

Thus far in our study of Gospel Holiness we have seen—Its Necessity, Nature, Mistakes, Source, Cause, Means, and two weeks ago—we began to consider Its Activity—the Activities of Holiness or sanctification are two—mortification and vivification—the first is negative and concerns the putting to death the deeds of the body—the second is positive and concerns the promotion of Christian virtues and qualities...

Thus—vivification is the opposite of mortification—to mortify is to put to death—to vivify is to promote or foster life—these obviously go together—they are two sides of the same coin—we put off sin and we put on righteousness...

(1) Mortification—"let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit"—that is—sins of the heart and life, and (2) Vivification—"perfecting holiness in the fear of God"—to "perfect" is—"to bring to an end or to complete"—it refers to the continuation or completion of holiness—we are not only to put away sin, but, we are to promote holiness...

Now—I want to suggest that fundamentally "vivification" entails two things—(1) the inward cultivation (promotion) of grace in the heart, and (2) the outward conformity of life to the law—that is—TRUE holiness consists in HEART and LIFE—these necessarily go together as CAUSE and EFFECT, Matt.12:33—"Make a tree good and its fruit will be good"...

A helpful text in this regard is Proverbs 4:23—"Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life"—keep the heart...because our conduct will be no better than the present condition of the heart—thus—I've mentioned this before—Christian Holiness is not merely, WHAT WE DO, but in the first place, WHAT WE ARE—or, WHAT WE ARE determines WHAT WE DO—both of these are implied in the text before us...

(1) We are to promote holiness "in body"—that is—in our outer practice—in what we say and do, and (2) We are to promote holiness "in spirit"—that is—in our inner disposition—in the heart—God is concerned with BOTH and Christian Holiness concerns them both—all holiness of LIFE is the direct result of purity of HEART...

- I. The Cultivation of Grace
- II. The Conformity of Life [considered next time]

I. The Cultivation of Grace

A. HOW grace is cultivated

1. Let me here first clarify—that by "cultivation"—I mean—the promotion, strengthening, and growth of grace...
2. Thus—the question I am here seeking to answer is—HOW does God promote or maintain life within the soul...
3. Now—before I answer that question—it may be proper to remind you—that true religion consists in God implanting divine life in the soul...
4. By nature—the soul is dead to God—but in regeneration—God implants within the soul a divine principle of life...
5. This "life" or "grace" is implanted within the soul at regeneration—and is strengthened and increased in sanctification...
6. Let me put it this way—He begins a flame of life within the soul—that He maintains throughout sanctification...
7. Throughout the Christian life, this flame is strengthened as the Lord continually supplies it with the oil of His grace...

8. [1] Through Christ's intercession—that is—grace is continually worked within the soul because of Christ's merit...
9. The ongoing intercession of Christ—is the meritorious cause of our salvation—our justification and sanctification...
10. Now—it must be kept in mind—that Christ's intercession is necessarily dependent upon His oblation or sacrifice...
11. In other words—in His death—He purchased our complete salvation—which included the ongoing gift of grace...
12. Oh my friends—surely this has to be a very encouraging fact—Christ is presently praying for our vivification...
13. While grace may grow small and dim—it will never totally go out—because—Christ is presently praying for us...
14. Lk.22:31-32—"Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift *you* as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to *Me*, strengthen your brethren..."
15. [a] WHO prayed—"I have prayed for you"—Oh brethren—surely these are amazing and comforting words...
16. Christ Himself—the eternal Son of God incarnate—the God-Man—the Christ of God and the Lamb of God...
17. Now—we know that Christ is always heard by His Father—everything He prays for happens without exception...
18. [b] WHY He prayed—"Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat"—his enemies were against him...
19. [c] WHAT He prayed—"that your faith should not fail"—that is—that grace not be totally eradicated from his soul...
20. [2] Through the Spirit's work—Christ works grace within our hearts—through the present ministry of His Spirit...
21. 2Cor.3:6—"the Spirit gives life"—that is—it is the Spirit who communicated grace from Christ to the soul...
22. The older writers would distinguish between Christ FOR us and Christ IN us—both of these are equally needed...
23. Christ FOR us refers to His work FOR us in His death and intercession—His work IN us refers to His work in us by His Spirit...
24. Eph.3:16—"I pray] that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man..."
25. [3] Through abiding in Christ—the first two ways that grace is cultivated—God does in us without our work...
26. But these last two ways—stress not only God's work within us, but our responsibility to cultivate that grace...
27. The Scriptures describe Christ as "our life"—that is—all spiritual life is found in personal union with Him...
28. Thus—for grace to be cultivated and strengthened within our souls—we must look for grace and life in Christ...
29. Jn.15:5—"I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing..."
30. Now—to "abide in Christ" simply—"to continue or remain"—to continue or remain in Christ by faith and fellowship...
31. John Gill—"To abide is] to continue in the exercise of faith and love upon Christ, holding to him the head, cleaving to him with full purpose of heart, and so deriving life, grace, strength, and nourishment from him..."
32. [4] Through means of grace—that is—the means ordained by Christ—to serve as channels of grace and change...
33. These are public and private—and are the ordinary means through which the Spirit works grace within the soul [Ps.92:12-15; Heb.4:16]...

