

## **Terms on Entire Sanctification in Scripture.**

This session was presented at School of the Prophets in Pell City, Alabama.

If you wish to have more information about this session, you can download a PDF of the 2 handouts here:

[www.newstartdiscipleship.com/entire-sanctification](http://www.newstartdiscipleship.com/entire-sanctification)

The video of the presentation is here: <https://youtu.be/aoYMdeACriM>

If you are looking for more teaching about entire sanctification, but in a more devotional way, I would encourage you to check out [www.40daysofholiness.com](http://www.40daysofholiness.com)

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### **Didactic Terms:**

- Entire sanctification (1 Thessalonians 5:23)
  - Entire is *holoteleis* a compound word which would be roughly “completely to the goal” or “totally in all the parts”
- Perfecting Holiness (2 Corinthians 7:1) – from the *telos* word family, meaning a completing
- Perfection (Gr. *Telos/teleios* – Hebrews 6:1)
  - For further research on this, see Chris Bounds, “The Doctrine of Christian Perfection in the Apostolic Fathers,” *JWTS*, Volume 42, Number 2

### **Imaginative/Metaphorical/Descriptive Terms:**

- A divided heart / united heart (Ps. 86:11, compare with 1 Chron 12:38, same Hebrew word)
- Double-minded / purified heart (James 1:8, 4:8)
- Loving God with All Our Heart
  - Note John Wesley’s definition of loving God: ““What is it to love God, but to delight in him, to rejoice in his will, to desire continually to please him, to seek and find our happiness in him, and to thirst day and night for a fuller enjoyment of him?”
- Submitting to Voluntary slavery to Christ (Romans 6:13ff)
  - This passage also contains a metaphor of taking account of all that is provided in our union with Christ by faith (see Romans 6:11)
- Surrender to a full sacrifice (Romans 12:1)
  - Note: the sacrifice is “living,” “holy,” and “well-pleasing” which is why it is distinct from the moment of the New Birth. No sinner is living (they are dead, Eph. 2:1), or holy, or well-pleasing.
  - Note also that the motivation is gratitude for “God’s mercies,” which means this sacrifice aligns more with the thank offering or fellowship offering than sin offering. Christ brings the sin offering, and dies. We offer up ourselves because of thanks for what he has done, and out of a desire for deeper fellowship.
- A further cleansing beyond salvation (See Acts 15:8-9, compare with Acts 2)

- note that the word “purifying” is from *katharsis*, which is used in John 15:3, where Jesus tells the disciples they are “clean” because of the word he has spoken to them. This demonstrates that it is a further cleansing beyond an initial one.
- Also note that this Greek term is used in 2 Cor. 7:1.
- A filling with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18, comp Eph 1:13, “were sealed”, compare Romans 8:9)
  - Metaphor is compared/contrasted with alcohol (this means \*control\* is the key issue, not “amount.”)
- Jesus made “fully at home” (Eph. 3:17ff, note compound form of “dwell”)
- Holiness is something to follow (Hebrews 12:14)
  - Peace with all men is a relationship which must be pursued, not a one-time transaction; so is holiness.
- A surrender of the greatest of your blessings (Isaac & Abraham)
  - After the faith that was “counted to him for righteousness,” Abraham is called to surrender, *not his sin, but his blessings*, so that they might not be withheld from God, but belong to him.
- The Lord comes suddenly to his temple, and sits as a Refiner/purifier, enabling an offering of righteousness (Malachi 3:1-3)
- The rest that remains for the people of God (Hebrews 4)
- A touching and cleansing of the lips with a coal from the altar (Isaiah 6)
  - Isaiah’s lips are emblematic of sin he (and the people) cannot be free of
  - Note that Christ tells us “out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks”
- A purifying (as with hyssop for uncleanness) to deal with the sinful nature (Psalm 51)
  - Note that hyssop was used to purify uncleanness after contact with a dead body

**Double-Duty Terms** - Terms that include entire sanctification, but are used more broadly in scripture.

God has sovereignly decided that his saving work will be accomplished in stages, but it is all **part of the same thing**, the purification and redemption of man & all things.

