greek *dikaíosunē*) “is the state commanded by God and standing the test of His judgment (2 Cor 3:9; 2 Cor 6:14; Eph 4:24). It is conformity to all that He commands or appoints. Since God Himself is the standard of the believers, the righteousness of God means the righteousness which belongs to God or to oneself from God, or God-like righteousness (Matt 6:33; James 1:20). Thus righteousness, in general, is God’s uprightness or standard, without reference to any particular form of its embodiment, to which man is expected to conform” (Zodhiates). Thus, to do righteousness is to do what is right and just according to God’s will and Word including all of God’s commandments.

Many are praised for their good works and sacrifice for the poor and the needy, but if their hearts and motives are not right before the holy God, they will be rejected. Many professing Christians think that they are doing the right things even performing miracles in the Lord Jesus’ name but these are not according to God’s will! They will also be rejected before the righteous Lord, who will “*profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity*” (Matt 7:23). With man’s sinful, depraved and deceitful nature, no man is able to live up to God’s righteous standard nor keep all of God’s commandments. “*For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all*” (James 2:10). God’s Word confirms: “*There is none righteous, no, not one... For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*” (Rom 3:10, 23). All the good things we have done can never satisfy God’s righteous standard. “*But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags...*” (Isa 64:6). Thus, “every one that doeth righteousness is born of him” (1 John 2:29). Only born-again believers are able to do what is right and acceptable unto God by His grace and strength! What about you?

THOUGHT: Am I doing the right things before God?

PRAYER: Lord, help me do what is right in Thy sight.

TUESDAY, JULY 25
PHILIPPIANS 3:1-11
PHILIPPIANS 3:9

*"And be found in him,
...the righteousness which is of God by faith."*

DO RIGHTEOUSNESS (2)

God's Word declares that only God is righteous. "*The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works*" (Ps 145:17). He is the "*righteous God*" who tries our hearts (Ps 7:9). He is "*the righteous LORD*" who loves righteousness (Ps 11:7; cf. Heb 1:9). Because God "*is righteous... every one that doeth righteousness is born of him*" (1 John 2:29). To do the right things according to God's will and Word, our hearts and motives must be right before Him first. We must be born again, and there is no other way!

It is vain for those who do righteousness outwardly, but within they "*are full of hypocrisy and iniquity*" like the Pharisees (Matt 23:28). It is vain for those who try to keep themselves from defilement of the world, but their hearts still "*proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness*" (Mark 7:21-22). When we are born again, we may understand God's righteousness and shall not try to establish our own righteousness externally like the Jews (Rom 10:3), but regard all things but loss to know Christ and to "*win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith*" (Phil 3:8-9). What a great blessing to know and appreciate the Lord Jesus Christ, "*who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption*" (1 Cor 1:30)! Truly, "*THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS*" (Jer 23:6)!

Moreover, with the help and power of the Holy Spirit, "*the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*" (Rom 8:4). When we yield to the Holy Spirit and walk after the Spirit, we will have the right heart, mind, understanding and motive to do God's will and Word acceptably to our righteous God. This way, the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us when we live righteous lives in conformity with God's law. All glory to the Lord!

THOUGHT: Am I fulfilling God's righteousness by the Holy Spirit?

PRAYER: Lord, help me do the right things according to Thy will.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 26

1 JOHN 2:1-6

1 JOHN 2:6

*"He that saith
he abideth in him ought himself
also so to walk, even as he walked."*

DO RIGHTEOUSNESS (3)

Truly born-again believers must do the right things according to God's will and Word and in God's way and timing as well. The Lord Jesus Christ came to do His Father's will alone (John 6:38) and submitted to His Father even unto death (Phil 2:8). When His mother and brothers according to the flesh suggested the Lord do something, He always waited upon His heavenly Father's will and timing, saying, *"My time is not yet come"* (John 7:6-8; cf John 2:4). That shows the Lord Jesus' wholehearted dependence and submission to His Father! Looking at the Lord Jesus' ministry on earth, we do not see the Lord using music, miracles or man-pleasing messages to attract people. On the contrary, the Lord usually charged those who were healed not to let others know (Matt 8:4; 12:16), acknowledging that only His Father is able to draw sinners to Him with the right motive and sincere submission (John 6:44, 65). If we are in Christ, we must do the same. *"He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked"* (1 John 2:6).

Sadly, many professing Christians nowadays cannot wait upon God for His will, direction, help and timing! They think that their church growth in size and number can justify their compromise and worldly means and methods with worldly music, sign gifts and popular man-pleasing speakers. They think that their church cannot grow without such means and methods! That is why the Lord has warned that such professing Christians will be rejected (Matt 7:22-23).

Many professing Christians think that it is not a sin to listen to worldly music, to go to the cinema, to play video games, to watch worldly dramas and movies, to go out and have fellowship with unbelievers, to attend an unbiblical service, to follow worldly fashions, to drink alcohol, to smoke, to gamble, etc. But, the important question is: Is it God's will for His children to do so? Are we doing the right things before God according to God's will and Word in our worship and in our personal lives?

THOUGHT: I have to live as the Lord Jesus did on earth.

PRAYER: Lord, please live in me and help me walk as Thou didst.

THURSDAY, JULY 27

EPHESIANS 5:22-25; 6:1-4

EPHESIANS 5:23, 25

"For the husband is the head of the wife,

...Husbands, love your wives..."

DO RIGHTEOUSNESS (4)

It is God's will that *"the husband is the head of the wife"* and *"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it"* (Eph 5:23, 25). Christ loved the church with His holy love and wants her to be *"holy and without blemish"* (Eph 5:27). Knowing his responsibility, the husband has to humbly seek God's will, Word, strength, grace and love to be a godly and loving head so that his wife may be willing to submit to him. It is God's will that *"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord"* and *"that she reverence her husband"* (Eph 5:22, 33). Realizing human weaknesses, the husband and the wife have to seek God and His Word together in their daily devotion so that they may be able to love, endure, help, serve, encourage and forgive each other according to God's Word. Sadly, many couples have failed to seek righteousness before God; as a result, their family life is a failure or even a disaster, not having a good testimony for God's glory!

It is God's will for parents not to provoke their children to anger, *"but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord"* (Eph 6:4). *"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children..."* (Deut 6:6-7). Knowing that only God is able to save their children and transform their sinful hearts, parents have to pray hard for their children, set a good example for them, pray with them and teach them God's Word at family worship, take them to a Bible-believing church to worship God, etc. It is God's will for children to *"obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth"* (Eph 6:1-3). Children who want to receive God's blessings must show their respect, obedience, and filial care to their parents in the Lord, even when they are getting old, weak and sick. Failing to do righteously, many families are not happy Christian homes with God's blessings! What about yours?

THOUGHT: Am I doing the right things before God in my family?

PRAYER: Lord, help me do Thy will and Word in my family.

FRIDAY, JULY 28

1 JOHN 5:13-21

1 JOHN 5:18

“...he that is begotten of God
keepeth himself...”

KEEP ONESELF IN CHRIST AND GOD’S WORD

The eighth sign of born-again believers is they keep themselves in Christ and God’s Word. “*We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself; and that wicked one toucheth him not*” (1 John 5:18). “*That wicked one*” (in Greek with the definite article, *ho ponēros*) refers to *the evil one, Satan* (Matt 13:19, 38; Eph 6:16; 1 John 2:13, 14; 3:12; 5:18) (Zodhiates). God’s true children and servants are the target of Satan’s attack. Those professing Christians and servants with their gospel of wealth and health only see material blessings and their defeated Satan. They claim that they can cast out demons and bind Satan in the Lord Jesus’ name! They think that they have the power and authority to bind Satan at home, in someone’s life and in a particular area in the Lord Jesus’ name! However, looking at their life and ministry, we do not see them doing righteously before God or humbly keeping themselves in Christ and God’s Word with biblical separation! They are still compromising and enslaved to sin, their sinful flesh and worldliness! Then, how can they be God’s true children and servants when they do not have the signs of born-again believers? The most dangerous part is that they are deceived by their feelings and Satan’s deceit unawares! The Jews thought God was their Father while the Lord Jesus told them that their father was the devil (John 8:41-44)!

The more determined we are to do God’s will and Word seriously and carefully, the more attacks we can experience from Satan, the wicked one. Although God’s children are secure in the mighty hands of the Saviour Jesus and the heavenly Father (John 10:28-29), we must not proudly belittle Satan, for he is “*a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour*” (1 Pet 5:8). Without the Lord’s protection, we are just easy prey for Satan! To avoid the snares of Satan, we must humbly hide ourselves in the Lord as our Refuge and Fortress, watch and pray, put on the whole armour of God, submit to God and use God’s Word to resist Satan (Ps 91:2; Matt 26:41; Eph 6:10-18; James 4:7; 1 John 2:14). What about you?

THOUGHT: Am I humbly keeping myself in Christ?

PRAYER: Lord, Thou art my Hiding Place, Refuge and Fortress.

SATURDAY, JULY 29

ROMANS 8:12-17

ROMANS 8:16

*“The Spirit itself beareth witness...
that we are the children of God.”*

HAVE THE WITNESS AND GUIDANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The ninth sign of born-again believers is they have the witness and guidance of the Holy Spirit. *“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God... ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God”* (Rom 8:14-16). Many charismatic “Christians” and leaders think that they are filled with the Holy Spirit with their speaking in tongues, prophesying, having dreams and visions, healing, casting out demons, performing miracles, etc, whereas their life and worship are worldly and ungodly! They assume that they are revived to worship God with all their zeal – clapping or waving their hands, jumping and dancing, singing unbiblical lyrics according to the rhythm and the beats of worldly music! However, true revivals in Church history did not have such things! True revivals always have reverence in biblical worship with a broken heart and contrite spirit, with humble confession of sins in deep repentance, with separation from sins, ungodliness and worldliness, with more thirst for God and His Word, with more consecration and sanctification, with more zeal to share the pure Gospel to others, and so forth. What about you?

The Holy Spirit is God the Creator and the Divine Author of the Holy Scripture. The Holy Spirit controls and leads God’s children to live, worship and serve God according to God’s Word, and never contrary to God’s Word! When the Lord Jesus comes again, He will not care about what church or what denomination we belong to, but whether we have the seal of the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:30), and *“if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his”* (Rom 8:9). It is a great blessing to enjoy the Holy Spirit’s guidance through God’s Word with His sovereignty and providence. It is a great blessing when the Holy Spirit *“beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God”* and *“our spirit”* can cry to God, *“Abba, Father”* meaningfully although others may condemn us as heretics!

THOUGHT: Without the seal of the Holy Spirit, I am not the Lord’s.

PRAYER: My God, how I thank Thee for being my holy Father!

LORD'S DAY, JULY 30

MATTHEW 5:38-48

MATTHEW 5:9

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."

BE PEACEMAKERS

The tenth sign of born-again believers is they are peacemakers. *"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God"* (Matt 5:9). Many think that they are worshipping and serving the living and true God, but their gods are totally different from the living and true God of the Christian Bible. Their gods teach them to kill and to make war!

The living and true God of the Christian Bible is a loving, good, longsuffering, merciful, gracious, holy and righteous God, who commands His children to be perfect and loving as He is perfect and loving (Exod 34:6-7; Matt 5:44-48). The living and true God is *"the God of peace"* (Rom 15:33; 16:20) and the Lord Jesus is *"the Lord of peace"* (2 Thess 3:16), *"the Prince of Peace"* (Isa 9:6), and *"the King of Peace"* (Heb 7:2)! His Gospel is *"the Gospel of peace"* (Eph 6:15), and *"the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost"* (Rom 14:17). The Lord Jesus did not have an army on earth to fight against those who wanted to destroy Him (John 18:36), but He teaches His followers to live in peace with others: *"have peace one with another"* (Mark 9:50). God's Word also teaches us: *"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men"* (Rom 12:18), and *"Follow peace with all men"* (Heb 12:14).

Due to man's rebellious and hostile nature toward God (Isa 65:2; Rom 8:7), we must be born again to be true *"peacemakers,"* and *"have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"* (Rom 5:1), and then to have the peace of God and the God of peace ruling in our hearts (Col 3:15; Heb 13:20-21). Then, we can be peacemakers to help others have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, to *"be ye reconciled to God"* (2 Cor 5:20) and to live in peace with one another (2 Cor 13:11). God's true children are *"peacemakers"* and not troublemakers. Sadly, many professing Christians do not want to live in peace with their neighbours, but may even want to sue their neighbours due to their self-interest, envy and covetousness!

THOUGHT: God's true children must be peacemakers.

PRAYER: Lord, I thank Thee for regenerating me to be Thy child.

MONDAY, JULY 31

HEBREWS 12: 1-11

HEBREWS 12:6

*“For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth,
and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.”*

BE CHASTISED BY THE LOVING HEAVENLY FATHER

The eleventh sign of born-again believers is they receive God the Father's loving chastisement. *“For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.... But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons... but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness”* (Heb 12:6, 8, 10). Due to man's sinful nature, no true children of God are exempt from their loving Father's chastisement although they are born again and in the process of sanctification. God is holy and He commands His children to be holy (1 Pet 1:16), and out of love, He has to chastise His children when they fail to honour Him, to do His will, or to keep His Word. What is God's purpose? So that they may be *“partakers of his holiness.”*

Thus, we can be sure that those professing Christians and leaders who do not depend on or submit to God and His Word, but do their own will and plans in worldly ways are not God's children if they are not chastised: *“if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.”* We should not be surprised, envious or stumbled when we are unrepentant professing Christians and leaders still living in sin, worldliness and ungodliness without God's chastisement! They may even seem to be more prosperous, successful, popular, and increasing in size and number! However, the holy and righteous God *“will render to every man according to his deeds... For there is no respect of persons with God”* (Rom 2:6, 11). Sooner or later, they will be judged!

Although it is not a happy but painful experience to be chastised, we must not despise God's chastisement or be discouraged (Heb 12:5), but should *“rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live”* (Heb 12:9). Moreover, we must be thankful because God deals with us as His beloved children and wants us to be *“partakers of his holiness”* and to yield the *“peaceable fruit of righteousness”* (Heb 12:11). Truly, *“He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit”* (John 15:2).

THOUGHT: I must thank God for His loving chastisement.

PRAYER: Father, thank Thee for purging and chastising me.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 1

1 TIMOTHY 1:18-20

1 JOHN 5:4

*"For whatsoever is born of God the
overcometh the world..."*

LIVE A VICTORIOUS LIFE

The twelfth sign of born-again believers is they live a victorious life. "*For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith*" (1 John 5:4). Satan is "*the god of this world*" (2 Cor 4:4), and he uses the world with "*the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*" (1 John 2:16) to tempt and distract many from God and His Truth. Demas used to be Paul's fellow-labourer, but he left Paul and the ministry "*having loved this present world*" (2 Tim 4:10). Billy Graham started his ministry as a fundamentalist but slowly became a compromising neo-evangelical unawares! Many churches and Bible colleges used to be faithful to the Lord and His Truth but have fallen into Satan's trap unawares! No one is able to overcome Satan and the world except the Lord Jesus and "*whatsoever is born of God.*"

Satan tempted the Lord Jesus to turn stone into bread (to satisfy His hungry stomach), to test God's protection by risking His life regardless of God's will, and to worship Satan for all the glory of the world (eg. fame, power and wealth), but the Lord overcame Satan by prayer and God's Word (Matt 4:1-11). Satan made use of Peter's human love to try to turn Jesus away from the narrow way of the cross, but Jesus overcame Satan by His sharp discernment and focus on God's will (Matt 16:23). Satan wanted the Lord to shrink from the bitter cup of shame and pain, bearing all the curse and sins of mankind (1 John 2:2; Gal 3:13), but the Lord overcame him by His prayer and full submission to His Father's will. Satan used the ungodly to challenge the Lord to come down from the cross to save Himself but the Lord overcame Satan by His humble obedience to His Father and His love for mankind (John 15:13; Phil 2:8). Through His resurrection, the Lord Jesus proved that He has overcome His self-will, Satan, the world and death. And the Lord surely will help His children and servants who trust in Him, depend on Him and submit to Him to overcome as well. "... *be of good cheer; I have overcome the world*" (John 16:33).