34. These means are simply—reading and hearing the word of God, prayer, Christian fellowship, and sacraments...
35. Some of these take place publically with the people of God—others take place privately in homes and closets...
36. Now—here I want to briefly examine two passages—one underscoring private means the other public means...
37. 1Pet.2:1-3—"Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord *is* gracious..."
38. Ps.84:5-7—"Blessed *is* the man whose strength *is* in You, Whose heart *is* set on pilgrimage. *As they* pass through the Valley of Baca [weeping], they make it a spring; the rain also covers it with pools. They go from strength to strength; *each one* appears before God in Zion..."
39. The word Baca means "weeping"—and is here used figuratively of this world—we are all walking through the Valley of Baca...
40. But notice—such who are Christian—find a refreshing water throughout this Valley—as they appear before God in Zion...
41. To "appear before God in Zion" refers to the public worship of God's people as they stood before the tabernacle or temple...
42. Ps.84:10-11—"For a day in Your courts *is* better than a thousand. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness. For the LORD God *is* a sun and shield; the LORD will give grace and glory; no good *thing* will He withhold from those who walk uprightly..."
43. These verses extol the benefits and joys of public worship, in His temple, with His people, on His special day...
44. Notice the phrase—"the LORD will give grace and glory"—that is—strength and change—as He conforms His people into the image of Christ from one degree of glory to the next...
45. Now—we have spoken about the means of grace many times—and there are two errors that need avoiding...
46. [a] It's easy to DESPISE the means of grace—today people have lost confidence in the ordinary means of grace...
47. Let me ask you—do Christians have a responsibility to be holy—yes, our text commands us—"be holy, for I am Holy..."
48. Now—the question then becomes—how does God ordinarily transform His people into the image of Christ...
49. Well—He does that through the merits of Christ, by the Spirit, as we abide in Him—and—through various means...
50. My friends—let me put it very simply—there's no consistent spiritual growth—apart from a diligent use of means...
51. J.C. Ryle—"I lay it down as a simple matter of fact, that no one who is careless about such means must ever expect to make much progress in sanctification. I can find no record of any eminent saint who ever neglected them. They are appointed canals through which the Holy Spirit conveys fresh supplies of grace to the soul, and strengthens the work which He has begun in the inward man..."
52. Perhaps I can illustrate this importance of these means—by changing the imagery to that of spiritual exercises...
53. [b] It's easy to MISUSE the means of grace—that is—we turn the means into an end and not a means to an end...
54. Thus—it's not enough that we merely read our Bible's at home and attend church—we must benefit from them...
55. Now—fundamentally, in order to benefit from these means—we must understand they are MEANS of grace...
56. And—let me ask you—where is grace found?—IN CHRIST—thus, means of grace are in fact, means to Christ...

B. WHY grace is cultivated

1. Here—I briefly want to suggest three reasons—why grace needs to be cultivated or replenished within the soul...
2. [1] Resistance—that is—there remains within and without us—various enemies who oppose the work of grace...
3. Now—traditionally we speak of three enemies—the flesh, world, and devil—these three work together to put out grace...
4. These three collectively seek to hinder the work of God within our hearts—to hinder the work of God's Spirit...
5. Gal.5:17—"For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish..."
6. [a] By "Spirit" is meant the Holy Spirit—who works grace within our spirits—which wants to love and obey God...
7. [b] By "flesh" is meant remaining sin—which fights against the Spirit—hindering us from loving and obeying God...
8. [2] Declension—that is—Christians have need of continual grace, otherwise, they will grow weak and digress...
9. In other words—grace isn't given in such a way that we can live off of previous grace—but stand in need of new grace...
10. Perhaps I can illustrate it this way—think of a tire with a slow leak—that needed air added to it every day....
11. So too—perhaps we could say that our souls have a slow leak—and thus stand in need of daily replenishing...
12. Now again—this doesn't imply that our souls will ever go totally flat—but they do need daily and constant attending...
13. Jn.1:16—"And of His fulness we have all received, and grace for grace"—that is continuous and daily grace...
14. [3] Progression—that is—the Christian life—is not merely standing firm—but making progress and growth...
15. Brethren—we must know—that sanctification, Christian holiness—must increase—we must make progress...
16. 2Pet.3:18—"but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* the glory both now and forever. Amen..."

