

# SALVATION – HOLINESS

## “pure religion”

### Key question

What is the nature of Christian holiness and how important is it?

### Key text

## II Corinthians 7:1

“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

### Introduction.

1. **Key questions**
  - a. What does it mean to be holy?
  - b. How is holiness related to salvation?
  - c. Is experiential holiness possible in this life?
2. Meaning of the **key terms** used in the New Testament.
  - a. The most common **Hebrew** terms translated – “holy”, “saint”, “sanctified”, etc. have two connotations:
    1. They are a description of moral purity or devotion as in “You are to be holy in all that you do.”
    2. They are a description of the position of an object that is set apart as in “The Holy Temple is in Jerusalem.”
  - b. The most common **Greek** terms translated – “holiness”, “holy”, “saint”, “sanctify”, “sanctification” all come from the same root meaning to set apart (from the world and onto God).
3. The holiness position most simply stated is that the righteousness (holiness) that is required for a right relationship with God in this life and the next is not a positional (legal) holiness but an experiential holiness that is actually lived out in the believer’s life. This holiness is usually qualified as a purity of heart (intent) that is not necessarily sinless perfection.
4. Holiness teaching has a long history going back to the early centuries of the church.
  - a. The Jewish position was a holiness position in that a right standing with God consisted of a heart to follow the Law with a penitent response to any transgression with the offering of specified sacrifices.
  - b. The Roman Catholic understanding of “justification” as the first step in “sanctification” is a holiness position.

- c. Holiness teaching adopts the same premise as the Roman Catholic Church – experiential holiness is necessary for temporal and eternal fellowship with a holy God. There is one difference, the Protestants do not have the benefit of Purgatory’s purification. The holiness of Wesley must be achieved in this life. There is no place (like purgatory) available to make up any deficiencies in moral perfection.
- d. Calvinists adopt a similar premise under the banner of Lordship or Discipleship Salvation. In this view, saving faith is notarized by obedience to the law. (See [apptoteach.org](http://apptoteach.org) theology file #713).

A. **The position of John Wesley** (what follows is an outline of one of Wesley’s sermons delivered in 1872)

1. The idea of sinless perfection in this life for Christians is seen by many as an unrealistic standard that should be resisted because it will exclude virtually everyone from a right standing before God.
2. But does not the Scripture suggest in many places that sinless perfection in this life is what we are called to?
3. The meaning of the texts that address this subject seem to contain contradictions.  
 “Not that I have already attained it, or already become perfect, . . . Let us therefore, as may as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you.” Phil.3:12,15
4. Our concern is to discern first, in what sense are Christians perfect and second, in what sense are they not yet perfect?
5. There are many ways in which people including Christians are not perfect.
  - a. First, they are not perfect in knowledge: they are not *so* perfect in this life as to be free from ignorance.
  - b. Secondly, they are not perfect with respect to mistake; which indeed are an almost unavoidable consequence of ignorance; seeing that those of us who “know but in part” (I Cor.13:12) are ever liable to err.
  - c. Thirdly, they are not free from weaknesses and areas of vulnerability that constitute temptations for us.
6. In what sense are Christians perfect?
  - a. We must note that perfection is to be put in the context of spiritual stages of development. For a child to be “perfect” as a child does not mean that they are “perfect” in the same way an adult is expected to be perfect. So it is with spiritual children and adults.
  - b. Those who are truly born again in the most basic sense, “do not continue in sin” outwardly and when they are fully formed and walk in the power of love, they do not sin inwardly.
    1. They cannot “live any longer in sin” (Rom.6:1,2). They are “planted together in the likeness of the death” of Christ; (Rom.6:5) and their “old man is crucified with him,” the body of sin being destroyed, so that henceforth they do not serve sin; being dead with Christ, they are free from sin; (Rom.6:6,7).
    2. They are “dead to sin, and alive to God;” (Rom.6:11), “sin no longer has dominion over them,” who are “not under the law, but under grace.” They, “being free from sin, have become the servants of righteousness.” (Rom.6:14,18).

