

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

First Quarter 2017: *The Holy Spirit and Spirituality*

Lesson 6 “The Holy Spirit and Living a Holy Life”

Read for this week’s study

1 Peter 1:14-16; Isaiah 6:3; Hebrews 12:14; 1 Corinthians 6:11; 1 Timothy 1:8; Ps. 15:1, 2.

Memory Text

“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 5:23, NASB).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Holiness of God
- III. The Nature of Holiness
- IV. The Agent of Sanctification
- V. The Rule of Holiness Is God’s Law
- VI. Pursuing Holiness
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “This week we will have a closer look at what it means to be holy and to live a holy life. [...] The name [‘Holy Spirit’] reminds us that God is holy and that it is God’s great desire to make sinners into the image of His own holiness.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Why is a proper understanding of God’s holiness so important? Would you agree with the lesson: “To deny the purity of God’s holy being is, perhaps, worse than denying His existence.” (Sunday’s lesson) Here is the explanation why: “The latter makes Him nonexistent, the former an unlovely, even detestable god.”
3. “In the New Testament, believers are called holy because of their unique relationship to Jesus that sets them apart for a special purpose. Being holy does not make them ethically perfect and sinless, but changes them so that they can start to live a pure and holy lifestyle (compare with 1 Corinthians 1:2 where Paul calls the Corinthians holy ones or saints, even though they are not sinless and perfect).” (Monday’s lesson)

4. Is there a tension between being holy and having to pursue holiness (cf. 1 Peter 1:15 & Hebrews 12:14)?
5. “Too often we are self-centered in our religion. We focus too much on our victories and on our defeats rather than on God, who alone can give us victory over sin.” (Tuesday’s lesson) Why can’t self-centered religion bring true victory?
6. “We know that God calls us to keep His law. The question arises, though, why should we keep His law if we cannot be saved by it? The answer is found in the idea of holiness.” (Wednesday’s lesson) Do you agree? Why?
7. “While it is possible to keep the letter of the law without love, it is not possible to exhibit true love without keeping the law.” (Wednesday’s lesson)
8. What do we mean when we say: “The only thing we will take with us to heaven will be our characters”? (Thursday’s lesson) Is there a real danger that we focus too much on ourselves (see question 5.)?
9. “Activism is not holiness. There will be people who think that they have done great works for the Lord, and yet they really were not following Him at all. ‘Many will say to Me in that day, “Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?” ’ ” (see Matthew 7:22, 23, NKJV). (Thursday’s lesson) Why is it that these people are so impressed with their track record, but Jesus is not?
10. “There is a big difference between being called by God or being driven to do something for God.” (Thursday’s lesson) How can living and working out of an understanding of being “driven” by God to do something, result in more damage than good?
11. One of the consequences of the Fall in the Garden of Eden was that the image of God in humans became radically disrupted by sin. It remained present in us, but in a marred and distorted state. Sanctification is intended to restore God’s image by reproducing God’s character in his children. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to produce this Christlikeness within believers. The effects of this work of the Holy Spirit are called the *fruit of the Spirit*. What is the significance of the fact that the fruit is relational (Galatians 5:22-23)?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

But now, doesn’t it seem too little that God would only ask for trust? Isn’t it also necessary to know him? And to love him? And to obey him? Not to mention the need to repent. And to be reborn. And to be converted. And to be justified. And to be sanctified. And even to be perfect. And the list gets so long that it’s no wonder that it discourages many people from really wanting to have a right relationship with our God. But don’t be scared by that list. Taken in the larger view of what went wrong, and what needs to be set right, every one of those items I

have mentioned is an integral part of a single, wonderful, reassuring, transforming experience that is made available to us all. And it was never supposed to be so complicated, or to be divided into so many different parts. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #3, "All God Asks is Trust" recorded January, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/3MMCAG>

Lou: You have said a great deal about trust this evening. I can hear a person saying something like this, "When are we going to get on to the really important ideas of justification and sanctification, expiation, propitiation, atonement, substitution and so forth. Haven't we spent long enough on trust?"

Graham: I think we have been talking about justification, but we've given it another name. We'll even use those names, because they are an important part of our history. And when we talk to our friends for whom those *are* the words, then we should use them if we are going to communicate at all. But I'd rather use the words the Bible uses. And some would say, "Well, aren't those the words the Bible uses?" No. It's going to be interesting to arrive in the Kingdom and settle all debates by going up to Paul and saying, "Give us the last word, Paul. What did you mean by justification?"

