

Sanctification

The Process of True Biblical Change

Cotton Mather

- Studied medicine
- *Angel of Bethesda* (1724)
- Standard medical views in New England



What True Biblical Change Is Not!

- Participating in spiritual activities (cf. Is. 1:10-15)
- Having emotional experiences (cf. Ex. 19:16ff)
- Keeping a set of rules and regulations:
 - Focuses on less important issues (Matt. 23:23-24)
 - Law awakens the flesh (Rom. 7:8-9)
 - Flesh has no power to control the flesh (Rom. 7:15, 18; Gal. 3:1-3)

What True Biblical Change Is Not!

- Avoiding overtly sinful actions (cf. Luke 18:11)
- Performing the right actions (cf. Luke 18:12-14)
- Accumulating knowledge about spiritual things (cf. 1 Cor. 8:1)

Background of John 17

- John 13-17 - Christ's ministry to His disciples on the night before His crucifixion
 - John 13-14 in upper room at Last Supper (cf. 14:31)
 - John 15-17 apparently spoken somewhere between upper room and the Kidron Valley on the east side of the city (cf. John 18:1)
 - John 17 is really the Lord's Prayer

John 17 - an Outline

- Jesus prayer for Himself (1-5)
- Jesus prayer for the Apostles (6-19)
- Jesus prayer for all NT believers (20-26)
- John 17:17 is a complete summary of spiritual growth, biblical change, or sanctification

The Nature of True Biblical Change

- “Sanctify” (17:17)
- Two main senses:
- 1) “To consecrate, set apart from a common to a sacred use; to set apart for God’s service”
 - Things: places (2 Pet. 1:18); vessels, furniture, utensils of the tabernacle & temple (Lev. 8:10ff; Matt. 23:17, 19; 2 Tim. 2:21)
 - Christ (Jn. 10:36; 17:19)
 - Christians in general (1 Cor. 1:2; Acts 26:18; Heb. 10:10; 1

The Nature of True Biblical Change

- Two main senses:
 - 1) “To consecrate, set apart from a common to a sacred use; to set apart for God’s service”
 - 2) “To actually make holy; to purify; to render clean in a moral sense”
 - cf. Eph. 5:26; Heb. 2:11; Rev. 22:11
 - A work God does within us
 - Practically—we are *made* holy in an ongoing process.

Sanctification

- “The work of God’s free grace, by which His Spirit continuously delivers the justified sinner from the pollution of sin, renews his whole nature in the image of God, and enables him more and more to die to sin and to live unto righteousness.”

Louis Berkhof

The *Ordo Salutis*

(adapted from R. Raymond)



Nine Biblical Propositions

- 1) Is made possible by the work of Christ (John 17:19; 1 Cor. 1:30; Heb. 10:10; 13:12)
- 2) Is completely a work of God
 - Father: 1 Th. 5:23
 - Son: Heb. 2:11; 13:12
 - Holy Spirit: 1 Cor. 6:11
 - context = a prayer
 - Cf. John 15:6; 1 Th. 5:23; Heb. 13:20-21; Gal. 3:5; Phil. 1:6; 2:12-13

Nine Biblical Propositions

- 3) Involves maximum human effort (Rom. 6:11, 12, 13; Eph. 4:22, 24; Col. 3:5; Phil. 2:12; 2 Cor. 7:1; 1 Tim. 4:7)
 - Remember: our effort doesn’t earn or achieve it; it is still a work of God’s grace
 - We expend the effort, but God produces the change.

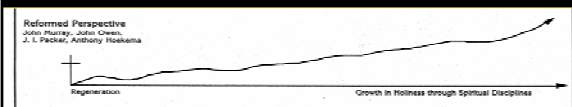
Nine Biblical Propositions

- 4) Is a process.
 - Eph. 4:15; 2 Pet. 3:18; 1 John 2
- 5) Is a constant war within (Gal. 5:17; Rom. 7:14-15, 21-25)
- 6) Is only complete when you die or Christ returns (Phil. 3:12-14)

Nine Biblical Propositions

- 7) Is a means to an end (1 Pet. 1:13-17)
- 8) Is a renovation of the heart; not merely change in behavior or self-reformation (Matt. 12:33-34)
- 9) Is Guaranteed
 - Goal of our salvation (Eph. 5:25-27; Tit. 2:14; Rom. 8:29-30)
 - Father always hears Christ (John 11:42)

