

PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION: THE BIBLICAL PROCESS OF CHANGE
DR. JOHN D. STREET

II. THE BIBLICAL PROCESS OF CHANGE

A. A Macro Look at the Problem of Sin (Origin and Progression) as It Affects Worship

1. Its Beginning (Gen.3)

- a) Man had divine counsel before the fall. He was innocent, but not autonomous or independent.
- b) Man also required the counsel of the Word (Gen.1:28-30; 2:24). Without the Word, life is absurd; life has no purpose or future.
- c) Man turned from the divine counsel to devilish counsel.
 - (1) Doubt ➤ Gen.3:1
 - (2) Distortion ➤ Gen.3:2
 - (3) Denial ➤ Gen.3:4
- d) Man rejected divine counsel and suffered the consequences.
 - (1) Immediate Consequences: gained knowledge of good and evil; lost power to effect change; gained guilt, separation, blindness, rejecting responsibility; developed problems with God, others, and self
 - (2) Eternal Consequences: spiritual death - physical and eternal

2. Its Continuation

- a) The first man born (Gen.4)
- b) The first king of Israel (I Sam.13-31)
- c) The assessment of all mankind at the time of Paul (Rom.3:9-23)

3. Its Present Status (II Tim.3:1-13)

- a) There is wholesale iniquity (II Tim.3:2-4)
- b) There is wholesale hypocrisy (II Tim.3:5-7)
- c) There is wholesale apostasy (II Tim. 3:8-9)
- d) There is wholesale persecution (II Tim.3:12-13)

4. Its Alternatives

- a) One can quit; many have.
- b) One can seek help from man's counsel.
- c) One can seek help from God through His Word (II Tim. 3:15 - 4:2).

B. A Micro Look at the Problem of Sin as It Affects Worship

1. The Location - The Heart (Gen.6:5; Matt.22:34-40; Prov.4:23; Mk.7:20-23; I Sam.16:7; Ps.111:1; Prov.23:7)

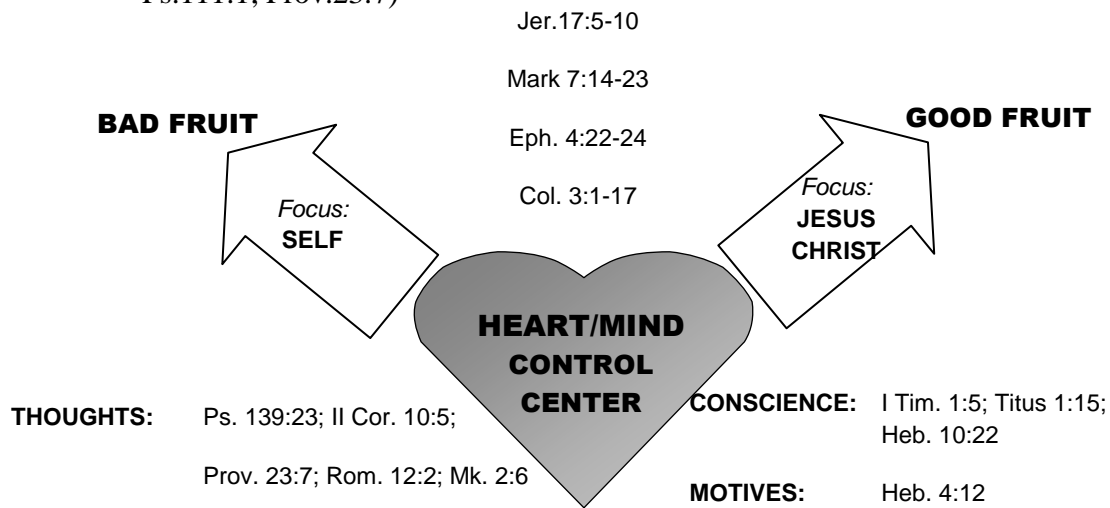


Fig. 7 Man's Control Center

2. The Occupation – Worship (Ex.20:1-6; Rom.12:1; Jer.2:13; I Kings 18:21; Matt.12:34; Jos.24:14-20; Rom.6:16; Matt.6:21)