3. John could not be clearer in stating that true Christians do not and cannot live in sin. “He who sins is of the devil; for the devil sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin; for his seed remains in him: And he cannot sin because he is born of God.” (1 John 3:8,9). And also (1 John 5:18) “We know that whosoever is born of God does not sin; but he that is born of God keeps himself, and that wicked one does not touch him.”
  4. The issue is not relative but absolute. John is not talking about “habitual sin” but “any sin.” A true Christian does not sin without raising serious doubt about the security of his or her salvation.
- c. The fact that some Biblical figures did indeed sin (Abraham, Moses, David, etc.) does not suggest that this is normal or necessary for Christians. On occasion true Christians may fall but this is temporary and unusual. In Matt.11:11 we read, “Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist: Notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.” Under the new covenant dispensation, there is a power to live on a level above the saints of the Old Testament. **There are no examples after Pentecost of “Christians” who are sinners and still recognized as true Christians.**

NOTE: The consecration of ones life wholly to God frees one to live on a level motivated continually by “**perfect love**”. This is the Wesleyan view.

In John Wesley’s *Plain Account* we read:

Q. What is Christian Perfection?

A. Loving God with our heart, mind, soul, and strength . . .

Q. Can any mistake flow from pure love?

A. I answer 1) Many mistakes may consist with pure love. 2) Some may accidentally flow from it; I mean love itself may incline us to mistake . . .

Q. How shall we avoid setting perfection too high or too low?

A. By keeping to the Bible, and setting it just as high as the Scripture does. It is nothing higher and nothing lower than this . . . love governing the heart and life, running through all our tempers, words, and actions . . . (Christian) perfection . . . is purity of intention, dedicating all desire and design ruling all our tempers. It is the devoting, not a part, but all our soul, body, and substance to God.

According to Wesley, Christian perfection is not “sinless perfection” but rather the commitment of the heart to obey the call of love and to avoid all “conscious” sin.

**B. The Biblical material sited in support for “holiness” teaching.**

1. Holiness teaching assumes that the O.T. sets the requirements for fellowship with God in all ages including the N.T. age. The O.T. teaches that fellowship with a holy God requires holiness in heart and behavior. (In other words, the Pharisees of Jesus’ day were right in their assumption that the bottom line is disciplined obedience.)
2. Holiness is fundamental to God’s nature as revealed in the religion of ancient Israel. Israel was called to stand apart from the religious culture of the ancient world.

<i><b>Ancient World perspective</b></i>	<i><b>Israel’s perspective</b></i>
All reality is a part of a common web of life.	There are fixed boundaries between God and the Creation.
Good and evil are defined by the degree	Good and evil are defined by the

to which the web of life is realized and supported.	degree to which the Creation conforms to the will of the Creator.
The visible world came into existence because of the conflict between eternal principles - good and evil.	God as a showcase for His character created the world.
Matter is eternal.	God alone is eternal.
The gods emerged from matter through sexual union.	Matter came into existence because God spoke it into existence.
Gods are super humans	God is distinct from His creation.
The gods are independent of any common sense of ethical good or evil.	God is sovereign, ethically consistent, and love.
There is no clear division between the divine world and the natural.	God is personal and transcendent.
Sex is a profoundly religious activity that links us to the gods.	God cannot be manipulated by magic, sorcery or sexual rituals.
The weaker human world simply mirrors the reality of the superior divine world.	This world is significant and what happens here matters.
History is circular. The physical world has no real goal or purpose except survival and self-perpetuation.	History is linear. God has a purpose for His creation that will be fulfilled through time.
Ethics are not absolute and have no relationship to our connection with the gods.	Ethics are absolute and defined by the character of God. Ethical conduct links us to God.
Religion's purpose is to maintain the cycles of existence through ritual acts.	Religion is the expression of man's relationship with God's purpose.
Humanity is of little real worth.	Humanity is dignified with the image of God.

