

Sanctification; preparation for prayer

To experience God and His answer to prayer, we must be properly prepared. Anything opposed to God's Will is sin, and sin and its effects in us hurt our efforts to serve Him. This is not in opposition to our Salvation. Those Saved by Jesus alone are fully forgiven. However, we are still here "in the flesh", still sinners, and still suffering the consequences of our sin – all of the way up to our death or our seeing the Lord return. But even though we are still sinners, we can approach God as someone already forgiven, under the Sacrifice of Jesus' Blood.

The role of sin in the Christian life is important to understand, because though we are forgiven, our sin still has its consequences. Knowing how sin affects our walk, and what to do about it, will make the difference between a successful walk and a failing one.

This is not an issue in opposition to our Salvation. Those in Jesus are Saved and fully forgiven, though still sinners. We are Justified now before God on the merit of Christ's Sacrifice and constant intercession on our behalf. However, we are yet in the flesh, and we still suffer the results of our sin – all the way up to death or when Christ returns and we are Glorified in our new bodies.

Though we are sinners, as Righteous through Christ we may now approach the Throne of God in the Most Holy Place in Heaven. We may stand before God in the Holy Spirit, clean under the Sacrifice of the Lamb's Blood.

All of these issues speak of the Christian's heart. The Gift of the Holy Spirit is for the express purpose of the transformation of our heart, and thus our life. All that we do and are flows from the heart, and God's primary concern is our heart and the results following it. The nurture of our heart and our interaction with the Holy Spirit in us is our primary responsibility, and sin is the obstacle standing in our way.

The nurture of our relationship with the Spirit in us revolves around five things – the study of the Word to know the Person, Heart, and Will of God; prayer to God seeking our conformity to His Word; the deliberate pursuit of a holy life before God; our obedience to His Word, supported in prayer made profitable through a holy life; and our joy in obedience to God, bringing joy in experiencing Him. All of these issues are common and are seated in the heart. If these are necessary for our transformation to Christ's image, and if our heart is centrally involved, and if sin hardens our heart and so dampens our responsiveness to God – then the only reasonable thing to do is what God already demands. Examine yourself, see your sin in your reflection in Scripture, see what you are to be, be conformed in obedience under the help of the Holy Spirit, turn from your sin, and strive to be a useful slave to Christ in the Kingdom of God.

See sin for the blight it is. See its hindrance on your heart, the same heart responsible as the source of yourself and your Christian walk. Recognize God's despise of sin. Strive to be holy, for He is holy. Strive and live to obey His law written on your heart.

Confessed and Sanctified

Once Saved, our Lord Jesus sets out to refine us, restoring all of the parts of us distorted under our sin. We are forgiven, but it's still a long road to the Christ-likeness we will know when He gathers the Church. For now, while still in our sinful flesh, we are sinners who have forgiveness.

The key here is that we continue to disobey in sin, and we must constantly turn in confession to our Lord Jesus, repent, and receive forgiveness relief from the burden of our sin. It is a mistake to believe that one's original confession at Salvation will automatically bring forgiveness liberation from all of the sins we are yet to commit, *without any further action from us*. No, we are told that we have been set right before God, adopted, and now have entered into the New Covenant under Christ.

In His Covenant with us, we are allowed to confess and repent of our sin, and receive that forgiveness He earned at the Cross. We have been placed under the care of Jesus' grace and priestly authority. But we continue to be responsible for

confession and repentance, in order to be relieved of the sin that affects our relationship with God the Father, Son, and Spirit.

When we sin, the Word shows us, the Spirit convicts us, and we respond in confession, repentance, and a plea for mercy. When we do this, Jesus always responds – the guilt and burden of our sin have been hung on the Cross, and He is always ready to say ‘It’s alright, this issue is behind us now. Don’t do that anymore. Let’s try it one more time.’

Standing forgiven, soft hearted, and humble before the Father, He hears our prayers. His Will is that we would be confessed and Sanctified, or made ready and clean, through Jesus’ forgiveness.