A Graph of Biblical Sanctification

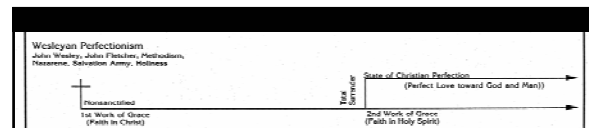


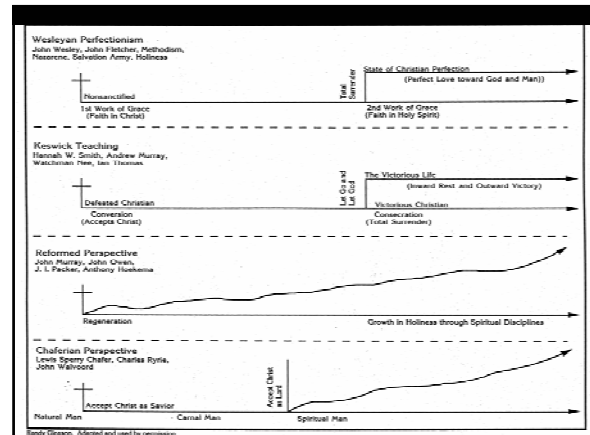
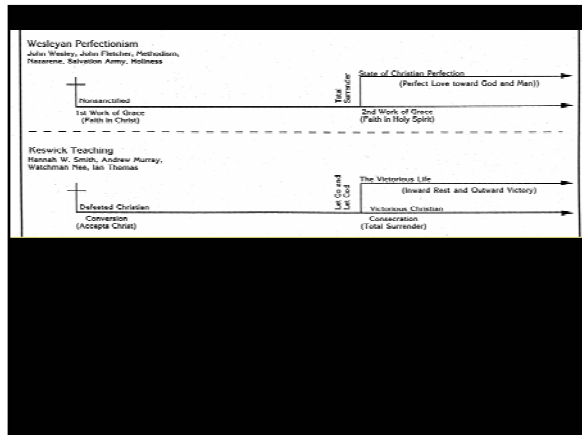
The Objects of Biblical Change

- "Them" (v. 17)
 - 17:9, 12 = disciples
 - 17:20 = all of us
- Cf. Rom. 8:29ff
- Eph. 2:10 (connected to 2:8-9)

The Means of Biblical Change

- "In the truth" (v. 17)
- "In" = "through" or "by means of" (cf. 1 Tim. 4:2—"by means of"; 1 Cor. 8:11)
- God uses means
 - Common unbiblical views that deny use of means [chart]





Common Denominators

- Something God does directly w/o any means or human effort.
- Something that happens suddenly in a moment of crisis
- The Assumption: a lack of power (cf. Eph. 1:18-19)
- But the real issue is man's relationship to the truth
 - lack of knowledge
 - lack of obedience

J. C. Ryle in *Holiness*

"Many admire growth in grace in others, and wish that they themselves were like them. But they seem to suppose that those who grow are what they are by some special gift or grant from God, and that as this gift is not bestowed on them they must be content to sit still.... Growth in grace is bound up in the use of means within the reach of all believers and... as a general rule, growing souls are what they are because they use these means."

Common unbiblical means

- Isolation from the world
 - extreme = monasticism
 - common = staying away from unbelievers
 - cf. Jn. 17:15, 18; 1 Cor. 5:9-11
- Asceticism—depriving oneself of God's good gifts or inflicting pain or discomfort on oneself
 - extreme = causing bodily pain
 - common = Xn shouldn't have a good time or enjoy life
 - cf. Col. 2:21-23

The Primary Means God Uses

- "The truth"
 - Eph. 5:26 - so that He might sanctify [the church], having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,
 - John 8:32 - you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.
- Not some wonderful, secret teaching
- Not some famous Christian's spiritual secret
- "Your Word is truth"
 - Christ's teaching (17:14)
 - All Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16)
- So "truth" & "word" → the whole truth, the entire teaching of Scripture
- Note: *means* not *cause*

The Actual Process

- Eph. 4:17–5:1
 - 4:1 Habits of thinking and acting should match our position.
 - 4:17 Christians shouldn't live like those who don't know God.
 - 4:17-19 Describes both the way they live & more importantly, why.
 - 4:20-21 Documents the change: "learned Christ, heard Him, been taught in Him" - all references to salvation

4:21-24

- "Just as the truth is in Jesus" is parenthetical.
- "You have heard Him and have been taught in Him" is followed by three infinitives that summarize what they have been taught:
 - lay aside (4:22)
 - be renewed (4:23)
 - put on (4:24)

