

## **Introduction to Christian Perfection**

### **I. What is Christian Perfection?**

#### **A. Wesleyan Terms**

1. Perfection - *Matthew 5:48* - Maturity of faith by the cleansing of Adamic sin
  - a. Christians are not perfect in knowledge
  - b. Christians make mistakes -  $2+2=5$
  - c. Christians have infirmities - mental, physical, emotional
  - d. Christians are not free from temptations
2. Perfect love - *I John 4:18* - “unmixed love for God and others.”
3. Second blessing - *II Corinthians 1:15* - a blessing beyond our conversion
  - a. Second Work of Grace - experience beyond salvation including baptism in the Holy Spirit, cleansing from original sin, anointing by the Holy Spirit, and sealing by the Holy Spirit
  - b. Second Rest - after conversion experience - holy rest
  - c. Canaan (Beulah or Beulah land) - analogy of a second experience— first - deliverance, second - inheritance
4. Holiness - *Leviticus 11:44-45* - a work that God does from conversion through sanctification
  - a. Scriptural Holiness - God’s Word as the foundation of holiness
  - b. Christian Holiness - Christ’s work as the foundation of holiness
  - c. Heart Purity - inward sin cleansed away
5. Sanctification - *I Thessalonians 5:23* - constant relationship with God promoting growth and service beyond conversion

#### **B. Other Terms**

1. Calvinist - “life of faith” or full assurance of faith
2. Pentecostal - “baptism of the Holy Spirit”
3. Dutch Reform - “entire consecration”
4. Quaker - “living in the Spirit” or “overcoming power”
5. Roman Catholic - “death to self-life” or “pure love”

### **II. Holiness in the Old Testament**

#### **A. God alone is holy - motto of Leviticus (*11:44-45;19:2;20:26*)**

1. Holiness is a part of God’s character - who He is
2. Holiness sets God apart from humanity - sin vs. holiness

#### **B. Holiness in humanity or creation is present only when in relation to God**

#### **C. Holiness in humanity is understood to be “godliness”**

1. Wholeness - having all the proper parts or elements
2. Integrity - completeness; soundness
3. Normality - regular, standard; natural

### **III. Holiness in the New Testament**

#### **A. Nature of God defined by Jesus Christ - *Philippians 2:5-11***

1. Maker and preserver of all things - everlasting
2. Infinite power, wisdom and goodness

#### **B. Image of God defined by Jesus Christ - *Colossians 1:15***

1. Restores the image of God in humanity
2. Connects the image of God to the image of humanity
3. Models the image of humanity

# **ROAD TO HOLINESS**

---

*Midwest City Free Methodist Church*

## IV. The Mosaic of Christian Holiness - Richard Howard

- A. Positional Sanctification - What God declares holy, is holy
  - 1. Old Testament - Sabbath (*Exodus 20:8-11*); tabernacle (*Exodus 25:8-9*); priests (*Exodus 29:1*); people (*Exodus 19:6*); temple (*Habakkuk 2:20*)
  - 2. New Testament - believers belong to God through Christ
- B. Initial Sanctification - change at the point of conversion
- C. Progressive Sanctification - change from glory to glory; transformation
- D. Entire Sanctification - God's divine love expels the believer's sin
  - 1. Deliverance from all sin - purification
  - 2. Received by faith - believing and trusting
  - 3. Given in a moment - instantaneous
  - 4. Moment can be right now - no waiting

## **Reference Books on Holiness**

- A Wesleyan-Holiness Theology* - J. Kenneth Grider
- A Layman's Guide to Sanctification* - H. Ray dunning
- The Celebration of Christian Holiness* - Richard Howard
- Deeper Experiences* - James Gilchrist Lawson