C. WHAT grace is cultivated

1. In general—ALL grace is cultivated or promoted within the heart through Christ's intercession, the Spirit's work, and the means of grace...
2. But—here I simply want to suggest five graces—that need cultivating—that are essential to our pursuit of holiness...
3. Thus—while these five graces are the presence of holiness—they are also the means whereby we pursue holiness...
4. That is—these five graces are active graces which motivate the heart and soul to pursue after a personal holiness...
5. Now—I want to stress this because unfortunately I'm forced to deal with obedience to the law in two weeks...
6. [1] Faith in God—faith is referred to as the queen of the graces, as it's the grace through which grace is given...
7. Faith is absolutely essential to the Christian life—Christians live by faith—it's the channel through which grace comes...
8. Now—in one sense—I don't feel obligated to show from Scripture—the centrality and importance of faith...
9. Gal.2:20—"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me..."

10. [a] The Old Man was crucified with Christ—"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live [that is the old man]..."
11. [b] The New Man was resurrected with Christ—Christ lives in the new man by His Spirit who gives us faith...
12. The new man—the Christian—lives BY THE SPIRIT (Christ lives in them by the Spirit)—and BY FAITH...
13. Thus—faith is an essential grace if Christians are to live holy—and—faith is a grace that must be PURSUED...
14. 2Tim.2:22—"Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart..."
15. That is—Christians are to pursue the grace of faith—through the previous means that we have already explained...
16. [2] Hope in God—the Christian grace of hope is very similar to trust—it refers to a confident expectation of what God promises...
17. I can describe the relation of hope to faith with an illustration—think of a newly wed wife, whose husband goes off to war...
18. Every so often he sends her a letter confirming his love for her and promising her that he shall return soon...
19. FAITH believes the promises HOPE looks out of the window—both faith and hope are essential to pursue holiness...
20. For example—because she expects to see her beloved soon—she keeps herself and her house clean and orderly...
21. 1Jn.3:2-3—"Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure..."
22. [3] Love to God—love to God in Christ, is a powerful and necessary motive and incentive to obey God and live holy...
23. 1Tim.6:11—"But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness..."
24. 2Tim.2:22—"Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart..."
25. [4] Fear of God—the fear of God is a very important grace—a grace essential to pursuing Christian holiness...
26. Prov.8:13—"The fear of the LORD is to hate evil" Ecc.12:13—"Fear God and keep His commandments..."
27. Now—before I show you the importance of fearing God in the pursuit of holiness—let me quickly define it...
28. First of all—what fearing God is NOT—it is NOT fear God in the way that sinners fear or are afraid of God...
29. Thomas Watson—"The godly fear God as a child does his father, the wicked are afraid of God as the prisoner is of the judge..."
30. Simply put—to fear God is to KNOW GOD as God—to KNOW GOD in the whole of His divine perfections....
31. Perhaps I can put it like this—fearing God is knowing God, as He is known in Christ and a reconciled Father...
32. Thus—a God fearer knows God as holy and just—merciful and gracious—he knows God as creator and redeemer...
33. J.C. Ryle—"A holy man will follow after the fear of God. I do not mean the fear of a slave, who only works because he is afraid of punishment and would be idle if he did not dread discovery. I mean rather the fear of a child, who wishes to live and love as if he was always before his father's face, because he loved him..."
34. Now—here I want to briefly examine two NT texts—where holiness, fearing the Father—are brought together...

35. 2Cor.7:1—"Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God..."
36. 1Pet.1:17-19—"And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay *here* in fear; 18 knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *like* silver or gold, from your aimless conduct *received* by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot..."
37. [5] Desire for God—that is—the desire and longing for fellowship with God in Christ—a thirsting after God...