THOUGHT: Am I living a victorious life in Christ?

PRAYER: I thank Thee, Father, for victory in Christ (2 Cor 2:14).

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 2

PHILIPPIANS 2:12-18

PHILIPPIANS 2:13

*"For it is God which worketh in you
both to will and to do of his good pleasure."*

SANCTIFIED BY THE TRIUNE GOD (1)

The name "God" in Hebrew is Elohim, a plural noun used with a singular verb, and replaced with a singular pronoun He, His, Him or Thou, Thee, Thy or Thine. This shows the Trinity of God – one living and true God with three Divine Persons: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. The Triune God created the heaven, the earth, the seas, the universe, and all the living things out of nothing by His Word, but when God created human beings, God created man in His image and after His likeness with His hand and breath. The Triune God gathered together for this special work. *"Let us make man in our image, after our likeness"* (Gen 1:26) and *"the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul"* (Gen 2:7). Thus, human beings are different and far more superior to animals, even monkeys or apes. Animals die and are no more, and they do not need God's salvation. However, human beings with their immortal souls do need God's salvation due to Adam's sins and their own sins. To save mankind from sins and to bring them to Himself, the Triune God had a plan of salvation:

1. **God the Father** gave His only begotten Son Jesus (John 3:16);
2. **God the Son** was willing to obey His Father, humbled Himself to become a man to die and rise again for mankind (Rom 5:8; Phil 2:5-8); and
3. **God the Holy Spirit** convicts and converts repentant sinners and regenerates them (John 3:5; 16:8-14; Titus 3:5).

To sanctify His children, the Triune God has to be with them and in them. *"Even the Spirit of truth... for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you... If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him"* (John 14:17, 23). We must appreciate the Triune God, who *"hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ... For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure"* (Phil 1:6; 2:13).

THOUGHT: I must thank God for saving me and sanctifying me.

PRAYER: I thank Thee, Father, for salvation and sanctification.

SANCTIFIED BY THE TRIUNE GOD (2)

Jesus prayed to His Father, “Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are... I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil... Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:11, 15, 17). Jude wrote “to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called” (Jude 1). Living in this sinful world full of snares, traps, temptations, and attacks from Satan (1 Pet 5:8), we, like naïve and defenceless sheep, do need the loving care and protection of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Good Shepherd, and God, our Almighty Father. “And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand” (John 10:28-29). Thanks and praise be unto the Lord!

God the Son, Jesus “Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Eph 5:25-27). And “for both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren” (Heb 2:11). We ought to be grateful to the Lord for His sacrifice as “we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb 10:10).

We must also be thankful to God the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth and Comforter “because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth” (2 Thess 2:13) and “that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost” (Rom 15:16). Thus, those who ignore God’s “great salvation” by grace through faith cannot escape His judgment (Eph 2:8; Heb 2:3)! What about you?

THOUGHT: Am I always thankful to the Triune God for His grace?

PRAYER: I thank Thee, O God, for Thy grace and great salvation.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 4

JOHN 17:9-19

JOHN 17:17

*"Sanctify them through thy truth:
thy word is truth."*

SANCTIFIED BY GOD'S WORD AND TRUTH

The Author of our "great salvation" (including justification and sanctification) is the Triune God. So, the means of sanctification must be from God alone: by God's Word/Truth and by Christ's precious blood. However, not all are sanctified automatically. In order to enjoy God's work of sanctification, we must have faith in Him and His Word with our obedience and submission. All is by God's grace alone, so all thanks, glory and praise be unto God alone!

The Lord Jesus Christ still prays to His Father for His followers. "*Holy Father, ... Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth*" (John 17:11, 17). Only God is true (Rom 3:4) and His "*word is true from the beginning*" (Ps 119:160). Without God's Word and Truth, we can never know the truth about the holy God as well as about our sinful and deceitful hearts. Without God's Word and Truth, we can never have true salvation or true sanctification. Knowing this truth, we can be sure that those religions, Bible colleges and churches including pastors, teachers, professors and scholars that do not have a high view of God's Word nor a trusting and submissive heart can never have true sanctification before the holy God! The Almighty God created this world by His mighty Word. "*For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast*" (Ps 33:9). God the Father uses His same mighty Word to sanctify His children. God the Son uses God's Word to cleanse and wash His Church (John 15:3; Eph 5:26). God the Holy Spirit uses God's Word to convict, convince, convert, regenerate and sanctify believers (John 16:8-14; 1 Pet 1:23). Truly, "*For the word of God is quick, and powerful*" (Heb 4:12), and "*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*" (2 Tim 3:16).

Thus, to enjoy the Triune God's sanctifying work, we must read, study, keep, and live by God's Word daily with a humble, prayerful, teachable and submissive heart. There is no other way!

THOUGHT: Without God's Word/Truth, there is no sanctification!

PRAYER: Lord, I thank Thee for sanctifying me through Thy Word.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 5

HEBREWS 9:11-28

HEBREWS 13:12

*“...he might sanctify the people
with his own blood...”*

SANCTIFIED BY JESUS' PRECIOUS BLOOD

God's Word, the Holy Scripture, reveals the truth about God, His attributes, His creation (including man), His chosen people Israel, His salvation for mankind through the incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ, His Church in Christ, His Millennial Kingdom under Christ's reign, His Final Judgment, His New Heaven and New Earth for the righteous, etc. Throughout the Scriptures, God has His instructions, moral laws and commandments for mankind to live and to worship and serve Him accordingly. The more we read and understand God's Word, the more we see our shortcomings, unrighteousness and transgressions due to our failure to keep God's Word. Then, we shall need and appreciate the cleansing and sanctifying blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ more and more. Let us search God's Word to learn the truth about the precious blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who is God but humbled Himself to be a man to die and shed His precious blood for the salvation of mankind:

- **The remission of sins** (Matt 26:28), and have peace with God (Col 1:20), as *“without shedding of blood is no remission”* (Heb 9:22).
- **The redemption** (Eph 1:7; Col 1:14). *“... he hath purchased with his own blood”* (Acts 20:28) and *“hast redeemed us to God by thy blood”* (Rev 5:9).
- **The justification**. *“...being now justified by his blood”* (Rom 5:9).
- **The washing and cleansing**. *“... Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood”* (Rev 1:5), and *“the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin”* (1 John 1:7), and God's children *“have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb”* (Rev 7:14).
- **The access to God in the holiest**. *“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus”* (Heb 10:19) and have fellowship with God in His light (1 John 1:7).
- **The sanctification**. *“... he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate”* (Heb 13:12).
- **The victory over Satan's accusation**. *“...they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb...”* (Rev 12:11).

THOUGHT: Without Jesus' blood, there is no true sanctification!

PRAYER: Lord, how I thank Thee for shedding Thy blood for me!

SANCTIFIED BY JESUS' CROSS

It is a great blessing to be kept clean and pure in the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ all the time. Whenever we read or remember God's Word and are convicted by the Holy Spirit of our shortcomings and sins, we can turn to the Lord Jesus, our Great High Priest in repentance and implore Him to wash and cleanse us in His precious blood. Satan has no ground to accuse us, and we can have peace in our hearts!

However, with the sinful nature inherited from Adam, we tend to fall into sin again and again. To deal with our old man, our sinful flesh, our self-will and selfishness, and worldliness, God does not improve it, but crucifies or mortifies it by our union with the Lord Jesus in His death, and then let the Lord live and manifest His holy life in us:

- **Our old man** *"is crucified with"* Christ (Rom 6:6).
- **Our sinful flesh** is crucified. *"And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts"* (Gal 5:24). No matter how hard, strict and painful the discipline and punishments are, human beings can never deliver themselves from the slavery of their sinful nature. Only the Holy Spirit is able to help us mortify our sinful flesh and deeds. *"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live"* (Rom 8:13), and *"mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry"* (Col 3:5)!
- **Our self-will and selfishness.** Jesus says, *"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me"* (Luke 9:23) and *"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me..."* (Gal 2:20). Taking up our cross and denying ourselves daily means dying to our self-will and selfishness daily. No more I, no more "my will," but God's will be done.
- **Worldliness.** *"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world"* (Gal 6:14). What about you?

THOUGHT: Without Jesus' cross, there is no true sanctification!

PRAYER: One life to live on this earth. May I live it for Thee, Lord.

MONDAY, AUGUST 7

2 CORINTHIANS 4:7-18

2 CORINTHIANS 4:10

“...the life also of Jesus
might be made manifest in our body.”

SANCTIFIED BY CHRIST’S HOLY LIFE

Forensic justification or positional sanctification causes us to be dead to the old man and the sinful flesh. Without the resurrection of the Saviour Jesus Christ, we shall be condemned in our sins without any justification or true holiness. “*And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins*” (1 Cor 15:17). Knowing this truth, we shall turn to the Lord Jesus Christ, humbly believe on Him and live by Him moment by moment each day to bear good fruit, just like the branches living by the vine (John 15:5), and living by the Lord. “...he that eateth me, even he shall live by me” (John 6:57). Knowing this truth, we shall not be deceived by those who preach a false gospel, who do not truly believe the Lord Jesus Christ and God’s Word. Without justification which comes by faith in Christ alone, no one can ever live a true sanctified Christian life!

Although we have been reconciled, justified and cleansed by Jesus’ precious blood, we still need the Lord Jesus and His holy life to sanctify us progressively from our sinful flesh and to help us do God’s Word and will each day. Truly, “*For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life*” (Rom 5:10). That was how Paul experienced the Lord’s deliverance each day. “*O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord...*” (Rom 7:24-25). Paul also experienced Christ’s life in him. “*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me*” (Gal 2:20), and “*Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body*” (2 Cor 4:10). No one is able to overcome the law of sin (one’s sinful nature) and death (the penalty of sin) without the death and life of the risen Christ. It is only when we live in the risen Christ and live by the Holy Spirit can we be “*free from the law of sin and death*” (Rom 8:2). Are you?

THOUGHT: No life from the risen Christ, no true sanctification!

PRAYER: Lord, I thank Thee for living in me with Thy holy life.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 8

HEBREWS 11:1- 10

ACTS 26:18

*“...them which are sanctified how
by faith that is in me.”*

SANCTIFIED BY FAITH IN CHRIST AND GOD’S WORD

As mentioned before, without being born again, no one is able to walk in the narrow way of sanctification, for it is contrary to his sinful nature and lusts. Like a dying or dead fish drifting in the water without any ability to swim against the tide, a spiritually dead or dying person can never live a holy life against his sinful nature and against the worldly trends of ungodliness. All the means of sanctification written here is strange to him!

If salvation including sanctification is by good works and human efforts, we shall be able to boast about our merits and achievements, or to despise others. However, salvation is by grace through faith alone, and it is a gift of God, so we have nothing to boast about. *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast”* (Eph 2:8-9). Truly, *“For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith”* (Rom 1:17). When the Scripture tells us about faith, it is not any kind of faith, but the saving faith in God, in the Lord Jesus Christ, and in God’s Word (Mark 11:22; Heb 12:2; Rom 10:17). Thus, *“without faith it is impossible to please”* God (Heb 11:6) and *“whatsoever is not of faith is sin”* (Rom 14:23). Knowing this truth, we can be sure that those who doubt God and criticize or question His Word can never please God or live a true sanctified Christian life!

It is by faith in Christ that we are saved and justified (Rom 3:25-28; Eph 2:8), but we must not stop there like many professing Christians who think that it is enough just to believe in the Lord Jesus to be saved without walking in the narrow way of sanctification! Our faith in the Lord and in God’s Word must grow daily from faith to faith (Rom 1:17; 10:17; 2 Thess 1:3), even from justification to sanctification. *“... them which are sanctified by faith that is in me (Christ)”* (Acts 26:18). Thus, we must look unto “Jesus the author and finisher of our faith” for our sanctification as well.

THOUGHT: No faith in Christ and His Word, no true sanctification.

PRAYER: Lord, how I thank Thee for granting me faith to believe!

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 9

PHILIPPIANS 2:1-14

1 PETER 1:22

“...ye have purified your souls
in obeying the truth through the Spirit...”

SANCTIFIED BY OBEDIENCE TO GOD AND HIS TRUTH

Through God's Word we know that we are sanctified by the Triune God, by God's Word/Truth, by Christ's precious blood, cross, and life, etc. All such knowledge is precious, but it is only effectual when we truly believe and live out our faith in obedience to the Triune God and His Word/Truth. Disobeying God and His Word is sin. We must not be deceived by popular speakers and writers who may preach, speak and write very well but whose lives do not show true obedience and submission to God and His Word and Truth.

Sanctification includes separation (from sins, sinful flesh, wrong doctrines, unbelievers, worldliness, etc), dedication to God, and submission to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Without any of these, true holiness will not result. Are we willing to separate ourselves from sins, worldliness, and whatever that does not suit God's Truth and His holy presence? Do we turn to the Lord, trust in Him, rely on Him, live by Him and submit to Him and His Word daily? If we do, we are walking in the narrow way of sanctification, leading to life. It is by God's grace alone that He works in us and moves us to do His will, so we must willingly obey God to work out our salvation or to produce the fruit of our salvation through a sanctified Christian life! *“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. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure”* (Phil 2:12-13). *“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit...”* (1 Pet 1:22).

We must bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit: *“love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance”* (Gal 5:22-23), as well as the *“fruit unto holiness”* (Rom 6:22). Thus, *“let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God”* (2 Cor 7:1). What about you?

THOUGHT: Without obedience, there is no true sanctification!

PRAYER: Lord, I thank Thee for working in me to do Thy will.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 10
1 THESSALONIANS 5:12-28
1 THESSALONIANS 5:23

*"And the very God of peace
sanctify you wholly."*

THE VERY GOD OF PEACE SANCTIFY YOU WHOLLY

God's Word confirms again that sanctification is the work of the Triune God. "*And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it*" (1 Thess 5:23-24). According to God's will, the Holy Spirit moves us to read God's Word, illumines us to understand God's Truth, helps us see not only God's love but also God's holiness, convicts us of our sins and shortcomings, helps us pray to the Lord in repentance for His cleansing in Jesus' precious blood, mortifies our sinful flesh, and fills us to live a holy life! The more we are sanctified, the more we are holy like Christ, and the more peace we can enjoy from the holy presence of the God of peace.