## **Wesley's Sermons on Holiness**

- Christian Perfection* - Sermon XL
- The Lord our Righteousness* - Sermon XX

## Entire Sanctification

- I. The History of the Holiness Movement in America
  - A. Methodist Episcopal Church founded Christmas - 1784
  - B. The Second Great Awakening - 1795-1859
    1. First Methodist awakenings in America - Captain Thomas Webb
    2. Revivals in Gaspar River and Mud River, Kentucky - James McGready
    3. Presbyterian Revival at Cane Ridge, Kentucky - Barton W. Stone
    4. Yale Revival under Timothy Dwight - other colleges experience renewal
    5. Charles G. Finney starts to preach in 1825
    6. Churches split over slavery - Presbyterian - 1837; Methodists - 1844; Baptists - 1845
    7. Dwight L. Moody converted in 1855
    8. Great Prayer Meeting Revival - call to prayer and fasting-1857-1858
  - C. The American Theologians of Entire Sanctification
    1. Thomas N. Ralston - stressed free agency - a person's free will
    2. Randolph S. Foster - defended Wesley's view of perfection - Bishop
    3. Miner Raymond - used Scripture to support sanctification - *Ephesians 3:16-21*
    4. John Miley - supported "second blessing" view of sanctification
    5. Olin Alfred Curtis - emphasized personal holiness - *I John 4:16-5:5*
  - D. Phoebe Palmer - Altar Theology
    1. First Step - The person puts everything on the altar
    2. Second Step - The person must understand that the altar is Christ Himself
    3. Third Step - The person accepts that the altar sanctifies the gift; therefore, the person is sanctified
- II. The Development of the American Holiness Movement
  - A. Comparison of Wesleyan and American Holiness

<b>Wesleyan - 18th Century</b>	<b>American - 19th Century</b>
1. Christological - Calvary	Pneumatological - Pentecost
2. Process with crises	Crises - one time
3. Content of love	Experience of power
4. Authority of Scripture	Authority of experience
5. Relationship to God	State of Being
6. Community	Individual
7. Grace	Means of grace (altar)
  - B. American 19th Century Personal Holiness produced the Pentecostal Revival
    1. Emphasis on a "Personal Experience" with the Holy Spirit
    2. Stress on a "result"; ie speaking in tongues
  - C. Interaction with the Holy Spirit - Dr. Luke's descriptions
    1. Mary overcame - sang a song - *Luke 1:35-56*
    2. Elizabeth filled - pronounced a blessing - *Luke 1:42*
    3. Zechariah filled - prophesied - *Luke 1:67-69*
    4. Simeon - Holy Spirit upon him - praised God - *Luke 2:25-32*
    5. Jesus - Holy Spirit descended - started ministry - *Luke 3:21-23*
    6. 120 people in upper room – filled – spoke in tongues – *Acts 2:4*
    7. Peter – filled – preached – *Acts 4:7-8*
    8. People praying – filled – spoke the Word – *Acts 4:31*

## **ROAD TO HOLINESS**

---

*Midwest City Free Methodist Church*

9. Stephen being filled – received a vision – *Acts 7:55-56*
10. Samaritans – received the Holy Spirit – no recorded reaction – *Acts 8:15*
11. Saul filled – could see again and preached – *Acts 9:17-19*
12. Church strengthened and encouraged – growth in numbers – *Acts 9:31*
13. Cornelius – Holy Spirit came upon – spoke in tongues and praised God – *Acts 10:44-46*
14. Paul filled – word of knowledge – *Acts 13:6-11*
15. Disciples at Iconium filled – joy – *Acts 13:52*
16. Disciples at Ephesus – Holy Spirit came upon – spoke in tongues and prophesied –  
*Acts 19:1-7*

### **III. Free Methodist View on Entire Sanctification**

#### **A. Articles of Religion; XII Entire Sanctification**

Entire sanctification is that work of the Holy Spirit, subsequent to regeneration, by which the fully consecrated believer, upon exercise of faith in the atoning blood of Christ, is cleansed in that moment from all inward sin and empowered for service. The resulting relationship is attested by the witness of the Holy Spirit and is maintained by faith and obedience. Entire sanctification enables the believer to love God with all his heart, soul, strength, and mind and his neighbor as himself, and it prepares him for greater growth in grace.

