

Operation 180

Session 5: Walking as He walked

Home Group Edition

Session 4 review

- ❖ Daily meditations
 - Did any of the readings stand out to you?
- ❖ Confessions
 - Any issues? Any praise reports?

Confession review

I pray that you had a Spirit-filled experience as you acknowledged your sins in the presence of God and another human being. I also pray that acknowledging your sins in the context of your life timeline was especially healing.

As mentioned in the last session, the freedom we experience through confession and forgiveness is the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives:

“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.” (2 Corinthians 3:17)

In this session, we will focus on the freedom to move in our faith and begin to change.

Freedom is the freedom to take risks and move into the next chapter that God has planned for us. To be revived in a new season of walking the light. To walk as a *new creation in Christ*.

WE CAN'T ALWAYS THINK OURSELVES INTO A NEW WAY OF LIVING.

WE MUST LIVE OUR WAY INTO A NEW WAY OF THINKING.

So we must change and *live* as a new creation in Christ. We must do more than talk the talk, we must *walk the walk*.

The Apostle John says it this way:

“The one who says he remains in him should walk just as he walked.” (1 John 2:6)

The focus of this session is to begin to *walk as He walked*. This is the process of *sanctification*.

Sanctification is defined as:

Sanctification is the ongoing supernatural work of God to rescue justified sinners from the disease of sin and to conform them to the image of his Son: holy, Christlike, and empowered to do good works.

Sanctification is:

- *supernatural*, in that it is accomplished through the work of the Holy Spirit;
- an act of salvation (rescue) by God of us from ourselves and our self-destructive habits;
and
- a life-long process where we are continually being conformed to the image of Christ.

Sanctification is seen in the 12 Steps in Steps 6 & 7:

Step 6 -- We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

Step 7 -- We humbly asked Him to remove all our shortcomings.

Note that Step 6 uses the phrase ‘defects of character,’ and Step 7 uses the term ‘shortcomings’. There is no difference between these terms, and since *we all fall short of the glory of God*, I will use the term ‘shortcomings’ in these materials to refer to both.

Taken together, Steps 6 and 7 recite a process wherein we become *entirely ready* and *humbly ask* God to *remove all our shortcomings*. This describes the Biblical process of our sanctification.

Why do we need to ask God? Because only God can remove *all* our shortcomings. If we could do this ourselves, we would not need to come before God. The truth is that *we need the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit* to change the things about us that we cannot change ourselves, no matter how hard we have tried.

For this change to happen, Steps 6 and 7 indicate that we must be *entirely ready* and *humbly ask Him* to change us. In other words, we come to God in a spirit of *humility*.

Humility

Humility can refer to a state of being—generally lowness in status rank or economic means. In this sense, humility is the opposite of importance or wealth. It can also refer to a virtue that involves a modest self-perception. In this sense, it is the opposite of pride and arrogance.

Jesus tells us that He is both:

“Take up my yoke and learn from me, because I am lowly and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” (Matthew 11:29)

We begin our personal journey of sanctification by coming to Jesus in a state of humility, both in the sense of our perceived self-importance in relation to others, and in our own self-perception of ourselves. We shed our pride and arrogance.

And we ask.

Why?

Because Jesus asks us to ask Him:

“If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.” (John 14:14)

We humbly ask Jesus to sanctify us in His image.

What does it mean to be sanctified? What are the benefits?

Benefits of sanctification

Sanctification allows the Holy Spirit to reveal the truth of God’s word in us, and through us:

“Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. I sanctify myself for them, so that they also may be sanctified by the truth.” (John 17:17–19)

We are sanctified and sent into the world.

We become God’s *logos*, His message of truth and healing. This being His message of recovery becomes our purpose, and there is power in recovery in having a purpose.

But God doesn't just give us a new purpose and leave us on our own. He *equips* us to carry out that purpose as part of the sanctification process. God does not call those who are already qualified, rather, God qualifies and equips those that He has called.

Through the sanctification process, *God supernaturally equips those that He has called.*

The writer of Hebrews puts it this way:

“Now may the God of peace, who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus—the great Shepherd of the sheep—through the blood of the everlasting covenant, equip you with everything good to do his will, working in us what is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.” (Hebrews 13:20–21)

God's Word promises that we will be equipped with *everything good we need to do His will*. The sanctification works *in us* to produce *what is pleasing in His sight*. If we are *obedient* to the working of the Holy Spirit, we will produce results in accordance with God's will for us that are pleasing in His sight. This is a comforting promise, indeed.

But what is God's will in the context of recovery and this series? What is pleasing in His sight?

This was revealed in our cornerstone Scripture for this series, the Lucan Commission.

“[A]nd repentance for forgiveness of sins will be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” (Luke 24:47)

We are to *proclaim forgiveness and repentance of sins*. That is our Kingdom recovery work

As part of our sanctification process, we must humbly ask God to remove any and all shortcomings that get in the way of carrying out Jesus' commission. This is the goal of this session.

But what does Kingdom living look like in recovery? Jesus gives us a great example.

