



E.9. Pt. 2 - Partakers of the Divine Nature

2 Pet. 1. 2-4 *“Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”*

In Episode 8, Part 1 of this two-part message a foundation was established for pressing on into a higher and most marvelous understanding of the spiritual nature of our salvation. Without a concrete knowledge of the regenerated man, aka *the new man, the new creature, or the new creation*, and being *born again*, we could not pursue the higher understanding of the nature of this *new man* in Christ, and especially of us no longer having a dual nature—one focusing on our natural life and the other on our spiritual; how many people attempt to live out their Christian lives trying to balance their time, energy and resources between exercising their natural wills hopefully making wise decisions for their daily lives, and that of exercising their spiritual wills, praying they make Holy Spirit led decisions impacting their spiritual life and also helping to direct the natural life.

But now, we are ready to build upon the foundation laid by those six scriptures in Part 1: Eph. 4.20-24; 2 Cor. 5.17; Col. 3.10; Gal. 6.15; Rm. 6.4; and Rm. 7.6 and to attempt to establish the mystery of how those two wills that seemingly act independently of one another come together as one in the *new man*. Even as man has two eyes to see, both looking at the same objects and giving direction to our walk, in like manner the *new man* can see as one in the natural as well as in the spiritual and to make godly decisions in life—it is part of his or her new nature. After all, life is intended to be spontaneously experienced, as our souls interact with the natural world through our bodies and also interact with the spiritual world through our spirits, we are made complete as our spirits are now bonded in unity with the Holy Spirit; this was as promised by Jesus in Jn. 14.16 *“And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever.”*

Unbelievers, heathens of this world, are spiritually dead to God and do not concern themselves with seeking Divine input into their lives. According to Eph. 4.17-18, *“they walk ... in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.”* So they become wise in their own ways according to the highest intelligence, logic and reasoning of man. The

world has their specialists and professionals, even their psychics and gurus to help in decision making. But all of this comes with a caution from God,

1 Cor. 3.18-21 *“¹⁸Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. ¹⁹For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, “He catches the wise in their own craftiness”; ²⁰and again, “The LORD knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile.” ²¹Therefore let no one boast in men.*

Life’s true answers must come not from the ingenuity of man, from the intelligent rational thinker and clever analyst, but must ultimately come from... a new life inherent “in” the believer. This truth is so important I must repeat it; “Life’s true answers must come not from the ingenuity of man, from the intelligent rational thinker and clever analyst, but must ultimately come from ...a new life inherent “in” the believer.” The financial planner may give advice and wisdom regarding investments, but choosing the right planner, and deciding issues of when, where, and how much requires discernment_a sense of the spirit. In order to properly function, man’s spirit and soul must not act independently of one another but the whole man, body, soul and spirit, must act in harmony with each other. To compartmentalize man, dividing the soul/body and soul/spirit, is counterproductive. Biblically, when the soul and body interact independently without the spirit it is considered to be acting “carnally,” or “in the flesh.” From creation man was never intended to act that way, but to have body, soul and spirit act as one, in harmony and unity. This ability was lost in the fall of man but has been regained in his redemption in Christ.

Let’s return now to our opening scripture passage and attempt to uncover the mystery of this new nature possessed by the *new man*.

Partakers of the Divine Nature

2 Pet. 1. 2-4 *“²Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, ³as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, ⁴by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be **partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”*

This “word of God” is introduced here with a compelling emphasis; it reads, “*in the **knowledge** of God and of Jesus our Lord.*” This word *knowledge* in the original Greek is *epignosko*, actually means a fuller, more precise and complete understanding of God, even implying a spirit of discernment that goes beyond having mere factual awareness. This knowledge of God awakens our souls to receive a spiritual impartation of light and truth; such light and truth powerfully works “in” us. Note 1 Thes. 2.13, *“¹³For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works*

in you who believe,” _ re-emphasizing, “*the word of God, which also **effectively works in you who believe,***” This is the essence of our faith, a faith not being filled with religious traditions and rituals, but with spiritual impartations into our souls, causing us to grow up increment by increment. This constitutes spiritual growth or spiritual maturity.