#### **B. Personal Holiness**

1. God desires our perfection
2. The agent of God in the believer's life is the Holy Spirit
3. The call to a holy life brings both an inward change and an outward expression
4. The change is both Scriptural and experiential

### **Reference Books on Holiness**

*Book of Discipline, 1995 Edition* – Free Methodist Church  
*All the Saints Adore Thee* – Bruce Shelley

### **Periodicals on Holiness**

*Camp Meetings and Circuit Riders* – Christian History, Volume XIV, No.1  
*Spiritual Awakenings in North America* – Christian History, Volume VIII, No.3

## **Historical Development of The Doctrine of Holiness**

### **I. Holiness in the Early Church**

#### **A. New Testament Church – 35-100 AD**

1. Believed and experienced the power, presence and purpose of the Holy Spirit –  
*Ephesians 1:13-14*
2. Refreshed and renewed by the Holy Spirit – *Jude 20*
3. Cleansed and purified by faith in Jesus Christ – *I John 1:8-10*
4. Encouraged, strengthened and comforted by prophetic interaction – *II Corinthians 14:3*
5. Grew in godlikeness, Christ likeness, love and grace – *Colossians 1:9-14*

#### **B. Apostolic Fathers and Apologist – 95-300 AD**

1. Ignatius of Antioch – work of love in the church/practical perfection
  - a. Baptism – purity and cleansing – outward expression
  - b. Liturgy – doctrine and mysteries – symbolic expression
2. Irenaeus – perfection of the Incarnation/power of the Holy Spirit
3. Clement of Alexandria – emphasis on creation/image of God
4. Origen – divine love and freedom of humanity/cosmic perfection
5. Tertullian – zeal for separation and consecration
6. Montanus – believed in Spirit-led, Spirit-directed life/led to heresy
7. Cyprian – virtue comes from discipleship with Christ

#### **C. The Formative Period – 300-600 AD**

1. Macarius the Egyptian – sanctification in personal terms
2. Gregory of Nyssa – Eastern View – deification
  - a. Systematic theology of sanctification/first in the church
  - b. Stressed personal holiness was attainable in this life
3. Augustine of Hippo – Latin View – purification and union
  - a. Pauline doctrine and practice – early life
  - b. Sanctification started with sacraments – confession, baptism, confirmation, ordination, healing, marriage and communion
  - c. Theological shifts – three times changed his views
    1. Pauline doctrine and practice – early life
    2. Free agency – middle life
    3. Extreme Calvinism – later life

### **II. Holiness in the Middle Ages – 600-150 AD**

#### **A. Pastors and Theologians**

1. Gregory the Great – popularized Augustine's views/discipline required
2. Bernard of Clairvaux – practical love; costly love/possibility of perfection
3. Thomas Aquinas – sin issues vs. perfection/love and other virtues

#### **B. Mendicant Orders**

1. Franciscans – imitating Christ in life, thought, word and deed
2. Dominicans – preaching a life of holiness, peace and service

#### **C. Female Leadership**

1. Catherine of Siena – intimacy with God as rapturous encounter
2. Teresa Avila – holiness grew out of self-denial and suffering

# **ROAD TO HOLINESS**

---

*Midwest City Free Methodist Church*

## III. Holiness in the Reformation – 1500-1700 AD

### A. Protestant Reformers

1. Martin Luther – separates perfection and sanctification/alien holiness
2. John Calvin – Holiness brings moral transformation/God to humanity

### B. Dutch Pietism

1. Direk Coornhert – personal, progressive holiness/maturity in Christ
2. Wilken Teellinck – union with Christ/Holy Spirit controlled-life

### C. Lutheran Pietism

1. Johann Arndt – baptism bestowed a certain perfection/imparted
2. Philipp Jacob Spener – process for perfection/holiness received in stages

## IV. Holiness in Orthodox Belief

### A. Eastern Orthodox – Greek, Russian, Armenian, Coptic

1. Deification – imparting of the divine life into the soul
2. Progressive transformation through grace in church service

### B. Western Orthodox – Roman Catholic, Reformed Catholic

1. Purification – enlightenment – union/levels of maturity
2. Combination of graces and works

### C. Protestant Orthodox – Luther, Calvin, Anglican, Wesley

1. Sanctification – justification and regeneration
2. Work of the Holy Spirit in the believer by faith

## **Reference Books on Holiness**

*Exploring Christian Holiness, Volume II* – Paul M. Bassett and William M. Greathouse