3. The Frustration – Idolatry / Lust (I Kings 11:4; Ezk.14:1-11; Rom.1:25; I Cor.10:1-14)
 - a) Wanting or desiring something that God does not want or desire

 - b) Wanting something that God wants or desires but wanting it so much that one becomes ungodly to get it or ungodly if they don't

 - c) Being controlled by expectations and becoming ungodly in thought, word, or deed when the expectation is not realized

 - d) Perceiving a deserved right and following through with ungodly thoughts, words, and actions to try to get it when that right is denied

 - e) Believing in something, a standard or rule, that is not of God and that leads to ungodly practices

 - f) Having a mindset that is against the truth of God's Word, that leads to ungodliness in thoughts, words, and actions

4. The Regeneration — versus Rehabilitation
 - a) The Gospel and its counterfeit, the psychologized gospel

 - b) Rom.10:8-10; Matt.7:21-23; Eph.3:17

5. The Transformation - The Renewing of the Mind / Heart
 - a) This is a battle (war) (Rom.12:2; Eph.4:22; II Cor.10:5) - into Christlikeness

 - b) Rom.8:28-29; II Cor.3:18; Gal.4:19, Eph.4:13-15; Col.1:17; 3:10

6. The Glorification - Christ's Return (Rom.8:18-25,30; I Cor.15:50-58)

7. Summary and Conclusion

- a) Pray daily (Psalm 139:23-24)
- b) Ask yourself:
 - (1) What are my goals, expectations, or intentions?
 - (2) What do I become anxious over or fearful over?
 - (3) What makes me happy?
 - (4) What motivates me?
 - (5) What would I like, possibly more than anything?
 - (6) In what situation do I respond in anger?
 - (7) What perceived right(s) has been denied?
 - (8) What biblical standard or principle permits that thought, word, or action?
- c) Write down how that particular idol/lust is worshipped in thought, word, and deed.
- d) Acknowledge what it is and confess it = sin of idolatry.
- e) Ask forgiveness from God and whomever is part of the worship process.
- f) Study God's character to examine how your view of God is skewed. Do an in-depth study on the character and attributes of God that are directly involved in this area of change.
- g) Be ready to learn how to replace idol/lust worship with the worship of God.

C. General Considerations

1. Three Models of Sanctification

a) The Wesleyan View (Christian Perfection)

A "second work of grace" catapults the believer into a state of sinlessness, which is often called "entire sanctification." (Sin is defined as only that which is a "willful transgression of the known law of God." Anything we do not

clearly "intend" to do or are ignorant about is merely a "mistake.") Spiritual growth takes place after the second work of grace by increasing in good works.

b) The Keswick View (Higher Life or Deeper Life)

A unique post-salvation commitment (or enlightenment) allows the believer to enter into a victorious and consistent life of obedience. The struggle with sin continues, but it is lessened significantly by the new truth that has been understood and accepted. Spiritual growth takes place after that primarily by a passive trust in the work of God, appropriately represented by the slogan "let go and let God."

c) The Biblical View of Progressive Sanctification (commonly referred to as The Reformed View)

A lifelong cycle of sin, repentance, renewal, and growth toward Christlikeness that will only be complete when we meet our Lord (Rom.6-8). This is accomplished through the active discipline of the believer himself, who trusts that the Holy Spirit is energizing his efforts (Phil. 2:12-13).

(1) The Westminster Confession, Chapter XII states:

- I. They who are effectually called and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them, are further sanctified, really and personally, through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, by His Word and Spirit dwelling in them; the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified, and they more and more quickened and strengthened, in all saving graces, to the practice of true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.
- II. This sanctification is throughout in the whole man, yet imperfect in this life; there abideth still some remnants of corruption in every part, whence ariseth a continual and irreconcilable war, the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.
- III. In which war, although the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail, yet, through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part doth overcome; and so the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

(2) Many people who claim to believe the biblical view nevertheless fall practically into the errors of the other approaches.

