

The Life Changer

Study Series

The Work of God in Us

By Jesus' successes we become heirs to blessings we don't deserve. Consider the powerful effects of what faith in Jesus does for the believer. First, you have studied the promise of God saying, "There is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). That means that by placing full faith in Christ, your guilty past is atoned for. Secondly in Christ, our lives are reconciled into a right relationship with God. In Christ we receive the smile of the heavenly Father. Thirdly, the promises of new birth, and even adoption into God's family are amazing because they give us a guarantee into heaven. In this lesson we will study yet another wonderful blessing that comes to you through your faith in Christ; it is God's work of "sanctifying" you.



Lesson 11

① Q1. What is God's will for you? Read 1 Thessalonians 4:3a.¹

A. _____

"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification." Note: the word sanctification means to consecrate and set apart for a holy use. God wants us to be holy, which naturally separates us from the sinful activities of many people around us. Sanctification especially means to be set apart for God's service.

② Q2. How important is sanctification, i.e. holiness? Read Hebrews 12:14.

A. _____

One of the reasons that sanctification is so important is because God is holy, and heaven is holy. If God allows unholy people into heaven, heaven would cease to be heavenly! God is certainly planning to take us to heaven, but in order to do so he must "clean" us. We are unable on our own to meet heaven's specifications. He uses His Holy Spirit to change our desires, our attitudes, and even our appetites.

③ Q3. In preparation for what event are we being sanctified for? Read 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

A. _____

Yes, God is now "sanctifying us" so that we will be prepared to meet Christ when He comes and then after to be taken into the presence of God. Sanctification is a work of grace where the heart becomes holy and is made into the likeness of God's own heart. A sanctified person grows to bear not only God's name but also the likeness of His character.

¹ Occasionally when referencing scripture passages, lessons may use the verse number and a letter 'a' or 'b.' This is a way of indicating that only a portion of the verse is being used. 'a' refers to the first portion of the verse and 'b' refers to the second portion of the verse.

Now consider deeply these seven things about the work of sanctification that is taking place in you through the Holy Spirit and the reviving power of God's word:

1. Sanctification is a supernatural thing; it is a divine work.

We are naturally polluted, and God takes the work of cleansing us to be His prerogative. Leviticus 22:32 says, "I am the Lord, who sanctifies you." We don't have the power to sanctify ourselves. A good comparison of this is how a street cleaner cleans a street. He may remove the garbage off the street, but no one would really say the street is "clean" like a blanket a mother would wrap her infant in, or clean like a plate to serve food on. No, the street is filthy even after the street cleaner has removed the trash. Similarly, our efforts at cleaning ourselves are largely external. Like a street, our lives may get the visual appearance of order, but God says He will and must make our lives holy.

2. Sanctification is an internal thing; it lies chiefly in the heart.

In 1 Peter 3:4, we find a description of what God's Spirit does in you. The beautiful traits of God's character begin to adorn and decorate the chambers of our thoughts. For many people, in their previous experiences with religion, they have only experienced God on the outside. Their behavior and actions have met the requirements of what they were told would satisfy God. But the powerful process of sanctification is different in that it doesn't work from the outside in, but from the inside out. "In the hidden part you shall make me to know wisdom." Psalm 51:6.



Shining Stars Series (Philippians 2:14-16)



It was a Saturday night and Mert was glad for a little free time. He had a big test on Monday and would study all day Sunday with friends. He had invited his friend Yusuf over for the night as his sister, mother and grandmother had gone to the village for the weekend. Yusuf came with another friend Tayfun who Mert had met several times before.

Tayfun brought a film with him and was pretty determined to show it to the guys. About five minutes into the movie, Mert began to feel that the movie was not something he wanted to see. The plot was about a girl who was demon possessed and all the unusual and scary things that happened to her. Mert looked at Yusuf to see if he was sensing any regrets about putting it on the TV. Yusuf was totally absorbed by the movie and Mert couldn't read his friend's thoughts about the film. Mert watched the movie for another few minutes. He mumbled something about "let's watch something else" but it didn't get any response from the other guys.

