



Sanctification and Appetite

Before we begin this session on Sanctification and Appetite, I would like to invite you to pray with me. Those of you who are able, please kneel with me as we come before our Heavenly Father.

Dear Heavenly Father, we ask for the presence of your Holy Spirit with us as we discuss this important topic of Sanctification and how appetite contributes to it. Really, we want to learn about Your salvation, and we want to be found faithful to you in all that we do. But we are unable to change our hearts. We are unable to understand truth. We are unable to do anything without your Holy Spirit making those changes within us, so we ask for the Holy Spirit to be amongst us, to dwell within us, to influence our thoughts and touch our hearts today so that when we leave this place, we will never be the same. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

Today, we are going to discuss the topic of Sanctification and Diet. This morning we are going to focus more closely on salvation and sanctification and what they are. We will look at the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, and come to a definite understanding of these very important topics. Then we will look at how appetite & diet fits into the topic of sanctification, for there is an inseparable link between them. In this afternoon's session, we will look more closely at specific injunctions in regard to appetite and diet, and gain a greater appreciation for what our responsibility is toward our body as the temple of the Holy Spirit.

What is salvation? Is it merely a forgiveness of sins, a covering of blood that declares us right before a holy God? Or is it more than that? Is salvation extended to those who are living in known sin? Does salvation require perfection before it can be realized? Are there requirements for salvation, and if so what are they?

If we look at the society in which we live, we see that the evangelical Christian world today promotes a salvation that is free: free to us because God paid the price and we don't have to; free from personal responsibility; free from consequences; free from inconveniences; but not free from sin. We are enveloped by a Christian culture where one can be assured of salvation while at the same time remaining a slave to known sin. "Freedom from sin is a myth, and impossibility while on this earth, and freedom from sin will only occur after we make it to heaven," they say.

But what does the Bible tell us?

In Ephesians 2:8-10 we read, "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. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." We see here that it is solely by God's grace that we are saved. Faith lays hold of the free gift of God's grace and makes it our own, and Christ's works are re-created in us as we walk in Christ, trusting in Him to do in us what we are incapable of doing ourselves.

Matthew 1:21 tells us, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." It does not say that He shall save His people IN their sins, but FROM their sins. He came not just to bring forgiveness from sin, but power to overcome sin IN Him. He came to separate us from the sins that destroy us and restore us to the ideal he had for us before the fall.

Also, in Philippians 2:12,13 we read, "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."

In Christ Object Lessons page 161, Ellen White comments upon this very passage, and I quote, “God does not bid you fear that He will fail to fulfill His promises, that His patience will weary, or His compassion be found wanting. Fear lest your will shall not be held in subjection to Christ’s will, lest your hereditary and cultivated traits of character shall control your life. Fear lest self shall interpose between your soul and the great Master Worker. Fear lest self-will shall mar the high purpose that through you God desires to accomplish. Fear to trust to your own strength, fear to withdraw your hand from the hand of Christ and attempt to walk life’s pathway without His abiding presence.”

You see, it matters not so much how you start the race as how you finish. We may begin strong in Christ, but if our focus does not remain on Christ, we may get caught up in the wrong race.

The story is told of nine contestants lined up at the starting line, eager for the opportunity of winning their prize. The year was 1976, the place Spokane, Washington, the event - the Special Olympics. Nine contestants who were either physically handicapped or mentally challenged were to compete in the 100-yard dash for the coveted prize. The gun fired, and all raced forward toward the goal. One contestant, however, fell in her quest for the prize. Two of the other contestants stopped, turned back, helped the fallen contestant up, and all three walked across the finish line together.

Let me ask, who won the race?

You see, in earthly races, the prize is given to the one who finishes first, but where our eternal prize is concerned, it is given to those whose characters reflect Christ.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 is a familiar text for us. “Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”

Even Paul was concerned about the finish. Despite all that Paul had been involved in and had done through the years, he was concerned about finishing faithful, “lest...I myself should be a castaway.” Jesus reflects this reality when he states in Matthew 24:13 “But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.” The clear implication is that if we do not endure unto the end, we will not be saved.

We see clearly from scripture that the true gospel of salvation does not save us from personal responsibility. We see that it does not save us IN sin, but praise the Lord, it saves us FROM sin!

When we discuss salvation, many times we use the terms justification and sanctification to describe different aspects of salvation. Though they may be discussed separately, they can never be separated in reality. One cannot be justified and not sanctified, and neither can one be sanctified and not justified.

