



NEW HEART BEAT DEVOTIONS

When Does Entire Sanctification Take Place?

by Charles Stambaugh July 12, 1999 Revised May 2004

According to some, Entire Sanctification is an important event in the Christian's life. It is when the Christian becomes completely holy, perfect, spotless, purer than pure, whiter than white, and more than conquers over the world, the flesh, and the devil. It is when the Holy Spirit controlling all of the heart, soul and mind powers service to God. It is when final victory over personal sin is achieved.

The word sanctification appears five times in the King James Bible. (All scripture references in this paper will be from the King James.) The associated words of sanctified appears 62 times, sanctifieth appears four times, and sanctify appears 69 times. In the Greek, sanctification and holiness are the same word (hagiasmos) meaning the state of purity.

In the entire King James Bible, the word entire only appears once. In the verse, it is not in reference to sanctification. Some translations use I Thessalonians 5:23 with the term "entire sanctification". However, this passage speaks about the Christian keeping their entire or "whole" spirit, soul and body preserved blameless. Here, God's sanctification is not being described.

John Wesley and his colleagues coined the term entire sanctification on June 16, 1747. Despite it's suggestion of absolute sinless perfection, Wesley did intended the term to mean anything more than a relative evangelical perfection.

Taken from the Nazarene denomination: "We believe that entire sanctification is the act of God, subsequent to regeneration, by which believers are made free from original sin, or depravity, and brought into a state of entire devotion to God, and the holy obedience of love made perfect. It is wrought by the baptism with the Holy Spirit, and comprehends in one experience the cleansing of the heart from sin and the abiding, indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, empowering the believer for the life of service. Entire sanctification is provided by the blood of Jesus, is wrought instantaneously by faith, preceded by entire consecration; and to this work and state of grace the Holy Spirit bears witness."

They believe that entire sanctification is a second event or crisis in the believer's life occurring after salvation and before glorification (heavenly homecoming). There has even several articles and books written on this crisis with encouragement for believers to seek this event. Some associate this event with the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, eradication from the sin nature, Christian perfection, second work of grace, and entire concretion.

Do You Have It?

In the 70's, there was a Jesus movement that used the phrase "Do you have it?". The evidence of having it was uncontrollable emotions and charismatic signs. At each meeting, people would work themselves into an emotion state by repeatedly asking for it. The people who got it were greatly praised. The "it" they were seeking was the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Not An It

The Holy Spirit is not an it. The Holy Spirit is the Divine Third Person of the Trinity, who has distinct fruits, gifts and works in man. To lower the Holy Spirit to a thing that can be controlled by man's desire is a form of blasphemy. "The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men". (Matt 12:31)

Not Necessary Shown By Emotions and Charismatic Signs

God has created us in His image with emotions. One cannot read His Word without seeing and becoming emotional. Without joy, love, conviction, and excitement, we would have nothing more than a dead religion. However, today we are spending a lot of money on controlling depression, aggression and other emotions. "Emotions, can we trust the them?" is a very good question. We should be so careful not to assume that when a person gets emotional that they are being controlled or slain by the Spirit. "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear but of power, and of love and of a sound mind." (II Tim 1:7)

The charismatic signs, which these groups refer to, are often misunderstood and misused gifts of the Spirit. These gifts were never meant for self-edification, Time and space does not permit the discussion on the specific misuse of the charismatic sign of tongues. It is interesting that the less emotional gifts like administration and mercy (listed in Romans 12:8) are not mentioned by these movements as evidence of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Only Happens Once

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit refers to the event, when the believer first receives the Holy Spirit. This baptism is a one-time event. "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God the Father of all..(Eph. 4:5,6) Once the believer receives the Holy Spirit they can never lose Him. "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever." (John 14:16)

Not To Be Sought

There is no reference in the Bible where people prayed that they might receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Samaritans in Acts 8:14-20, Gentiles in Acts 10:44-48, John's disciples in Acts 19:1-6 and even Jesus disciples in Acts 2 were not seeking the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In the verses before the day of Pentecost, the disciples were busy with internal affairs of casting lots to replace disciple Judas. Praying, seeking, believing, working, singing are not mentioned in Acts 2:1 to bring on that first Baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit cannot be gotten from God. The Holy Spirit is a gift given by God without any influence from man.

What Are The Results Of The Holy Spirit?

A light bulb is made to provide light. If it does not shine it is cast out. But how ridiculous is it to expect the bulb to function without first applying an external power.

Fruits Of The Spirit

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." (Gal. 5:22,23) How is a Christian expected to produce fruit without the Spirit dwelling in them?

Gifts Of The Spirit

In Ephesians 4:11 and I Corinthians 14:28-30, there are listed many gifts or ministers which the Spirit empowers man to perform. Perhaps church boards should place Christians in a holding tank until their Baptism of the Holy Spirit because they do not have a spiritual gift.

