
TURNING TO CHRIST IN OUR CONFLICT WITH SIN

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INTRODUCTION

According to how most things work in life, I must first *achieve* something before I'm *declared* to be something. For example, I must first actually graduate before I receive a diploma and am declared a graduate. I must complete a course of study, pass my classes, and finish with a certain grade point average. However, the gospel follows a different logic flowing from God's grace. It begins with a declaration of righteousness that has nothing to do with anything I have achieved.

The Bible is very clear that "None is righteous, no not one" (Rom.3:10). In fact, the Bible teaches that we are all alike dead in sin (Eph. 2:1). Instead, the Christian is declared righteous through faith in Christ and his righteousness. One of the best summations of the gospel may be found in 2 Cor. 5:21, where we are told that, "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." This transfer of our sinful status to Christ, and his righteous status to us, is called justification. This happens right at the start of the Christian life. We are declared righteous.

However, the logic of the gospel doesn't end there. God declares the Christian righteous from the start. But God also intends to make us into what he has already declared us to be. In other words, the gospel – the good news – is *more than* that our sins are forgiven through Christ. The good news is that God intends to make us righteous like Christ. Although forgiveness remains essential, the greater end God has in mind is to transform us into the image of his Son. As Rom. 8:29 says, "For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers." This process of transformation, of becoming what God has declared us to be, is known as sanctification.

As we think about sanctification, it is important to remember that this too is part of God's grace in our lives. The apostle Paul says,

"For the *grace of God* has appeared, bringing salvation to all people, *training us* to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works" (Titus 2:11-14).

God does not simply tell us, now that we are Christians, to say "no" to ungodliness. Instead, his grace trains us. God does not simply demand obedience. Instead, he graciously disciplines us towards greater godliness. The word "train" includes the ideas of instruction, teaching, and guidance. It has a goal but assumes that a process is required to get there. Training is always progressive. So is sanctification.

Elsewhere, Paul talks about the need to "learn Christ" in a way that leads to a new life, where we are taught to "put off the old self" and to "put on the new self, created in the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness" (Eph. 4:20-24). The question for us is: are we being trained by God's grace in such a way that transforms our lives? Are we learning Christ in such a way that truly leads to righteousness? In the following pages we will examine what it means to be trained by God's grace, to learn Christ, in ways that lead to sanctification.

OUR PERSONAL STRUGGLE WITH SIN IS PART OF A MUCH LARGER STORY.

First, in order to learn Christ in a way that leads to sanctification, we must see that our personal struggle with sin is part of a much larger story found in Scripture, a story with its focus on Jesus. This is why the Bible is essential for sanctification. Jesus himself prays for his disciples, "Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth" (John 17:17). We will not be sanctified apart from Scripture.

This points to what may be our greatest struggle. It is not individual sins that most threaten our progress in sanctification. It is living our lives by the wrong story, a story that stands in opposition to Scripture, a story that is untrue. Paul describes the danger in the following way: “having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the *truth* and wander off into *myths*” (2 Tim. 4:3-4). Think for a minute about a myth. It is a story. Paul uses it here as a story that stands in opposition to the truth of Scripture.

Our lives follow some story line. Consider the narrative that shapes your life. Who are the characters? Who is important? What are the driving themes? Is it about your pleasure, your plans, or your future? Are the important people in your narrative the ones who take supporting roles and help you achieve your desires? One of the clearest ways to uncover our myths is to think of our daydreams or fantasies! They are stories that suit my passions, stories that are all about me.

It is important to see that sanctification is not simply about a struggle between right behavior and wrong behavior. There’s always a larger story behind of our sin. For instance, consider lying. Lies are sometimes called ‘stories’ for a reason! When I lie, I am creating another narrative to suit my passions, to make my life easier, to get me out of trouble, to get something for myself.

Deeper than right and wrong behavior, the struggle in our lives is between two opposing stories. One is a myth within which I stand at the center of it all. The other is the story of Scripture with Christ at the center of it all. We will not make much progress in sanctification while clinging to our self-centered stories. Truth must replace myth. As we read Scripture, our own personal dramas in which we play the leading role must be challenged. We must see Christ himself as the protagonist in a sweeping story that our own lives are caught up in.