Kingdom living

So often, the distractions of the world cause us to lose our focus on our Kingdom work. We get drawn into arguments and fights about matters unrelated to our recovery and Kingdom work.

In a crucial scene that begins Passion Week, we see Jesus being brought before the local authorities and falsely accused of crimes that would form the basis for the sham trial that leads to his crucifixion. But notably, Jesus does not respond to the false accusations. In fact, He is silent,

baffling those around Him. Jesus knows that what is happening is the Father's will, and in obedience to the Father, Jesus does not let the arguments of the world distract Him from the Father's will.

Jesus explains His priorities this way:

“My kingdom is not of this world,” said Jesus. “If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight, so that I wouldn’t be handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.” (John 18:36)

We, too, must walk as Jesus walked, and walk like citizens of the Kingdom of God, not as citizens of the world. Our Kingdom is not of this world. We must remove those shortcomings that cause us to fight for things of the world.

Our shortcomings are often artifacts of our worldly battles, including battles from our distant past and even from our childhood. Many of our shortcomings are remnants of coping strategies we used to survive in the world. Tragically, these old behaviors that got us through past difficult times are not productive or useful in our current walk with Jesus.

These old behaviors can be difficult to shed as they are embedded in us as survival techniques. It is only through the supernatural operation of the Holy Spirit that these shortcomings can be removed. We must be empowered with the Holy Spirit to experience the freedom to walk as a new creation, and this is the freedom that the sanctification process provides.

There is freedom in obedience to the Holy Spirit as it works in and through us in sanctification.

That is worth saying again - a paradox of recovery is:

There is freedom in obedience to the Holy Spirit

Integrating these past behaviors and experiences into our testimonies is critical to our recovery. This is how we move from being *victims* to *victors*.

Remember,

Whatever is not transformed is transferred.

Recall that Jesus promised us that we would be *empowered from on high*. Jesus also promises us that He will transform us through the work of the Holy Spirit *if we humbly ask Him*. We must rely on the *power* of the Holy Spirit. Let's see what that power looks like in action.

Kingdom power

The gift of the Holy Spirit is the hinge that connects Luke's Gospel with the Book of Acts:

“And look, I am sending you what my Father promised. As for you, stay in the city until you are empowered from on high.” (Luke 24:49)

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

From the last chapter of Luke's Gospel and right into the first chapter of the Book of Acts, we see Jesus repeating His promise of that the disciples receiving the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

And then we see the Holy Spirit falling on all in the Upper Room at Pentecost - *just like Jesus promised.* (Ch. 2)

From that moment on until this very moment, even as you are reading this, all who believe in the name of Jesus are *empowered from on high* when they receive the Holy Spirit.

But what does this “Kingdom power” enable us to do? How is it different from worldly power?

To answer this question, let's see what Jesus was commissioned to do with His power. We see one example of this in a passage from the prophet Isaiah, often read at Christmas (yes, another Christmas reference):

*“For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.”
(Isaiah 9:6–7, NRSV)*

This passage lays out what Jesus as the Messiah will accomplish with His Kingdom power. Let's unpack this.

Kingdom power

Isaiah prophesies that the Messiah will do the following:

- Establish peace;
- Uphold that peace with justice and righteousness;
- The peace that is established will be forever;
- He will have the authority to do all the above.
- God will make sure this happens.

Putting this all together for our purposes in this session, Kingdom power looks like this:

Kingdom power = the power and authority to establish and uphold peace.

Jesus tells us this much in the Sermon on the Mount:

*“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”
(Matthew 5:9, NRSV)*

We are to be peaceMAKERS, establishing and upholding peace in the midst of the world.

When we walk as Jesus walked, we are walking and talking peacemakers.

In the recovery context, *sanctification equips us to establish and uphold peace in others' lives.*

You may already be doing this. After all, recovery meetings establish and uphold peace. It is in small groups all over the world that forgiveness of sins is proclaimed, and healing happens.

Recovery meetings can be a place where *pain becomes a portal to peace.* It is in small groups that the connection of *feeling felt makes pain tolerable.*

Putting this all together:

Pain becomes a portal to peace when other people are present

It is the supernatural transformation of us through sanctification that equips us to be present for others.

Justice

But the enemy places many obstacles in our collective roads to recovery. This is where the Biblical concept of justice comes in and is very different from the world's concept of justice.

Isaiah says the Messiah will “uphold peace with justice.” What does this mean?

Church father Thomas Aquinas provides a great quote on Biblical justice that also perfectly encapsulates many concepts running through this session:

“Peace is the work of justice indirectly, insofar as justice removes the obstacles to peace: but it is the work of charity directly, since charity, according to its very nature, causes peace.”

Biblical justice means *removing obstacles to peace*. And this is done through *the work of charity*. We continue to uphold that peace through ongoing charity, continuing to remove obstacles to peace as they appear.

Walking others through the Steps of recovery helps them remove their own obstacles of self-destructive behavior, thereby establishing peace in their own lives. Continuing service at church and recovery groups is the charity that helps establish and maintain that peace in the local community.

