

# **How To Obtain The Blessing Of Sanctification**

by Beverly Carradine

Nothing seems simpler to the man who has received the blessing than the way of holiness, while to the person not yet in the experience nothing is darker. One of the reasons that it is called “the secret of the Lord” is that it is a hidden experience to begin with, and it takes the Lord to reveal the blessing. It is the Lord’s secret. AFTER he has revealed it to us we tell it to others, show the way we trod, and wonder that they do not at once enter in. We forget that once we were as profoundly mystified, and the whole matter wrapped in darkness. Letters have been written to me, anxious questionings have been propounded: “How may I enter in?” The reply I would make to all is: First, you must believe that there is such a blessing. More depends upon this than one would at first imagine. The fact of doubt shuts me not only out of the blessing, but will prevent all effort to obtain it. Christ says: “According to your faith, so shall it be unto you.” If I do not believe that Christ can justify, it will not be done; and if I do not believe that he can sanctify, I will never realize that blessed experience.

Second, you must realize your need of this blessing. Here let me say that if the regenerated man who reads these lines has never felt convicted, at some time or times, of the necessity of having a perfectly pure and holy heart, then his case is anomalous. These convictions which are wrought in us by the Holy Spirit, if not acted upon, will disappear, and the Christian settles back upon a comparatively low plane again. To obtain the blessing of a holy heart the conviction must be aroused again. This will be effected by a humble, prayerful waiting upon God. He that adopts Psalm 139:23, 24 as his petition will be amazed at what follows. Just as conviction preceded pardon and conversion, so a second and far deeper conviction precedes purity, or the blessing of sanctification. Certainly he who is satisfied with present attainment, content with a life of fallings and risings, alternate defeats and victories, states of coldness and gloom, and, above all, the presence of sinful tendencies in the heart, such a one will never come into the great blessing.

Third, you must desire the blessing. God must see that you long for it supremely. This time you are not to enter upon service, but upon marriage. Christ is going to establish the most tender and delightful and permanent relationship. He, on this occasion, is going to make the heart holy, and then forever abide in it. In the regenerated life he was a wayfarer that turned in for a night, but in sanctification he is going to dwell in you, consciously, forever. (John 14:23.) He is going to give himself to you in his fullness. Such a gift demands that your heart cry out with burning desires and quenchless longings.

Fourth, you must seek for the blessing. There must be no idle, indolent waiting. The tarrying at Jerusalem was any thing but an idle one. The hours and days were filled with the most ardent seeking and importunate supplication. You must seek for it. Conscience must bear witness that you are seeking; people must see it; nature in the lonely grove and watchful stars must know it; above all, God must see that you are seeking the greatest blessing he has for us on earth. It must be a seeking that will not be diverted by any thing. The frowns and smiles of men, the ridicule and opposition certain to come must not be regarded — no, not for one moment. You must desire it like the man of the parable, who parted with all he had for the treasure in the field, and like another, who gave up all his gems for the pearl of great price.

Fifth, you must not be discouraged. A thousand things will arise to create despondency and despair. You will see other people pass in before you. Satan will be busy with you here, but keep your eyes on Christ, and not the people. You may be troubled with fluctuations of feeling. Experience of deadness and heaviness may possibly creep over you. Pay no attention to them. You are not sanctified by your feelings. Satan will endeavor, in various ways, to darken your mind and sadden your heart. The dark birds of gloom, doubt, and despair will swoop down upon your altar; but, like Abraham, stand and keep them off, and wait till God sends the fire. The fire will come, and likewise the burning lamp. That is, the work will be done, and the witness given; the baptism and the illumination is to see and recognize. The fire and the lamp will both be sent. Only determine that nothing shall discourage you, and all will be well.