It is the Triune God Himself doing the work of sanctification, and He will do it because He is faithful. Our part is to commit our whole spirit and body to Him with trust and submission like the clay in the Divine Potter's hands so that He may cleanse us, mould us, sanctify us, and preserve us blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. All thanks, praise and glory to the Triune God alone!

It is good for us to understand God's work of sanctification with our cooperation, even our faith and obedience. It is good for us to go into detail of our whole being and understand what a sanctified spirit/soul and a sanctified body mean and then apply it in our practical life. Many do not believe that they have a soul/spirit! With such unbelief, they think death is the end of all things, as is the case with animals. Consequently, they would neither worry about their life after death nor see their need of the Saviour Jesus Christ. That is a big lie and deceit from Satan! It is so dangerous when "*they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie*" (2 Thess 2:10-11)! What about you?

THOUGHT: Without God's gracious work, no true sanctification!

PRAYER: My God, I thank Thee for sanctifying me wholly.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 11

GENESIS 2:4-17

GENESIS 2:7

“...*the LORD God...
breathed into his nostrils the breath of life;
and man became a living soul.*”

HUMAN SPIRIT/SOUL AND BODY/FLESH (1)

When the Triune God created the first man, even Adam, in His image and after His likeness, “*the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul*” (Gen 2:7; cf. 1:26). God breathed into man’s nostrils “*the breath of life.*” “*Breath*” in Hebrew is *neshamah*; with twenty-four occurrences. The KJV translates it as “*breath*” seventeen times, “*blast*” three times, “*spirit*” twice (Job 26:4; Prov 20:27), “*inspiration*” once (Job 32:8), and “*souls*” once (Isa 57:16).

Thanks to God’s “*breath*”, man is “*a living soul.*” The term “*soul*” in Hebrew is *nephesh*; with 753 occurrences. The KJV translates it as “*soul*” 475 times, “*life*” 117 times, “*person*” twenty-nine times (Lev 27:2; Deut 10:22), “*mind*” fifteen times (Gen 23:8; Deut 18:6), “*heart*” fifteen times (2 Chron 1:11; Prov 27:9), “*creature*” nine times (Gen 1:21,24; 2:19), “*body*” eight times (Lev 21:11; Num 9:6-7), “*himself*” eight times (Judg 16:30; Prov 16:26), “*yourselves*” six times (Deut 4:15; Josh 23:11), “*dead*” five times (Lev 19:28; 21:1; 22:4), “*will*” four times (Deut 21:14; Ezek 16:27), “*desire*” four times (Eccles 6:9; Hab 2:5), “*man*” three times (Lev 24:17; 2 Kings 12:4), “*themselves*” three times (Isa 46:2; 47:14), “*any*” three times (Lev 2:1; Deut 24:7), “*appetite*” twice (Prov 23:2; Eccles 6:7), and translated miscellaneous forty-seven times including “*lust*” (Exod 15:9), “*me*” (Judg 16:30), “*ghost*” (Jer 15:9), etc.

Thus, man is a living being consisting of the immaterial part (spirit/soul) and the material part (body/flesh). The human spirit/soul being made in the image of God is that part of man (including his will, mind, heart, desire, etc) which can have a relationship with God and communicate with mankind. The human body/flesh is like a vessel or an instrument carrying out what is in his spirit/soul. Due to the disobedience of Adam and Eve, physical and spiritual death entered into the world. The sinful body/flesh and sinful spirit/soul separated from God will suffer eternal damnation in the lake of fire (Rev 21:8). How man needs God’s grace and salvation!

THOUGHT: (Read Psalm 139:14.)

PRAYER: Lord, how I thank Thee for wonderfully creating me!

SATURDAY, AUGUST 12

EZEKIEL 36:22-33

EZEKIEL 36:26

*"A new heart also will I give you,
and a new spirit will I put within you..."*

HUMAN SPIRIT/SOUL AND BODY/FLESH (2)

The almighty and loving God created man in His image and after His likeness, not in the physical sense as "God is a Spirit" (John 4:24), but in a spiritual sense – with created spirit/soul, heart, mind, etc, that animals do not have!

"*Spirit*" in Hebrew is *ruach*, meaning spirit, wind, breath. God's Spirit is *ruach* (Gen 1:2), human spirit is *ruach*, and the spirit of animals is also *ruach*. But Ecclesiastes 3:21 says, "*Who knoweth the spirit (ruach) of man that goeth upward, and the spirit (ruach) of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?*" Thus, each *ruach* has a different meaning. God's *ruach* is of the Creator: "*The Spirit (ruach) of God hath made me...*" (Job 33:4). Human *ruach* was created in God's image, while animals' *ruach* was created by God's spoken Word (Gen 1:24). Similarly, the "*soul*" (*nephesh*) of God, of human beings and of animals are not the same. God's soul is the Creator's *nephesh* (Lev 26:11; Isa 42:1), the human soul was created in God's image (Gen 2:7), while the soul/life of animals was created by God's spoken Word. "*Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life (nephesh)*" (Gen 1:20). In like manner, the "*heart*" (*lēḥāb*) and "*mind*" or "*soul*" (*nephesh*) of God the Creator (1 Sam 2:35) are not the same as human "*heart*" (*lēḥāb*) and "*mind*" or "*soul*" (*nephesh*) that are created in His image (Deut 6:5). Similarly, God's "*thoughts*" (*maḥśābāh*) are not like human "*thoughts*" which are created in His image (Isa 55:8-9).

Sadly, after the Fall of Adam and Eve, human nature is so sinful and depraved that even God's chosen people Israel could not keep His Word. Thus, the only remedy for sinful human beings is not to improve the spirit or heart, but to have a new spirit and a new heart given by the Creator. "*A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit (ruach) will I put within you...*" (Ezek 36:26). Jesus said to Nicodemus, "*Ye must be born again*" (John 3:7). It is the Creator's work alone. All thanks and glory must be to God alone!

THOUGHT: The human heart is too depraved to be fixed/improved.

PRAYER: Lord, I thank Thee for giving me a new spirit and heart.

LORD'S DAY, AUGUST 13

HEBREWS 4:1-13

HEBREWS 4:12

"For the word of God... piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit..."

A SANCTIFIED SPIRIT (1)

The human spirit/soul is the immaterial part created by God's breath, so it is immortal, whereas animals die and are no more. Thus, only human beings need God's salvation. After being born again with a new spirit and a new heart, the human sinful nature is still there, so there will be a conflict in the hearts of born-again believers until they find the victory through the Lord Jesus Christ alone (Rom 7:18-25). God's Word will help believers know the functions of their spirit and soul. *"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart"* (Heb 4:12). And their whole being needs to be sanctified. *"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ"* (1 Thess 5:23).

The spirit is the part of man that can know God, communicate with God in prayer and in reading of God's Word, trust in God, love God, glorify God, worship God, serve God, live by and live for God and His Word, etc. An unregenerate person's spirit is separated from the life of God, so it is dead spiritually (Eph 2:1). If we ask unbelievers, "Do you pray to God, read His Word and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ?" They will be uncomfortable or even upset. However, if we are truly born again, we are like a baby growing in the knowledge of God our heavenly Father. Our spiritual senses will be developed and get sharper. Our spiritual eyes can look unto the Lord Jesus and see God's truth (Heb 12:2; Ps 16:8; 119:18). Our spiritual ears can discern our Shepherd's voice from the strangers' voice (John 10:4-5). Our spiritual sense of smell can detect the fragrance of holiness as well as the odour of sin. In godly fear, we will avoid ungodly environment and temptations. Our spiritual taste of the Lord's grace (1 Pet 2:3) and our spiritual touch of faith (Matt 9:21-22) will be sharper day by day.

THOUGHT: Are my spiritual senses getting sharper each day?

PRAYER: Lord, may Thy Word sharpen my senses.

MONDAY, AUGUST 14

JOHN 4:19-26

JOHN 4:23

“...*the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth...*”

A SANCTIFIED SPIRIT (2)

The Lord Jesus Christ has His perfect and sinless spirit/soul and body. When Satan tempted Jesus to fall down and worship him to gain the glory of the world, the Lord Jesus answered, “*Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*” (Matt 4:10). Satan also tempts God’s children in the same way. Thus, a sanctified spirit must be separated and dedicated to the Lord to worship the living and true God alone without any idols or images. The Lord Jesus says, “*But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him*” (John 4:23).

Many professing Christians worship God with all their zeal and strength, but as they are not born again, their zeal and strength are from their sinful self, full of feelings and emotions, deceiving themselves unawares! When Satan cannot tempt us with the things of the world, he may attack us with false doctrines, opposition or persecutions. Do we resist Satan without any compromise like our Lord Jesus so that we shall be true worshippers of God, worshipping the Father in spirit and in the truth of His Word to the jot and tittle? A sanctified spirit will follow the Lord Jesus Christ (the Good Shepherd) and His true servants (His under-shepherds) in the narrow way of truth and sanctification. A sanctified spirit will not follow the majority walking in the broad way that leads to destruction. What about your spirit?

Next, a sanctified spirit will choose to believe and trust in God, in the Lord Jesus and in God’s Word alone, just like Joshua and Caleb before the unbelieving majority (Num 13-14). A sanctified spirit will stand firm on the foundation of the Lord Jesus (1 Cor 3:11) and God’s Word alone (Eph 2:20). With such a choice, the Holy Spirit will fill our spirit with His fruit of faith (Gal 5:22) so that we can build ourselves up in our “*most holy faith*” (Jude 20) and put on the shield of faith that quenches all the fiery darts of the devil (Eph 6:16).

THOUGHT: I must worship God in spirit and in truth.

PRAYER: I thank Thee, Father, for the privilege to worship Thee.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 15
MATTHEW 10:34-40
JOHN 21:15

*"Simon, son of Jonas,
lovest thou me more than these?"*

A SANCTIFIED SPIRIT (3)

A sanctified spirit will also choose to love the Lord God above all. *"And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment"* (Mark 12:30), and *"He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me"* (Matt 10:37). This love is not the human love with the feelings or emotions of the soul. This love is the divine love that fills the hearts of obedient children of God. *"... the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us"* (Rom 5:5). God's love will move our spirit and heart to obey and keep God's Word. *"But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him"* (1 John 2:5).

A sanctified spirit, once it knows God's will, will love to do God's will and will hate any will or opinion that is against God's. That is why the Lord Jesus said to Peter, *"Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men"* (Matt 16:23). When anyone, even our loved ones, hinders us from doing God's will to do their own will, we *"ought to obey God rather than men"* (Acts 5:29), and to follow the Lord's Word. *"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple"* (Luke 14:26). This is full submission to God's will, even unto death, just as the Lord Jesus said to His Father, *"O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done"* (Matt 26:42). What about you?

A sanctified spirit will be filled with God's love to love others with God's agape love – the love that *"rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth"* (1 Cor 13:6), the love that desires others to be saved, born again, and sanctified so that they may see the Lord too.

THOUGHT: Do I love God and submit to His will above all?

PRAYER: Lord, help me to love Thee above all with my full submission.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 16

MATTHEW 5:1-12

MATTHEW 5:3

*"Blessed are the poor in spirit:
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*

A SANCTIFIED SPIRIT (4)

A sanctified spirit will thirst for God and His Truth and will desire to know more about God and His Word like a baby desiring *"the sincere milk of the word"* (1 Pet 2:2). *"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ"* (Phil 3:8). A sanctified spirit will choose to seek God first and will find it a blessing to come near to God and to learn more about Him and His Word in personal devotion, through worship services, Bible study, prayer meetings and church camps. What about you?

When we have such a thirst and desire to know God and His Word, He will *"give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints"* (Eph 1:17-18). The more we know God's love and power, the more we shall trust in Him, appreciate Him and highly value Him above all. The more we know God's holiness and righteousness, the more we shall fear Him, humble ourselves in repentance, and cry unto Him for His purification and sanctification. Unlike the church in Laodicea who said, *"I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked"* (Rev 3:17), we shall acknowledge our spiritual poverty and enjoy the Lord's blessings. *"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"* (Matt 5:3), and *"to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word"* (Isa 66:2). It is vital to acknowledge that we are always in great need of God's grace, love, mercy, life, holiness, righteousness, glory, presence, and spiritual blessings. Sadly, many professing Christians and leaders today only have head knowledge of God (Titus 1:16) and do not want others to talk with them about God's Word! What about you?

THOUGHT: I always need God's presence, life, grace and mercy.

PRAYER: Lord, I cannot live without Thy presence, grace and life.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 17

JOHN 3:22-31

JOHN 3:30

"He must increase, but I must decrease."

A SANCTIFIED SPIRIT (5)

The more we know the Lord and ourselves, the more we shall love Him, treasure Him, honour Him, submit to Him, and be constrained by His love to live for Him, for His Truth and for His glory. *"For the love of Christ constraineth us... that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again"* (2 Cor 5:14-15). The Holy Spirit will fill our spirit with the same motives that the Lord Jesus had for His Father. *"I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do"* (John 17:4). Such noble motives cannot be found in professing Christians and leaders. Many think that they are called to serve the Lord while they are not yet born again with a sanctified spirit! They are only deceiving themselves! Sooner or later their selfish and carnal motives and ambitions will expose them as hirelings who compromise for earthly gain and glory! Many have fallen into temptations with sexual and financial scandals due to their sinful and greedy nature. They may think that they are filled with the Holy Spirit through speaking in tongues and performing lying signs and wonders, whereas they are not filled with the true Holy Spirit! They have received a different spirit and a different gospel unawares (2 Cor 11:4). They shall be shocked when the Lord comes and rejects them as those *"that work iniquity"* (Matt 7:23)!

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth and holiness, and He comes to *"glorify"* the Lord Jesus alone (John 16:14). John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit, and his motive was that *"He (Christ) must increase, but I must decrease"* (John 3:30), and even the wicked king Herod *"feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy"* (Mark 6:20). Thus, the more we are filled with the Holy Spirit, the more we are sanctified to live a holy life for the Lord, for His Truth and for His glory. *"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God"* (1 Cor 10:31). *"For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth"* (2 Cor 13:8). What about you?

THOUGHT: Do I live a holy life for the Lord and His glory?

PRAYER: Lord, please help me live a holy life for Thy glory.

cleanseth us from all sin."

SATURDAY, AUGUST 19
1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-28
1 THESSALONIANS 5:23

*“...the very God of peace
sanctify you wholly;...
your whole spirit and soul and body...”*

A SANCTIFIED SPIRIT (7)

According to God's order, we must have a sanctified spirit and a sanctified body (1 Thess 5:23). Without a sanctified spirit dedicated unto the Lord and filled with the Holy Spirit and His Truth, many are deceived by Satan with false beliefs and false doctrines unawares, leading to unbiblical practices. It is most dangerous when they strongly believe that they are right and serve the Lord with all their zeal, while they are actually still in spiritual darkness like the Roman Catholics (RCs), the Jehovah Witnesses (JWs), Mormons and many other cultic groups today!

For example, the Roman Catholics believe in prayer to the Virgin Mary and to the saints with statues and images, in baptismal regeneration, the Mass (Eucharist), the papacy, purgatory, etc. These unbiblical beliefs from their unregenerate spirit will move their faculties of knowledge, understanding and reasoning to reason and defend their beliefs; to select some parts of the Scriptures, Apocrypha and church traditions to support their beliefs; to teach and preach false doctrines; to move their body with their legs to go to a RC church and with their lips to sing and pray to Mary and the saints! The same happens with the JWs who deny the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Personal Deity of the Holy Spirit. They twist the Scriptures to defend their false beliefs and practices while thinking that only their group is saved! It is so dangerous!