In other words, only as our attention is drawn to Jesus will sanctification progress. Yes, we need to be aware of our own struggles with sin. We need to see our personal tendencies and what makes us open to temptation. But even in the midst of our deepest struggles we must see that Jesus’ struggle against sin is the focus of Scripture (see Heb. 2:17-18). In other words, our victories over sin are not of first importance. Jesus’ victory over sin is the foundation for sanctification.

In the story of the Bible, two individuals are of prime importance. One of these is Adam. His failure and fall into sin set the course for all of history as well as our own personal experience. In him, we too are fallen. No one had to teach us to do wrong. It comes very naturally. I see this in my young children. They did not need any examples to yell, scream, and fight. They quickly figured it out on their own. This disposition was inherited (most directly from me!).

In other words, it is not simply individual sins we contend with. Our own problem with sin is part of a much larger story that traces its origin to Adam. The only hope is for someone to completely undo what Adam has done. Jesus is this person. He is the other individual of prime importance. So much so that Scripture refers to him as the “last Adam” (1 Cor. 15:45). These two are compared side-by-side in Rom. 5:19 – “For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous.” Just as Adam’s disobedience is the source for all of our struggles with sin, Jesus’ own obedience is our hope in sanctification.

This comparison between Adam and Jesus is dramatized in the opening chapters of the Gospels (Matt. 4:1-11). Jesus comes face to face with Satan, only not in a garden as did Adam and Eve, but in the wilderness, into a world that has become barren and broken under the curse due to sin. The substance of Satan’s temptation is that Jesus should live for himself – “satisfy *your* hunger, Jesus; call upon others to deliver *you*, Jesus; take the kingdoms of the world for *yourself*, Jesus.” Yet Jesus refuses and instead takes upon himself the role the Father gave him as a servant to others, who through his own death and resurrection comes to deliver the descendants of Adam and Eve, the heirs of those who had decided to live for themselves.

As Jesus became a servant and submitted himself in obedience, he became the source of sanctification. Jesus himself said, “For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified” (John 17:19). Once again, Jesus is the main character in this story; however, not as he exalts himself, but as he humbles

himself. And as we read Scripture we must continually be drawn to him. We must turn from our self-exalting stories and place our hope in him, our faith in him, if we are to be transformed into his image. As J.C. Ryle said, “if we would be sanctified, our course is clear and plain: we must begin with Christ...The very first step towards sanctification, no less than in justification, is to come with faith to Christ.”¹

DEATH AND RESURRECTION ARE THE CENTRAL THEMES IN SANCTIFICATION

As we consider what faith in Christ looks like in our ongoing struggle with sin, we must see that his death and resurrection are central. At times Christians limit the significance of his death and resurrection to forgiveness for sin, to justification. But the Bible is clear that Jesus’ death and resurrection are just as significant for sanctification. Not only does his death overcome the penalty of sin, but also the power of sin. Not only is Jesus’ resurrection his vindication and a declaration of his righteousness; it is also the source of new life.

The apostle Paul puts it this way. “For I delivered to you as of *first importance* what I also received: that Christ *died* for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was *raised* on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:3-4). In other words, if Christ is the main character in Scripture, his death and resurrection is the focal point of the drama. His death and resurrection is the climax of the entire story. More pointedly, his death and resurrection are the climax of all history and have immense significance for our own lives as well.

Objectively, in history, through his death and resurrection, we are told that God “*disarmed* the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by *triumphing* over them in him” (Col. 2:15). Through Christ’s death and resurrection, the power of sin was overturned. Death was overcome. You can read at the end of the Gospels the quite literally earth shaking impact of Jesus’ death and resurrection (Matt. 27:50-54; 28:2-6). We continue to feel the rippling effects of these events in our own lives. What took place in history, objectively, apart from us, becomes the driving power in our lives now as Christians.

Paul describes Christ’s death and resurrection as matters of first importance not only because they are the key moments in history when Christ accomplished our salvation. They are not simply important as past events. Jesus’ death and resurrection have abiding value for our lives now and are the basis for sanctification. What has happened objectively, apart from us, in history is of the utmost importance for us subjectively, personally, in our own daily lives. Death and resurrection must be foremost in our minds as we deal with our sin.