As he continued watching, he felt a great struggle inside him as if he was ashamed. In his mind he could visualize their Bible study group meeting in that very living room when they were talking about the evils of fortune telling and sorcery. He had felt God's Holy Spirit bring peace and understanding to the group. Now as the scenes of this creepy movie rolled on, he felt this strange sense that he was betraying that peace, trading something good for something dirty. He stared for a moment as a half naked bleeding body flashed on the screen. At that moment he remembered a verse from his Bible study, "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things" (Philippians 4:8).

Mert jumped to his feet. Bravely he grabbed the remote control and changed the mode from flash disc to television. A football match immediately began to play from satellite.

"Hey what's that all about?" Tayfun groaned. Then mockingly he said, "So you are too scared!?"

Yusuf, seemed to wake up from his hypnosis. Mert and Yusuf were very close friends, and he had been to Mert's small group on several occasions with his girlfriend Ece. Yusuf defended Mert, "It's Mert's house, he can do as he wants."

Mert simply said, "I didn't like the movie." However, this answer didn't pacify Tayfun.

Tayfun began to ridicule Mert. "Come on, you didn't even give the movie a chance. What are you some kind of wimp?"

Mert hesitated and said, "I don't know, I just didn't think this is the kind of thing I want to be watching." Tayfun, sat angry for about a twenty minutes watching football. Then told the guys he was going out to get a pack of cigarettes. (To be Continued)

3. Sanctification is pervasive: it spreads into the whole life.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 says, "May the God of peace sanctify you wholly." Just as the first sin of Adam and Eve corrupted all the parts of human life (it brought moral degeneration, spiritual degeneration, and physical degeneration), in the exact opposite way, sanctification goes over the whole person to perfect him. The Bible says, "May the God of peace sanctify you wholly." This is good news because it means that the Holy Spirit touches every part of your life to make your character, attitudes, appetites, interests, and relationships heaven-like.

4. Sanctification is intense and active.

Read Romans 12:2. The person who has agreed to be the subject of God's program of transformation doesn't give in to be shaped by his surroundings but rather withstands external pressure. He is able to do this only by the powerful force of Christ's Spirit living in him. Read Colossians 1:28, 29. Note how the apostle Paul, the author of this letter, is cooperating with the Holy Spirit in this activity.

5. Sanctification is a beautiful thing.

Our steps toward holiness make God and the angels rejoice (Luke 15:10). As a woman is at her most beautiful on the day of her marriage, so God says He is preparing us, His people, the church, to be like a bride

for God in holiness (Revelation 19:7). From Ephesians 5:25-27 we see we are being made ready for a wedding day.

6. Sanctification happens through abiding in Christ.

Jesus said, “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the Vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for apart from Me there is not a thing you are able to do” (John 15:4, 5). The work of abiding is our job and it happens moment by moment, day by day.

7. Sanctification is serious.

The Bible describes that there is a war for our eternal life. The outcome of that war is decided by our faith, our thoughts, and our will. Read 2 Corinthians 10:3-5.

A person under the direction of the Spirit of Christ is being changed in every way. In a sense we become God’s construction project. Just as in a construction project the first thing to go up is a fence to enclose the work, we are encircled in salvation. What goes on inside that fence may get pretty messy and may not at first look at all like a building. But for the building to go up, the foundation must be dug. Similarly, God has put a fence of grace around you. And what He has begun, He will bring to beautiful completion.

What are the counterfeits of sanctification?

There are several things which look like sanctification—but are not.

1. The first counterfeit of sanctification is moral virtue.

To be a fair employer, or honest employee, to abstain from alcohol and cigarettes, to have a kind manner, are excellent qualities—but they are not sanctification in and of themselves. Many heathen have attained to

morality; it is what “civilization” is about. Under the gentle leaves of civility the worm of unbelief and self interest may be hidden!

