

YESTERDAY'S TOMORROW
Session Three
Class Leadership Instructions

Introduction Notes

A. The men who began our church wanted to fully experience the Christian life.

1. They were pietists who were keenly interested in the experience of the Christian life.
2. They not only sought to introduce people to the Christian life; they wanted them to live it fully.

God, the Holy Spirit, makes us holy through a process called sanctification which begins at the moment of our conversion and comes to completion at our resurrection.

B. When the Evangelical Mennonites were formed, doctrines about the Holy Spirit and sanctification were not important.

1. The Mennonite Confession of Dortrecht (1632) has no statement about the Holy Spirit or sanctification.
2. Our first statement in 1866 contains a one sentence description of the Holy Spirit.

C. During the 1870's, new ideas about the Holy Spirit and the Christian life began to emerge.

1. You get a clue as entire sanctification is mentioned in the obituary of David Henning. (Verhandlungen p. 132)
2. The Gospel Banner suggests that a book on entire sanctification be purchased. (Gospel Banner; July, 1880, p. 108)
3. The quest for entire sanctification gave rise to the camp meeting movement.
 - a. Camp meetings were, for the most part, a Methodist, frontier phenomenon.
 - b. For Mennonites to be interested in camp meetings was highly unusual.
4. Our church became strongly committed to entire sanctification. (Letter of Jonas Musselman, Gospel Banner; August, 1881)
 - a. They taught that a work of the Holy Spirit was needed beyond salvation.
 - b. When you were entirely sanctified, you would rise beyond sinning and fully live a life that pleases God.
 - c. If you fell or left this sinless life, you became a candidate for judgment.
5. Our church began to change its views during the 1920's and 30's.

- a. No one is quite sure why the pastors of Pennsylvania began to have a different view.
- b. Out of this old view grew the conviction that this work of God is progressive.

Question Notes

1. This question is not intended to be a "right or wrong" question. It is intended to get people thinking about the topic. Don't dwell on the question.
2. This question is intended to show the difference between our former statement and our current statement.
3. This is only a selection of passages about sanctification. You may want to find more.
4. Read an article on sanctification from a good theological or Bible dictionary.
5. Don't be fooled by this question. Sanctification is both a work of God and a work of man. Don't try to make it one or the other.
7. In this question, lead people to personalize the teaching on sanctification.

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SESSION THREE**

**SANCTIFICATION - THE WORK OF
THE HOLY SPIRIT**

4. Holy Ghost

The Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and Son as true and eternal God, in one existence, majesty and glory with the Father and Son. (Doctrine of Faith (1866), What Mean These Stones p. 27)

"Since it has pleased God to remove from our midst, by death, our aged and beloved brother, Elder David Henning, of Bangor, Northampton County, Pennsylvania, during the Conference year, therefore

Resolved: That we as a Conference and church members in general take it to heart, and especially his desire, expressed on his death bed, that his brethren in the ministry (in particular) and the members in general, should redeem their time in leading godly lives. **He professed entire sanctification** and had a desire to be 'absent from the body, and present with the Lord.'" (Verhandlungen, p. 134, 1882)

(From the Gospel Banner, July, 1880, page 108)

"We again call attention to Eld. D. S. Warner's new book, 'Bible Proofs of a Second Work of Grace, or Entire Sanctification as a Distinct Experience Subsequent to Justification, Established by the United Testimony of Several Hundred Texts, Including a Description by the Prophets of the Great Holiness Crisis of the Present Age.' ...

"Eld. B. G. Huber, editor of the Highway of Holiness, says of the same, 'The book treats the subject of a definite work of grace obtained by faith subsequent to regeneration, in a simple yet positive and strong manner. No one seeking truth can read this work without profit.'"

(Letter to the Gospel Banner from Jonas Musselman, August 25, 1881, reporting on the first camp meeting near Coopersburg, PA.)

"The meetings were conducted strictly on the holiness line, and quite a number entered the land of Beulah. Some at the commencement could not understand what these things meant, and were 'in doubt whereunto this might grow.' But as the power of God was so wonderfully displayed, many began to change their minds and concluded that after all, it is better in the land of Canaan, than in the wilderness, after having gotten a glimpse of the fruits that were brought from thence, and concluded to stand and walk by faith, rather than feeling. Praise God for his power. Each day and night he gave us a new baptism of the Holy Ghost....

The power of God, as displayed at times upon the encampment, was such that a number were not able to stand, but were crushed to the earth. Some were not able to rise for over an hour. God's wonderful works and glorious saving power, were to a greater or less extent seen and felt in each meeting during the encampment. Glory to

his name! Our Presiding Elder, Bro. Wm. Gehman, became so intensely interested in the work of the Lord, and so filled with his power, that he at once purchased the grove for the express purpose of holding annual camp-meetings there, as it is a beautiful location as well as a central point on our work. May God bless Bro. Gehman.

I can say that during my ministerial labors, I have never enjoyed myself better than I did during our camp-meeting. I heard a number saying that if spared to see the return of another camp-meeting occasion, they would move right to the encampment, and continue there to the close, as they had learned by experience, that home was no place of contentment during the time of a good camp-meeting.

Questions

1. What comes to your mind when you hear the word sanctification?
2. Compare our earlier statement to our current statement. How are they different? How are they alike? What do you think about "entire sanctification?"

Article 12- Entire Sanctification

Entire sanctification necessarily follows justification and regeneration, for by it is implied a setting apart for the continual service of God, the individual, justified and regenerated, also a cleansing from all sin and all unrighteousness, which are removed only by the application and cleansing process of Christ's blood. It is an instantaneous act of God through the Holy Spirit by faith in the atoning merits of Christ's blood and constitutes the believer holy. (1 John 1:7-9).

The personal indwelling of God through the Holy Spirit in the believer is the greatest theme of the New Testament. If we are really filled with the Spirit we must have Him in our body. We will then know what it means to be quickened in our mortal flesh by the Spirit that dwelleth in us.

We, therefore, are perfect - perfectly saved- the will of God perfectly performed in the soul. We must get a Scriptural conception of the reality and possibility of such a life. (Doctrines,

Article XVI - Sanctification

Sanctification is a progressive work of the Holy Spirit in the believer which purifies the life and conforms the whole man to the image of Christ as the Word of God is believed and obeyed. It begins at regeneration, continues throughout the individual's life on earth and reaches its completion at the appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Articles of Faith, Bible Fellowship Church)

Mennonite Brethren in Christ (1936), p.
16.

3. What do the following passages teach about sanctification?

-1 Corinthians 6:11

-1 Thessalonians 4:3

-1 Thessalonians 5:23

-1 Peter 1:15

4. What is the purpose of sanctification? When do you believe that purpose will be realized?

5. Whose work is sanctification, God or man's? Explain your answer.

6. What is the relationship between a person's sanctification and that person's experience of abundant life?

7. What evidence do you see in your own life that sanctification is taking place?