Justification means to be made right with God. Jesus, taking our human nature upon himself with its tendencies to sin, lived in our flesh a perfect life of complete surrender and dependence upon God, and then accepted upon Himself the consequences of our sins and died in our behalf--satisfying the requirements of God’s justice, and rose again with the right to restore us to the favor of God. He who deserved only life, suffered our death; that we, who deserve only death, might be given His life. This unfair exchange is predicated upon our accepting

Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf and accepting Him as our Savior. As such, we are forgiven for our past sins, His blood covers our transgressions, and we are made right with God.

Sanctification has two main aspects: First, it means to be set apart or separated.

1 Corinthians 1:2 states, "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:" By reading through the rest of 1 Corinthians, we can be assured that the believers in Corinth needed continued transformation into the likeness of Christ. They were not perfect, and indeed were dealing with many issues as a whole, but they had been set apart (separated) from those around them. They were identified as God's special people and set apart for a special purpose in Christ, even though they had not attained to the perfection that Christ desired in them.

Several years ago, I met a wonderful girl. She and I started hanging out together, talking, walking, writing, and dreaming together. As time passed, we were nearly inseparable. We loved being together. And one day, I decided that I didn't want any possibility of any other guy attracting her attention, so I proposed. And to my joy, she accepted. We were married, and in that marriage, we were set apart unto each other. Off limits to anyone else.

As in a marriage the husband and wife are set apart, or separated, unto themselves, to enter into a relationship that no one else is to intrude upon, so we are sanctified by faith in God, through Christ, by the working of the Holy Spirit. We are set apart as His holy people. At the same time that we are justified, we are sanctified (set apart) as holy to God, and as such we may rightly be called "saints." But sanctification is more than just that.

Secondly, sanctification is a progressive process of moral change by the power of the Holy Spirit in cooperation with the human will. This is not to be seen as a 50/50 relationship where sanctification is half my work and half God's work. It is 100% the work of God, but it cannot be accomplished in a life that is not surrendered to and dependent upon God's working power. If this moral change ceases to progress, then sanctification ceases to exist.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:13, we read, "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:" We see here that sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit that is manifest in the life of one who believes the truth.

In addition, we read in Ephesians 5:25-27, "Husbands, love your wives, even as 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." We see here that Christ's work of sanctification in His church is to ultimately produce a complete likeness to Christ in each believer - "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

1 Thessalonians 5:23 reads, "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." This is no half work. God is seeking to sanctify a people wholly who may be "preserved blameless unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ." The word unto leads us to understand that this preserving blameless is a reality BEFORE the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, the perfect likeness of Christ is to be reproduced in the lives of Christ's followers before His second coming.

In Acts of the Apostles, pages 531, 532, 560 & 561 we read, “None need fail of attaining, in his sphere, to perfection of Christian character. By the sacrifice of Christ, provision has been made for the believer to receive all things that pertain to life and godliness. God calls upon us to reach the standard of perfection and places before us the example of Christ’s character. In His humanity, perfected by a life of constant resistance of evil, the Saviour showed that through co-operation with Divinity, human beings may in this life attain to perfection of character. This is God’s assurance to us that we, too, may obtain complete victory.”

“Before the believer is held out the wonderful possibility of being like Christ, obedient to all the principles of the law. But of himself man is utterly unable to reach this condition. The holiness that God’s word declares he must have BEFORE he can be saved is the result of the working of divine grace as he bows in submission to the discipline and restraining influences of the Spirit of truth. Man’s obedience can be made perfect only by the incense of Christ’s righteousness, which fills with divine fragrance every act of obedience. The part of the Christian is to persevere in overcoming every fault. Constantly he is to pray to the Saviour to heal the disorders of his sin-sick soul. He has not the wisdom or the strength to overcome; these belong to the Lord, and He bestows them on those who in humiliation and contrition seek Him for help.”

“The work of transformation from unholiness to holiness is a continuous one. Day by day God labors for man’s sanctification, and man is to co-operate with Him, putting forth persevering efforts in the cultivation of right habits. He is to add grace to grace; and as he thus works on the plan of addition, God works for him on the plan of multiplication. Our Saviour is always ready to hear and answer the prayer of the contrite heart, and grace and peace are multiplied to His faithful ones. Gladly He grants them the blessings they need in their struggle against the evils that beset them.”