"Could I hear that one more time?" he'll say.

"Yes. Justification. You know, your favorite word."

"Well, I never used it."

"How about sanctification?"

"No."

"Propitiation? You mean you used none of those terms? Expiation?"

Paul never used one of them. Neither did Jesus or anybody else in the Bible. You see, they are largely Latin words that came from a period when Latin was largely used for theology. A good many of the words, a good share of the heavier words, have Latin derivation. Some come from Greek. We'll look at *Sola Scriptura*. That's pure Latin. And no one studies Latin these days, by and large. Why do we keep using it? Why not "the Bible only." Or the word that I used previously, the *Christomonistic principle*. That's Greek. (I think, by the way, I slipped and said it was Latin one time. That's Greek.) *Christos* (Christ) and *monos* (only). Why not say the "Christ

alone” principle? So I would rather use simple terms as we go through; but having discussed the whole plan of salvation and its transforming experience, we’ll sprinkle these terms through if you like, so you can see where they fit. But Jesus described the whole truth about his Father and how we could be saved without ever using one of those words. Jesus spoke Aramaic.

Lou: I wonder if the words become a sort of shorthand? But the danger of that is we think we understand what we are talking about when we may have loaded the word with meaning that really isn’t fair to the Scripture.

Graham: That’s the hazard. It’s well to go back to the beginning, and we’ll try to do that. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #3 with Lou Venden, “All God Asks is Trust” recorded January, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/3MMCAG>*

Lou: I want to ask the same question but in another way: Isn’t it enough to be justified? Do I also have to be sanctified? Are you saying here that the healing-trust model really challenges that kind of separation and that kind of thinking?

Graham: Very much so. Of course those two words do not occur in the Bible. They are English words of Latin derivation. Not to make light of them. But the Greek word could be more literally translated “set right, put right” for “justification.” Now if a person has been really set right with God and he now loves and trusts him and is willing to listen, don’t you think he would say, “What else do you want me to do, Lord?”

“I want to heal you if you will cooperate.”

“Absolutely! Just tell me, and I’ll follow.” There’s no way to be justified without sanctification following. If you’re not willing to be kept right, you obviously haven’t been set right. So being set right and kept right are all part of the same package. They belong together.

Lou: But I worry a little –for example, one of the questions that came in early in our series: “You’ve made it so complicated. There is so much to think about: justification, sanctification, and all of this. If what really is at stake is simply trusting God, why isn’t it enough to say, ‘I’m going to have the faith of a little child? I’ll just trust God, and don’t bother me with all the rest of this.’”

Graham: But don’t underestimate the faith of a little child. The faith of a little child implies he’s really willing to listen. So if we really have the faith of a little child, we are willing to listen and to be trusting, which by the way is why a little child needs protection, because he’s too willing

to trust anybody. So he needs protection. But on the good side, the faith of a little child is wonderful. Why, I have all my grandchildren home visiting right now. I love it. And they will sit there and listen and believe anything Grandpa says. I could get away with murder, you know, but I won't do it. But to have them sit and look and hang on every word is beautiful. I love it. Well, if we have the faith of a little child we're sitting there listening to God and saying, "Tell me. Tell me more. Tell me more." Look, there's no way to have the faith of a little child without following along and sanctification will come with it and we'll be healed. There's no way to avoid it.

Lou: As I remember the little children in our house, they were trusting, but they also loved to ask "Why?"

Graham: Oh, that's part of the faith of a little child.

Lou: They are eager to grow.

Graham: Yes. I love that. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #14 with Lou Venden, "God Can Completely Heal the Damage Done" recorded May, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/14MMCAG>*

All the law requires is that we love him and we love each other, and behave accordingly. If God changes his law, the quality of life in the hereafter would deteriorate. We do not wish him to change it! So eventually it will be written on our hearts, where a man does his thinking. It becomes thinking obedience, intelligent obedience. We don't love because we're told to; we love because we're absolutely sold on this. We agree with God; we actually do love him, and love each other. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Larger View, #2, recorded October, 1982, Monterey, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/2MMLVIEW>*

If God is the gracious Person we believe Him to be, why does He make such extensive use of law? If this really is a free universe, and God can accept only love and faith that are freely given, why does He have so much to say about law?

Jesus said, "Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." Matthew 11:28-30, RSV.