This is the pattern found in the New Testament. Let me encourage you to stop now and read Rom. 6:1-11. Notice how many times the apostle Paul mentions *Christ’s* death and resurrection in relation to *us*. In v.4, he says, “We were buried with him...in order that, just as Christ was raised...we too might walk in newness of life.” In v.5 he talks about “being united with him in a death like his” and “being united to him in a resurrection like his.” In v.6, “our old self was crucified with him,” and v.8, “we have died with Christ,” and “we will also live with him.” Again and again, death and resurrection are central themes and must remain central in our own lives.

The point is that a relationship with Christ, who died and was raised, changes our relationship with sin in dramatic ways. The question Paul is dealing with is found in v.1. “Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?” No! Why? You have died to sin and have been raised to new life through Christ who died and was raised. This is why sanctification begins with faith in Christ together with an understanding of who we now are in Christ. My faith is in him who died and was raised. This is of first importance.

Let’s allow Paul to sum it up, as he does in v.10&11. “For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. *So you also must consider yourselves* dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.” What is true for Christ becomes true for me in my relationship with him. Considering ourselves dead to sin and alive to God is part of what it means for us to live by faith.

The famous 4th century Bishop Augustine provides a powerful example of what this looks like in practice.² Before he became a Christian, Augustine was self-admittedly sexually promiscuous. The story goes that years later, after he had been a Christian for some time, a former mistress passed him in the street. She

called out to him, “Augustine, it is I.” He stopped, turned and responded, “Yes, but it is no longer I, Augustine.” What was he saying? ‘The Augustine you once knew is no more. *That* Augustine is now dead. *This* Augustine standing before you is now alive to God in Christ Jesus.’ As we live by faith, our response to sin must be similar.

This is by no means to suggest it is an easy thing to do. We don’t know how Augustine was feeling at the time, how powerful the temptation was as he remembered his former relationship with this woman. The point is he responded in faith as he identified himself with Christ, his death and resurrection. This is the call of the Christian life. This is what it looks like to have “learned Christ,” as Paul describes it in Eph. 4:20. It is what theologians of old described as *mortification* and *vivification*, dying and living. This is the action we are to take as we live by faith in Christ who died and was raised.

Basically, this is what it means to repent. John Calvin puts it like this: “repentance consists of two parts: namely, mortification of the flesh and vivification of the spirit.”³ We usually think of repentance simply as stopping one thing and doing another. Stop sinning and do the right thing. If that’s all repentance is, it has nothing to do with Jesus. Christian repentance is much more. It requires me to ask what the death and resurrection of Jesus is to look like in my life. As I struggle with a specific sin, that is what I must do. I must look to Jesus who died and was raised. I must count myself dead to sin and alive to God in him. Then I must set myself against the particular sins in my life and consider the patterns of new life in Christ that are to replace them.

Two passages that describe what this process of mortification and vivification looks like in practice are Eph. 4:21-32 and Col. 3:1-17. We are called to “put off” or “put away” or “*put to death*” things such as lying, stealing, sexual immorality, anger, and obscene talk. We are called to “put on” things such as speaking the truth, laboring to provide for others, compassion, kindness, and humility. As you consider this list (as well as many other things that could be added!), where do you need to see the death of Christ in your life? Where do you need to see more of the resurrection? Is your faith in Christ becoming visible as you struggle with sin?

Let me give you an example. A number of years ago, a young woman came to me with roommate problems. Although in the same house, she and her roommate had not spoken with each other in over a month! At the same time, each had been saying plenty about one another to friends. Of course it was about money, bills, and who was going to keep the refrigerator they had bought at the start of the year. I have seen plenty of roommate problems, but rarely this degree of anger and hatred.

In our conversation, I read Eph. 4:31-32, “Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.” Notice how the first sentence describes mortification and the second, vivification. As I read these verses, she began to cry. But I quickly realized these weren’t tears of conviction. They were flowing from a hard heart. She said, “But I can’t do that!” And it was clear that she did not want to do it. This young woman needed to see this as an opportunity to “learn Christ” and to see his death and resurrection at work in her. Sadly, both decided to cherish their bitterness and bide their time until the end of the year when they could escape each other.

What would Christ’s death and resurrection have looked like here? Many things could be mentioned. Mortification would have meant dying to pride, to being right, and going humbly to the other person. Vivification, the resurrection, would have looked like listening to the other person and a willingness to put the other’s interest above her own, not only speaking the truth but doing so in love.