3. The Mosaic Covenant with Israel revealed the importance of holiness in four ways.
  - a. It revealed the true nature of reality.
  - b. It revealed God's holy character.
  - c. It revealed God's intention for human life.
  - d. It revealed Man's need for a Savior. Man cannot be like God and does not want to be like Him.
4. The O.T. text indicates that a person is expected to walk before God with perfect integrity (a pure heart).
  - a. The meaning of Shalom (peace) is wholeness or integration of understanding, inner experience, and behavior.

- b. The Hebrew word “shalom” is often translated “perfect.” To have a perfect heart is to be fully devoted in intent but not necessarily flawless in conduct. A perfect heart can be guilty of sins of ignorance or immaturity but not 1<sup>st</sup> degree (intentional sins).
1. **I Chron.12:38** “a perfect heart”
  2. **I Chron.28:9; 29:19** David tells Solomon to “serve God with a whole heart.”
  3. **I Kings 8:61** At the dedication of the temple the people were to have hearts that were “wholly devoted to the Lord.”
  4. **I Kings 11:4** “When Solomon was old, his wives led his heart astray after other gods, and his heart was not perfect towards his God, like the heart of his father David.”
  5. **I Kings 15:14** indicates that a perfect heart does not necessarily mean perfect performance. “but the high places were not taken away; nevertheless the heart of Asa was wholly devoted to the Lord all his days.”
  6. **II Chron.25:2** indicates that a person (Amaziah) could do the right thing yet without a pure heart. “And he did right in the sight of the Lord, yet not with a whole heart.”
- c. It was expected that Israel should be able to obey the Law as it was not too difficult for them.
1. **Deut.30:9-11** “<sup>9</sup> Then the Lord your God will prosper you abundantly in all the work of your hand, in the offspring of your body and in the offspring of your cattle and in the produce of your ground, for the Lord will again rejoice over you for good, just as He rejoiced over your fathers; <sup>10</sup> if you obey the Lord your God to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this book of the Law, if you turn to the Lord your God with all your heart and soul. <sup>11</sup> **For this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor I it out of reach.**”
  2. **Deut.10:12-13** “And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require from you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the Lord’s commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you to day for your good?”
  3. It is important to understand that the Law made provision through animal sacrifice for pardon from sin so that the one who failed to keep a part of the moral law could make things right. With this provision, life under the Law was manageable.
- d. The “filling of the Spirit” in the O.T. should be understood as a renewal of the inner life from without (by God).
1. **Gen.41:38** Joseph “in whom is the spirit of God”
  2. **Ex.31:2-5; 35:30-33** Bezaleel’s skills are the result of the spirit of God.
  3. **Num.11:17** Moses was to “take of the Spirit that was on him and put the spirit on them (the elders of the Tabernacle).”
  4. **Num.24:2** Balaam
  5. **Judg.6:11** Gideon
  6. **I Sam.10:6-7** Saul – Note 15:17 “Though you are little in your own eyes, are you not the head of the tribes of Israel?”
- e. The promise of the New Covenant in **Jer.31:31-34** speaks of the day when God’s people will have a new heart that will know Him and His law from within. **Ezek.37:12-14** links this transformation with the gift of the Spirit. The NT describes the Christian life as a fulfillment of this New Covenant of the Spirit not the Law. If this covenant is fulfilled completely in the church, then we should expect perfect obedience from the heart to characterize every person who has the Spirit.

5. Jesus reiterates the need for holiness in heart and conduct in order to have fellowship with God. The four gospels (especially Matthew, Mark, and Luke) record very little teaching about the atonement and justification by faith. They emphasize the ethics of the Kingdom as the ticket to eternal life.
  - **Matt.5:17, 20** “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I came not to abolish, but to fulfill. . . For I say to you, that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom on heaven.”
  - **Matt.5:48** “Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”
  - **Matt.6:15** “But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.”
  - **Matt.7:15-23** “He who does the will of My Father”
  - **Matt.12:22-37** “the tree is known by its fruit”
  - **Matt.18:21-35** “So shall My heavenly Father also do to you”
  - **Matt.25:31-46** “The sheep and the goats”
  - **Jn.5:28-29** “Good deeds and life”
  - **Jn.15:1-6** “The fruitful branches”
  