But Jesus also had much to say about the continuing authority of God's law and the benefits that come to those who are willing to keep all His commandments. He emphasized this from the beginning of His public ministry, as in the Sermon on the Mount.

"For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Whoever then relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but he who does them and teaches them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:18,19, RSV.

Jesus was still emphasizing obedience at the end of His ministry. "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments," He urged His disciples in the upper room. And on the way out to the Garden of Gethsemane He added, "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love." "You are My friends if you do what I command you." John 14:15; 15:10, 14, RSV.

What kind of friendship is it that demands obedience? How does "keep My commandments" fit with "the truth will set you free"?

I believe that one's understanding of God's use of law has much to do with one's conception of God Himself and hence the quality of one's relationship with Him.

Some fourteen hundred years after the giving of the law on Mount Sinai, Jesus came to live among the people who had been entrusted with this revelation of God's will. He found a people who were much preoccupied with God's law and obedience to its every detail.

Jesus never had to tell them not to set up any graven image. They had shunned idolatry since learning their lesson in Babylonian captivity.

Nor did He have to tell them which day was the Sabbath, or that in it they should not do any work. They saw it as their highest duty to keep all ten of the Ten Commandments.

Nor did Jesus have to urge them to pay tithe. They even tithed such small items as mint, dill, and cumin. See Matthew 23:23, RSV.

Or to obey the Old Testament laws of hygiene. They were careful to strain the gnat from a drink, lest they swallow a forbidden insect. See Matthew 23:24; Deuteronomy 14:19.

Or to read the Scriptures. They searched them diligently to find eternal life. See John 5:39, 40, RSV.

Or to be careful in their association with unbelievers. They even performed certain cleansing rituals on returning from the market, and shrank from eating with the Gentiles. See Mark 7:1-5; Galatians 2:11, 12.

They could say with the rich young ruler, “We have obeyed all these laws since our youth.” See Luke 18:18-21.

In the face of such rigor and devotion, one might have thought the Lord would be pleased. But all heaven watched the extraordinary scene of people claiming to love the law while hating the Lawgiver.

Jesus ventured to suggest that they were obeying for the wrong reason and as a result were not really obeying at all; that their picture of God was in error; that if they knew the truth about God, they would obey for a different reason—a reason that would make it possible for them to be obedient and free at the same time. {Maxwell, A. Graham. *I Want to be Free*, 26-28. Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1970}

And he went on with the Beatitudes. . . and then commented on their being the salt of the earth, and the light of the world. And he had to pause, because he sensed that their reaction was unfavorable to what he was saying, and he said, “Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them.” Why would he need to say that in the middle of this presentation? Is it that what he had already said would not seem to be in harmony with the Old Testament?

Now, we need to pause on the meaning of “the Law and the Prophets.” As you know, the Jews divided the Old Testament into three canons: The Law, the Prophets, and the Writings, or The Law, The Prophets, and The Psalms. So that’s the long name for the Old Testament. The Law, The Prophets, and The Psalms. Sometimes that was shortened to The Law and The Prophets. Sometimes it was shortened to just The Law. For example when they said, “You should not call yourself the Son of God; that’s blasphemy,” Jesus said, “Does it not say in your law, we are all gods?” (little g). You know where that quote is? In the Psalms. So he called the Psalms “the Law.” They knew what he was saying when he did this. Jesus said, “Everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled.” They knew he was referring to the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament.

So this isn’t “Think not that I have come to abolish the Ten Commandments.” Sometimes we use it as a key text like that. No. “Think not that I have come to abolish the whole Old Testament. I haven’t. I’ve not come to abolish the Old Testament. I’ve come to fulfill it.” Well,

we think of fulfillment as fulfilling predictions. That's too limited. He had come to fulfill it in every appropriate way, like *explaining, telling them what it was all about*; but they did not like his explanations. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Intertestament Period and Matthew, recorded March, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/51MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/52MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Imagine living in a society where the life of every citizen can be described by the Ten Commandments and 1 Corinthians 13! No one ever kills or hates or lies or steals; no one even wants to hurt anyone else. All regard each other with unfeigned love, trust, and respect. There is no need for prisons, no police on every corner. Our wives and daughters can walk the streets alone at any hour. Everyone is perfectly safe and free.

This is why God's law is called the royal law of liberty. God is not asking us to do anything that is not for our best good. He values nothing higher than our freedom. Think of the price he has paid to give us back our freedom once again! But there can be no freedom without order and self-discipline, mutual love and complete trustworthiness.