Works Of The Spirit

Sealed

"And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." (Eph. 4:30) Is a Christian sealed for heaven before they have the Holy Spirit?

Bears Witness

"The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (Rom. 8:16) Can we have the assurance that we are a child of God without the Holy Spirit within us?

Gives Victory

"... because greater is He that is in you than He that is in the World." (I John 4:4) Can we have any power over sin with the Spirit?

Regeneration

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." (John 3:6,7) Are Christians born again without the Spirit?

Comforts, Teaches, Remembrance

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you." (John 14:26) The Holy Spirit comes along side to help comfort, guide, empower and much more. He is that friend that stays closer than a brother.

Lives Within The Believer

"What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" (I Cor. 6:19) We have the only religion where God's Spirit lives within us.

When Does Indwelling, Baptism and Filling Take Place?

Before we are saved, the Holy Spirit worked upon us. At the moment we are saved, the Holy Spirit worked in us. And now as we yield, the Holy Spirit works through us.

Indwelling Of The Spirit

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." (Rom. 8:9) "Even the Spirit of Truth: whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you and shall be in you." (John 14:17) "And because ye are so, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying Abba Father." (Gal. 4:6) "Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit." (I John 4:13) It is obvious from these verses, that if anyone who does not have the Spirit dwelling in them, they are not a child of God.

Baptism Of The Spirit

Who Is Baptized?

"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jew or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." (I Cor. 12:13) All believers are.

When Are We Baptized?

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." (Rom. 8:9) This would mean that the baptism of the Holy Spirit must occur at the time of conversion.

But Wasn't There A Waiting Period In The Bible?

Before the ascension of Christ, the Holy Spirit did not indwell believers. Believers only had brief Spirit fillings (Luke 11:13, Psalm 51:11). The Samaritans in Acts 8:14-20, Gentiles in Acts 10:44-48, John's disciples in Acts 19:1-6 and even Jesus' disciples in Acts 2, received the Holy Spirit indwelling after conversion.

At the day of Pentecost, Jesus' disciples were baptized (Acts 2: 4) with the Holy Spirit as Jesus promised (Acts 1:8). There were charismatic signs and the church age started. The Holy Spirit never left them from that day. During this early church age, it was not accepted among the Jews that Gentiles nor Samaritans (half Jews) could be saved. God used the Apostles (by allowing them to give the baptism of the Holy Spirit) to show the Jews that these groups were included in the plan of salvation. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jew or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free..." (I Cor. 12:13) There is no evidence that these receivers even knew about the Holy Spirit. There is no record of post salvation baptism of the Holy Spirit without the Apostles laying on of hands.

When Does Indwelling, Baptism and Filling Take Place? (continued)

Could There A Waiting Period Today?

There are no more Apostles and there is no longer a reason for endorsement of certain groups for salvation. There is no reason for God to withhold his baptism of the Holy Spirit from believers. New believers are the ones who need the power to witness, victory over sin, and faith the most. It would be silly for God to say that a person needs to demonstrate more faith or strength not to sin before He gives the power to have more faith or strength. Nowhere in the Bible are we to seek or prove worthy for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. However, the Apostle Paul does command each one of us to "be filled with the Spirit".

Filled With The Spirit

But if the Holy Spirit already indwells the believer, then why do they need to be filled with the Spirit? "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." (Eph. 5:18) The term filled here means controlled. When a person is filled with wine, they lose control of themselves and may hurt themselves and others. When a person is filled with the Holy Spirit, they give up or yield control of themselves but this time they are conscience of their behavior and the results are beneficial.

"Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." (Rom. 6:13) Every Christian needs to daily yield every part of their life to the Lord and let the Holy Spirit have control. Indwelling is God's part, but filling or yielding is man's part. We cannot get more of him but He can get more of us. The world has yet seen what one man totally yielded to the Holy Spirit can do for Christ.

Stop Seeking / Start Yielding

Let us stop seeking and thinking that we can make ourselves acceptable for God's Spirit by our own works of righteousness. Let us stop looking for the experiences, emotions, and spiritual signs of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Instead, let us start yielding to the unlimited resources of the Holy Spirit (which we as believers had from the moment of salvation) to achieve the work and to fill the place, which God has personally designed, for us.

Can A Christian Be Eradicated From The Sin Nature?

Cleaning a dirt floor with soap and water will only make it muddy. Covering the dry floor with carpeting will not make it a clean floor. However, transforming the floor to cement removes the natural dirty state and provides an acceptable changed base. The purpose of this new floor is to stay clean, but as we know, the floor will still get dirt from the world. In this case, the floor is not returning to its previous earthly state. It can be restored dirt free with repeated cleaning. To stay perfectly clean, the floor must be eradicated from the dirty environment.