Looking at other religions, we see the same. As they are not born again and do not have a sanctified spirit filled with the Holy Spirit and God's Truth, Satan is able to mislead them to believe false gods and religious leaders. Then, their beliefs move their unregenerate minds to reason and support their beliefs with strong desires. Then their heart and desires move them to go to a temple or a shrine, their lips to pray to their gods, and their body to perform their religious practices. They focus on their conduct and deeds while their mind and heart are still full of sin and unclean things! How important it is to have a sanctified spirit!

THOUGHT: My spirit must be sanctified first then my body.

PRAYER: Lord, keep my spirit sanctified and filled with Thy Truth.

LORD'S DAY, AUGUST 20

JEREMIAH 17:1-13

JEREMIAH 17:9

*"The heart is deceitful above all things,
and desperately wicked: who can know it?"*

A SANCTIFIED SPIRIT (8)

Unbelievers without a sanctified spirit live with all the functions of a totally depraved will, with a guilty conscience, with a corrupt mind consisting of human wisdom, understanding, intelligence, thinking, judgment, reasoning, imagination, and memory, with a heart including human love, emotions, affections, feelings, zeal, enthusiasm, ambition, passion, lusts, and tempers, and with skills and hobbies bound by sin. They may be very smart like scientists and inventors. They may be talented musicians, artists, singers, poets, medical specialists or engineers. However, all of them are spiritually dead, separated from the Lord God Creator! They do not know how to, or desire to, use their talents and skills for God's will and glory!

Only human beings have an immortal soul, created in God's image, after God's likeness. Thus, when human beings die, it is not the end. After death, their soul will either be with God if they are saved and born again, or be in Hell if they reject God's love and salvation. Due to the sinful human nature, the human soul including the will, conscience, mind and heart is *"deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked"* (Jer 17:9), and *"the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be"* (Rom 8:7). How vital it is for a human soul to be saved, cleansed and sanctified!

Many professing Christians do not know God's holiness nor understand God's Truth correctly. They quote certain Bible verses to support their worldly worship without reverence at all – clapping or waving their hands, jumping, or dancing to worldly music! How all the features of the soul need to be sanctified for God and His glory!

The features of a sanctified soul include a sanctified will, a sanctified conscience, a sanctified mind, a sanctified heart, and sanctified skills and hobbies so that we may keep our soul, heart and mind separated and dedicated unto the Lord always.

THOUGHT: My sinful soul needs to be sanctified unto the Lord.

PRAYER: Lord, please sanctify my soul, heart and mind for Thee.

MONDAY, AUGUST 21

EPHESIANS 2:1-10

PHILIPPIANS 1:6

“...he which hath begun
a good work in you...”

A SANCTIFIED WILL (1)

We must thank God for creating human beings in His image — a living soul with a will, and not like an impersonal, non-living and non-feeling robot, nor like animals, with a natural instinct to struggle for survival and to satisfy their need for food or for a mate. With a will, human beings are able to achieve their goals, encounter challenges, solve problems and overcome difficulties. An animal may want to cross a big river, but it has to give up its intention or desire when it is not able to cross. It does not have a will to press on. Man with a will, however, is able to be determined to press on despite difficulties and obstacles, and with wisdom, intelligence and skills given to him by God, he can build a bridge or a tunnel to cross the river. Animals encounter pestilences and hopelessly suffer death, but with a will, man can study hard and try hard until he finds a cure for those pestilences. It is amazing, is it not? Sadly, instead of acknowledging and thanking their Creator, many deny Him and believe that they evolved from the monkey! Why? Because they have a sinful heart, a corrupt mind and a rebellious will!

Adam was first created with a free will, with the capacity to choose, to make his own decision, to direct his emotion and behaviour, to control himself, or to determine what he should do or where he should go. He could even choose, decide and control himself to obey God or disobey Him. Sadly, after the Fall of Adam and Eve, sin and death entered into the world (Rom 5:12), and man's free will was marred and corrupted. Man is naturally rebellious against God. He does not want and is unable to love God, obey Him or submit to His Word. *“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be”* (Rom 8:7). *“But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart...”* (Jer 5:23). Therefore, if a sinful man with his rebellious will is able to repent, to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to submit his will to God's will and Word to be saved and sanctified, it is totally by God's grace alone (Eph 2:1-10; Phil 1:6). All glory to God alone!

THOUGHT: It is God's good work to save and sanctify me!

PRAYER: Lord, I thank Thee for Thy good and gracious work.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 22

ROMANS 3:9-20

JOHN 6:44

*"No man can come to me,
except the Father which hath sent me draw him"*

A SANCTIFIED WILL (2)

Some people have a very strong will, and they always want their own will to be done. They may become dictators unawares at home, at school, at work, at play and even in church! The self-will of little children grows as well. If parents fail to train their children from young and keep them under control with grace and love according to God's Word, their children may turn out to be little dictators, always demanding that their will be done! When they cannot get what they want, they will cry until they get it. When they grow up, it may be too late for the parents to control them, and they may want to leave home in order to do what they like. We see this happening everywhere today. Why? Because of the sinful and rebellious nature of human beings! Knowing this truth, Christian parents must pray hard for their children, and train and admonish them in the fear of God according to His Word. *"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it"* (Prov 22:6), and *"bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord"* (Eph 6:4). The children need to know the Lord and His moral law or the Ten Commandments as early as possible. Thus, daily family worship at home, Bible study, prayer meeting and worship service in a Bible-believing church are good environments for children to learn to fear God.

It is impossible for rebellious human beings to give up their self-will and to submit themselves to God's will and His Word. The Lord Jesus Christ's teaching and preaching were powerful and His many amazing miracles were undeniable before the eyes of many. Many came to the Lord for material blessings, to be fed and healed, but they did not truly submit themselves to Him! Even many of the Lord's disciples left Him when His teaching was not in tune with their self-will and self-interest! That is why the Lord Jesus confirmed twice that no man can come to Him with true submission if His Father does not draw him (John 6:44; 65). Sadly, many churches today do not see this truth, and still believe they can attract people to the Lord through miracles and entertainments. In actual fact, they only attract many goats, not sheep, to their churches!

THOUGHT: God the Father has drawn me to the Lord Jesus Christ!

PRAYER: Father, I thank Thee for drawing me to Thy Son Jesus.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 23

ACTS 9:1-16

PHILIPPIANS 2:13

“...it is God which worketh in you
both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”

A SANCTIFIED WILL (3)

The first step for a believer to have a sanctified will is to be born again by the Triune God and God's Word so that his new man may submit to the Lord. *“And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness”* (Eph 4:24). Next, a sanctified will must be separated and dedicated to the Lord in submission and be filled with God's will and Word. A believer's will is holy when he submits to God's holy will and can humbly and willingly say to the Lord like Saul (later Paul), *“Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?”* (Acts 9:6). Once we are born again, the Triune God will start His good work of sanctification in us (Phil 1:6). *“For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure”* (Phil 2:13). Without God's gracious work in you and me, we shall be undone forever!

The Lord Jesus prays to His Father, *“And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth”* (John 17:19). The Lord Jesus is perfectly holy and sinless, but He is willing to sanctify Himself – to be separated from His own will, to be dedicated to His Father to become *“obedient unto death, even the death of the cross”* (Phil 2:8). Consequently, through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, we *“also might be sanctified through the truth”* and through His precious blood (Heb 13:12). The Lord Jesus has set the perfect example for us to follow (John 13:15). His humble submission to His Father's will unto death – *“I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me”* (John 5:30), and *“He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross”* (Phil 2:8). And the climax of Jesus' full submission is His prayer to His Father in Gethsemane, *“Thy will be done”* (Matt 26:42). What about us? Without our full submission to the Lord, it is sin, and surely there is no true sanctification in the sight of God!

THOUGHT: No submission to God, no true sanctification!

PRAYER: Lord, may Thy love constrain me to submit to Thy will.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 24

MATTHEW 7:21-29

JOHN 4:34

*"My meat is to do the
will of him that sent me."*

A SANCTIFIED WILL (4)

What shall we do to have a sanctified will? First, we must separate ourselves from our self-will and from human will, even from the will of our loved ones, religious leaders, pastors, bishops, priests, popes, and the church too if that will is against God's will and Word. That is why we have to read and study God's Word with the illumination of the Holy Spirit in order to know God's will as revealed in His Word. Sadly, many today just blindly follow their ungodly leaders or unbiblical churches! They are surely accountable for what they have decided to do, either after God's will or man's will, and when the Lord Jesus comes, they can never blame others for their own choice! The Lord Jesus clearly states, *"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven"* (Matt 7:21). What about you?

Next, we have to dedicate ourselves to the Lord to do His will alone. We must not be scared of God's will or run away from God's will like Jonah. Why? Our own will is sinful and foolish before God although it may seem to be good and wise in our own eyes! When we are determined to do God's will, we shall *"prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God"* (Rom 12:2). We shall be truly satisfied like eating good food for our hungry stomachs: *"My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work"* (John 4:34). Thus, the more we do God's will, the more we are nourished, strengthened and satisfied spiritually, whereas those who serve the Lord according to their own will or man's will can neither be truly satisfied nor have the true peace of God in their hearts!

Moreover, the more we do God's will, the wiser we are and the firmer the foundation of our spiritual house will be, thanks to the strong support of our almighty and sovereign God. And our spiritual life will never collapse in times of troubles or trials (Matt 7:24-27). *"Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is"* (Eph 5:17). What about you?

THOUGHT: "Without doing God's will, no true sanctification!

PRAYER: Lord, help me to wisely choose to do Thy will and Word.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 25

MATTHEW 6:5-15

MATTHEW 6:10

*"Thy will be done in earth,
as it is in heaven."*

A SANCTIFIED WILL (5)

Eve was seduced by Satan into thinking that doing his will would make her wise and be like "gods." How she must have regretted her failure to do God's will when she was cursed by God. Sadly, Adam followed Eve's will, and was cursed too. How important it is for us to have a sanctified will, separated and dedicated unto the Lord to do His good, holy, wise and perfect will alone. Then, the Holy Spirit will help us know God's will and fill us with God's will and Word, and we can sincerely and wholeheartedly pray to our Father as the Lord teaches us: "*Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven*" (Matt 6:9-10). What is God's will for you and me according to His Word?

- Look unto the Lord Jesus and believe in Him (John 6:40; Heb 12:2).
- Fear God, read and keep God's Word (Eccles 12:13; Josh 1:8).
- Love God and our neighbours (Matt 22:37, 39).
- Be like Christ, be holy, and sanctified (Rom 8:29; 1 Pet 1:16; 1 Thess 4:3).
- Do all things to God's glory (1 Cor 10:31).
- Do good things despite sufferings (1 Pet 3:17).
- Be thankful to God in all things (1 Thess 5:18).

God has spoken to us through His written Word the Holy Scripture and His living Word the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb 1:1-2). In all things we have to read God's Word and look unto the Lord Jesus to imitate Him and do God's Word by His grace and strength (2 Cor 12:9; Phil 4:13). We must be more like Christ each day in His humility, meekness, love, grace, faith, faithfulness, obedience, submission, holiness, righteousness, patience, prayer life, the way He interacted with God and others in all situations, etc. When we want to know God's will for us in a particular situation, we have to patiently seek God and His will through prayer, searching His Word, and consulting with His godly servants, and only carry out our decision when we know it is God's will. That is always wise and safe!

THOUGHT: Understand "*what the will of the Lord is*" (Eph 5:17).

PRAYER: Lord, help me to patiently seek, know and do Thy will.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 26
MATTHEW 12:46-50
MATTHEW 12:50

*"For whosoever shall do
the will of my Father...
the same is my brother, and sister..."*

A SANCTIFIED WILL (6)

The compromising trend today is to please men and to keep fellowship with the majority in order to be accepted, approved, accredited and recognized by men regardless of God's will and God's Word in their personal life, worship, ministry and service! This trend is from the ecumenical mindset and movement, which accepts all as brothers and sisters in love, peace, harmony and unity despite their different beliefs and faiths. We should not be surprised as that is one of the end-time signs, paving the way to the One-world religion (Rev 13:11-18). When we do not join them to support homosexuality, same-sex marriage, or abortion, they will regard us as those who are not for love, peace, harmony and unity although we are for what is good and holy according to God's will! May God help us not to be discouraged when others regard us as unfriendly, narrow-minded, unloving, or even dangerous due to our separation, dedication and sanctification!

Looking at the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, we know that He never compromises to please men. The Lord never receives all as His brothers or sisters, but only "*whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother*" (Matt 12:50). If you truly want to be the Lord's brother or sister, you must be serious in seeking and doing God's will, making sure that you are living according to God's will, worshipping and serving God according to His will. You must also imitate the Lord Jesus, His life, His worship and His ministry on earth. The Lord did not join the ungodly high priests, scribes or Pharisees to worship or serve God. On the contrary, the Lord exposed their sins and rebuked them so that they might repent (Matt 23). The Lord did not believe that He had to have a music band to help His ministry. He did not clap or wave His hands, nor jump or dance in worship! The Lord always does things that please His holy Father (John 8:28-29). Yet, He suffered hatred, contempt, blasphemy, betrayal and persecutions from His sinful creatures! Do you still want to please men or please God? Will you do men's will or God's will?

THOUGHT: Only those who do God's will are Jesus' brethren.

PRAYER: Lord, help me to do Thy will wisely in all situations.

A SANCTIFIED CONSCIENCE (1)

We must thank God for creating human beings with a conscience. Man can feel glad and encouraged when he does something good, and he can feel sorry, regretful, remorseful or guilty when he does something wrong (Rom 2:15). A person who has murdered someone cannot have peace or sound sleep; but an animal still sleeps well after killing another animal or even a human being! This shows that man can never evolve from monkeys, and that man has a conscience while animals do not.

God created human beings with a conscience to convict them of their sins and to turn them to God in repentance. Sadly, many have suppressed the functions of their conscience and hardened it by unbiblical beliefs, ungodly lifestyles, worldly values, philosophies, human reasoning, good works and religious practices. Due to Adam and Eve's fall, the human conscience is not a reliable judge and guide any more as *"the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"* (Jer 17:9).

Many think that they have a good conscience because they have never murdered, nor committed adultery, nor harmed others. Their conscience is not sharp and sensitive enough to see that the holy God has already condemned their pride, hatred, envy, sexual lusts, lies, selfishness or covetousness as sins! Many think that they are holier and better than others because they have forsaken this world and confined themselves in monasteries or temples in their effort to keep themselves holy and pure. However, outside of Christ, their heart is still deceitful, sinful and wicked (Jer 17:9; Mark 7:21-23), and all their good works and self-righteousness are like filthy rags before the holy God (Isa 64:6). Man's conscience must be examined in the light of God's moral standard, even God's Word, which is like a mirror, showing us our sinful state and leading us to the Saviour Jesus Christ (Rom 3:20; Gal 3:24; James 1:23-24). What about your conscience?

THOUGHT: I must thank God for convicting me of my sins.

PRAYER: Lord, please search me and convict me of my sins.