2. The second counterfeit of sanctification is superstitious devotion.

These abound around the world: images, altars, long prayers and holy water—and are far from sanctification. This religious frenzy does not put any intrinsic goodness into a person, nor does it make a man better. If to count over a few beads, or bow toward a city, or wash one’s self were sanctification and all that were required to redeem us—then why did Christ have to die?

3. The third counterfeit of sanctification is hypocrisy.

Hypocrisy is like a comet compared to a star. It is the difference between a statue and a man. The Bible describes people who are hypocrites as “having a form of godliness, but denying its power” (2 Timothy 3:5). These people are lamps without oil. The gospel’s power is a living connection with Jesus Christ.



Shining Stars Series (Philippians 2:14-16)



When Tayfun left. Yusuf clicked off the soccer match and said, “Talk to me Mert. What were you thinking that made you turn that movie off?”

Mert said, “You know Yusuf, you and I sit in classes at the University everyday. Those classes are educating us, they give me knowledge but they aren’t changing us. However, I have been studying the Bible with my mom and friends for over a year, and it is not only educating me, it’s changing me. You know. You and Ece have been there sometimes.” Mert stared at the blank wall for a moment, trying to gather his thoughts. “There are animals that love the darkness, bats, spiders, scorpions. I wasn’t destined to be one of them. I want to live in the light.” Mert looked at Yusuf directly and continued, “When

that movie started playing, I heard my conscience, like a voice of the Holy Spirit saying, 'Live clean Mert. Live holy Mert. Come away and be a real man.' I can't describe it, but it was like God was pulling on me to rescue me from falling into a dark pit and pulling me toward the light of heaven. I couldn't sit there anymore."

Yusuf sat stunned for a moment. "I can respect that." Then with more earnestness, he said, "Man, I want that! All I saw was a bloody weird movie, but you got something better. Mert, how can my eyes be opened like yours? I want to get what you have!"

Mert, "All I know is that God is working on me. It all began by reading the Bible and praying. I'll tell you what Yusuf, why don't you and Ece start coming to our group more. We read the Bible passages and talk about them. Most of the time one of us has actually prepared a study on a topic. Why don't you come?"

② Q4. What power can we rely on to obtain sanctification? Read 2 Peter 1:3.

A. _____

When we give God permission to work within us we are committing ourselves to love goodness and hate wickedness as He does. Psalm 119:104 says, "I hate every wrong path." A hypocrite may leave sin—yet love it; as a serpent sheds its skin but keeps its poison! But what God wants for us to do is not only leave sinful behavior, but to also loath it altogether. In the sanctified person there is a holy hatred against all that is dark and sinful, the very things we may have once enjoyed. This is the sign of God's amazing work having its good effect. Ephesians 5:8 says, "For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light." And Titus 2:13-14 says, "Our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for Himself a people that are His very own, eager to do what is good."

- ② Q5. How can you gain victory over temptation? Read James 4:7 and Psalm 119:11.

A. _____

It is interesting to note that in spiritual warfare, by submitting to God we gain strength over the devil. When God's Word becomes an integral part of the believer's life, it fortifies that person against temptation's power and helps us "resist" the devils assaults. A systematic, prayerful study of Scripture is an absolute prerequisite to defeating temptation. The Word not only warns of Satan's methods (2 Corinthians 2:11), but it empowers against attacks (Ephesians 6:11-17). Another essential to victory is to avoid temptation. On several occasions, Christ told His disciples to pray that they might not fall into temptation (Matthew 6:13; Luke 22:40). Some believers understand that temptation is not the same as sin, so they feel that they can enjoy the enticements of temptation without any harm. This behavior becomes a type of game—seeing how much titillation one can "enjoy" without falling into sin. Such an attitude is sinful in itself, because it fails to take seriously God's commands for holiness in attitude as well as in action.

- ② Q6. Is there a temptation that is too strong for me to overcome? Read 1 Corinthians 10:13.