Sinner's Nature

"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." (Ps. 51:5)
"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Rom. 5:12) "As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one." (Rom. 3:10) "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:23)

Christian's New Creature

"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh." (Ezk. 36:26) "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things become new." (I Cor. 4:17) Not only did we get a clean slate but a new heart, new desires, and new power.

Christian's Enemies

The Christian has three enemies which are the world, the flesh and the devil. "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." (John 17:15) "This I say then, walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." (Gal. 5:16) "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Eph. 6:12)

Christian's Temptation And Sin

Temptation is not sin. Jesus was tempted and did not sin. (Heb. 4:15) "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (I Cor. 10:13) Unfortunately, all born again believers even with the new desires and the Holy Spirit power have sinned since their conversion. The Bible is filled with super saints that sinned. King David, Noah, Moses, Peter and many others have their sins recorded and read by millions. Paul wrote to believers: "If we say we that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (I John 1:8).

New Testament's Plea

The New Testament letters were written to Christians who had sin problems. "...How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body..." (Rm. 6:2, 12) "My little children, these things write I unto, that you sin not..." (I John 2:1) "Dearly beloved I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." (I Peter 2:11) There is no mention of earthly eradication from the World, the Flesh, and the Devil for the believer. But there is written about repentance, forgiveness, and power.

Is Christian Perfection Possible?

When a man and wife are married, they become one. Are they still one even when they are not in direct fellowship? When an argument occurs and the communion is broken, is the marriage union broken? Engraved in my wife's and mine wedding bands is "Till death... do we part." But during the normal course of the day, we are physically apart more than we are together. We are only out of fellowship.

Our Goal

"Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect." (Matt. 5:48) Perfect here is the Greek word "teleios" meaning complete in various applications of labor, growth, mental or moral character. "...Be ye holy as I am holy." (Lev. 11:44) If Christian sinless perfection and total holiness are possible on earth, then why does not God give it at the time of conversion when He gives us a new heart? We are to pattern our life after Christ who was sinless and holy. Holiness and Christian perfection must be the goal of every believer until eradication from this world at our home going.

Our Repentance

The First Epistle of John was written to the Christian church. In it is a verse for the believer: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (I John 1:9) Admitting that a Christian can always sin is not a burden for continuous introspect but is the first step to being on guard and daily depending on the power of Jesus. If we truly confess, repent and seek power, we have a loving Father who forgives, forgets and restores.

Our Accountability

Repentance does not give us the liberty to sin nor removes our accountability for sin. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Gal. 6:7) "...My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him, for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." (Heb. 13:5,6) "...for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ...so then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." (Rom. 14:10, 12)

Our Victory

"But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (I Cor. 5:57) Is a great verse about victory over ... death. At the time of our home going, we will have gloried bodies. We will be made pure, completely spotless, with final victory over sorrow, sin and death. But until then God has given us a free will to choose right or wrong. He has given us the power for victory over our sins but we must yield to it. We cannot get more of Him. He just gets more of us.

Some people believe that victory means that God will remove our desires and ability to sin. They say that there is an earthly crisis where God makes us sinless or perfect. We must seek, pray and believe for it. After this crisis, a Christian will no longer sin in word, thought or deed. To them, any other belief that allows Christians to sin is a sinning religion. The Bible speaks of no sinless persons except Christ. It speaks often of believers who sin less and are under God's grace.

What is Grace?

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Rom. 10:13) "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Eph. 2:8, 9)

Saving Grace

Grace is God's Righteousness At Christ's Expense. Grace is getting something we totally do not desire. It is by His grace that we obtain salvation, justification, sanctification, adoption and regeneration at the moment of conversion. It is not by any works of us. It is an eternal gift from God given to us by our initial faith and trust in His Son. When we become saved, God sees us just as if we had never sinned. "And their sins will I remember no more." (Heb. 10:17)

God's saving grace is for everyone. It does not matter if we are Jew or Gentile, American or Russian, male or female, young or old, big or small, rich or poor, saint or sinner. Christ died for all. "God is ... not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (II Peter 3:9) There is no sin gross enough or amount of sin large enough to keep a person from salvation. Christ's blood removes it all. "...the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." (I John 1:7)

Second Grace

Some say that there is a second work between salvation and the believer's home going. They imply that God did not perform or give everything to the believer at conversion. Some believe it is when God removes the old sinful nature and gives the Christian the new heart. (Ezk. 36:26) To others, it is when God gives or baptizes the believer with the power of the Holy Spirit after conversion. However, from their writings, it is difficult to know what moves God to give this second work of grace. Is it additional faith? Does God need to first see a life of consecration? But if we have to do something additional, then this work of God can not be considered grace. What happens if a person dies without getting this second work of grace?