MONDAY, AUGUST 28

1 TIMOTHY 4:1-5

1 TIMOTHY 4:2

“...having their conscience seared...”

A SANCTIFIED CONSCIENCE (2)

Without God's truth, many have a wrong definition or understanding of human conscience. It is unbiblical to say, “Conscience is the voice of God speaking to man”! Why? The holy and righteous God is never the author of sins, confusion, mistakes, wrongs or evils (1 Cor 14:33; James 1:13; 1 John 1:5), while human beings have a wicked heart and evil conscience (Jer 17:9; Heb 10:22)! The holy God speaks to man through His holy Word and through His holy Son Jesus Christ (Heb 1:1-2), and never through man's sinful and deceitful conscience!

It is wrong to say, “Conscience is acquired in life through discipline, education, training, or social morality”! Why? God the Creator created every human being with his conscience (2 Cor 4:2). It is wrong to think that a highly educated person or a monk in a monastery has a better conscience than that of an uneducated man or a layman in a worldly society. An unsaved scholar, priest or pastor still does not have a better conscience than that of a saved farmer, carpenter or fisherman. The Lord Jesus Christ severely rebuked the religious leaders in His days as hypocrites, whited sepulchres, serpents and a generation of vipers (Matt 23)!

It is dangerous to say, “My conscience is my guide,” or “My conscience bids me to do this or that,” or “I just live according to my conscience”! Why? Due to human sinful nature, the human conscience is also deceitful, fallible and unreliable. *“There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death”* (Prov 16:25). Human conscience is like a malfunctioning speedometer in a car. If you trust it, you will think that you are keeping to the speed limit when in actual fact you have exceeded the speed limit! You may argue with the traffic policeman, but he will show you your real speed in his speed camera and fine you for speeding and for using a malfunctioning speedometer! The unsaved who think they are “good” with a “good” conscience cannot stand before the holy God on the Day of Judgment! What about you?

THOUGHT: Only God is my true and faithful Guide.

PRAYER: Lord, I thank Thee for Thy guidance through Thy Word.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 29

JOHN 8:1-11

JOHN 8:9

*“...being convicted by
their own conscience...”*

A SANCTIFIED CONSCIENCE (3)

The term “conscience” can be found only in the New Testament. In the Old Testament, the general term “heart” is usually used to refer to the specific functions of “conscience” as used in the New Testament. *“And David’s heart smote him after that he had numbered the people...”* (2 Sam 24:10; cf. Acts 2:37), and *“a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise”* (Ps 51:17). The English word “conscience” is from the Latin *conscientia*, a compound of *con* (“together” or “with”) and *scire* (“to know”). It is a translation of the Greek *suneîdēsis*, literally “knowledge with” — knowledge of oneself (about one’s sins or goodness) with (or based on) his own accepted standard of morality. This noun is used in the Greek New Testament at least thirty times. It is used first in John 8 to refer to those who condemned the woman taken in adultery after the Lord challenged them. *“He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her”* (John 8:7) and then *“they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one”* (John 8:9). Their conscience was convicted by Jesus’ Word! What about yours?

Based on Romans 2:15, the conscience is a faculty *“which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing (defending) one another.”* Therefore, the basic functions of the conscience are: (1) *“bearing witness”* (of who we are or of what we are doing with discernment – Rom 9:1; 2 Cor 1:12); (2) *“accusing”* (and making us remorseful or regretful about our mistakes, shortcomings, sins, failures – John 8:9; Acts 2:37); and (3) *“excusing”* or defending (ourselves for our right thinking or good deeds – Acts 23:1; 24:16; 1 Pet 3:16). Without a good conscience, many are not aware that they are living in sin and idolatry! They may even justify and defend themselves! It is so dangerous for those who are fighting against God’s Word and God’s children and yet think that they are serving the Lord (John 16:2). Truly, *“There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness”* (Prov 30:12). What about your conscience?

THOUGHT: It is vital to have a good and sanctified conscience.

PRAYER: Lord, please wash and sanctify my conscience.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 30

ROMANS 2:12-16

ROMANS 2:15

“...their conscience
also bearing witness...”

A SANCTIFIED CONSCIENCE (4)

Our conscience has to be based on a certain standard of morality. We must ensure that that standard is God's holy standard, the Holy Scripture. Then, we can have a true knowledge of ourselves. In other words, our conscience must be tuned up to God's holy standard with the convicting, convincing and sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit; otherwise, many will be deceived by their own conscience based on their own beliefs, philosophies and moral standards.

When I share the Gospel with others, telling them their need for the Saviour Jesus Christ because “*all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*” (Rom 3:23), they usually defend themselves with their own accepted beliefs, philosophies and moral standards. It is so dangerous! One says that sin is only the product of human thinking, i.e. if you think that it is a sin, then it is a sin; if you do not think it is a sin, it is not a sin. This type of ungodly thinking causes many to indulge themselves in sins regardless of God, the Saviour Jesus and God's judgment! Worldly philosophies teach man to practise positive thinking, i.e. have self-esteem, self-importance and self-goodness. They say, “Your mental and moral life is based on your thinking. If you think that you are good, you are good. Thus, you must think that you are good, you are important, you are able, you are lovely, and you are deserving. You must never think about yourself as bad, stupid, weak, sinful, nothing, unable, etc.” It is so dangerous to embrace such worldly mindsets and self-esteem as many will not see their need for the Saviour Jesus Christ!

Even certain so-called Christian books deceptively encourage Christians to think positively about themselves. They say, “You should believe that God always loves you and is able to help you, to heal you, to prosper you, and to bless you, and that you are very precious and important to God, and that God needs you and cannot do His work without you!” And yet their life, worship, service and practices are not according to God's will and Word! They will be shocked when the Lord comes and rejects them (Matt 7:21-23)!

THOUGHT: My conscience must be tuned to God's holy Word.

PRAYER: Lord, please tune my conscience to Thy Word.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 31

MARK 7:1-13

1 JOHN 3:4

“...sin is the transgression of the law.”

A SANCTIFIED CONSCIENCE (5)

Without a proper knowledge and understanding of the holy God and His holy standard, men cannot see how sinful they are before God; and as a result, they do not appreciate or receive God's plan of salvation. Today, many think that homosexuality, same-sex marriage and abortion are alright. But, to God, they are abominations! Thus, our conscience must be tuned to God's standard concerning sins:

- a. *“Sin is the transgression of the law”* (1 John 3:4). God has given mankind His moral law or the Ten Commandments. If we break or violate God's law, we have sinned. It is a sin if we worship someone or something other than God the Creator, when we bow down before idols or images, when we take God's Name in vain, when we say “My God” without reverence, when we fail to keep God's day of rest holy, and when we fail to honour our parents! You may think that you are good because you have never killed anyone. But before God, even if you hate someone, you have committed the sin of murder (1 John 3:15). You may think that you have never committed adultery, but if you have a sexual lust in your heart after a woman, you have committed the sin of adultery (Matt 5:28). You may think that it is alright to tell a lie or to covet, but before God you have sinned! Have you never lied?
- b. *“All unrighteousness is sin”* (1 John 5:17). “Unrighteousness,” in Greek *adikia*, denotes not only what is unjust, wrong, false, ungodly, or wicked but also what is not right in the sight of God. Many may think that they are doing the right thing when actually their beliefs and practices are not right according to God's will and Word! They will be shocked when the Lord Jesus comes and rejects them (Matt 7:23). Are you doing the right things before God?
- c. *“Ye have erred, and not observed all these commandments”* (Num 15:22). Many do not observe all of God's Word. Many observe or keep only the parts of God's Word that suit their beliefs and practices. And they think that they are keeping all of God's Word. King Saul was like that, and God rejected him (1 Sam 15:23)! Are you keeping all of God's Word?

THOUGHT: My conscience must accept God's Word about sins.

PRAYER: Lord, please use Thy Word and moral law to convict me.

A SANCTIFIED CONSCIENCE (6)

- d. *"To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin"* (James 4:17). Many think that they are good because they do not harm or hurt others. However, before God, if we fail to do what is good, it is also a sin. It is good to love God and love others. It is good to be humble and patient. It is good to forgive others and to help the needy. It is good to share the Gospel with others. And there are many other good things we ought to do. When we fail to do any of these, we are guilty of the sin of omission before God!
- e. *"If ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin"* (James 2:9). When we show respect to the wealthy, the mighty or the highly educated, while we despise the poor, the needy, the weak, the disabled, or the uneducated, it is a sin before God. God's Word says, *"An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin"* (Prov 21:4), and *"He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth: but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he"* (Prov 14:21).
- f. *"Whatsoever is not of faith is sin"* (Rom 14:23), and *"Of sin, because they believe not on me"* (John 16:9). God the Creator and His Word are absolutely perfect, holy and trustworthy with His divine authority. So, when we fail to trust God, the Saviour Jesus Christ, and His Word, it is a great sin!
- g. *"All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"* (Rom 3:23). *"Come short"* (Greek: *husterōō*) denotes *not to reach, miss, lack*. For example, God's moral standard for mankind to enter into Heaven is 100 points, and the best of all mankind only reaches zero points. How can they save themselves by their own efforts and good works? According to human moral standard, we may be better than many others, but before God all have sinned; not only because of our transgressions, but also because we fall short of God's glory, love, grace, goodness, righteousness and holiness! Truly knowing God's holy standard and our own shortcomings, we must humbly repent, for we greatly need Jesus!

THOUGHT: My coming short of God's righteousness is sin.

PRAYER: Lord, please keep me filled with Thy holy presence.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 2

ISAIAH 6:1-10

ISAIAH 6:5

“... *Woe is me! for I am undone;
because I am a man of unclean lips...*”

A SANCTIFIED CONSCIENCE (7)

The Scripture tells us about several kinds of conscience: **evil conscience** due to a depraved heart (Jer 17:9; Heb 10:22), **weak conscience** due to a lack of knowledge of God and His Word (1 Cor 8:7, 10, 12), **seared** (or **burnt** and **hardened**) **conscience** due to unbelief, impenitence, wrong doctrines, apostasy, lies, seducing spirits (1 Tim 4:1-3), **defiled conscience** due to ignorance, unbelief, or wrongdoings (1 Cor 8:7; Titus 1:15), **un-offensive** (or **blameless**, **clear**) **conscience** (Acts 24:16), **pure conscience** (1 Tim 3:9; 2 Tim 1:3), and **good conscience** (Acts 23:1; 1 Tim 1:5,19). Only the Triune God is able to sanctify our corrupt and deceitful conscience. Our conscience must be separated and dedicated to the Lord and be filled with God's holy standard, even God's holy Word.

First, our conscience must be separated from any moral standard that is contrary to God's holy standard. If you believe that it is a sin to take away the life of animals and insects and think that you are holier than others because you are a vegetarian, you must separate yourself from such unbiblical beliefs and submit yourself to God's holy standard. You must do the same with all other unbiblical beliefs about your “self” and about sin from human moral standard, religious teachings and worldly philosophies.

Next, we ought to read God's Word and ask the Holy Spirit to search our hearts and convict us of our sins according to His holy standard (Ps 139:23-24; John 16:8-11). Then, we have to repent of our sins and ask the Lord to wash us, not only from our sins but also from our evil conscience, in His precious blood (Heb 9:14; 10:22; Rev 1:5). Only the Holy Spirit is able to help us see God's holiness and to break our self-goodness and self-righteousness into pieces in humble repentance like Isaiah, “*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*” (Isa 6:5) and like Job, “*I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes*” (Job 42:5-6). What about you?

THOUGHT: Once I see God's holiness, I shall “*abhor myself*.”

PRAYER: Lord, may Thy holiness break my self-goodness to pieces.

A SANCTIFIED CONSCIENCE (8)

It is important and vital to have a good conscience before God like Paul who said, *"I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day"* (Acts 23:1). Without a good conscience we cannot be a good testimony for the Lord nor defend ourselves before our enemies (Acts 23:1; 1 Peter 3:16), nor love others as God commands (1 Tim 1:5), nor fight a good fight of faith (1 Tim 1:18-19). A good conscience before God is one that has been redeemed and cleansed by Jesus' blood, that is submissive to the Lord and His Word and that is un-offensive to others.

Keep the Conscience Clean and Pure by Jesus' Blood: Our worship and service are acceptable unto the holy God if our conscience is pure (1 Tim 3:9; 2 Tim 1:3). If we are used to living in a hygienic environment, we shall feel uncomfortable in a smelly room. And if we do not clean up that room or stop living in that room, we shall gradually get used to the smell and will not feel uncomfortable any more. We may even like that smell and miss the smell! In like manner, living in sin without repentance will make our conscience dull, defiled, bad and hardened. Fifty years ago, homosexuality, same-sex marriage and abortion were condemned. But due to moral and spiritual decline without sincere repentance, the human conscience is so dulled and hardened that these abominations have now become an acceptable alternative lifestyle! Fifty years ago, rock music was banned in many fundamental churches, but today many are so used to it that they cannot worship God without it! Therefore, when the Holy Spirit convicts us of our sin, it is wisest to confess our sin right away, repent and forsake it, and pray for the cleansing in Jesus' blood (Ps 51; Heb 9:14; 10:22; 1 John 1:7, 9). When Satan accuses us of our confessed sins, we can overcome him by Jesus' blood (Rev 12:10-11), and not by defending ourselves. To keep our consciences clean and pure, we must separate ourselves not only from sins but also from wrong doctrines, worldliness and even *"from all appearance of evil"* (1 Thess 5:22) and *"have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness"* (Eph 5:11). What about you?

THOUGHT: My conscience needs to be purged and sanctified.

PRAYER: Lord, please search, purge and sanctify my conscience.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 4

JOHN 8:31-44

JOHN 8:32

*“And ye shall know the truth,
and the truth shall make you free.”*

A SANCTIFIED CONSCIENCE (9)

Know More of God and His Word: Our conscience is weak due to our lack of the knowledge of the Lord, His Word and His Truth (1 Cor 8:7). In Jesus' days, the Pharisees thought that they were holy and pure by keeping their extra rules and traditions. Today, many also think that they need to follow their church's teachings, rituals and traditions in order to keep themselves right with God! Because they do not know God's love and salvation in Christ alone, they “feel” more secure and comfortable to pray to Mary or saints, or to confess their sins to their priests and bishops! Others turn to their charismatic church leaders who claim they have sign gifts (eg. visions, dreams) for guidance. They are taught that the Holy Scripture is only the letter, and that the letter kills, so they need the living revelation from God through their church leaders! It is so dangerous to turn away from God's Word and to depend on man's words and teachings! What about you?

Those who do not know God's sovereignty usually have fears and worries about unfavourable things that may happen to them. They (even professing Christians) become superstitious and believe in luck. They may even think that they must pray to God in the same room in order to have their prayers answered. What a shame!

Truly, the Lord Jesus says, *“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”* (John 8:32). The more we know our living and true God, His Truth, His Word, His sovereignty, and His sufficient salvation in Christ alone, our conscience will be strong and firm with our faith in God and His Word alone, giving us peace and a high standard for our discernment and judgment as well. A Christian with a good conscience can discern and see what is good and right in the sight of God according to God's Word, eg. it is not good to watch worldly movies, to listen to worldly music, to read unbiblical articles except for refutation, to have fellowship with ungodly friends and even with professing Christians with ecumenical mindsets (although many Christians may think it is alright to do so).