A. _____

This verse is God's guarantee that He will never allow Satan to go too far. The temptation's intensity and the escape route will be uniquely tailored to the individual and will not exceed his capacity.

Knowing there is a way of escape and using that way of escape may be quite different things. If one is ignorant of God's Word, one will likely not recognize the escape when he sees it, for he won't know how God works.

The Scripture contains no promise of help in overcoming temptation for

those who are unsaved. Indeed, until one repents of his sin and accepts by faith Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, he has no capacity for pleasing God. But those who are saved may appropriate the power and wisdom of the Word, relying upon God's grace. They can therefore have victory, even over Satan's most subtle and compelling temptations.

Above all things pursue after sanctification. Seek holiness more than gold—for happiness is nothing but the enjoyment of holiness. "Keep her, for she is your life!" (Proverbs 4:13).

Call to commitment through prayer.



EN ZENGİN MAĞARA ADAMI

Milyoner bir baba ile gösteri dünyasında çalışan bir annenin oğulları olan genç Doug Batchelor, paranın satın alabileceği her şeye sahipti. Mutluluk hariç her şeye. Uyuşturucu kullandı, okulda kavgalar çıkardı ve intihar düşüncesiyle hayaller kurdu. Kendinden tiksinen ve hayatın hiçbir amacı olmadığına inanan Doug, yaşayabileceği tüm eğlence ve heyecanları yaşamayı kafasına koydu.

Arayışı sona ermeden önce dağlarda bulunan bir mağara, evi oldu. Babasının sahip olduğu yata, jete ve havayolu firmasına rağmen, Doug kendini çöp tenekelerinde yiyecek ararken buldu.

Doug'un aradığı mutluluk sürekli kendisinden kaçıyor, ta ki bir "arayışçı" dostun mağarasında bıraktığı tozlu bir kitabı bulup okuyana dek. Bundan sonra olanlar ancak mucize olarak açıklanabilir.

BİNLERCESİ KIRILACAK

Franz Hasel, 40 yaşındaki bir pasifist, ön cephelerde köprüler kuran Hitler'in seçkin birliği 699. İstihkâm Bölüğüne atanmıştı. Dinî inancı üstleri tarafından pek hoş karşılanmamıştı. Kendisiyle "havuç yiyen" ve "İncil okuyan" diye alay edilmesine rağmen sonunda birliğinin saygısını kazanmıştı.

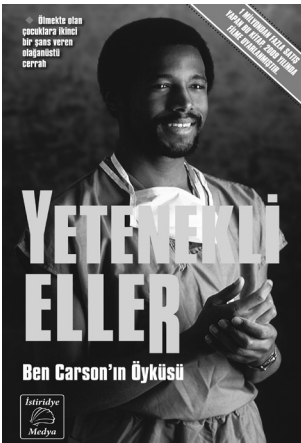
Çevrelerindeki binlerce insan savaşın dehşetine kurban giderken onlar meleklerin kanatları altındaydılar, hatta bazen gerçek anlamda. Bu, ne pahasına olursa olsun imanlı kalmayı seçen ve yüce Tanrı'nın gölgesinde sığınmak bulan çaresiz bir ailenin yürek parçalayan gerçek öyküsüdür.