Unity

And when there is peace in the community, there is unity.

And that is Jesus' prayer. In fact, it is one of the very last prayers that Jesus lifts up to the Father immediately before He is betrayed in the hands of those that will lead Him to the cross.

Jesus prays this:

“I am in them and you are in me, so that they may be made completely one, that the world may know you have sent me and have loved them as you have loved me.” (John 17:23)

Jesus prays that we are to be made *completely one*, that is, in *perfect unity*. It is in this unity that the world sees Jesus in and through Christians. It is through this unity that others are drawn towards Jesus as a source of unity and peace that cannot be found in the world. This is because it is through our unity that others see that *God loves us just as much as He loves His Son*.

And for someone experiencing the despair of addiction and trauma, this is hope. We proclaim God's healing through forgiveness *in and through our unity as Christians*.

To tie all this together:

We are sanctified in our own recovery so that we can create unity by proclaiming healing for all through God's Word and forgiveness.

So let's get to work on our part, our sanctification.

Confession observations

Now, it is time to reflect on your confession experience. Make note of any obvious shortcomings that come to mind. Did the person receiving your confession provide any feedback? Were there any shortcomings that were common throughout the cycles of your life? Take a moment to consider what shortcomings in you that the Holy Spirit is directing you humbly prayerfully ask Jesus to remove. Prayerfully consider what self-destructive obstacles are in the way of you experiencing the peace of Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

Make some notes here:

Notes: _____

Prayer for removal of shortcomings

A powerful technique to humbly ask for the removal of shortcomings is to also ask for a replacement attribute at the same time. Often, it is difficult to imagine letting go of a long-held shortcoming without filling that void with a Godly, righteous character attribute.

Jesus gives a concise guide to how we should walk with Him when He addressed the church of Thyatira in the Book of revelation. There, Jesus commends the church by stating:

“I know all the things you do. I have seen your love, your faith, your service, and your patient endurance. And I can see your constant improvement in all these things.” (Revelation 2:19, NLT)

Jesus calls out their love, faith, service, and patient endurance. And He notes they are constantly improving over time.

Take the list of your shortcomings you noted above, and see what Jesus would have you replace that shortcoming with from His list.

As a guide, here is some context for Jesus’ list of attributes:

- Love = *agape* love, selfless community-facing love. This love is for the greater good of all;
- Faith = *pistis faith*, faith in Jesus as our source of salvation, not faith in the world;
- Service = service in the church, either as a leader or simply as being in attendance;
- Endurance = perseverance based on the hope we discussed in sessions 1 and 2, the hope that God will do what He has said He will do. Today, this is the hope of Jesus as the soon-coming King.

There are many other sources in the Bible for examples of Godly attributes. The Fruit of the Spirit from Galatians chapter 5 is a good example.

Now complete this short table of your shortcomings along with an attribute for Jesus to replace it with. Complete the table below:

<u>My shortcoming to be removed</u>	<u>Attribute of Jesus to replace my shortcoming</u>

Next, intentionally set aside time each day to humbly come before Jesus and ask Him to remove each shortcoming and replace it with an attribute of Him. Pray through one shortcoming each day with intention and supplication.

I suggest the following prayer:

Prayer of sanctification

Father, I acknowledge my shortcoming of _____ . I repent of this sin and come to You, entirely ready to have this shortcoming removed from me. I humbly ask that this shortcoming be removed and replaced with _____ , an attribute of Your Son, Jesus Christ. I ask for the strength and endurance to obey the Holy Spirit as I seek to die to my old ways and rise in the power of the resurrection as a new creation in Your Son, Jesus Christ. I ask this in the name of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

I pray that you experience the supernatural inner change that only the Holy Spirit can provide, and begin to walk as a new creation in Jesus Christ!

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Daily Meditations

Theme: Sanctification and humility

Day 1

“Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. I sanctify myself for them, so that they also may be sanctified by the truth.”
(John 17:17–19)

Notes: _____

Day 2

“By this will, we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all time. Every priest stands day after day ministering and offering the same sacrifices time after time, which can never take away sins. But this man, after offering one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God. He is now waiting until his enemies are made his footstool.”
(Hebrews 10:10–13)

Notes: _____

Day 3

“Therefore, Jesus also suffered outside the gate, so that he might sanctify the people by his own blood.” (Hebrews 13:12)

Notes: _____

Day 4

“Now may the God of peace, who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus—the great Shepherd of the sheep—through the blood of the everlasting covenant, equip you with everything good to do his will, working in us what is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.” (Hebrews 13:20–21)

Notes: _____

Day 5

“[H]e humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death— even to death on a cross.” (Philippians 2:8)

Notes: _____

Day 6

“The one who says, “I have come to know him,” and yet doesn’t keep his commands, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps his word, truly in him the love of God is made complete. This is how we know we are in him: The one who says he remains in him should walk just as he walked.” (1 John 2:4–6)

Notes: _____

Day 7

“I know your works—your love, faithfulness, service, and endurance. I know that your last works are greater than the first.” (Revelation 2:19)

Notes: _____