6. The Apostles also teach that practical holiness is necessary for temporal and eternal fellowship with God.
  - **Acts 5:32** “those who obey”
  - **Col.1:28** “And we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ.”
  - **I Thess.5:23** “May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
  - **Rom.2:1-16** “Rendering to every man according to his deeds.”
  - **Rom.12:1** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.
  - **Rom.6:19** I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.
  - **Rom. 6:22** But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.
  - **Rom.8:4** “the requirements of the law fulfilled in us”
  - **Rom.8:13** “living according to the flesh . . . you must die” “putting to death the deeds of the body . . . shall live.”
  - **I Cor.5:5** “that his spirit may be saved”
  - **I Cor.9:27-10:21** “lest I be disqualified”
  - **II Cor.7:1** Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.
  - **Gal.6:6-10** “sowing and reaping”
  - **Eph.4:24** And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.
  - **Col.3:5-6** “these things bring wrath”
  - **Phil.2:12** “work out your salvation with fear and trembling”

- **I Tim.4:16** “as you do this you will insure salvation”
- **I Thess.4:7** For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.
- **Heb.5:9** “All who obey”
- **Heb.10:26-31 (6:4-12)** “sinning willfully”
- **Heb.12:10** “For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.”
- **Heb.12:14** “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord”
- **Jas.2:12-26** “faith without works is dead”
- **I Pet.1:14-19** “<sup>14</sup> As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts {which were yours} in your ignorance, <sup>15</sup> but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all {your} behavior; <sup>16</sup> because it is written, “*You shall be holy, for I am holy.*” “<sup>17</sup> judging according to each man’s works”
- **I John 3:8,9** “He who sins is of the devil; for the devil sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin; for his seed remains in him: And he cannot sin because he is born of God.”
- See also - Deut.30:6; Ps.130:8; Ezek.36:25, 29; Matt.6:13; 22:37; Jn.3:8; 17:20-21, 23; Eph.3:14-19; 5:25, 27. (see theology file #108 for a commentary on many of these passages.)

## 7. The imputed moral merit of Christ by grace through faith.

Imputation is best understood in the context of Christ’s becoming sin for us. He was not guilty of personal misconduct but was nonetheless bearing true guilt as the sins of the world were accounted as a part of his record. In the same way we who are not righteous through our own doing but are righteous because the life of Christ is accounted as a part of our record.

- **Rom.1:16-17** “<sup>16</sup> For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. <sup>17</sup> For in it {the} **righteousness of God** is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “*But the righteous {man} shall live by faith.*”  
The quote from Habakkuk 2:4 suggests that the imputation of moral merit is in view.
- **Rom.3:24-28** “<sup>24</sup> being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; <sup>25</sup> whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. {This was} to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; <sup>26</sup> for the demonstration, {I say,} of His righteousness at the present time, that **He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.** <sup>27</sup> Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. <sup>28</sup> For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.”
- **Rom.4:3-8** “<sup>3</sup> For what does the Scripture say? “*And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as **righteousness.***” <sup>4</sup> Now to the one who works, his wage is not reckoned as a favor, but as what is due. <sup>5</sup> But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as **righteousness**, <sup>6</sup> just as David also speaks of the blessing upon the man to whom God reckons **righteousness** apart from works: <sup>7</sup> “*Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been*

*forgiven, And whose sins have been covered. 8 "Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account."*