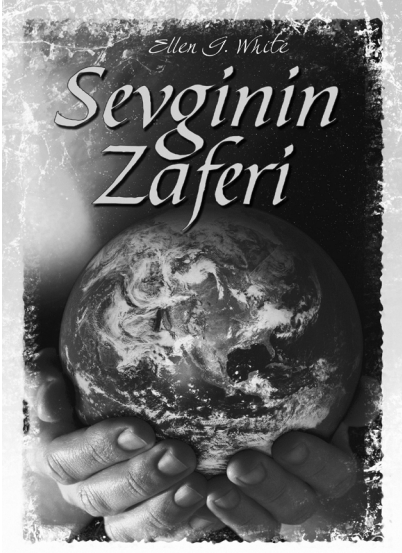
YETENEKLİ ELLER

Dr. Ben Carson, beyin cerrahisindeki umut olmayan yere umut getiren yeniliklerle tüm dünyada tanınmaktadır. Yetenekli Eller'de, Detroit'in kenar mahallelerindeki çocukluğundan başlayarak, otuz üç yaşında Johns Hopkins Sağlık Kurumları'nda pediatrik beyin cerrahisi şefliğine uzanan ilham verici macerası anlatılıyor. Sizi, sayısız hayat kurtardığı ameliyathaneye götüren Ben Carson, görünürde imkânsız olanı başarmaya çalışan herkese örnek oluyor.

Etkileyici vaka tarihçeleriyle dolu olan bu çoksatır kitap, Ben Carson'un zorlukların üstesinden gelme çabasının ve onu günümüzün en büyük hayat kurtarıcılarının biri yapan iman ile dehanın dramatik ve ayrıntılı öyküsünü anlatıyor.



SEVGİNİN ZAFERİ



Kötülüğün kaynağı, henüz çözülememiş bir sırdır. Neden kötülük var? Nereden geliyor? Kötülüğün bir sonu olacak mı? Bunlar yanıtlanması gereken çok önemli sorulardır.

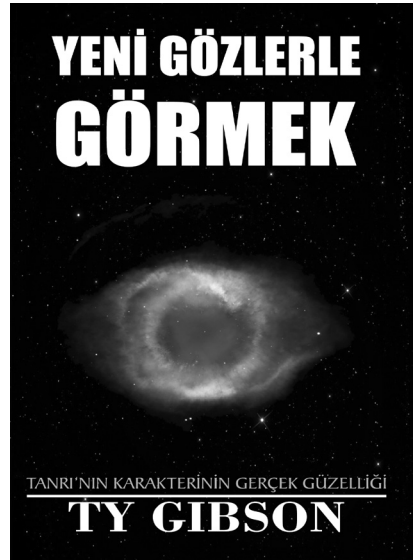
Büyük mücadele, görünen dünyayı, görünmeyen dünyadan ayıran perdeyi aralamakta ve bu dünyanın tüm sakinlerinin dahil olduğu doğüstü savaşı gözler önüne ermektedir.

Kitap, uğrunda savaştıkları şey için çok önemli olan iki tarafın, iyinin ve kötünün arasında geçen evrensel savaşın nasıl başladığından ve nasıl sonlandırılacağından bahsetmektedir. Geçmişten, şimdiki zamandan ve gelecekte söz etmekte, çok dokunaklı bir ricayla ve ciddi bir uyarıyla sona ermektedir. Bu kitabı okurken, sanki Tanrı ile röportaj yapıyormuş hissine kapılacaksınız.

Güzel olduğu kadar şok edici bir yolculuğa çıkmaya hazırlanın. Okuduktan sonra artık aynı kişi olmayacaksınız.

YENİ GÖZLERLE GÖRMEK

Pek çok şeyi görebilmek için, kişinin gözleri açık olmalıdır. Fakat Allah ile öyle değil. Gözlerinizi çok fazla açarsanız ya da çok fazla yakından bakarsanız, O'nu gördüğünüzü düşünürken aslında O'nu gözden kaçırabilirsiniz. Pek çoğumuz tam da bu hatayı yaparız. Allah'ı görmeyi umarak insanlara bakarız. Dinlere bakarız. Hatta aynaya bakarız. Kaçınılmaz olarak da hayal kırıklığına uğrarız, zira İlahî Kişi'nin daha güzel bir resmini ummuştuk. Sayısız insan Allah'tan dönmüştür, çünkü O'nu bir kişide ya da bir toplulukta gördüklerini sanmışlardır... ve açıkçası gördüklerinden hoşlanmamışlardır. Elinizde tuttuğunuz kitap Allah hakkındadır.





Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 2:1-5)



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This study series is a continuation of the Fate Changer series
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