Sin is rebellious rejection of God's law. Sin is hating, lying, stealing, cheating. Sin is arrogant insistence on having one's own way. Sin is stubborn unwillingness to listen to the healing words of our Creator. Sin, in its essence, is a spirit of lawlessness.

The only way God could admit rebels to his kingdom would be to turn heaven into a prison, to keep sinners in solitary confinement, lest they hurt and destroy each other. But we can trust God never to give up freedom. In his Son he gave his life to keep the universe free. He has no plans to become a prison warden. He has promised his loyal people a universe free from sin, a home of unthreatened safety and peace. We can trust him to insist forever on obedience to the royal law of liberty. This will not deprive us of our freedom. It *guarantees* our freedom for all eternity.

God can admit to his kingdom only people who can be trusted with all the privileges of freedom. This is why the plan of salvation offers more than just forgiveness. Heaven is not to be peopled with pardoned criminals but transformed saints. This is why Jesus told Nicodemus that he needed to be converted, to have such a change of heart and life that it would seem as if he had been born all over again (see John 3:1–10).

Jesus explained that this marvelous experience of healing is the work of the Holy Spirit, the Teacher of love and truth. And John describes how we may tell if the healing has begun: "No

one born of God commits sin” (1 John 3:9). Or more precisely from the Greek: “No one who is born of God will continue to sin” (NIV). Phillips translates it: “The man who is really God’s son does not practice sin.” As John says in verse 6, “The man who lives ‘in Christ’ does not habitually sin” (Phillips).

Sin is lawlessness, rebelliousness. To continue in a state of habitual lawlessness means that one is still resisting the truth, still unwilling to trust and let God heal. But in the person who has been reborn, faith has taken the place of rebelliousness, there is love instead of lawlessness, there is a longing to be completely healed.

John explains further that we can “know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers” (1 John 3:14, NIV). One of the first symptoms of the healing of salvation is a new regard and love for our fellowmen. Without this love we have reason to question the genuineness of our conversion—in spite of our profession of faith in God. “If any one says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen” (1 John 4:20). {Maxwell, Graham. *Can God Be Trusted?*, 117-119. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 2002}

<http://speakingwellofgod.org/written-materials/can-god-be-trusted-chapters/chapter-11>

Further Study with Ellen White

God does not employ compulsory measures; love is the agent which He uses to expel sin from the heart. By it He changes pride into humility, and enmity and unbelief into love and faith. {MB 76.3}

The Jews had been wearily toiling to reach perfection by their own efforts, and they had failed. Christ had already told them that their righteousness could never enter the kingdom of heaven. Now He points out to them the character of the righteousness that all who enter heaven will possess. Throughout the Sermon on the Mount He describes its fruits, and now in one sentence He points out its source and its nature: Be perfect as God is perfect. The law is but a transcript of the character of God. Behold in your heavenly Father a perfect manifestation of the principles which are the foundation of His government. {MB 77.1}

Many have an idea that they must do some part of the work alone. They have trusted in Christ for the forgiveness of sin, but now they seek by their own efforts to live aright. But every such effort must fail. Jesus says, “Without Me ye can do nothing.” Our growth in grace, our joy, our usefulness,—all depend upon our union with Christ. It is by communion with Him, daily, hourly,—by abiding in Him,—that we are to grow in grace. He is not only the Author, but the

Finisher of our faith. It is Christ first and last and always. He is to be with us, not only at the beginning and the end of our course, but at every step of the way. David says, "I have set the Lord always before me: because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved." Psalm 16:8. {SC 69.1}

Consecrate yourself to God in the morning; make this your very first work. Let your prayer be, "Take me, O Lord, as wholly Thine. I lay all my plans at Thy feet. Use me today in Thy service. Abide with me, and let all my work be wrought in Thee." This is a daily matter. Each morning consecrate yourself to God for that day. Surrender all your plans to Him, to be carried out or given up as His providence shall indicate. Thus day by day you may be giving your life into the hands of God, and thus your life will be molded more and more after the life of Christ. {SC 70.1}

A life in Christ is a life of restfulness. There may be no ecstasy of feeling, but there should be an abiding, peaceful trust. Your hope is not in yourself; it is in Christ. Your weakness is united to His strength, your ignorance to His wisdom, your frailty to His enduring might. So you are not to look to yourself, not to let the mind dwell upon self, but look to Christ. Let the mind dwell upon His love, upon the beauty, the perfection, of His character. Christ in His self-denial, Christ in His humiliation, Christ in His purity and holiness, Christ in His matchless love—this is the subject for the soul's contemplation. It is by loving Him, copying Him, depending wholly upon Him, that you are to be transformed into His likeness. {SC 70.2}