The word “*life*” used in verse 3 (*has given to us all things that pertain to **life***) refers to a new or regenerated life of the soul; that life which is born out of our union with Christ; this is the life of Christ living in us. The life of this *new creation* must exist before there can be any true *godliness* in character. New God-breathed life must precede any true spiritual development of the soul. The child of God must have vital breath first, then begin to cry, and learn to walk, and to eventually grow up and advance in the ways of his Father. A walk of “*godliness*” begins with the realization and focus of our Lord’s abiding presence, Ps. 16.8 “*I have set the LORD always before me; Because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved.*” And, Heb. 12.2 “*looking (better, fixing or eyes) unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.*” This awareness of Christ’s presence must grow from inception and something intermittent to become a constant living reality. I do not see Christ in me; I do not feel sensations of Christ in me, but the witness of my spirit being joined to His Spirit is a constant reminder of His indwelling presence. This is the fellowship of the Spirit.

Do you see here that there is no dichotomous religious life versus secular life for the believer? We are living “in” the world, though not being a part “of” the fallen world, but living in the Kingdom of God simultaneously. Acts 17.28 reads, “*for in Him we live and move and have our being*”_in worship assembly, out of worship assembly; in work, out of work; in play, out of play; etc. and is not dependent on special places such as temples or church building or some other solemn place for the awareness of His abiding presence. Things of the spirit transcend time, space and material objects. 1 Cor. 2.16 reads, “*For “who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?” But we have the mind of Christ.*” Interpreted, this means that the Spirit of Christ, who abides “in us,” and who is our teacher, knows the mind of the Lord and reveals it to us. This is Christianity in the continuum of “*life,*” and not in sporadic religion. This is Christianity beginning as an inward life progressing outward.

Partakers of the Divine Nature. These words seem to demand special attention. They are gripping and stir up strong imaginations of something divinely glorious, and yet mysterious. Do they really mean what they obviously say? By all means they do. Bold as they are, and challenging as they seem, “*partakers of the Divine nature*” is only putting into another language or a new expression the teaching of which the whole Gospel of Christ is full; and that is, that men may by faith receive into their souls a real impartation of the Divine life of God. Jn. 10.10 reads, “*I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.*” This life of which our Lord speaks refers not to a heightened soul life we were created with, but the Divine life from the Father. This life opens the way to Divine fellowship.

Divine life! How else can one interpret the scriptures: becoming “*sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty?*” (2 Cor. 6.18); what else does the teachings of, *regeneration, the new man, the new creation* mean? (Tit. 3.5; 2 Cor. 5.17; Eph. 4.24) How else can we interpret Jesus Christ’s bold declaration that He dwells “in us” and that we are “in Him,” even as the branch is “in” the vine? (Jn. 15.1-8) What else does “*But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him,*” mean? (1 Cor. 6.17) How else can we explain Paul’s passionate remark, “*I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me?*” (Gal. 2.20) All of these different expressions represent the exact same principle, the truth of the indwelling spirit of life in Christ Jesus. (Rm. 8.2)

There can be no other interpretations. The very purpose for which God had sent His Son Jesus Christ into the world, to be crucified, buried, and resurrected, and ascended into heaven, and the Holy Spirit sent forth to dwell within the believer, is for us needful, sinful, unknowing souls to be lifted up, exalted in Christ, and receive in our souls that spark of life from God. Furthermore, adding to that life is that we might be “*partakers of the Divine nature;*” not receiving the very essence of God, but an impartation of His holiness and righteousness. This is true Christianity, not as a religion but as life.

It means that not only the eternal life and vitality of God may come “into” us, but also His divine nature as well. This is not just some mere divine influence, or some wooing of the Spirit, of attempting to walk in His footsteps, but a spiritual impartation, an infusing into us His own life and holy nature. Righteousness and holiness express and resemble the nature of God, and collectively are called... His image.

Any forthcoming exercise of one’s will must not be a cause for debate between the natural and spiritual but will issue forth from a single will wrapped up in Christ. Decisions will be guided by our spiritual senses: such as insight, discernment, and revelation, and choices made in righteousness and holiness. This is the way of the Spirit. The word “inherent” must become a part of our vocabulary. **The Divine qualities inherent in the nature of Christ become inherent in the believer**, that is, they become permanent, essential, characteristic attributes of our own nature. Glory.