Sustaining Grace

If God's grace was sufficient to save us, why is it not sufficient to sustain us? If one can lose their salvation, then it is not a gift, not by grace, and not eternal. To say that we must keep the faith, show works, or keep from sinning is really adding works to grace. This is just like when the early church Jews stated that Gentile believers must keep the Law of Moses. (Acts 15:10, 11) But this grace does not give the Christian liberty to sin. "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein." (Rom. 6:1, 2)

Some state that "once saved, always saved" removes the free will of man of leaving God. They relate their relationship to Christ like bonds of marriage that when one becomes unfaithful the commitment is broken. They believe there is a point if we deny God that His sustaining grace runs out and the promise of eternal life is broken. But the Bible states that we are "born again". (John 3:3, 7). According to Galatians 4:6,7, we are called the sons of God **and** an heir of God through Christ. Our relationship is not based on a marriage but on a birth. My Father said He will never leave me nor forsake me. (Heb. 13:5) I will always be the son of my earthly and heavenly father.

What is Entire Consecration?

Salvation is more than a fire escape from Hell. It is a new direction, new heart, new way of life, and new owner. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." (II Cor. 5:17)

Christian Maturity

"Even as unto babes in Christ, I have fed you with milk and not with meat..." (I Cor. 3:1) The Christian life is a process of learning and growing in Christ. This life brings forth fruit and works for Christ. Christian maturity is developing the tools and power God gives to the believer from the moment of salvation. A Christian who stops growing will soon have their joy gone, their fruit rotten, and sometimes their testimony marled.

Christian Consecration

From the moment of salvation, every Christian should want to serve the Lord with all their heart, soul, and mind. The first thing out of a Christian's mouth each morning should be "Here am I Lord, use me". Paul pleads: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service and be not conformed to this world but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." (Rom.12: 1,2) This is not a one time event, but should be a daily yielding, transforming, and consecration of our hands, feet, mouth, thoughts and desires. This should occur at the moment of conversion but often-young believers do not yield their entire life to the Lord until later. Some refer to this as a crisis in their Christian walk. This is also referred by the terms of total surround or rededication.

Christian Service

Everyone is called to be in Christian service. Whether we have the lowest of professions or elected to be the President, we are to glorify God in all that we do. (I Cor. 10:31) We can all do some type of lay ministry in the church. Some may be chosen by God to have professions in full time Christian work. But these people are not to be put higher than others. "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness." (I Cor. 12:18-23) The believer's true fulfillment and satisfaction comes from finding their part in the body of Christ and serving there with all their heart, soul and mind.

My Thoughts on Entire Sanctification

The term entire sanctification is distinctive to the Nazarene denomination. It is presented in their membership classes and encourages to be sought from the pulpit. Their literature on this subject explains how to prepare for this crisis and what to expect after it. One booklet is called You Can Be Sanctified Wholly by Richard Neiderhiser published Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City 1988.

My Questions

If this crisis is so crucial to the Christian, then why is it unique to the teachings of only one denomination? Being a Christian for 40 years, I have never heard of it until I came to the Nazarene church. The large Bible University, which I attended, did not speak of this subject. The Pastors that I have spoke with, not associated with this denomination, have no clue about what I am speaking on. Also, if it is so crucial then why was this not revealed until John Wesley days?

Some others questions which I raised included: Why would God wait to give the Holy Spirit or the Holy Spirit's power to the believer? Why does not God make us perfect or sinless, at conversion, so we can better please Him? What triggers God to do perform this second work to a believer? What happens to a believer who is not entire sanctified at the time of death? Is a believer who is entire sanctified sinless (perfect, has victory over sin) or just sins less? Since the Nazarene denomination states that people can lose their salvation, does this include those who are entire sanctified?

My Observations


I was in a church were they preached on this subject for four weeks. After the fourth week, there were those that were confused or disagreed with what was presented. While at that church, in my eyes, I knew on one who was sinless. I watched those who claimed to have victory over sin. Yes, they lived Godly lives but I questioned them on their anger at church sport events, their driving speed and other items. To them these were not sins. At times, you get a "holy than thou" feeling.

My Suggestions

Let us stop seeking and start using the Holy Spirit's power, which we had from the time of salvation. Let us start daily consecrating our lives for the Lord whether it is in a full time profession or as a lay worker. Let stop seeking an event where God does something more to us so that we can do more for Him.

Lets us stop seeking or believing that we obtained a second work of grace, where we were made perfect with complete victory over sin. This event will happen at the time of our glorification at our homecoming. Let us start confusing and forsaking sin and trusting in His strength. Let us believe that when we sin again, God will forgive us and thorough His grace sees us just as if we had never sin. Let us rise above the fear that God can remove our salvation because our sin or unbelief.

Lets us start to research, study, pray and understand the scriptures through the Holy Spirit for ourselves. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness." (II Tim. 3:16) "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (II Tim. 2:14)

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