- **Rom.10:1-5** “<sup>1</sup> Brethren, my heart’s desire and my prayer to God for them is for {their} salvation. <sup>2</sup> For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. <sup>3</sup> For not knowing about **God’s righteousness**, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the **righteousness of God**. <sup>4</sup> For Christ is the end of the law for **righteousness** to everyone who believes. <sup>5</sup> For Moses writes that the man who practices the **righteousness** which is based on law shall live by that **righteousness**.”
- **I Cor.1:30** “<sup>30</sup> But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and **righteousness** and sanctification, and redemption, <sup>31</sup> that, just as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord."”
- **II Cor.5:21** “He made Him who knew no sin {to be} sin on our behalf, that we might become the **righteousness of God** in Him.”
- **Gal.3:6** “<sup>6</sup> Even so Abraham *believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness*. <sup>7</sup> Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. <sup>8</sup> And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, {saying}, "All the nations shall be blessed in you." <sup>9</sup> So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer. <sup>10</sup> For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them." <sup>11</sup> Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, "The **righteous** man shall live by faith."”
- **Gal.3:21-22** “<sup>21</sup> Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then **righteousness** would indeed have been based on law. <sup>22</sup> But the Scripture has shut up all men under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.”
- **Phil.3:9** “and may be found in Him, not having a **righteousness** of my own derived from {the} Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the **righteousness** which {comes} from God on the basis of faith,”

### C. A response to “Holiness theology.”

1. The holiness position fails to respect the distinction between two types of holiness.
  - a. Ceremonial or legal (**justification**) – The believer’s position “in Christ” as in I Cor.1:30. The notes on “Positional truth” (#706) address this expression of holiness.
  - b. Behavioral or experiential (**sanctification**) – The sanctification of the believer who’s moral qualities reflect Godliness as in Rom.6:22. This aspect of holiness is distinct from justification, which unites us to God in Christ.
2. The holiness position fails to respect the clear **assumptions behind the N.T. epistles**.
  - a. The letters are addressed to true believers who are sinners in need of correction. Their sins are not just sins of immaturity or ignorance. Why would Paul appeal to his readers to love others and stop sinning if indeed all true believers were free from sin. Why would believers be encouraged to forgive one another if true believers did not openly sin against one another?



- b. The letters make a distinction between the believer's legal "position", usually addressed in the first part of each epistle, and the believers process in ethical conduct, usually addressed in the second part of each epistle.
  3. The holiness position does not seem to reflect the **testimony of the Apostle Paul** in a number of passages.
    - a. **Rom.7:20-24** "20 But if I am doing the very thing I do not wish, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. 21 I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wishes to do good. 22 For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, 23 but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. 24 Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?" Nowhere does Paul suggest that this confession was not a present frustration when he put his life under the law.
    - b. **Rom.6:1** "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase?" Paul assumes that his readers understand his teaching of grace (Rom.3-5) to suggest that their sinning will not remove the blessings of grace. Thus, he anticipates the logical question, "What will prevent us from sinning if it makes no difference with respect to the blessings of grace?" His answer is key (Rom.6:2-23). He argues that the rationale for holiness is our identity as children of God, not our vulnerability to losing our blessing. Note that Paul assumes that his teaching will raise the question of undisciplined living. Such a question would only make sense if in deed Paul's gospel is one of radical grace, moral freedom, and full security in Christ through faith (not works). His response is not to correct a misunderstanding of grace but to remind his audience that they are in deed free not only to sin but also to obey.
    - c. **Phil.3:12** "Not that I have already obtained it (the resurrection life), or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus." Paul saw this life as a process of moral development.
    - d. **I Tim.1:15** "It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all." Paul speaks in the present tense "I am" not "I was."
  4. **Human experience** suggests that even the most disciplined believer is aware of mixed motives when they conduct a serious internal audit of their souls.
    - a. It is not sufficient to say that we have avoided conspicuous sins like murder, adultery, stealing, etc. We must recognize that the holy nature of God extends to the inner heart (anger, lust, coveting, etc. as in Matt.5) and to a depth that leaves everyone in need of forgiveness.
    - b. It is not easy to conclude with confidence that we have a pure heart that is free from mixed motives. The heart is deceitful and wicked. Satan and the world are subtle and disguise evil as virtue.
  5. Is uniform sustained absolute victory over sin (outward and inward) possible in this life?
    - a. Can **Matt.22:37-39** be satisfied? "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. . . . You shall love your neighbor as yourself." The governing word here is "all."
    - b. If I limit the issue of holiness to freedom from "known sin", don't I excuse all sociopathic tendencies in the flesh? **I Cor.4:4** "I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord."

