

CGH: Spirit of Holiness

From TLD: It seems that everyone...is engaging in some sort of self-help or self-improvement. We-both Christians and non-Christians-are often unhappy with who we are because we are not who we were meant to be: God's holy people, created without sin, to live in communion with Him. If we need the support of others to become sober, thin, or better able to communicate with our spouse, how much more is divine assistance needed if we are to become holy?

- A. How do we know we aren't who we were meant to be?
- B. Why aren't we "complete?"

Luther in the Large Catechism: "for now we are only half pure and holy. So the Holy Spirit always has some reason to continue His work in us through the Word. He must daily administer forgiveness until we reach the life to come. At that time there will be no more forgiveness, but only perfectly pure and holy people [1 Corinthians 13:10]. We will be full of godliness and righteousness, removed and free from sin, death, and all evil, in a new, immortal, and glorified body"

This is the concept of *Sanctification*. As TLD says, sanctification is daily putting to death sin and being transformed into the likeness of our holy God.

- C. What is your concept of sanctification?
- D. Is it the same as salvation (Concept of Justification)?
- E. Is sanctification necessary for salvation?

We are sanctified by the truth, which is God's own Word, the means through which the Spirit is always at work. The Spirit's presence and activity are in fact the only basis on which the Church can rightly be called "holy." The Church is not always in its outward and visible life more holy than other organizations. Without the Holy Spirit, there is no Holy Christian Church.

- F. What are some of the characteristics of the sanctified life?
- G. What do you think the process of sanctification consists of?
- H. Are there false interpretations of what sanctification truly is?
- I. What is a key characteristic of sanctification?

Aside from participating in worship, many Christians do not find time to be actively involved in the affairs of the Church. Works done in and for the congregation are not the sole means by which we live the sanctified Christian life. Being a faithful and loving spouse is a good work. Being an honest and able employee pleases God. Being an obedient child fulfills God's Law. Even in the most common acts of daily life, Christians can be confident that the Holy Spirit is at work in them and sanctifying them. God has placed each of us in specific situations in life: mother, father, son, daughter, employee, employer, volunteer, mentor, etc. Another word for these situations is "vocation."

- J. What does this tell us about works and sanctification?
- K. What is our help in our daily lives?
- L. How would you explain the process of sanctification to a friend?

COMPARISONS:

Perfect holiness only in heaven: Lutherans, the Reformed, and Baptists of the Calvinist tradition teach that Christians do not attain perfection in this life because of the taint of original sin. The Holy Spirit sanctifies believers in lives of greater service to God and others.

Degrees of holiness: Roman Catholics and the Eastern Orthodox Church teach that the saints attain a greater degree of holiness than most Christians. They attain this through fervent prayer, good works, and self-deprivation. Roman Catholics also teach that Mary was born without the taint of original sin.

Perfectionism: Churches of the Wesleyan and Anabaptist traditions, as well as others of the Arminian tradition, teach that it is possible to reach a state of perfection. Perfection is a second work of grace following justification and is usually accompanied by a mystical, personal experience.

Ethics: Liberalism, as an heir to the individualistic form of religion known as Pietism that was popular after the Thirty Years' War (1618–48), emphasizes personal or corporate standards of conduct, which the human will can attain through love and discipline.