When this young woman responded, “I can’t do that!” in one sense she was exactly right. It was not within her power apart from Christ to rid herself of anger and instead be tenderhearted. This is exactly where she needed to turn to Christ, to call out to him who died and was raised for her, and to move forward in faith toward her roommate, in the way he calls her to. She needed to trust that God would be present, providing the grace needed and producing change both in her and her roommate as she acted in faith.

THE AIM OF SANCTIFICATION IS COMPLETE TRANSFORMATION

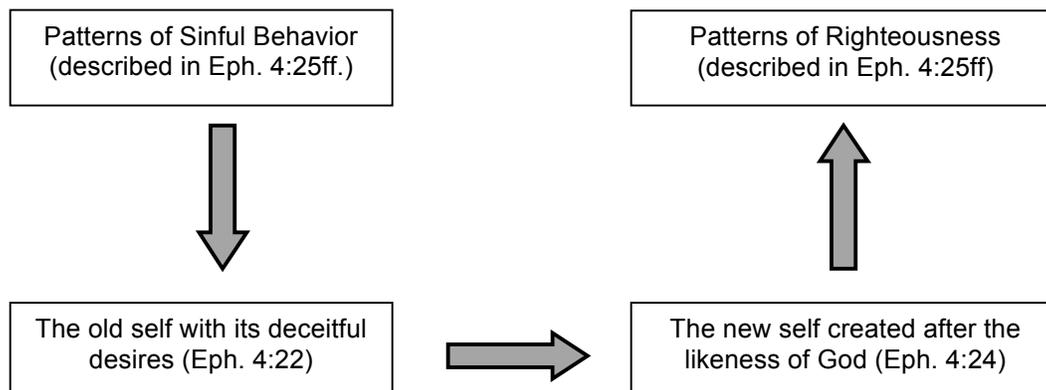
The above scenario illustrates something else about sanctification. It's about much more than changed behavior. It must go to the heart. The puritan Walter Marshall put it this way: "Our work is not only to alter vicious customs, but to mortify corrupt natural affections, which bred those corruptions; and not only to deny the fulfilling of sinful lusts, but to be full of holy love and desire."⁴ Sanctification does not simply make us more like Christ outwardly but inwardly as well. Not only will we begin to do things that Christ would do, we will begin to love the things that Christ loves.

When Jesus is asked which commandment is the most important of all, he responded, "You shall *love* the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall *love* your neighbor as yourself" (Matt. 22:37-39). If love of God and love of neighbor underlies true obedience to God's law, we need to trace our sinful behavior to other affections that are at work in our hearts.

Above we looked at the directions Paul provides in Eph. 4 to put off patterns of sinful behavior and to put on new ways of living in accord with the new life we have through the resurrection. These sinful patterns have their source in what Paul calls the "old self," and he describes this old self as being "corrupt through *deceitful desires*" (Eph. 4:22). These desires need to be addressed if we are to make progress in sanctification. Otherwise, although we may have success in manipulating certain behaviors, these deceitful desires will simply continue to manifest themselves in other ways.

Let me give a personal example. When I started college, I came with a strong desire to have fun. I was fairly successful in fulfilling that desire in many the typical ways students do, the ways that led my university to be voted one of the top party schools. However, by the end of my freshman year I had become rather tired of the routine. It was no longer fun. So instead I decided to give myself to my schoolwork. I studied hard. I had great goals and ambitions as a student. I did well. Outwardly a lot had changed. My parents were very pleased! No one thought to question how I lived now. But I came to realize that I was actually no different than before. None of my new behavior came from a love of God and a love of neighbor. It all flowed from a great love for myself, just as my previous desires for fun had. Now it was simply manifesting itself in a desire for acclaim and recognition for my intelligence and ability. Inwardly, I was just the same.

This is why they are called "*deceitful desires*." They are not obvious. But as we pursue sanctification, we must not only give our attention to the sins on the surface. We must have a growing awareness of the deeper desires that are at work. The following chart may be helpful in thinking this through in greater detail:⁵



The boxes on top are the outward behaviors. The boxes on bottom contain the deeper heart issues from which the outward behaviors arise. The point here is that sanctification does not happen simply by exchanging patterns of sinful behavior for patterns of righteous living. We are never simply dealing with what's on top. Our sinful behavior must be traced to the deeper desires at work below, desires that in one way or another will be all about me. The "old self" is always and only for himself (or herself).