- c. How can one discern all motives when our **hearts are deceitful**? Each of us have areas in our lives that are more mature, disciplined, and virtuous than other areas.
  - d. Does Scripture recognize **two distinct classes of believers - victorious and defeated**? Not in any clear sense. The better model is one that is patterned after physical growth from immaturity to maturity as a process over time.
  - e. The Greek work τελειοι TELEIOI translated “**perfect**” in Matt.5:48 (“Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”) does not mean “flawless” but “complete” or “mature.”
  - f. **Galatians 5:17**, “The flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.” The presence of sin in our flesh prevents us from ceasing totally from sin (cf. Rom. 7:14-25). As we read in 1 Kings 8:46 and 2 Chronicles 6:36 regarding the faithful people of God, “There is no man who does not sin.” And as John wrote in exhortation of the Christian’s life of continuing repentance, “If we say we have no sin we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1:8).
  - g. In **Romans 6:6**, Paul mentions the old man again. In this context, it might appear that the old man died once and for all at our baptisms. A closer inspection of the passage, however, indicates to us that Paul fluctuates between present and future tenses as he speaks of the benefits of our union with Christ. We often refer to this as the tension between the “already” and the “not yet.” These terms refer to the fact that the kingdom of God has begun, but has not yet come in full. As a result, we have been initiated into the blessings of the kingdom, but we have not received them in full. One easy place to see this in action is in Paul’s contrasts between the present “first fruits” of the blessings and the future full harvest (Rom.8:23; 1 Cor.15:20,23). Another is his reference to the Holy Spirit as a “down-payment” or “pledge” of future blessings (Eph.1:13-14). With regard to nearly every blessing of which we partake in Christ, we now experience only a fraction of the blessing, and we await the full blessing at Christ’s second coming. In Romans 6:6, Paul is teaching that the old man has been dethroned, but that he has not yet been destroyed. Therefore, it still takes effort to resist him (e.g. Rom.6:12-13).
6. Does John Wesley’s position of “freedom from all conscious sin” **satisfy the texts that demand perfection from all sin**? Hardly, A holy God does not give special dispensations to people who may be ignorant or undeveloped. If He did, we would do well to stay ignorant.
  7. Other texts that suggest that experiential holiness is relative and a process.
    - **Gal.5:17** “For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.”
    - **Rom.7:18-19** “For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. For the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish.”
    - **I Cor.3:1-3** “And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?”
    - **I Jn.1:8-10** “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse

us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”

8. Holiness teaching tends to produce the same attitude that we see in the Pharisees of Jesus’ day – **legalism, judgmentalism, guilt, pride, separatism, and superficial views of sin**. While these negative characteristics do not necessarily follow they do have a logical connection to the implications of holiness teaching.
9. Three strategies for coping with life are suggested by Karen Horney in *Neurosis and Human Growth*. Each strategy is negatively effected by perfectionistic impulses.

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Move toward others</b>	<b>Move against others</b>	<b>Move away from others</b>
<b>Positive expression</b>	Intimacy, friendship	Individuality, standing up for self	Independence
<b>Negative expression</b>	Seduction, clinging to the powerful	Aggression, hostility, judgmentalism	Withdrawal, cover-up, fear, guilt

10. But perhaps the greatest challenge to traditional holiness teaching is the suggestion that at the heart of its teaching is a gospel that is focused on the Holy Spirit and not the Cross. Holiness puts the emphasis on the Spirit’s power to perfect the saint. It is the Spirit that grants us a new heart and power to live a holy life that fulfills the demands of the Law of love. Holiness teaching removes the Cross from its rightful place at the center of the Gospel. While living a holy life is very important, it is not the heart of the Good News.
11. But how does one explain all those texts that seem to teach the need for moral purity as a part of fellowship with God? **See my theology file #108 in apttoteach.org**

**D. Other theology files that deal with related subjects.**

1. Lordship (Discipleship) Salvation (#713)
2. Views of Sanctification (#715)
3. Continuation of Salvation (#710)
4. Positional Truth (#706)
5. Law and Grace (#107)
6. Problem Texts (#108)