Sixth, consecrate yourself entirely to God. This is called the first step. Put every thing on the altar. Make an Appomattox surrender of yourself. Become God's man by solemn covenant. Turn over every thing to Christ that you are and have, and ever expect to be and have. Give him your whole self. He will not accept a lesser gift. Christ intends giving himself in his fullness to you, and he demands the same thing at your hands. Put every faculty on the altar; place your money there, and your reputation and ambition. Place your tongue there, and your time and your influence. If you have wronged any one, promise God to right that wrong, and do it. If you are at enmity, first be reconciled with thy brother, then come with thy gift unto the altar. Is every thing upon the altar? If so, who is the altar? Paul tells you in Hebrews that it is Christ. What does the altar do? Glory be to God, it sanctifies the gift! See Matthew 23:19. When the gift was laid upon the Jewish altar, it became as holy as the altar. Thus it is we become holy, if we are on our altar, Christ; if, in a word, we are perfectly consecrated. The word of God says that "every devoted thing is most holy unto the Lord." Will you believe that? Will you take God at his word?

Seventh, you must believe that Christ makes you holy right now. Faith is the second step to sanctification. Will you take that step and receive full salvation? If you can and will believe that the blood of Jesus Christ sanctifies you now, the work of sanctification will be done, and the glory of God will come upon you. "Said I not unto thee that, if thou believest, thou shouldst see the glory of God?" Plant yourself on God's own word; he says that the altar sanctifies you, that the blood cleanses and makes you holy. You do not say this; the preacher did not originate the speech; it is the word of the Lord! Then believe that word; receive it in your heart; say, "I am sanctified by the blood, because Christ says so;" and hold on with unmoved confidence until the witness comes. The witness will come and will not tarry where the soul is consecrated and the heart exercises a present appropriating faith; It will rush to and settle upon your faith like the dove-like Spirit swept down upon the Savior. It is bound to come because of the divine faithfulness and in fulfillment of the divine promise. But have I a right to say that Christ sanctifies me before the witness is given? Can I dare to say, will I be able to say that the blood makes me holy before the experience is set up in my soul? To this I reply that if you are conscious of a perfect consecration (and your own spirit will always witness to that fact), then you can say that the blood cleanses, and believe it, because God gives the perfectly consecrated man the right to say it. "Every devoted thing is most holy."

"The altar sanctifies the gift." The instant I believe it and say it, that instant the work is done. The Bible says: "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." I must so believe that I will be willing to confess

and proclaim, and then salvation in its fullness comes. This is the order: heart and mouth. Many have failed here. Many have had the belief, but, refused to speak. Felt powerfully moved to do so, but from a sudden timorousness, a sudden false humility, a swift temptation from Satan, they shrunk back into silence and missed the salvation that was ready to be poured, in all its richness, fullness, and blessedness, into the soul. I can recall two cases of recent date when the consecration had been made and the faith was born in the heart, and the Spirit of God with mighty pressure urged them to arise and claim and own the blessing. They could with difficulty keep silence, so great was the inward movement and impulse of the Holy Ghost upon them to speak. In both cases they shrunk back, and in both cases have I witnessed since a rapidly weakening faith and an unmistakable lapse in the spiritual life.

It is no presumption to believe what God asserts, and to proclaim what God declares. But it is presumption and sin besides to refuse to believe God's word, and be afraid to repeat what he affirms. He that is conscious that he is not a perfectly consecrated man should not dare to say that he is made holy; but he who knows in the depths of his soul, and thrilling along every fiber of his being, that he is on the altar — bound, handed over, and devoted to the Lord — cannot only say, "The blood sanctifies me now," but should say so without a moment's delay. A lady in Alabama very recently, in obedience to the instruction of a minister, placed every thing on the altar. When she had done so the preacher, standing over her, said: "My sister, do you know who the altar is?" She replied: "Yes, it is the Lord Jesus Christ!" The minister rejoined: "The word of God says that the altar sanctifies the gift. Will you believe this? Do you believe that Christ makes you holy right now?" She answered, after the pause of a moment, "I do!" and instantly the refining fire of God did its work, and her soul was sanctified. I read once this story of the first Napoleon: His horse had become affrighted and was dashing down the lines beyond the control of the rider, when suddenly a common soldier darted from the ranks, and, flinging himself on the horse's neck, caught the reins, checked the animal, and placed the bridle in the emperor's hand. With a smile of appreciation, Napoleon said: "Thank you, captain?" As instantly did the soldier reply: "Of what regiment, sire?" And the emperor's reply, as he swept on, was: "The Old Guard." What a wonderful appropriating faith the man had! Do you know what many people who read these lines would have replied when the emperor said: "Thank you, captain!" They would have said: "You make a great mistake, sire! I am no captain; I am nothing but a poor soldier — a wretched, obscure private marching in the rear ranks, and will doubtless die in the rear ranks."