THOUGHT: Only the Lord and His Truth can make me free.

PRAYER: Lord, please make me free from sin and wrong doctrines.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 5

1 CORINTHIANS 10:23-33

1 CORINTHIANS 8:12

“...when ye... wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.”

A SANCTIFIED CONSCIENCE (10)

Submit to the Control of the Holy Spirit and God's Word: God's commands, *“Be filled with the Spirit”* (Eph 5:18) and *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom”* (Col 3:16) literally mean that we must keep on letting the Holy Spirit and God's Word control and direct our whole being: our spirit, our soul, our heart, our conscience, our mind, our desire, our body, our tongue, our worship, our service, our ministry, etc. With a submissive heart and a pure conscience, we must walk after the Holy Spirit and God's Word. Once our conscience is tuned and bound to God's Word by the Holy Spirit in full submission, it will become very firm as God's Truth is firm. We shall fear God alone and not men (Matt 10:28). Martin Luther refused to recant his convictions and writings which were based on God's Word against the wrong teachings and practices of the Roman Catholic Church. He said, “Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Holy Scriptures or by evident reason – for I can believe neither pope nor councils alone, as it is clear that they have erred repeatedly and contradicted themselves – I consider myself convicted by the testimony of Holy Scripture, which is my basis; my conscience is captive to the Word of God. Thus I cannot and will not recant, because acting against one's conscience is neither safe nor sound. God help me. Amen.” What about you?

Have Concerns for Others' Consciences: Not everyone has the same kind of conscience or the same knowledge of God and His Word. Thus, if we have a good conscience, we shall have concerns for others' consciences; otherwise, they may be stumbled or offended by what we watch, say, eat, drink, or do (like watching worldly movies, attending unbiblical services, keeping ungodly fellowship with unbelievers, drinking, smoking, gambling, or eating food offered to idols, etc). *“But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ”* (1 Cor 8:12). *“Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other...”* (1 Cor 10:29).

THOUGHT: I must be concerned about the consciences of others.

PRAYER: Lord, help me not to hurt the weak consciences of others.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

1 SAMUEL 16:1-13

1 SAMUEL 16:7

“...man looketh on the

outward appearance,

but the LORD looketh on the heart.”

A SANCTIFIED MIND (1)

Human soul, heart and mind are mingled together in one human being. Thus, God commands us to love Him with our whole being. *“And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment”* (Mark 12:30). Man’s mind includes his thoughts, knowledge, wisdom, intelligence, understanding, observation, judgment, reasoning, deduction, imagination, memory, etc. His heart includes his love, affection, feelings, zeal, enthusiasm, desires, lusts, tempers, etc. When we talk with somebody, our mind usually takes note of what he says and does and how he behaves. Then our mind may make some judgment about him: whether he is friendly, gentle, polite and smart, or whether he is unfriendly, impolite and boastful. This leads our heart to have either warm or uncomfortable feelings about him. Do we love our Lord with our mind and our heart? The Lord said to Samuel, *“man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart”* (1 Sam 16:7).

Due to the Fall of Adam and Eve, the human heart and mind are naturally rebellious against God. Our heart and mind are concerned about themselves and the things of the world. We use our knowledge, understanding and reasoning to support what we like to do and even to reason and argue against God and His creation, to criticize God’s Word and to misjudge others. It is vital for us to put away our sinful and carnal mind, and instead, to be filled with the mind of the Lord Jesus Christ: *“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus”* (Phil 2:5). Thank God for giving us His only begotten Son including His life, His mind, His righteousness, and His all. *“But we have the mind of Christ”* (1 Cor 2:16). That is why Paul regarded all things but loss to win Christ and to be found in Him (Phil 3:8-9). Praise the Lord! Then, what is the mind of the Lord Jesus Christ that we should have? First, let us know the truth about our human mind so that we may willingly separate ourselves from our corrupt mind and let the Lord fill us with His holy mind.

THOUGHT: My mind must be renewed and sanctified each day.

PRAYER: Lord, please renew and sanctify my mind each day.

A SANCTIFIED MIND (2)

A Sinful and Proud Mind: The holy God had to destroy all living things on earth, besides Noah and his family. Why? Because of their wickedness and evil mind. *“And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually”* (Gen 6:5). The Lord Jesus Christ had to expose the sinful heart and mind of the Jews who tried to keep themselves clean outwardly but inwardly were full of evil thoughts, sexual lusts, pride and wickedness. *“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness”* (Mark 7:21-22). Knowing this truth, we are not surprised by the wickedness of the people in this world as out of their evil heart and mind come evil words, deeds and crimes.

A Rebellious Mind: God’s Word exposes the rebellious human mind. *“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be”* (Rom 8:7). *“And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled”* (Col 1:21). Knowing this truth, we are not surprised when we are rejected, opposed or persecuted upon sharing God’s Word and the Gospel with others.

A Selfish and Worldly Mind: People in this world are usually concerned about themselves and the things of the world. They do not care about God and His Word or about the people around them. *“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh”* (Rom 8:5), and *“they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things”* (Phil 3:18-19). Knowing this truth, we must not be discouraged when our unsaved loved ones and friends are not interested in God’s Truth and spiritual values, and may even regard our sharing of God’s Word as impractical and unwise.

THOUGHT: The human mind is sinful, proud, rebellious and worldly!

PRAYER: Lord, please keep my mind humble, holy and submissive.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

2 CORINTHIANS 4:1-6

2 CORINTHIANS 4:4

“...the god of this world hath blinded
the minds of them which believe not...”

A SANCTIFIED MIND (3)

A Blinded Mind: No matter how intelligent human beings are, if they are not born again and illumined by the Holy Spirit, they can never see the truth or understand God's Word. Why? Because “*the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned*” (1 Cor 2:14). Moreover, their spiritual eyes are blinded by Satan. “*But their minds were blinded*” (2 Cor 3:14), and “*In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not*” (2 Cor 4:4). Knowing this truth, we must humbly thank God for helping us to see and understand His Truth. And we have to pray hard for those with whom we have shared the Gospel and God's Word but who have not understood and accepted it yet.

A Reprobate Mind: The Greek term for reprobate mind is *adókimos*, a combination of a (without) and *dókimos* (acceptable), meaning “unapproved, unworthy, spurious, worthless. In a passive sense meaning disapproved, rejected, cast away (1 Cor 9:27; 2 Cor 13:5-7; Heb 6:8); a reprobate, abominable mind, a mind to be abhorred by God and man” (Zodhiates). A reprobate mind refers to the mind of those who purposely reject God and His grace and Truth but proudly keep living in sin and ungodliness to the extent that God has to give them up to their sinful nature. Their conscience is hardened, and they do not feel guilty when they live in sin against God and His Word! It is so dangerous! May God help us to always fear Him and to repent straight away when the Holy Spirit convicts us of our sins, shortcomings and unrighteousness. The holy God has to give human beings up to their reprobate mind and sins because they did not fear Him, worship Him, thank Him or submit themselves to Him. “*And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient*” (Rom 1:28). And the worst is their homosexuality. What about you?

THOUGHT: God has opened my eyes and my mind.

PRAYER: Lord, how I thank Thee for opening my eyes and mind.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

JAMES 4:1-10

JAMES 4:8

“...purify your hearts,
ye double minded.”

A SANCTIFIED MIND (4)

A Double Mind: The Greek term for “double minded” is *dipsuchos*, a combination of *dis* (twice) and *psuchē* (soul, mind), meaning “double-minded, doubtful; in a general sense as an unstable person (Jas 4:8). Such a person suffers from divided loyalties. On the one hand, he wishes to maintain a religious confession and desires the presence of God in his life; on the other hand, he loves the ways of the world and prefers to live according to its mores and ethics” (Zodhiates). “*A double minded man is unstable in all his ways*” (James 1:8) as he does not wholeheartedly trust in the Lord nor submit to Him and His Word. He wants to serve two masters, both God and worldly values and pleasures, which are unacceptable before God. “*No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon*” (Matt 6:24).

A double-minded person cannot be trusted as he keeps on changing his mind. He may have a double life, a double standard and a double talk. He can be godly on Sunday, but worldly on weekdays. He may confess one thing, but his mind may not mean it. He is not true to himself, to God and to others! He is not consistent in his beliefs and convictions. He is compromising, self-pleasing and man-pleasing. He may use the same biblical and theological terms, but may have different beliefs and convictions. He may state that he believes in the inspiration and preservation of the Holy Scripture, but in his mind it is only the autograph or only the important doctrines, and not all the words of God! Thus, we must be cautious and discerning in these last days. The only way a double-minded person can be freed from his double mind is to acknowledge that his double mind is sin, and then to humbly and sincerely repent and cry to the Lord for His deliverance. “*Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded*” (James 4:8). “*Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name*” (Ps 86:11). What about you?

THOUGHT: I must be true to God, to myself and to others.

PRAYER: Lord, please unite my heart and mind to fear Thy Name.

A SANCTIFIED MIND (5)

A Carnal Mind: The Greek terms for *"carnally minded"* are *sárx* (flesh) and *phrónēma* (mind, the tendency or inclination of the mind). "As implying sinfulness, proneness to sin, the carnal nature, the seat of carnal appetites and desires, of sinful passions and affections whether physical or moral" (Zodhiates). Thus, a carnally minded person is still influenced and controlled by his sinful or carnal nature, while a spiritually minded person is influenced and controlled by the Holy Spirit and God's Word. To be carnally minded is death, enmity and rebellion against God and God's Word. *"For to be carnally minded is death... the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be"* (Rom 8:6-7).

A carnally minded person does *"mind the things of the flesh."* He loves himself and always thinks of himself. His motives are to promote himself, seeking his own and the praise of men because his own self is the centre of his life. Such a carnally minded person *"cannot please God"* (Rom 8:8).

A carnally minded person usually compares himself with others, and tries to catch up with them and then desires to be top in terms of worldly values, fame, popularity, power and wealth. He has no joy and peace when he sees others better, richer, more beautiful or more successful than himself. *"For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?"* (1 Cor 3:3). A carnally minded person likes to argue, quarrel, take sides or follow the group in tune with his carnal mind. He easily gets angry, murmurs and complains about others and unfavourable situations or when things happening to him do not meet his expectations. What about you?

A carnally minded person *"mind(s) earthly things"* (Phil 3:19). He does not take up his cross nor deny himself to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. If he is a pastor, he will be just a hireling. He likes to preach God's material blessings with worldly values. What about you?

THOUGHT: A carnally minded person can never please God!

PRAYER: Lord, please fill me with Thy holy mind and Word.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11

PHILIPPIANS 2:8

*“And being found in fashion as a man,
he humbled himself...”*

A SANCTIFIED MIND (6)

God’s command for us is: *“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus”* (Phil 2:5). What is the mind of Christ?

A Divine and Holy Mind: Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the very God. *“Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God”* (Phil 2:6). Jesus Christ is the reality of the unseen God, and His being equal with God cannot be considered to be a robbery. *“... God was manifest in the flesh...”* (1 Tim 3:16). Jesus Christ is God and Man in one Person. He has both a divine mind and human mind, but His human mind is always submissive to His Father’s mind. What is the mind of God? God has revealed His mind through His written Word (the Holy Bible) and through His living Word (the Lord Jesus Christ). Therefore, if our mind is filled with God’s Word and the Lord Jesus, we are filled with the mind of God. We must be born again to be partakers of God’s divine nature (2 Pet 1:4) and God’s divine mind (1 Cor 2:16). Contrary to the human sinful and worldly mind, Jesus’ mind is holy as God is holy. To have God’s holy mind, we have to be separated from our humanistic mind, carnal mind, and worldly mindsets. We must dedicate our mind to the Lord to be filled with His mind and His Word. *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom...”* (Col 3:16).

A Humble Mind: Contrary to man’s proud and selfish mind, Jesus’ mind is a humble mind. Jesus is God the Son, but *“he humbled himself”* (Phil 2:8) to become a man, even a servant. Jesus has the power and authority of God to proclaim God’s Word, to forgive sins, and to perform miracles. However, Jesus totally and humbly depended on His Father in all things (John 5:19, 30). True humility before God is to always depend on God and His Word. The Lord Jesus humbly served His Father and men. *“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many”* (Matt 20:28). With the mind of Christ, we shall humbly serve God and others as a servant and not be offended or discouraged when our labour is not appreciated. What about you?

THOUGHT: A humble mind always depends on God and His Word.

PRAYER: Lord, keep me humble and dependent on Thee always.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

ISAIAH 55:1-13

ISAIAH 55:9

*"For as the heavens are higher
than the earth, so
... my thoughts than your thoughts."*

A SANCTIFIED MIND (7)

An Obedient Mind: In contrast to the rebellious human mind, Jesus' mind is an obedient and submissive mind. *"And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross"* (Phil 2:8). Jesus submitted to His Father and obeyed His Father unto death, even the shameful and painful death of the cross. When we are filled with the Lord Jesus' mind, we will also submit to God and obey Him unto death, knowing that God's mind and thoughts are the best. *"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts"* (Isa 55:7-9).

A Spiritual Mind: *"To be spiritually minded is life and peace"* (Rom 8:6), so how can we have a spiritual mind? We *"must be born again"* (John 3:7) 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"* (Rom 12:2). Then, we must walk after the Holy Spirit and submit to His control and guidance through God's Word (Gal 5:16; Eph 5:18). Satan has painted this world to be so nice, appealing and attractive with *"the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life"* (1 John 2:16). However, the Lord Jesus overcame Satan's temptations as He looked at this world as a sinful and cursed world that will be destroyed. When Satan made use of Peter's human love to hinder Jesus from doing God's will, Jesus answered, *"Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest (think, mind) not the things that be of God, but those that be of men"* (Matt 16:23). Thus, we must have the spiritual mind and perspective of Christ when we look at ourselves, at others, and at the world in all situations. In other words, we must think as Jesus thinks, see as He sees, do as He does, and *"walk, even as he walked"* (1 John 2:6).

THOUGHT: God's mind is always holy, wise, good and perfect.

PRAYER: Lord, help me think as Thou thinkest in all things.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

1 CORINTHIANS 3:18-23

1 CORINTHIANS 3:19

*"For the wisdom of this world
is foolishness with God..."*

A SANCTIFIED MIND (8)

To have a sanctified mind is also to have sanctified wisdom, understanding, intelligence, knowledge, judgment, reasoning, deduction, imagination and memory. All these faculties of the mind prove that man is created in God's image and after God's likeness and never evolved from apes or monkeys. However, due to the Fall of Adam and Eve, all these faculties are corrupted, becoming sinful and rebellious. What about your mind?

Human and worldly wisdom and understanding are just *"foolishness with God"* (1 Cor 3:19) and can never help us to know God and His Truth. Many unsaved scientists, philosophers or scholars with their wide knowledge of many things in this world think they are wise, smart and intelligent; and they are admired by others. But they are just foolish before God because of their unbelief. *"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good"* (Ps 14:1). Truly, how can they be wise if they deny God and the Saviour Jesus Christ with their evolutionism, human philosophies and worldly mindsets, leading them to eternal destruction in the lake of fire on Judgment Day? Many professing Christian leaders and scholars who do not truly believe and submit to the authority of God and His Word also compromise and end up believing in Textual Criticism, the Gap Theory (a big gap of period of time between verse one and two of Genesis chapter one, giving room for human imaginations and arguments on the age of the earth and God's work of creation), Theistic Evolutionism (the belief that God used the process of evolution to create the universe and living things), Progressive Creationism (the denial of six literal twenty-four-hour days of God's work of creation), Liberalism, Modernism, Rationalism, Hyper-Calvinism, Charismaticism, Neo-Evangelicalism, Ecumenism, Romanism, New Age Mysticism, Open Theism, Neo-Fundamentalism, New Calvinism, etc. Before God, all these mindsets, beliefs, doctrines and isms are foolishness. They depart from God and His Word of true wisdom! What about your mind?