As in nature, so in grace; there can be no life without growth. The plant must either grow or die. . . . At every stage of development our life may be perfect; yet if God's purpose for us is fulfilled, there will be continual advancement. Sanctification is the work of a lifetime. As our opportunities multiply, . . . We shall become strong to bear responsibility, and our maturity will be in proportion to our privileges. {COL 65.2}

Supreme love for God and unselfish love for one another—this is the best gift that our heavenly Father can bestow. This love is not an impulse, but a divine principle, a permanent power. The unconsecrated heart cannot originate or produce it. Only in the heart where Jesus reigns is it found. "We love Him, because He first loved us." In the heart renewed by divine grace, love is the ruling principle of action. It modifies the character, governs the impulses, controls the passions, and ennobles the affections. This love, cherished in the soul, sweetens the life and sheds a refining influence on all around. {AA 551.2}

God bids us fill the mind with great thoughts, pure thoughts. He desires us to meditate upon His love and mercy, to study His wonderful work in the great plan of redemption. Then clearer and still clearer will be our perception of truth, higher, holier, our desire for purity of heart and clearness of thought. The soul dwelling in the pure atmosphere of holy thought will be transformed by communion with God through the study of Scriptures. {COL 60.1}

Even when he was cast out of heaven, Infinite Wisdom did not destroy Satan. Since only the service of love can be acceptable to God, the allegiance of His creatures must rest upon a conviction of His justice and benevolence. The inhabitants of heaven and of the worlds, being unprepared to comprehend the nature or consequences of sin, could not then have seen the justice of God in the destruction of Satan. Had he been immediately blotted out of existence, some would have served God from fear rather than from love. The influence of the deceiver would not have been fully destroyed, nor would the spirit of rebellion have been utterly eradicated. For the good of the entire universe through ceaseless ages, he must more fully develop his principles, that his charges against the divine government might be seen in their true light by all created beings, and that the justice and mercy of God and the immutability of His law might be forever placed beyond all question. {PP 42.3}

This is not an act of arbitrary power on the part of God. The rejecters of His mercy reap that which they have sown. God is the fountain of life; and when one chooses the service of sin, he separates from God, and thus cuts himself off from life. He is "alienated from the life of God." Christ says, "All they that hate Me love death." Ephesians 4:18; Proverbs 8:36. God gives them existence for a time that they may develop their character and reveal their principles. This accomplished, they receive the results of their own choice. By a life of rebellion, Satan and all who unite with him place themselves so out of harmony with God that His very presence is to them a consuming fire. The glory of Him who is love will destroy them. {DA 764.1}

At the beginning of the great controversy, the angels did not understand this. Had Satan and his host then been left to reap the full result of their sin, they would have perished; but it would not have been apparent to heavenly beings that this was the inevitable result of sin. A doubt of God's goodness would have remained in their minds as evil seed, to produce its deadly fruit of sin and woe. {DA 764.2}

But not so when the great controversy shall be ended. Then, the plan of redemption having been completed, the character of God is revealed to all created intelligences. The precepts of His law are seen to be perfect and immutable. Then sin has made manifest its nature, Satan his character. Then the extermination of sin will vindicate God's love and establish His honor before a universe of beings who delight to do His will, and in whose heart is His law. {DA 764.3}

Well, then, might the angels rejoice as they looked upon the Saviour's cross; for though they did not then understand all, they knew that the destruction of sin and Satan was forever made certain, that the redemption of man was assured, and that the universe was made eternally secure. Christ Himself fully comprehended the results of the sacrifice made upon Calvary. To all these He looked forward when upon the cross He cried out, "It is finished." {DA 764.4}

The law of God existed before man was created. It was adapted to the condition of holy beings; even angels were governed by it. After the fall, the principles of righteousness were unchanged.

Nothing was taken from the law; not one of its holy precepts could be improved. And as it has existed from the beginning, so will it continue to exist throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. “Concerning thy testimonies,” says the psalmist, “I have known of old that thou hast founded them forever (ST April 15, 1886). {1BC 1104.2}

Recommended Reading: *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing* Chapter 3 – “The Spirituality of the Law” <https://egwwritings.org/>