So, for example, if you struggle with various patterns of sexually immoral behavior, consider the desires that are at work in your heart. Is it self-centered gratification, self-centered pleasure, self-centered security, or perhaps self-pity? More than likely you'll see yourself at the center, that it's about what you can get. This is what's at work beneath the surface. On the other hand, the "new self" being transformed into the image of Jesus is called to love God and love neighbor, and from this love comes forth new patterns of living. I will have a completely different agenda in my relationships with others.

But how can you change what's going on in your heart? How can your desires and affections be transformed? As we see how deeply sin runs within us, it should cause us to call out to Christ that he might change us. Remember, in sanctification we are just as dependent upon God as in any other part of our salvation. We must use the things he has given to draw us closer to himself, such as Scripture, prayer, and fellowship with other Christians, trusting that he uses these means of grace to draw our hearts towards him.

In other words, we must always remember that the gospel begins with God's love towards us. God's love underlies sanctification, specifically the love that he has displayed through his Son. As we begin to comprehend God's love for us, it provides both the pattern as well as motivation for the love we are to show to others. The apostle John says that this love that God has for us underlies the love we are to have for others. "If God so loved us," he says, "we also ought to love one another" (1 John 4:10-11).

At the same time, we must *act* in faith. We are not to wait until we *feel* the right way before we *act* in the way God calls us to. We do not need to feel love before we act in love. Much of the time, what we feel as Christians is great conflict. Paul says in Gal. 5:17 that, "the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh." J.C. Ryle, commenting on this verse says,

"Sanctification, again, is a thing which does not prevent a man having a great deal of inward spiritual conflict. By conflict I mean a struggle within the heart between the old nature and the new, the flesh and the Spirit, which are to be found together in every believer."⁶

This is the opposition we constantly experience deep within us. But in the midst of this great struggle, the power of the gospel is seen as we take hold of who we now are in Christ and strive against the "old self," not allowing it to dictate the way we live. Rather, as those who live by faith in Jesus who died and was raised, we strive to put on the ways of the "new self, created after the likeness of God."

The point is: we must constantly strive on both fronts, both at the level of the heart and the habits that flow from it.⁷ We must examine our hearts and the desires that drive the ways we live. We must consider what death and resurrection will look like at the level of our hearts as we are called to deny ourselves and love both God and neighbor. We also need to confront our habits, our patterns of behavior, and put to death the ways our sinful hearts manifest themselves in our lives. We must consider what death and resurrection will look like here too, both inwardly as well as outwardly.

Growing as a Christian inevitably leads to a growing awareness of this conflict, both its depth and breadth in our lives. The struggle will increase, but only because you are seeing how great the struggle actually is.⁸ But do not despair! Remember the words of Paul, as he says in view of his own struggle, "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Rom. 7:24-25). We must not forget that Christ is our righteousness. Only this will free us to look honestly and deeply at how sin works in our lives without fear. A growing awareness of sin must always correspond with a growing sense of God's grace.

OTHER PEOPLE ARE ESSENTIAL IN SANCTIFICATION

If at the heart of sanctification is love for God and love for neighbor, this means that other people must be a part of our lives if we are to make any progress. We may be tempted to make sanctification a private study. I find that to be true for myself because I don't want others to know about my struggles with sin. I would rather hide it so as not to experience shame. Of course, this betrays what I profess, that Christ alone is my righteousness. However, I'd just rather people not know about all the details!

Yet the Bible is clear that we will not make progress in sanctification if we are working to keep our sins secret. We are told, “confess your sins to one another and pray for one another” (James 5:16). It is hard to imagine a better way to die to ourselves than to confess our sins in humility to others. What this means is that death and resurrection, mortification and vivification, are not individual activities. It’s a group effort.

We are called to engage in each other’s sanctification, and we must allow others to be part of our own. Consider these verses:

“Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But *exhort* one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today,’ that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin” (Heb. 3:12-13).

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and *admonishing* one another in all wisdom” (Col. 3:16).

“If your brother sins against you, go and *tell him his fault*, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother” (Matt. 18:15).

Exhorting and admonishing, graciously confronting each other, is what it looks like to participate in mortification together. It is a shared responsibility. The clear implication is that if we are not involved in one another’s lives in this way, we are allowing each other to be hardened by sin. We need other people to bring insight and clarity into our self-deception. And we likewise need to do this for others. If we are overlooking each other’s sin, we are helping to reinforce it.