THOUGHT: Human and worldly wisdom is foolishness to God!

PRAYER: Lord, please keep me humbly submissive to Thy Word.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

PSALM 12

PSALM 12:6-7

*"The words of the LORD
are pure words... Thou shalt keep them,
O LORD, thou shalt preserve them...."*

A SANCTIFIED MIND (9)

It is vital for us to believe and submit to the authority of the Holy Spirit and God's Word (the Holy Scripture) to enjoy His illumination and teaching so that we can understand God's Word properly.

By denying the divine personality of the Holy Spirit as well as by not submitting to the authority of the Holy Scripture, many can never understand and interpret the Scripture correctly or properly.

By denying the inspiration, infallibility and inerrancy of the Holy Scripture (2 Tim 3:16-17), liberals and modernists deal with the Scripture like a secular book. They reject the deity of Christ, the total depravity of man, and the miracles in the Scripture. As a result, their understanding and interpretation of the Scripture is unbiblical and against fundamental doctrines.

By not submitting to the authority and sufficiency of the Scripture, the Roman Catholic Church claims that the authority of the Church, the Pope and the priests are above the Scripture. They believe that only they can understand/interpret the Scripture properly. Ironically, they have misinterpreted the Scripture and invented many heresies.

By not submitting to the authority and sufficiency of the Scripture, Charismatic churches overemphasize experiences, feelings, and sign gifts. As a result, they add more so-called revelation and prophecies to their worship, service and life. All of these are unbiblical and against the true guidance of the Holy Spirit and God's Word!

By denying the preservation of God's Word in the Masoretic Hebrew Text and the Received Greek Texts underlying the King James Bible (Ps 12:6-7; Matt 5:18; 24:35), many are confused by the many modern English versions of the Bible, and do not have full power nor strong conviction in their preaching, teaching, and defending of God's Word!

THOUGHT: God's holy mind is revealed in His holy Word.

PRAYER: Lord, please fill me with Thy holy mind and Word.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

1 CORINTHIANS 2:6-16

1 CORINTHIANS 2:10

*"But God hath revealed them
unto us by his Spirit..."*

A SANCTIFIED MIND (10)

To have a sanctified mind, we must separate ourselves from human and worldly wisdom, understanding, mindsets and unbiblical doctrines, movements and isms. No matter how smart, intelligent, scholarly and knowledgeable we may be, we have to set aside all our pre-understanding, prejudices and reasoning when we come to God and His Word. We must come to God and His Word with a humble, prayerful, teachable, submissive and receptive heart, asking for His wisdom, understanding and illumination. The Holy Spirit is *"the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD"* (Isa 11:2), and He is able to guide you and me into *"all truth"* (John 16:13), to teach and help us know God and understand His Word biblically and properly (1 Cor 2:10-13; Eph 1:17-18; 1 John 2:20).

With a sanctified mind controlled by the Holy Spirit, we will be able to understand and interpret the Scripture properly. We will not dare to add our own thoughts and pre-understanding to the Scripture when we interpret a Bible text nor subtract any words from the text when those words seem to contradict our human mind, reasoning or worldly mindsets. We will humbly pray and wait for the illumination of the Holy Spirit when we cannot understand any part of the Scripture. We will not dare to regard those parts as mistakes or contradictions as many arrogant "scholars" do nowadays. The Holy Spirit is the Divine Author of God's Word (the Holy Scripture), so we must submit ourselves to the authority and guidance of the Holy Spirit and God's Word with humility, reverence, trust and submission. Truly, *"For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word"* (Isa 66:2). Once the Holy Spirit illumines our mind and heart to understand God's Word, we shall appreciate it, treasure it, live by it, and use our sanctified mind and reasoning to defend it (Deut 8:3; Matt 4:4; Acts 17:2). What about you?

THOUGHT: I need the illumination and teaching of the Holy Spirit.

PRAYER: Lord, please illumine me and teach me Thy Truth.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

JOHN 7:11-24

JOHN 7:24

*"Judge not according to the appearance,
but judge righteous judgment."*

A SANCTIFIED MIND (11)

The observation and judgment of our mind must be sanctified as well. We must not look at others and judge them *"according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment"* according to God's Word and the perfect example of the Lord Jesus Christ (John 7:24). The Lord Jesus has warned us not to be naive, but to *"beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits"* so that we may not be deceived (Matt 7:15-16). Many have been deceived by false prophets, bishops, pastors and teachers unawares! Many cult members whose minds were controlled by their cult leaders (eg. Jim Jones of the Peoples Temple, David Koresh of the Branch Davidians) were killed together with their leaders in suicide pacts! Many cannot biblically control their minds after seeking and following the counsel and advice from psychologists, hypnotists, psychics, false pastors and religious leaders. We must beware!

The imagination of our human mind must be sanctified too. Human *"imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually"* (Gen 6:5). When you see a man talking with a pretty woman alone in a room, what does your imagination tell you? We can see ungodly products of human imagination through worldly novels, movies and dramas. Sadly, many professing Christians consider it alright to watch worldly movies and read ungodly novels (eg. novels about Harry Potter)! Our imagination needs to be sanctified by Jesus' blood, the Holy Spirit and God's Word so that it may help us see pictures of Bible truths in our mind, eg. the Lord Jesus chasing the merchants out of the temple, His washing of His disciples' feet, etc.

The memory in our mind also needs to be sanctified. There are so many things occupying and wasting our memory! Our memory must be cleansed and separated from sinful self, ungodly pictures, painful experiences, unnecessary matters, etc. It must be sanctified to store God's Word, to remember the Lord, His grace and commandments, our duties to God and men, our loved ones and others in prayer, etc.

THOUGHT: Is my judgment, imagination and memory sanctified?

PRAYER: Lord, please sanctify my mind and use it for Thy glory.

A SANCTIFIED HEART (1)

The human conscience, mind and heart are mingled together and affect one another. Your heart grieves when you remember someone who has offended or hurt you. Your heart is glad and thankful when you remember the love and kindness of the Lord and others. Your heart worries and is anxious when you think about the difficulties, troubles, problems, illness or trials you are encountering. Your heart is stressed and depressed when you think about your heavy workload, your tight schedule, your hopeless situation, etc. Your conscience and heart feel guilty and remorseful when you remember your mistakes, faults or sins, hurting others, grieving the Holy Spirit, damaging your good testimony for Christ, etc. The only way to have the peace of God is to repent, trust in Him, pray and commit everything to Him. *"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus"* (Phil 4:6-7). It is vital to forget the things in the past and think about the Lord and on *"whatsoever things are true, ... honest, ... just, ... pure, ... lovely, ... of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things"* (Phil 4:8).

The human heart is very deceitful and wicked (Jer 17:9; James 1:26), and so are human feelings. Whether we are right and acceptable before God is based on our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His blood for our justification (Rom 5:1, 9) and on our obedience and submission to the Holy Spirit and God's Word for our sanctification (John 17:17; 1 Pet 1:2, 22). Sadly, many are deceiving themselves through their feelings unawares! They may become very emotional when hearing messages with touching stories, or hearing soothing or exciting music with repeated lyrics. They may feel they love God and are close to Him, expressed with all their "zeal of the flesh" like clapping and waving of hands, jumping, dancing or speaking in tongues while their life, worship and practices are not according to God's Word! They are deceived by their feelings!

THOUGHT: Trusting in one's feelings is foolishness (Prov 28:26).

PRAYER: Lord, may I trust wisely in Thee and Thy Word alone.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

MARK 7:14-23

PSALM 139:23

*"Search me, O God,
and know my heart..."*

A SANCTIFIED HEART (2)

The human heart consists of human love, feelings, affection, sentiment, zeal, passion, desires, temper, lusts, etc. All these features must be sanctified; otherwise, we will be miserable and our life may end up in self-destruction. Human love is selfish, limited and conditional. "I love her because she loves me, because she is pretty and charming, or because she has a good job." And this love may turn to hatred when you are offended, abandoned or betrayed!

God's Word says that love is *"strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame"* (Song of Sol 8:6). Many fall in love with their lovers so much that when their lovers leave them, they cannot continue with their life. They may go mad, seek solace in alcohol, lose their desire to live, or end up committing suicide.

Many love their children so much that they do not want their children to serve the Lord as missionaries in unsafe countries. Like Peter who loved Jesus with his human love, Satan made use of his love to try to hinder Jesus from going to the cross. Some love their parents, husbands or wives so much that they obey their loved ones rather than God, and end up not following or worshipping the Lord Jesus Christ! Many professing and immature Christians fall in love with their unbelieving boyfriends or girlfriends, thinking that they would be able to bring their loved ones to the Lord later. They think that their love can change human hearts! Their love is so strong that they ignore God's commandment or the good reminder from their Christian parents and pastors. *"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers..."* (2 Cor 6:14). Disappointingly, they do not find true happiness at all with the ones they love and married!

How vital it is for human love to be sanctified and controlled by God's holy love so that we may love God first and above all, and love our loved ones and others with God's holy love.

THOUGHT: My heart must be cleansed and sanctified!

PRAYER: Lord, please search my heart, cleanse and sanctify it.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

JOHN 2:13-22

JOHN 2:17

*"The zeal of thine house
hath eaten me up."*

A SANCTIFIED HEART (3)

It is a joy and a good motivation when we have much zeal or enthusiasm to do something we are passionate about. Thus, it is dangerous if human zeal is not controlled and directed by the Holy Spirit and God's Word. The Jews had much zeal to serve God but it is without knowledge of His will and His salvation in His Son Jesus Christ (Rom 10:2)! They persecuted and crucified Jesus, thinking that they were serving God. They did the same to Jesus' disciples (John 16:1). Paul used to persecute Christ's church with his human zeal, thinking that he was serving God (Phil 3:6). Many professing Christians are doing the same to God's true children unawares!

It is unacceptable to worship and serve God without love and zeal for Him like the churches in Ephesus and Laodicea (Rev 2:4; 3:16). Many have much zeal for their business, their hobbies, or for worldly things, but they are lukewarm and indifferent to the Lord and His service! Our human zeal needs to be sanctified and filled with God's holy zeal to love, worship and serve Him and to serve His children like our Lord Jesus and His true servants. *"The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up"* (John 2:17) and *"Epaphras, . . . a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you."* (Col 4:12-13).

The human temper also needs to be sanctified and controlled by the Holy Spirit and God's Word. Many Christians do not have a good testimony because they cannot control their temper. Their long-suffering is limited like the pressure cooker, and when their anger reaches a certain point, they explode! The Lord Jesus has holy and righteous anger against the Jews due to their unbelief and hypocrisy (Matt 23; Mark 3:5), but *"when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously"* (1 Pet 2: 23). Only the Holy Spirit is able to control our temper and produce His fruit of love, longsuffering and temperance (Gal 5:22-23). What about you?

THOUGHT: My zeal and temper must be sanctified by the Lord.

PRAYER: Lord, please sanctify and control my heart to do Thy will.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

ROMANS 1:18-27

ROMANS 1:26

"For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections..."

A SANCTIFIED HEART (4)

Human desires and lusts are from man's whole being, even his soul, mind and heart. The Scripture tells us about *"the desire of thy soul"* (1 Sam 23:20), *"the desire of his mind"* (Deut 18:6), and *"heart's desire"* (Ps 10:3; 21:2; Rom 10:1). It also tells us about *"the lusts of their own hearts"* (Rom 1:24), *"the lusts of our flesh"* (Eph 2:3; cf. 2 Pet 2:18), *"the deceitful lusts"* (Eph 4:22), *"many foolish and hurtful lusts"* (1 Tim 6:9), *"youthful lusts"* (2 Tim 2:22), *"divers lusts"* (2 Tim 3:6; Titus 3:3), *"worldly lusts"* (Titus 2:12), *"fleshly lusts"* (1 Pet 2:11), and *"ungodly lusts"* (Jude 1:18). God's command is: *"Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour's house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his ass, or any thing that is thy neighbour's"* (Deut 5:21). What about your desires?

Due to the deceitful and sinful human heart, human desires and lusts are sinful, selfish and worldly. Many cannot control their worldly desires and sinful lusts and have fallen to temptations and sins like telling lies, addiction to alcohol, drugs, gambling or pornography, as well as theft, robbery, fornication, adultery, murder, etc. It is a severe judgment for those who do not fear God, thank God, glorify God and worship God when God gives them up to their reprobate mind, sinful desires and fleshly lusts, namely homosexuality. *"Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:... For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet"* (Rom 1:24, 26-27). How vital it is for human desires to be separated from sins, sinful flesh and worldliness, and instead be dedicated to the Lord, and controlled by the Holy Spirit and God's Word! What about yours?

THOUGHT: My desires need to be sanctified!

PRAYER: Lord, sanctify my heart and fill me with Thy holy desires.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

PSALM 73:16-28

PSALM 73:25

“...there is none upon
earth that I desire beside thee.”

A SANCTIFIED HEART (5)

Satan is still using “*the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*” (1 John 2:16) to lure many including professing Christians into his trap unawares while they still think that they love God and are His servants and children! “*And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful*” (Mark 4:19). They desire a loving God with all His material blessings, but they do not desire a holy and righteous God with all His truth and spiritual blessings including sanctification! Sadly, many still follow their false leaders who have “*eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children... While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage... unto them according to the true proverb,... the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire*” (2 Pet 2:14, 19, 22).

A born-again Christian has holy and godly desires to please God and keep His Word. He still has his fleshly lusts of the sinful nature to commit sins (Rom 7:18:23). The only way to overcome our sinful desires and fleshly lusts is to turn to the Lord Jesus Christ for His deliverance (Rom 7:24-25), to ask the Holy Spirit to mortify them (Rom 8:13; Gal 5:24), and to allow the Holy Spirit and God’s Word to control our whole being – our spirit, soul, mind, heart and body. It is a great blessing to be filled with godly desires. “*Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee*” (Ps 73:25), and “*desire to fear thy name*” (Neh 1:11), “*desire mercies of the God of heaven*” (Dan 2:18), “*desire a better country, that is, an heavenly*” (Heb 11:16), “*desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby*” (1 Pet 2:2). Surely, you are to “*delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart*” (Ps 37:4). Do you delight in the LORD?

THOUGHT: Do I truly desire the Lord and His Word above all?

PRAYER: Lord, fill me with holy desires for Thee and Thy Word.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

GENESIS 11:1-9

GENESIS 11:9

*“...the LORD did there confound
the language of all the earth...”*

SANCTIFIED SKILLS AND HOBBIES (1)

We must thank God for creating human beings in His image and after His likeness with wisdom, understanding, intelligence, creative minds, skills, and a sophisticated system of communication by spoken and written languages that animals do not have. Evolutionists can never explain why there are many human “races” with many different languages. By God’s revelation through His written Word, the Holy Scripture, we know that *“the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth”* due to their pride, self-will and self-glory (Gen 11:9).