- (a) They echo both the Wesleyan and Keswick views when they seem to be waiting for some divine event that will take away the strongest pulls of sin and eliminate the need for concentrated self-discipline.
- (b) They echo the Wesleyan view specifically when they admit that we sin "all the time" but very seldom confess it or ask forgiveness.
- (c) And they echo the Keswick view specifically when they "let go and let God's Word" by thinking that the absorption of scriptural teaching alone, without its practice, will change them.

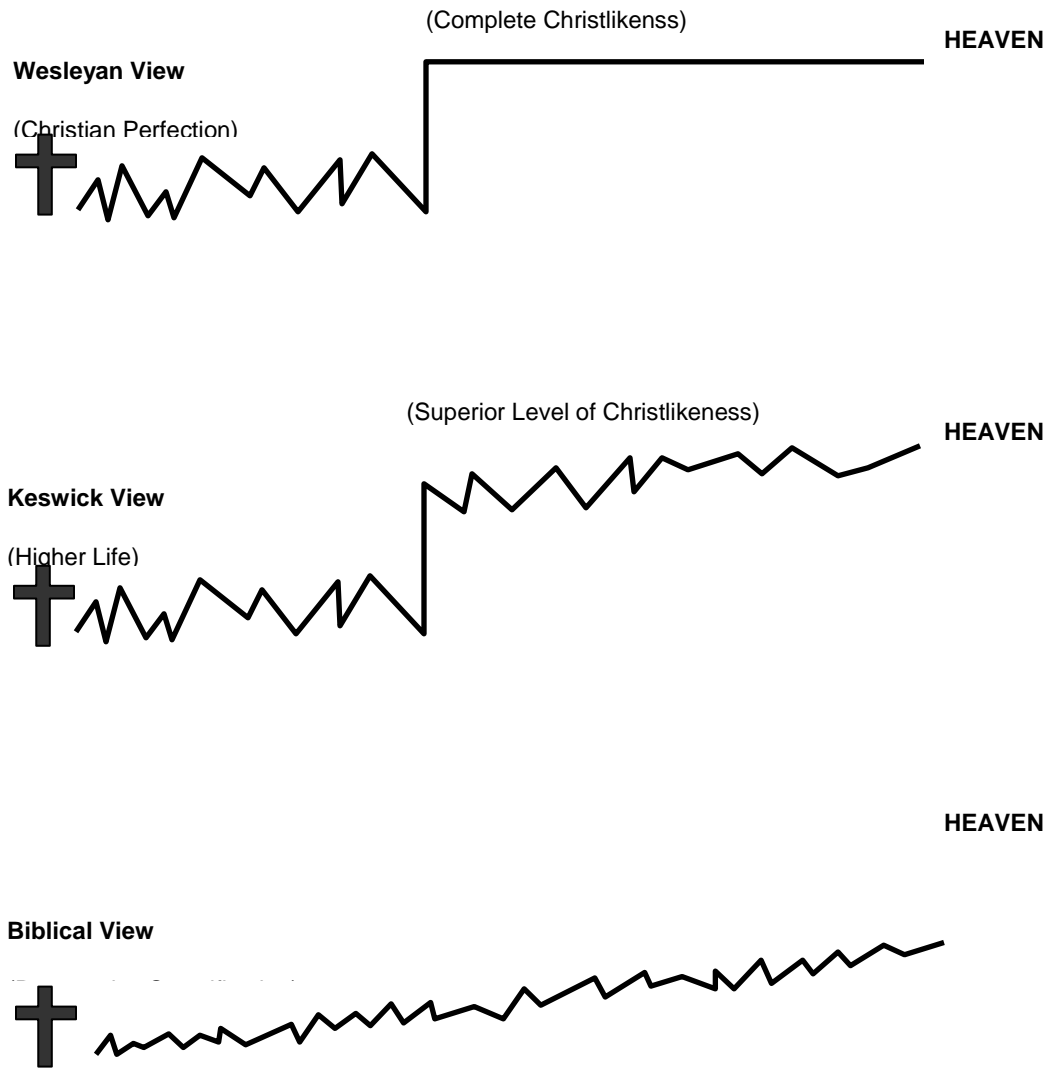


Fig. 8 Sanctification Models