“Sanctification is not the work of a moment, an hour, a day, but of a lifetime. It is not gained by a happy flight of feeling, but is the result of constantly dying to sin, and constantly living for Christ. Wrongs cannot be righted nor reformations wrought in the character by feeble, intermittent efforts. It is only by long, persevering effort, sore discipline, and stern conflict, that we shall overcome. We know not one day how strong will be our conflict the next. So long as Satan reigns, we shall have self to subdue, besetting sins to overcome; so long as life shall last, there will be no stopping place, no point which we can reach and say, I have fully attained. Sanctification is the result of lifelong obedience.”

“None of the apostles and prophets ever claimed to be without sin. Men who have lived the nearest to God, men who would sacrifice life itself rather than knowingly commit a wrong act, men whom God has honored with divine light and power, have confessed the sinfulness of their nature. They have put no confidence in the flesh, have claimed no righteousness of their own, but have trusted wholly in the righteousness of Christ.”

“So will it be with all who behold Christ. The nearer we come to Jesus, and the more clearly we discern the purity of His character, the more clearly shall we see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the less shall we feel like exalting ourselves. There will be a continual reaching out of the soul after God, a continual, earnest, heartbreaking confession of sin and humbling of the heart before Him. At every advance step in our Christian experience our repentance will deepen. We shall know that our sufficiency is in Christ alone and shall make the apostle’s confession our own: “I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing.” “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.” Romans 7:18; Galatians 6:14.

In these paragraphs, we learn that God calls us to reach the standard of perfection of Christian character. We learn that, through Christ, every thing necessary to attain to that perfection of character is given to us, so that we

are without excuse for falling short. We learn that we must attain to the holiness of Christ before we can be saved, but that it is the working of divine grace in a life that is totally surrendered to the influence of the Holy Spirit that makes this possible. We learn that we must deny self constantly and consistently, relying upon the power of God, if we are to finally be victorious. We learn that sanctification continues as long as one is alive and is characterized by constant dying to sin and living for Christ. We learn that we will never feel like we have “arrived,” but on the contrary, as we become more like Christ, we will distrust self more and more.

In this state of self-distrust and continual dying to sin and living for Christ, we will have attained to the perfection of Christian character made possible only through the gift of Christ.

Now, what does diet or appetite have to do with sanctification? Much in every way.

I am going to let the Spirit of Prophecy speak for itself on this subject and allow the Holy Spirit to move upon your hearts and minds.

Our physical health is maintained by that which we eat; if our appetites are not under the control of a sanctified mind, if we are not temperate in all our eating and drinking, we shall not be in a state of mental and physical soundness to study the word with a purpose to learn what saith the Scripture—what shall I do to inherit eternal life? Any unhealthful habit will produce an unhealthful condition in the system, and the delicate, living machinery of the stomach will be injured, and will not be able to do its work properly. The diet has much to do with the disposition to enter into temptation and commit sin. *Counsels on Diets and Foods P 52*

It is impossible for anyone to live intemperately in regard to diet and yet retain a large degree of patience. Our heavenly Father sent the light of health reform to guard against the evils resulting from a debased appetite, that those who love purity and holiness may use with discretion the good things He has provided for them, and by exercising temperance in their daily lives, may be sanctified through the truth. *Testimonies for the Church Vol. 4, P 140.*

God’s people are to learn the meaning of temperance in all things.... All self-indulgence is to be cut away from their lives. Before they can really understand the meaning of true sanctification and of conformity to the will of Christ, they must, by co-operating with God, obtain the mastery over wrong habits and practices. *Medical Ministry, p 275.*

Every true Christian will have control of his appetites and passions. Unless he is free from the bondage of appetite, he cannot be a true, obedient servant of Christ. The indulgence of appetite and passion blunts the effect of truth upon the heart. It is impossible for the spirit and power of the truth to sanctify a man, soul, body, and spirit, when he is controlled by sensual desires.—*Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene, p 75-80.*

A large proportion of all the infirmities that afflict the human family are the results of their own wrong habits, because of their willing ignorance or of their disregard of the light which God has given in relation to the laws of their being. It is not possible for us to glorify God while living in violation of the laws of life. The heart cannot possibly maintain consecration to God while the lustful appetite is indulged. A diseased body and disordered intellect, because of continual indulgence in hurtful lust, make sanctification of the body and spirit impossible. The apostle understood the importance of the healthful conditions of the body for the successful perfection of Christian character. He says, “I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.” He mentions the fruit of the Spirit, among which is temperance. “And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.”