Only human beings can study and do research or experiment, and convey their knowledge and experiences to younger generations through education and training with libraries of books. They can invent many good things while animals cannot. Animals cannot invent anything, not even making simple clothing for themselves. We must thank God that many good things have been invented and made for our homes and gardens, for transport, for work and study, for telecommunication, for medical equipment and treatment and medicine, for building and infrastructure, for arts and music, etc. With different talents and skills, we have artists, musicians, singers, scientists, educators, linguists, doctors, nurses, lawyers, architects, engineers, pilots, teachers, IT programmers and managers, analysts, writers, bankers, mechanics, electricians, chefs, accountants, builders, trade-people, carpenters, farmers, gardeners, workers, and so forth. How amazing human minds and skills are!

Sadly, due to men’s sinful mind and heart, they use their talents and skills to promote themselves instead of giving thanks, praise and glory to their God and Maker! They do not know or ignore the truth that some day they will have to give an account of their stewardship to their Creator (Matt 25:19). Sanctified skills should be used for God’s glory and for the well-being of mankind according to His will and in His ways (1 Cor 10:31).

THOUGHT: Are my skills and talents sanctified to the Lord?

PRAYER: Are my skills and talents sanctified to the Lord?

SANCTIFIED SKILLS AND HOBBIES (2)

Human skills ought to be separated and dedicated to the Lord to belong to Him and to be used according to His will and for His glory. If you have a good voice to sing or a talent to play musical instruments, you must dedicate them to the Lord and use them for God and His glory. Your musical talents and skills will be defiled if you use them for your self-will, self-glory or worldly entertainment. Sadly, many professing and immature Christians also use their musical talents and skills to play and sing secular songs! It is worse when they use worldly music with electric guitars and drums in their worship and invite popular singers (who usually sing secular songs for worldly entertainment and performance on weekdays) to sing in their church on the Lord's Day so as to attract young people! They do not know or understand God's holiness at all. *“O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth”* (Ps 96:9)!

We must also thank God for giving us hobbies to enhance the joy and variety of our life. There are various hobbies like reading, writing, poetry, cooking, scrapbooking, knitting, gardening, painting, photography, videography, collecting things, playing musical instruments, renovating, archery, flying, horse-riding, travelling, camping, fishing, hiking, walking, jogging, cycling, surfing, swimming, diving, sailing, skiing, playing tennis, table-tennis, badminton, soccer, cricket, baseball, volleyball, golf, etc. These hobbies must be sanctified and used for God's glory as well (1 Cor 10:31). Surely, we must avoid ungodly hobbies like playing video games, computer games, cards, surfing ungodly websites, watching worldly movies, dramas, etc.

We must put God first and above all these hobbies; otherwise, they may turn into idols unawares! Satan may make use of your hobbies to draw you away from God and His Word when you spend so much time on your hobbies leaving no time for God, for your personal devotion, family worship, for Bible study, prayer meetings, worship services or for your loved ones.

THOUGHT: Are my hobbies dedicated and sanctified to the Lord?

PRAYER: Lord, please keep my hobbies in Thy will and control.

A SANCTIFIED BODY (1)

Looking at our human body with our senses of sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch, our brain, heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, cells, tissues, or the structures of DNA, our nervous, respiratory, circulatory, digestive, immune and reproductive systems, we must acknowledge God our Creator's perfect wisdom, power and love. God created human beings with an amazing body to carry out His will, purposes, plans, desires and works for His glory as well as for the benefits of mankind. Sadly, due to the human sinful heart and corrupt mind, they do not desire the holy and true God the Creator to fear Him, worship Him, serve Him, thank Him and glorify Him. Instead, they choose their man-made false gods to get material blessings regardless of their selfish and sinful lifestyles. Actually, they are worshipping Satan, the Devil, unawares (Matt 4:8-9; 1 Cor 10:20). How vital it is to have a sanctified spirit and soul, then a sanctified body!

Some think that only the human soul is real while the human body is not, and that what you see with your eyes is not real either. As a result, they just indulge in all kinds of sins. However, the Bible teaches us that our body is real and honorable and that we are responsible for what we have done and will do with our body before God (1 Cor 6:15, 20). Some think that the human soul is good while the human body is sinful and evil, so they have to control the body by torturing it, leaving it hungry and thirsty, or disciplining it and punishing it hard to keep it from sins. However, the human soul is sinful and totally depraved (Mark 7:21-23), so all human efforts to control their bodies are just vain if they are not born again and living with a sanctified spirit and sanctified soul controlled by the Holy Spirit and God's Word (Col 2:21-23). Those who deny God and His Truth believe that human beings are just materials without a soul, and when they die, it is the end, without Heaven or Hell. As a result, they just enjoy their lives and live in sin without any care for their souls or their future. However, the Bible tells us that Heaven and Hell are real (Rev 21), and *"after this the judgment"* (Heb 9:27). What about you?

THOUGHT: My body must be sanctified as a clean vessel for God.

PRAYER: Lord, please keep my body sanctified for Thy use.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

ROMANS 12:1-8

ROMANS 12:1

“... *present your bodies a living sacrifice,
holy, acceptable unto God...*”

A SANCTIFIED BODY (2)

God's Word teaches us that our body is honourable. We have to nurture it, take care of it, and keep it from sin, then dedicate it to the Lord, and let the Lord make it His holy temple and use it as an instrument to fulfil His will for His own glory. *“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (1 Thess 5:23). Do you have a sanctified body?

Be Separated from Sin, Self and Worldliness, for this is God's commandment for us. A sanctified body must be separated from all kinds of sins, adultery, fornication and homosexuality. *“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof”* (Rom 6:12). *“Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body”* (1 Cor 6:18). If our eyes and ears are exposed to ungodly things, our spirit and soul including our heart and mind will be defiled, just like opening the car windows when a smelly garbage truck is passing by, and our car will be filled with that smell. A person who reads ungodly novels or watches pornographic videos and movies will surely contaminate and defile his soul, heart, mind, imagination, and memory with sexual lusts. How vital it is to keep our body *“separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you”* (2 Cor 6:17)! What about your body?

Be Dedicated to the Lord; otherwise we can never have a sanctified body. A sanctified body must be dedicated to the Lord to be the Lord's holy temple. *“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”* (Rom 12:1). *“What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?”* (1 Cor 6:19). What about your body? Does it belong to the Lord or to you?

THOUGHT: Is my body dedicated and sanctified to the Lord?

PRAYER: Lord, may my body truly be Thy holy temple.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

ROMANS 6:1-14

ROMANS 6:12

*"Let not sin therefore
reign in your mortal body..."*

A SANCTIFIED BODY (3)

Be Controlled by the Holy Spirit and God's Word; otherwise, our bodies will be enslaved to sins. And we can fall into the temptations of Satan, who always cunningly misleads and lures us away from God's will and way. How vital it is for us to humbly submit ourselves to the control of the Holy Spirit and God's Word that we may have our *"fruit unto holiness"* (Rom 6:22).

Be Used according to God's Will and for His Glory, and not for our own pleasures and glory. *"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's"* (1 Cor 6:20). *"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God"* (1 Cor 10:31).

Sanctified Eyes: Our eyes are the Lord's. We must keep them from ungodly stuff. May God use our eyes to see what He wants us to see, not to look at outward appearances and then pass our judgment, but to see people's spiritual needs, pray for them and help them accordingly.

Sanctified Ears: Our ears are the Lord's. We must keep them from hearing or listening to gossips, worldly music, ungodly stories or unbiblical messages. May God use our ears to listen to what He wants us to listen to — God's Word, biblical messages, or the sharing of a troubled soul to comfort and encourage him.

Sanctified Tongues: Our tongues are the Lord's. We must keep them from lying, cursing, murmuring, slandering, boasting, yelling, screaming, or singing worldly songs. May God sanctify our tongues and use them to speak His Truth and Word, to say kind words of encouragement to the faint-hearted, or to rebuke (in a godly way) backsliders.

Sanctified Hands: Our hands are the Lord's. We must keep them clean and pure from sins. May God use our hands to do His will and Word, to help others and to glorify Him in all that we do.

THOUGHT: Are my eyes, ears and tongues sanctified to the Lord?

PRAYER: Lord, please sanctify and use my body for Thy glory.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

MATTHEW 6:25-34

PROVERBS 17:22

*"A merry heart doeth
good like a medicine..."*

A SANCTIFIED BODY (4)

Sanctified Feet: Our feet are the Lord's. We must keep them from places of temptations and worldly pleasures. May God use our feet to go where He wants us to go for His glory. *"How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"* (Rom 10:15).

Sanctified Hair, Skin, Clothing and Adornments: Our bodies are the Lord's. We must keep them from worldly styles. We must not have any tattoos, cuttings or marks on our bodies (Lev 19:28). Our clothings must have the mark of meekness and godliness (1 Tim 2:9).

Sanctified Health and Appetites: We must take care of our bodies and nurture them with healthy food and drink, with moderation and natural rest. We must abstain from alcohol, cigarettes, drugs, addictive stuff, or food stuff with harmful chemicals. We must eat and drink for God's glory (1 Cor 10:31). Sometimes, because of the Lord's work or exams, we may have to stay up late, but not for a TV programme or to push ourselves for worldly fame and gain. To keep our bodies healthy, we have to rejoice in the Lord and keep our heart from anger, bitterness, worries, stress, vengeance, malice, an unforgiving spirit, sorrow, etc. *"A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones"* (Prov 17:22).

Proper Attitudes in Illness: God may use illness to keep us humble (2 Cor 12:7-9), to chastise us (1 Cor 11:29-30), to refine us (Job 2:4-8; 23:10), to prevent us from doing our own plans (Acts 9:1-18), or to call us home to Heaven (2 Kings 13:14). Thus, we must not judge others in their illness, but pray for them and for God's will to be done. In illness, we ought to trust in God's sovereignty and loving care (Matt 10:29-31), examine ourselves in repentance (James 5:16), seek God first in prayer before seeking the doctor (2 Chron 16:12; Matt 6:33), commit ourselves to God, trusting that He Himself is able to heal us directly or to use doctors and medical treatment to cure us, and then be ready to meet the Lord when He calls us home.

THOUGHT: A holy and merry heart is good for my physical health.

PRAYER: Lord, keep me holy and happy in Thee in all situations.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

ZECHARIAH 14:20-21

ZECHARIAH 14:20

“HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD.”

HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD

We must thank God for His gracious work of regeneration and sanctification, without which we shall be undone and lost forever! Although the Lord sanctifies us and our *“whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (1 Thess 5:23), while living in this sinful and defiled world, we must purify ourselves and keep our garments white and undefiled (Rev 7:14).

Many young people may struggle to keep their heart and mind clean and pure as they cannot resist temptations with ungodly games and pornographic sites in their mobile phones and tablets! These devices and all things we have must be dedicated to the Lord. For the ministry in the sanctuary, a signet with the words *“HOLINESS TO THE LORD”* was put on the mitre upon Aaron’s forehead that he might be accepted before the LORD (Exod 28:36-38; 39:30-31). When the Lord Jesus Christ comes to establish His millennial kingdom of peace on earth, everything will be HOLINESS unto Him as Lord of lords and King of kings. *“In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD’S house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts”* (Zech 14:20-21).

To live a sanctified Christian life, not only must we have our spirit, soul and body sanctified, but everything we have, everything we do and everywhere we go must be also HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD. Our house, our car, our clothing, our computer, our tablet, our phone and our every possession must be dedicated to the Lord and be used for Him and His glory. We ought to study for the Lord, work for the Lord, preach and teach for the Lord and do all things for Him and His glory (1 Cor 10:31; 2 Cor 5:14-15). What about you and your things?

THOUGHT: I myself and my things must be holiness unto the Lord.

PRAYER: Lord, please make me and my things holiness unto Thee.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29

REVELATION 22:6-15

REVELATION 22:11

*“... he that is holy,
let him be holy still.”*

LET HIM BE HOLY STILL

We are living in the end-times. Whether you believe it or not, this world is getting worse and worse morally and spiritually. There is no neutral ground. There are only two ways, either the narrow way of sanctification leading to eternal life or the broad way of compromise and ungodliness leading to destruction (Matt 7:13-14). If you are a born-again believer, you are a child of God and a sheep of the Lord's pasture. You must keep being sanctified to be like Christ more and more each day. If you are not born again, you are like a goat, You will keep living in sin and ungodliness due to your sinful nature, the ungodly trends of the world, and the temptations and deception from the wicked one, even Satan, who *“is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time”* (Rev 12:12).

God's Word confirms: *“He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still”* (Rev 22:11). Truly, the Lord Jesus says, *“And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold... But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be”* (Matt 24:12, 37). What about the days of Noah? The holy God had to destroy the whole world except Noah and his family because *“GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually”* (Gen 6:5). What's more, *“But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed”* (Luke 17:29-30). What about Sodom? The holy God had to destroy this wicked city *“because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous”* (Gen 18:20). The grievous sin of Sodom is homosexuality! The world we live in today is exactly like that wicked world! However, God's true children and servants must press on in the narrow way of sanctification to be more and more holy each day until Jesus comes again which is very soon! What about you?

THOUGHT: Am I walking in the narrow way of sanctification?

PRAYER: Lord, may I grow more and more holy each day.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

MATTHEW 5:13-16

2 KINGS 4:9

*"I perceive that
this is an holy man of God."*

A HOLY CHILD AND SERVANT OF GOD

God has redeemed us at a great price by the precious blood of His only begotten Son Jesus Christ with a purpose – to save, regenerate, sanctify and transform us to be His holy people and to be like His Son Jesus (Rom 8:29). While we are living in this dark, cursed, sinful and troubled world, God wants to use us to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matt 5:13-16).

God wants to use His holy people to (1) enhance the flavours of a meaningful life to this vain and meaningless world; (2) prevent sins and corruption in this sinful and corrupt world; and (3) give cleansing, comfort and healing to this sick and wounded world. Many have lost the holy qualities of Christian life, so they are *"good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men"* (Matt 5:13). This is serious! What about you?

The Lord Jesus Himself is the Light of the world (John 8:12). God wants to use His holy people to reflect and shine forth (1) Christ's Light of holiness to this sinful world; (2) Christ's Light of Truth to this deceiving world; (3) Christ's Light of love to this hostile world; (4) Christ's Light of peace to this troubled world; (5) Christ's Light of happiness to this sorrowful world; (6) Christ's Light of hope to this hopeless world; and (7) Christ's Light of salvation to this cursed world. Are we like clean mirrors, sanctified for God's use to reflect Christ's Light? Do others see Christ in you and me?

The Shunammite woman had not seen the prophet Elisha perform miracles nor heard his preaching, but she could *"perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually"* (2 Kings 4:9). What can others perceive when they come into contact with us? A rich, good-looking, smart, polite, gentle and friendly person? Or a holy person? The wicked king Herod put John the Baptist in prison, but *"Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy"* (Mark 6:20). Do others fear us because we are just and holy?

THOUGHT: Am I a holy witness unto my Lord Jesus Christ?

PRAYER: Lord, please use me to reflect Thy holy Light.

Notes

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(马太福音10:8)

谨此附上爱心奉献

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