Righteousness and Holiness (Sanctification)

The essence of our new nature, the core of its quality, that from which our will is exercised, is Divine righteousness and holiness. We must make time here to elaborate on these most fundamental attributes of our new nature. Consider first the following two scriptures,

Eph. 4:24 “*and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.*” (akin to sanctification)

1 Cor. 1.30 “*But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us (past tense) wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.*”

First, regarding “righteousness.” Righteousness is simply living in a right relationship with God; meaning what we are and what we do pleases Him. True righteousness does not come by the works of the Law or by doing good deeds on behalf of others. These are considered “dead works.” Why are they considered dead works? It is because all unbelievers, who are **dead in trespasses and sin**, can do them. (Eph. 2.1-3) Nothing issuing forth out of death and sin is acceptable to God—they are contrary to His nature. However, deeds born out of the infusion of the Spirit of righteousness into our souls by Christ are most pleasing and acceptable to God. This comes from God by grace and is “imputed” (or attributed) to believers through faith in Christ Jesus. This “imputation” of righteousness encompasses **both** our legal standing of being declared righteous before God, **and** the morally righteous conduct that flows out from this indwelling Spirit of Christ which is now in union with our own spirits. This righteousness becomes what we “are” and what we “do”...in Christ Jesus.

In regards to our legal status before God, this righteousness is determined to be imputed, or simply credited to believers by God; it is for us to have the righteousness of Christ; it is righteousness not achieved in any way by human effort but is a gift of God through faith—which is known as grace.

However, regarding the righteousness pertaining to our moral conduct and behavior that flows out from this new life in Christ, this is determined to be the “**fruit**” of righteousness. The fruit of righteousness is “righteous character” that develops in the believer and appears in his life. This is much like the fruit that grows on the branch (who is the believer) that is connected to the vine (who is Jesus Christ) (Jn. 15.5) Thus, as it is written in Phil. 1.11, “*being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.*” This fruit will be seen in the life of the believer, fruit such as those listed in Gal. 5.22-23. “*love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.*” These attributes of righteousness are all above and beyond anything attempted or imagined by the natural man. For they all issue forth out of life, inherent Divine life.

So do you see that any act of our will, whether regarding the kingdom of God or of this world, is guided and influenced by the fruit of righteousness so that decisions are made in true love and goodness, and self-control. This is actively and spontaneously living our faith. It is not practicing a form of religion, or being obedient to commandments, or attempting to emulate or imitate Christ-like behavior. It becomes inherent in our nature.

Now regarding sanctification. It is written in 1 Thes. 4.3, “*For this is the will of God, your sanctification:*” One may ask, “What is the highest will of God for man?” Is it to be born again? Or maybe have our deeds be righteous before Him? Or to have a place reserved for him in heaven or the coming Kingdom? No, these are all good and necessary, but they are not the highest aim of God for man. The verse reads, “*For this is the will of God, your sanctification:*”

He would have us to be “*holy*” or “*sanctified*” unto him. It is one matter to have a close relationship with another, but it is an altogether different matter to have intimate fellowship with another.

For example, I have a daughter and a son. No matter what happens in their lives they will always be my children in relationship, my seed is in them. They could deny me and my name yet they remain my children; DNA testing will always prove they are undeniably my children. However, having *fellowship* with them is another matter. My relationship with them is confirmed and permanent, they are my children; but my fellowship with them can be highly variable, from none to fullness of joy. Actually, fellowship is conditional on both mine and my children’s parts. I deeply love my children, but my fellowship with them may be weakened if their nature and character become offensive and unacceptable. If, for instance, they become unruly, worldly, unbelieving, blatantly sinful and rebellious, our fellowship is truly threatened and may even cause an absolute barrier between them and myself. They may be my children, but I could not, or would not, be able to spend time with them. Nor would they with me should I have such an undesirable disposition. (For the record, I thank God that my children are loving, respectful, morally upright, Christians, with whom I enjoy many hours of fellowship.)

How thrilled was the heart of God to have formed man from the dust of the earth and to breathe life into him so that he became a living being; one with whom God might have fellowship; to have Adam and Eve as His prize possession, set above all living things on the earth. However, God was not able to have that fellowship with them because, in their “free wills,” they chose a desire for things of the world over the intimacy of fellowship with God. **Sin** entered their lives, followed by **death**, first spiritually in severing their fellowship with God, then in body severing their fellowship with the world. In their fallen state they were forever separated from a *holy* God_ you understand that sin erects a barrier between man and God; it makes him incompatible to God’s presence due to the imperfection of his sinful nature and God’s perfect holiness.

This regrettable condition is referred to in 1 Tim. 6.16 where it is written of God, “*who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power.*” Unacceptable and unapproachable before God or anywhere in the Kingdom of God are those two enemies of our souls: sin and death. However, we do know God now makes that loving offer to man for his repentance and reconciliation to Himself...in and through our Lord Christ Jesus.