God requires of His people continual advancement. We need to learn that indulged appetite is the greatest hindrance to mental improvement and soul sanctification. With all our profession of health reform, many of us eat improperly. Indulgence of appetite is the greatest cause of physical and mental debility, and lies largely at the foundation of feebleness and premature death. Let the individual who is seeking to possess purity of spirit bear in mind that in Christ there is power to control the appetite. *Counsels for the Church* p 234.

“Whenever their appetite was restricted, the Israelites were dissatisfied, and murmured and complained against Moses and Aaron, and against God.... But God was proving His people. In order to develop what was in their hearts, He allowed them to pass through severe trials. When they failed, He brought them around to the same point again, trying them a little more closely and severely. In Egypt their taste had become perverted. God designed to restore their appetite to a pure, healthy state, in order that they might enjoy the simple fruits that were given to Adam and Eve in Eden. He was about to establish them in a second Eden, a goodly land, where they might enjoy the fruits and grains that He would provide for them.

“He purposed to remove the feverish diet upon which they had subsisted in Egypt; for He wished them to be in perfect health and soundness when they entered the goodly land to which He was leading them, so that the surrounding heathen nations might be constrained to glorify the God of Israel, the God who had done so wonderful a work for His people. Unless the people who acknowledged Him as the God of heaven were in perfect soundness of health, His name could not be glorified. “

“If the Israelites had submitted to God’s requirements, they would have had a healthy posterity. But they chose to follow their own way, walking after the imagination of their own hearts. They gratified their appetites and consulted their own tastes and wishes. As a result, the wilderness was strewn with their dead bodies. Of all the vast multitude that left Egypt, six hundred thousand mighty men of war, besides women and children, only two entered the promised land. *SDA Bible Commentary Volume 1*, P 1102.

My friends, please learn your lesson from the Israelites. Please do not make the same mistake that they made. Please do not look around you to see what everyone else is eating and drinking, but may your choice reflect a determination to follow Scripture and Spirit of Prophecy. Only two of over 600,000 men made it from Egypt to the Promised Land. Modern Israel is just as rebellious as Israel of old. I see the same clamor for the fleshpots of Egypt amongst God’s professed remnant people as existed in the wilderness, and I am afraid that the vast majority of today’s Israel will die outside of the Promised Land.

It is time that we come before a holy God, fall before His presence and confess our sins before Him. It is time that we, by the grace of God, put off ALL sin and hold firmly to Christ. It is time that we place our appetites on the alter and allow God to purify our tastes. It is time that we be faithful to all of God’s law, moral and physical. It is time that we enter the Promised Land with characters perfected after the likeness of Christ.

If it is your desire to be saved. If it is your desire to become like Christ, to reflect His character perfectly in your life through the power of God’s grace. If it is your desire to offer to God your appetite and allow Him to purify it. If it is your desire to cooperate with the Holy Spirit working in your life, removing that which is harmful and developing that which reflects Christ. If it is your desire to go all the way for God who went all the way for you, then stand up and make your commitment known.

Dear Heavenly Father, here we stand; not worthy of your love, your grace, your forgiveness. Yet you chose to give up Your Son, Your only Son, Jesus, for us. Jesus, you chose to leave the admiration and praise of heaven.

You chose to leave the place where your will is implicitly and joyfully obeyed, and came to this dark world. You chose to live as we live, in our sinful flesh. You struggled against the pull of the flesh. You suffered from the pulls within and from without. You were not recognized for who you really were, and yet you lived a life of complete surrender and dependence upon Your Father, to give us an example of how we can be victorious just as you were victorious. You suffered the most intense mental, emotional and physical suffering that any human being would ever be called to suffer, and you did not fail or falter in one single instance. You lived a perfect life, and then died the death we deserve. You did not stay in the grave, but arose in complete victory over sin and death, and now you offer us the same, through the indwelling of your Holy Spirit. Lord, teach us how to cooperate with you in the process of perfection. We want to be so changed into your likeness that you are all that others see. We want to be so changed into your likeness that our thoughts, our words, and our actions reflect only what you would think, speak, or do. We vow to you today that we will cooperate with you in this process of change. We humbly ask your forgiveness for our rebellion and half-hearted service to you. Fill us with a burning passion for You, for Your law, for those whom You came to save. Lord, may we vindicate your name before a watching universe, because we have allowed You to take us from the depths of sin to the perfection of Christ. May we show in our lives that You can redeem men from the fall and restore them to Christ-likeness in every way. Lord, here we are. Use us as You see fit. We dedicate ourselves to you this day and every day from here. In Jesus precious and holy name. Amen.