The death of Christ must be a part of our relationships, but so must the resurrection. It is not only confronting and exhorting we are called to, but encouraging as well. Consider these verses:

“Rather, *speaking the truth in love*, we are to grow up into him who is the head, into Christ” (Eph. 4:15).

“Therefore *encourage* one another and build one another up, just as you are doing” (1 Thes. 5:11).

“And let us consider how to *stir up one another* to love and good works...encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near” (Heb. 10:24-25).

Such words bring about new life. We are not only to be adept at seeing one another’s sin, but also envisioning what resurrection will look like in their lives. Both mortification and vivification, death and resurrection, must shape the way we relate.

We tend to be bothered by other peoples’ sin. Just think of your roommates! It may be something we endure. Or we may abandon the relationship if we can’t. However, our calling is to be attentive and learn how sin works in each other’s lives so that we can better point one another to Christ. It is both something we must do for others and something we must be open to from others. All alone, we are prone to fall away.

The importance of this was impressed upon me while running my first half-marathon. The initial six or seven miles I ran in the middle of a group of about ten or eleven runners. I felt as though I was just being pulled along. The running was easy. In fact, I wasn’t even focused on running. My attention was on the group, our movement together, where I was in relation to others. There was a lot of energy and excitement. But about halfway through the race, I realized I couldn’t keep pace. I had to pull back. All of a sudden I was all alone and my thoughts turned to myself. Into my mind came thoughts such as, “No one would care if I walked. I don’t even have to do this. I can stop.”

It was much more difficult running alone. Motivation was easy when I was surrounded by others. We were all keeping pace, all headed in the same direction, moving towards the same end. The same is true in sanctification. There is momentum that comes from joining with others as we strive together against sin and move closer to the image of Christ, encouraging one another as we go, all longing for the same end.

Being involved in the lives of others requires us to think less and less about ourselves, and this is what sanctification entails! Lane and Tripp say,

“Living in community pushes us to die to ourselves. There will be times when loving others and allowing others to serve and love us will feel like death, but this is the pathway to real life in Christ. The more we understand our own hearts, the more we see that it takes a work of God’s grace to transform self-absorbed individuals into a community of love.”⁹

If we are to become more like Christ, we too must be willing to humble ourselves and become a servant to others (Phil. 2:5-8).

CONCLUSION

Possibly the best passage to sum up all of the above is found in 2 Cor. 5:14-15, “For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.”

Here we find the larger story with its focus upon Christ. He is at the center of it all. His death and resurrection are of the upmost importance. At the same time we see the clear implication for our own lives. He died and was raised for us, and so his death and resurrection will be seen in our lives as the pattern for sanctification. We must die to ourselves and live for him. As he gave himself for us, his love compels us to give our lives for others as we are being conformed to his image. This amounts to both the sum as well as the substance of sanctification.

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ENDNOTES

¹ J.C. Ryle, *Holiness* (Darlington: Evangelical Press, 2001), 31.

² I have tried but been unable to track down the reference for this story.

³ John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* (ed. John T. McNeill; trans. Ford Lewis Battles; 2 vols.; LCC; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 1:600 (3.3.8).

⁴ Walter Marshall, *The Gospel Mystery of Sanctification* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 1999), 25.

⁵ This chart is adapted from David Powlison, “Crucial Issues in Contemporary Biblical Counseling,” in *Counsel the Word 2nd Edition* (Glenside: Christian Counseling & Educational Foundation, 2002), 111.

⁶ J.C. Ryle, *Holiness*, 20.

⁷ J.C. Ryle says, “It is a fight of perpetual necessity. It admits no breathing time, no armistice, no truce. On weekdays as well as on Sundays, in private as well as in public, at home by the family fireside as well as abroad, in little things...as well as in great ones...the Christian’s warfare must unceasingly go on. The foe we have to do with keeps no holidays, never slumbers, never sleeps,” *Ibid.*, 55.

⁸ John Owen, another great puritan, writes, “Your state is not at all to be measured by the opposition sin makes to you, but by the opposition you make to it.” *An Exposition Upon Psalm CXXX* (vol. 6 of *The Works of John Owen*; Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1995), 605.

⁹ Timothy S. Lane and Paul David Tripp, *How People Change* (Winston Salem: Punch Press, 2006), 83.