- Purity of heart – can be either, depending on the the scope of cleansing.
  - Compare Matthew 5:8 & John 15:3, and Acts 15:8-9. The disciples were “already clean” and yet were “purified by faith” (same root word in Greek). This purification is accomplished in stages, in such a way that both can be called “cleansing / purifying”.
- Perfect love (1 John)
  - The word perfect means “complete” or “all is as it should be”
  - Note the implied contrast between perfect love and imperfect love
  - It is my contention that this term does not apply \*only\* to entire sanctification, but the entire journey of discipleship, based on the fact that we need not be entirely sanctified in order to obey God and love our brother (1 John 2:5, 4:13-21). A perfect love may (must!) continue to grow and progress and be deeper.
- Sanctify / holy
  - Note that sanctify/holy/saints are all from the same word.

- “Saints” (hagioi) is the most common word for Christian in the New Testament. Thus, all Christians are holy, but holiness progresses and increases (2 Cor. 7:1, 1 Thes. 5:23, etc.)
- Denial of self / death to self - This describes the death to our own will and way which takes place in *both* salvation and entire sanctification. The will before justification/regeneration is bound to sin, and we must die to our own sinful desires and will. The will after justification/regeneration is freed, but may still unconsciously be tuned in to self as the primary motivation.
- A saving from Idols (Ezekiel 36:25ff) – a broad metaphor which can apply to both the New Birth and entire sanctification
- “salvation” You were saved (Eph. 2:8-9), you are being saved (1 Cor. 1:18), you shall be saved (
  - You were saved from the guilt and penalty of sin (Eph 2:8-9)
  - You are being saved from the power & presence of sin
  - You shall be saved from all the results of sin & temptations to sin (New Heavens and New Earth)
- Salvation / Gospel
  - Salvation IS part of the terminology for entire sanctification, in that it refers to all the saving work of God... everything he does to “destroy the work of the Devil,” even the final redemption of all things. Too many Bible teachers have a theology that treats forgiveness as the Good News and sanctification as the Irrelevant News. We need to recapture the truth that sanctification is an integral part of the Gospel.

One feature of the way in which Scripture writers and ancient Christians speak of sanctification is that it is challenging to fit it into any particular systematic theology way of speaking in the modern era. Frequently, they speak in metaphor or broad terms. For instance, here’s a beautiful hymn from the ancient world.

Note as you read, how Prudentius describes the battle for inward holiness, and continued victory over sin & lust.

Note the metaphorical use of Jacob’s wrestling with the Lord, and how it “dethroned” lust, and caused him to “strive no more” against the will of God.

A hymn from Prudentius (born in 348 AD):

Yea, I have learned to wait on Thee  
 With heart and lips of purity,  
 Humbly my knees in prayer to bend,  
 And tears with songs of praise to blend.

Prove Thou my heart, my every thought,  
 Search into all that I have wrought:  
 Though I be stained with blots within,  
 Thy quickening rays shall purge my sin.

O may I ever spotless be  
 As when my stains were cleansed by Thee,  
 Who bad'st me 'neath the Jordan's wave

Of yore my soiled spirit lave.

If e'er since then the world's gross night  
Hath cast its curtain o'er my sight,  
Dispel the cloud, O King of grace,  
Star of the East! with thy pure face.

Since Thou canst change, O holy Light,  
The blackest hue to milky white,  
Ebon to clearness crystalline,  
Wash my foul stains and make me clean.

'Twas 'neath the lonely star-blue night  
That Jacob waged the unequal fight,  
Stoutly he wrestled with the Man  
In darkness, till the day began.

And when the sun rose in the sky  
He halted on his shrivelled thigh:  
His natural might had ebbed away,  
Vanquished in that tremendous fray.

Not wounded he in nobler part  
Nor smitten in life's fount, the heart:  
But lust was shaken from his throne  
And his foul empire overthrown.

Whereby we clearly learn aright  
That man is whelmed by deadly night,  
Unless he own God conqueror  
And strive against His will no more.  
- prudentius