

## The Means to the End

### The Gospel Mystery of Sanctification – Direction 1

Direction 1: That we may acceptably perform the duties of Holiness and Righteousness required in the Law, our first great work is, to learn the powerful and effectual means by which we may attain to so great an End.

Thesis: *Employ the means God has given us to accomplish this end.*

#### **I. We must understand the great end to which these means are designed, which is the principal subject here: living a manner of life that is called holiness, righteousness, godliness, obedience, true religion.**

A. *This is what is contained in the law, particularly, the moral law.*

1. This law is summed up in the Ten Commandments (Exod. 20:1-17) and the Two Great commandments (Matt. 22:37, 39).
2. This law is more largely explained in the rest of the Scriptures.

B. *The law is a mark that is extremely broad (Ps. 119:96) but extremely hard to hit and you must strive to hit every part equally or you will not hit any part at all (James 2:10).*

1. A believer does not love God at all if he does not love him with all heart, soul, mind, and strength.
2. The believer does not love God if he does not love everything in God: his justice, holiness, sovereign authority, all-seeing eye, and all his decrees, commands, judgments, and all his doings.
3. We are to love him, not only as better than other things, but as the highest good and the fountain of all good.
4. This means rejecting everything, all fleshly and worldly enjoyments, even our own lives, as if we hated them, when they stand in competition with our enjoyment of him or our duty to him.
5. It is for his sake, we are to love our neighbor, even all men, friend and foe, and seek to do for them what we would have them do for us were we in their condition (Matt. 7:12) with regard to any aspect of life.
6. “This spiritual, universal obedience is the great end, to the attainment of which I am directing you.”
7. To this end, what I promise is no more than the acceptable performance of these duties of the law as God will certainly delight in and be pleased with during our stay in this world.

C. *Consider the excellence of the duties of the law:*

1. These are the result of God’s sovereign command
2. These are the works for which we were created
3. These are the works for which we were framed in the image of God
4. These render the performer holy when performed in faith
5. These are works revealed by God to believers and unbelievers
6. These are works that bring God’s wrath when neglected

## **II. We must understand the powerful and effectual means by which this goal is to be accomplished.**

*A. Many overlook or disregard these means, thinking that all they need is diligence.*

1. They are quick to promise “All that the Lord has spoken, we will do (Exod. 19:8) but they fail to count the cost (Luke 14:28).
2. They mistake holiness for the means to the end which is salvation; they do not realize that holiness is an end itself. They ask, “What may I do to inherit eternal life?” (Matt. 19:16) but never ask, “How may I be enabled to do that which is good.”

*B. It is not enough for you to know the matter and reason of your duty; you must learn the powerful and effectual means of performance before you can apply yourselves to the practice.*

1. We are all, by nature, void of any strength and ability to perform acceptably that holiness and righteousness which the law requires but are dead in trespasses and sins, and children of wrath, by the sin of our first father, Adam, as the Scripture witnesses (Rom. 5:12, 15, 18, 19; Eph. 2:1-3; Rom. 8:7-8).
2. Those that doubt or deny the doctrine of original sin must know that God’s justice is against them and they are under his curse, and the sentence of death for their actual sins (Rom. 1:32; 2:2; 3:9; Gal. 3:10).
3. Though heathens might know much of the work of the law by the common light of natural reason and understanding (Rom. 2:14); yet the effectual means of performance cannot be discovered by that light, and therefore are wholly to be learned by the teaching of supernatural revelation.
4. Sanctification, by which our hearts and lives are conformed to the law, is a grace of God, communicated to us by means, as well as justification; and by means of teaching, and learning something that we cannot see without the word (Acts 26:17-18).
5. God has given, in the holy scriptures by his inspiration, plentiful instruction in righteousness. If God condescend to us so very low, to teach us this way in the Scriptures, and by Christ, it must be greatly necessary for us, to sit down at his feet and learn it.
6. The way of attaining godliness is so far from being known without learning out of the holy scriptures, that, when it is here plainly revealed, we cannot learn it so easily as the duties of the law; which was known in part by the light of nature, and therefore is more easily assented to.

*C. Many Christians are as guilty as the heathen of ignorance with regard to these means and of mistakes about the use of these means.*

1. Many Christians are content to perform external acts.
2. Many reject the way of holiness as austere and unpleasant.
3. Many try to practice holiness but do not do it in the right way and so fail in their attempts and are overcome by their sins.
4. Some practice extreme disciplines and, when those fail, they are plunged into despair and give up or turn from their professed faith.

Conclusion: Peradventure, God may bless my discovery of the powerful means of holiness so far, as to save some one or other from killing themselves. And such a fruit as this would countervail my labor; though, I hope, God will enlarge the hearts of many by it, to run with great cheerfulness, joy, and thanksgiving in the ways of his commandments.