This is the way many do in the spiritual life, and is the explanation of their never coming into the higher life. God says to them: "The blood cleanses you; Christ makes you holy." "O no!" they reply, "not me; I cannot be holy; the blood cannot purify me; I can never be but what I am — a poor, halting, repining, imperfect follower of the Lord." And they never do; because they will not believe the word of the Lord. In the rear ranks they stay, when they could be a power in the cohorts of heaven if they would take God at his word. Would that the faith of this soldier in the word of a man might shame or inspire us into at least an equal faith in the word of God! "Thank you, captain!" "Of what regiment, sire?" is the lightening-like response of the soldier. And immediately, the story runs, he walked to the Old Guard and took his position as an officer; and in reply to the indignant protest of the colonel, as to what he did there, said: "I am a captain." "Who said so?" was the colonel's inquiry. And the triumphant rejoinder of the promoted soldier, as he pointed to the emperor,

was: “He said so!” My brother, if you are on the altar, God says you are a holy man. As he says so, believe it, and immediately take your position in the “inheritance of them that are sanctified.”

In reply to all gainsayers and fault-finders who rise against your profession and life, saying there is no such thing as a holy heart and life, and that they doubt your experience and deny your claim, simply point to the Savior and reply calmly, but triumphantly: “He said!” But why is it that we see cases of individuals who affirm that they possess this faith, and yet do not obtain the witness of the blessing? In many instances the failure arises because of a defective consecration. All is not given up to God. There has not been a total surrender of life and property and family and reputation and will. There is mental reservation somewhere. The tongue is not on the altar, some one is hated in the heart, some wrong has not been righted, some confession has not been made, some duty remains undischarged.

Of course, if the heart be wrong in all these matters, the heavenly fire will not fall. The dove will not alight on a carcass. The Holy Spirit will not descend upon and make as his home and resting-place a disobedient and impure heart. A perfect consecration is the mother of a beautiful child — viz., a perfect faith. At the end of the rod of consecration faith buds, blooms, and bears fruit. While I will not say that consecration can evolve faith, inasmuch as faith is a distinct exercise of the soul, yet I firmly believe they never are and never can be long separated. Indeed, so near are they at times as to seem almost one act of the soul. In other instances we see people who say they are walking by faith, and yet never receive the witness, and sadder still, gradually get farther and farther from the blessing.

The explanation in this case is that what they regard as faith is nothing but a spirit of listlessness and apathy. Instead of believing, they have really ceased to believe. The ceasing to seek for and to expect possession of the pearl of great price, shows the decay of faith. Theirs is not the rest of faith, but the slumber of indolence, and a virtual giving up of the struggle. They are easily recognized. The face grows cloudy, the fervor of prayer departs, the attitude of pressing forward is gone; they have evidently paused in the race. A real faith pants with the desire for holiness. While it rests on the word of God, it does not rest from its striving to enter in through the strait gate. It continues to knock. Like Esther, it stands before the throne; and, though mute of lip at times, yet is it full of wistful pleadings of heart, and never so beautiful in the eyes of the King of heaven. It rests on the word of God; but its eyes are fixed upon the skies, awaiting the second coming of the Lord Jesus to the soul; this time the coming without sin unto salvation.

There are other cases where all are puzzled to account for the failure. The parties say that the consecration is perfect, that they are steadily seeking the blessing by faith, that they claim it now by faith, and yet they have not the gospel treasure, the holy secret of the Lord. This much we must say: that God is faithful. If we receive not that which God has promised, the explanation is to be found in some failure on our part to comply with divine requirements and conditions. The general cause is known to all under the words defective faith and consecration; the particular reason for failure is known to the man only and to his God. But at the judgment-day all will know the unbelief, or the secret sin, that kept a child of God from coming into the possession of a holy heart, and living a holy life.