The Steps of Biblical Change

- Put off (4:17-22)
 - "Old self" (Rom. 6:1-6; 4:17-19; cf. Rom. 13:12-14; Jam. 1:21)
 - "Lay aside" is the image of removing clothes (cf. Acts 7:58)
 - Paul's point: old self is dead; take off his clothes.
 - Lay aside all that remains of the old life (4:22)—its thinking, desires, self-will, sinful habits of thinking and acting

The Steps of Biblical Change

- Put Off (4:17-22)
- Be Renewed (4:23)
 - Continuous
 - Passive—it is something the Holy Spirit does to us (cf. Tit. 3:5)
 - A command
 - Implied: God does the renewing but you can either hinder it or encourage it

The Renewal

- Col. 3:8-10
- "To a true knowledge" = a deep and thorough knowledge of God and what He wants from me
- "According to the image of God" (Col. 3:10); i.e., Christ-likeness
- An inward change
- "Sanctification in its essential nature is not holy acts, but such a change in the state of the soul, that sinful acts become more infrequent, and holy acts more and more habitual and controlling." Hodge

The Renewal

- How does this renewal take place?
 - Through the Word (1 Pet. 1:22; 2 Pet. 1:3-4)
 - By the Holy Spirit (cf. Col. 3:10, 16)
- Renewing of the mind is the hinge on which our sanctification swings.

The Steps of Biblical Change

- Put Off (4:17-22)
- Be Renewed (4:23)
- Put on the new self (4:24–5:2)
 - “Put on” is to think and act in a way in keeping with our new self (cf. Rom. 13:12-14; 6:15-19)
 - Lloyd-Jones: “The whole matter of putting on the new man is in essence the application of truth to ourselves. It is the most important thing that one can ever discover in the Christian life.... We must talk to ourselves, we must preach to ourselves, and we must take truth and apply it to ourselves, and keep on doing so.”

Lying

- Lay aside - falsehood
- Be renewed - let the Bible speak
- Put on - speak the truth each one with his neighbor

How Can We Be Truly Changed?

- Jay Adams
 - When is a door not a door?
 - When it's a jar.
- The principle of replacement
- Every vice has a corresponding virtue.
- If you want to put off the vice, you must:
 - identify the opposite virtue
 - replace the vice with its opposite virtue

Stealing

- Lay aside - stealing
- Be renewed
 - God sovereignly distributes property.
 - He expects me to care for my own and that of others.
 - My resources are to be given to the church, used to support my family, saved, and given to others in need.
- Put on - rest of 4:28
 - Instead of taking from others, the thief must work hard so he can be generous with others.

The Process

- Identify the vices you know need to be put off; make a list.
 - Use biblical language
 - Identify the sin in your heart
- Identify the opposite biblical virtue.
 - Lying → truth telling
 - Stealing → generosity

The Process

- Identify the vices you know need to be put off; make a list.
- Identify the opposite biblical virtue.
- Thoroughly study what Scripture says both about the vice and its opposite virtue; meditate on your findings.
- Do your homework.
 - Keep a journal
 - Paul David Tripp in *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*:
 - What happened?
 - What did you feel?
 - What were you thinking?
 - What did you want?
 - What did you do?
- 5. Create a plan to put off and put on; expend the effort!

The Steps in Sanctification		
God	Gives us a new nature	Eph. 2:1-5
God	Unites us to Christ in His death and resurrection	Rom. 6:3-5
God	Frees us from sin's dominion	Rom. 6:6
God	Creates in us a desire for the truth	1 Pet. 2:2
The Believer	Reads, studies, and meditates on the Word of God	Josh. 1:8; Ps. 1:2; Col. 3:16
God, the Spirit	Illumines our minds	Eph. 1:18-19; 1 Cor. 2:12, 14
The Believer	Responds in repentance & faith	Acts 15:9; Rom. 1:17
The Believer	Seeks to obey by applying the truth, planning and disciplining ourselves to change	Eph. 4:21ff

- ### This Week's To Do's
- Believe that your old self died with Christ.
 - Discipline yourself for regular, systematic, thorough reading, study, and meditation on the Scripture.
 - Pray for divine illumination.
 - Respond to what you learn in repentance and faith.
 - Determine what you need to put off: your sinful habits of thinking and acting; and what corresponding virtues should be put on.
 - Develop a careful plan to help you change those habits.
 - Expend maximum effort, while remembering that God has promised to change you as you seek to be obedient.

John 17:17

**"Sanctify them in the truth;
Your Word is truth."**