

Seek What is Necessary

The Gospel Mystery of Sanctification – Direction 2

Direction 2: Several Endowments and Qualifications are necessary to enable us for the immediate practice of the Law. Particularly we must have an inclination and propensity of our hearts thereunto; and therefore we must be well persuaded of our reconciliation with God, and of our future enjoyment of the everlasting heavenly happenings, and of sufficient strength both to will and perform all duties acceptably, until we come to the enjoyment of that happiness.

Thesis: Seek what is necessary to live God's Law.

I. Seek an inclination and propensity of your heart toward the duties of the Law.

- A. *The duties of the Law are such that one cannot possibly perform them with indifference.*
 - 1. The Greatest Commandment – "...with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength."
 - 2. "Love" must be desire, not mere duty or danger. (We can't love God the way a sick man loves medicine, but the way a sick man loves being well.)
- B. *The image of God consists in a bent and propensity toward holiness.*
 - 1. This is more than a mere power of the will.
 - 2. The propensity is a renewal of the image of God.
- C. *Original corruption consists in a propensity and inclination of the heart to sin and a hatred of holiness.*
 - 1. Romans 7:23 demonstrates this propensity.
 - 2. This indwelling sin produces actual sin and must be removed or restrained.
- D. *God restores his people to holiness by giving them a new heart (Ezek. 36:26-27).*
 - 1. Romans 12:2; Psalm 51:10.
 - 2. This is more than neutrality or freedom of choice; otherwise David could not have prayed "Incline my heart to your testimonies" (Ps. 119:36).

II. Seek assurance of your reconciliation with God because such assurance tends to holiness.

- A. Justification involves imputation of righteousness so we can perform obedience to the Law.
- B. We are certain that we can do no work except it please God to work it in us (John 8:36; Phil. 2:13; Rom. 8:7-8).
- C. We must love God with a whole-hearted practical love, which love we cannot have unless it is worked in us through a knowledge of his love to us (1 John 4:18-19).
- D. To keep the law, our consciences must be purged from dead works which is accomplished by remission of sin (Heb. 9:14-15; 10:1-2, 4, 14, 17, 22).
- E. God's plan for bringing men from sin to holiness begins with revealing that he loves them and that their sins are blotted out (e.g., Exod. 20:2).

III. Seek to be persuaded of your future enjoyment of the everlasting heavenly happiness.

- A. How can one lay down his life for Christ and deny himself the pleasures of this world if there is no greater pleasure to be found in God's presence at death?

- B. This future enjoyment is used by God himself to encourage his people to persevere in holiness (Heb. 12:2; 2 Cor. 4:16-17; Heb. 10:34; 1 Cor. 15:19, 32, 58; see also Heb. 6:11-12; 1 John 3:3; Rom. 5:5).
- C. This is not a license to sin.
 1. Though we have full assurance of it, we must enter into it by holiness (1 John 3:1-3).
 2. It is not selfish to be motivated by this because we are persuaded of it through grace, not the law (Gal. 5:5).
 3. Any self-love that motivates us to this is not carnal self-love, the mother of sinfulness (2 Tim. 3:2), but holy self-love that inclines us to love God above the flesh and the world for our own salvation (Acts 2:40; 1 Tim 4:16).

IV. Seek to be persuaded of sufficient strength both to will and to do your duty acceptably until you enter into that heavenly enjoyment.

- A. *We are by nature dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1) and unable to will or to do anything that is spiritually good (Rom. 8:7-8) and the spiritually enlightened person knows this and that God must work in them to if they are to will and do anything pleasing to him (Phil. 2:13).*
- B. *Those who think that sincere conformity to God's Law is easy show that they know neither the Law nor themselves.*
 1. It is not easy to wrestle against forces that are not flesh and blood (Eph. 6:12).
 2. Paul himself found it difficult to obey the commandments and found that knowledge of the commandments made it more difficult (Rom. 7:7-8).
 3. Jesus spoke of the difficulty of keeping the law when he counseled those who stumble to pluck out their eyes or cut off their hands (Matt. 5:29-30).
 4. If obedience is easy, why do the heathens do those things which their conscience tells them are worthy of death (Rom. 1:32) and why do so many strive to enter in at the "strait gate" but are not able (Luke 13:24).
 5. If obedience is so easy, why is there such persecution in the world for those who try to live godly (2 Tim. 3:12)?
- C. *God gives the necessary strength and wisdom to will and to do.*
 1. God gives strength to his people to live righteously just as he gave strength to the OT saints to possess the Promised Land.
 2. Paul encourages believers to the life of holiness by reminding them that sin has no dominion over them and sin will not prevail because we are not under the law, but under grace (Rom. 6:13-14).
 3. Paul also encourages us to stand strong in the Lord and in the power of *his* might (Eph. 6:10-11).
 4. John encourages believers not to love the world or the things in the world because they are strong and have overcome the Evil One (1 John 2:14-15).

Conclusion: When men that are dead in sin are called to do the works of a holy life, God gives his power to them so that they can be encouraged in accomplishing his commands.