Now believers are “*sanctified*” or made “*holy*” in Christ and restored in a condition acceptable to God. Heb. 10.10 states it this way, “*By that ‘will’ we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*” Do you see the interplay of “wills” here? It was by the will of the Father to send His Son, the Lamb of God, to be that perfect sacrifice for man’s sin. It was then by the will of Christ Jesus as He submitted and offered His body as that living sacrifice on the cross. And it is by the will of man to now choose and receive Christ into his heart for the forgiveness of sin and to be reconciled back to God. Something spiritual and

miraculous happened when Jesus' will became one with the Father's will; sin and death was overcome and darkness was consumed in light. Something spiritual and miraculous also happens when the will of the believer becomes one with the will of God—they become born again of God, and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit progresses in their lives.

Salvation involves one continuous process called *sanctification*. Though Heb. 10.10 states that we, "*have been sanctified...once for all time*," meaning legally set apart by God in His Son Jesus Christ, a following verse, Heb. 10.14, reads, "*For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified*." Thus, to be sanctified in Christ is one thing, this affects our relationship with God, becoming children born of God; but to have Christ "in you" now further sanctifying you is quite another matter, affecting and enhancing our fellowship with our Father.

A marriage example: The state of marriage is expressed in the Song of Solomon, 2.16, "*My beloved is mine, and I am his*." Man and wife, consecrated to one another, set apart for one and one another's purposes. Each belongs to the other and has no attachment to any other; nor for anything or any activity that might come between them. Each is considered *holy* as one set apart to enjoy the other's love. This relationship is intended to grow over time as each partner learns to better serve one another. A devote man I knew, DeVern Fromke, once said, "The Son ever lives to please the Father, and the Father ever lives to bless the Son." If each partner in a marriage lived by this concept, all marriages will be full and satisfying. This being consecrated to one another in such a way is very powerful in creating oneness and solidifying relationships.

Can you see now the implication that sanctification is the highest aim of God in the salvation of man. Salvation must never be thought of in terms or places, like heaven or the New Jerusalem, or of conditions like having eternal bliss; but its highest goal involves being sanctified unto God, Father and Son in the Holy Spirit and coming into this high oneness with them in divine purposes. The agreement of God's will and our will begets sanctification, sanctification begets righteousness, and righteousness begets a transforming fellowship with the living God.

1 Pet. 1.15-16 "*¹⁵but as He who **called** you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."*

*He who **called** you...*this calling is not "to" salvation but a calling "in" salvation, an upward calling towards a pure and holy life in fellowship with God—for this is the will of God for you and every believer. Another more literal way of expressing this is, "*Do also show yourselves holy in every part of your conduct*." God has (past tense) set us apart from the mass darkness that is in the world, and selected us in Christ to come into this Divine relationship and fellowship with Him. As the "believer's will" comes into agreement with "God's holy will," the actual work of the Holy Spirit begins, as stated in Phil. 2.13 "*¹³for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure*."

Well, we must draw this discussion now to a close; it has been lengthy and deep. I trust that we both have been enlightened a bit of this most sober and glorious call of God for our sanctification and righteousness. We know this is the highest will and calling of God for us. Each and every believer has been *born anew* of God into a *new creation*; having a spirit regenerated in union with the Holy Spirit; a soul now being progressively transformed in measure to the divine nature; and a body waiting to be resurrected at the second coming. This *new man* possesses a renewed conscience to help guide and convict him, spiritual senses for insight and discernment for understanding and revelation, and a will acutely sensitive to the will of God; when coming into agreement with the will of God, Divine relationship and fellowship come to life, life beginning now, growing in measure into eternity.

S4.E9. Pt.2 Questions of Discussion

1. What are “dead works” and why may they appear to man as good and humane but be unacceptable to God?
2. Explain what is meant by the statement, “Life’s true answers must come not from the ingenuity of man, from the intelligent rational thinker and clever analyst, but must ultimately come from... a new life inherent “in” the believer.”
3. Discuss the significance of 2 Pet. 1.3-4, focusing your discussion of key words: *life*, *knowledge*, and *divine nature*.
4. How does 1 Thes. 2.13 show a distinct difference between practicing religion and living life in Christ Jesus.
5. Becoming righteous is two-fold: having both *legal* and *moral* righteousness. Explain. What is the *fruit* of righteousness?
6. Explain sanctification. Explain also how there may be both a legal sanctification and a moral or practical sanctification. Why is sanctification so important?
7. Explain how DeVern Fromke’s statement, “The Son ever lives to please the Father, and the Father ever lives to bless the Son,” fulfills sanctification in a marriage as well as our relationship and fellowship with God.