*Spiritual Companions* – Peter Toon

*The Pastor* – Philip L. Culbertson and Arthur Bradford Shippee, editors

## **Wesleyan Spirituality**

### **I. John Wesley's Background**

#### **A. Early Life**

1. Parents – Samuel – Church of England clergy; Susanna – Puritan descent
2. Family – 19 brothers and sisters – Charles closes and most famous sibling
3. Attended Christ Church College at Oxford; ordained in 1725
4. Taught Greek at Lincoln College, Oxford at age 23
5. Started holiness club at Oxford – known as “Methodists”
6. Set sail for Georgia to be a missionary to the Indians

#### **B. New Life**

1. Found his heart full of fear and unrest – began to search
2. Met Peter Bohler – Moravian in London, 1738 – discussed faith
3. Attended a prayer meeting at Aldersgate – May 24, 1738 – heart was strangely warm
4. Joined with Charles who had a similar experience only few days before

#### **C. Ministry**

1. Began to preach “salvation by faith, not by works”
2. Preached to the common people – in the fields; at the factories; on the streets
3. Wrote articles and tracts on the grace of God in the soul of a believer

#### **D. Organization**

1. Emphasis on Nurture
  - a. Placed believers into societies for spiritual growth and encouragement
  - b. Used small groups for accountability and comfort
  - c. Used large groups for worship, preaching and teaching
  - d. Used Anglican Church for Sacraments, doctrine and ecclesiastical order
2. Emphasis on Participation
  - a. Believers were encouraged to “walk in the Spirit” – edification and outreach
  - b. Leadership was based on spiritual maturity and spiritual gifts

#### **E. Thought**

1. Scripture – Christ – What did the Word of God say? – supreme
2. Tradition – Church What did history say? – dynamic
3. Reason – logic – What did common sense say? – Synthesis
4. Experience – interpretation – What did the Spirit do? – experiential

### **II. John Wesley's Ideas on Christian Perfection**

#### **A. What Christian Perfection Is Not**

1. Christians are not perfect in knowledge
2. Christians make mistakes  $2+2=5$
3. Christians have infirmities – mental, physical, emotional
4. Christians are not free from temptations

# **ROAD TO HOLINESS**

---

Midwest City Free Methodist Church

## **B. What Christian Perfection Is**

1. Mature Christian – Levels of Spirituality – *I John 2:12-14; I Corinthians 3:1-23*

converts	workers	disciples
children	young people	parents
carnal	enlightened	disciplined
new	undeveloped	mature

2. It is not so early as justification – justified persons go on to perfection – *Hebrews 6:1*

3. It is not so late as death – living people can be perfect – *Philippians 3:15*

4. It is not absolute – God alone maintains absolute perfection

5. It does not make any person infallible – no one is infallible while in the body

6. It is salvation from sin

7. It is perfect love – *I John 4:18* – essence thereof

8. It is improvable – cannot measure or regulate

9. It is amissable – capable of being lost (Wesley's views changed)

10. It is constantly both preceded and followed by a gradual work

11. It is instantaneous – a divine moment in the presence of God

## **Reference Books on Holiness**

*Belonging* – Donald N. Bastian

*A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* – John Wesley

*The Wesleyan Quadrilateral* – Donald AD Thorsen

## **Wesley's Sermons on Holiness**

*On Working Out Our Own Salvation* – Sermon LXXXV

*On the Wedding Garment* – Sermon CXX



## **The Sacrament of the Present Moment**

- I. The Grace of God – *John 14:1-7*
  - A. Prevenient Grace or “Preventing Grace” – **Finding the Way**
    1. The love of God for the whole of creation
    2. The sacrifice of Christ for the ewhole of humanity
    3. The work of the Holy Spirit for the whole person
      - a. Holy Spirit brings light into the darkness
      - b. Holy Spirit draws people to Jesus Christ
  - B. Justifying Grace – **Finding the Truth**
    1. The judgment of God upon the sins of humanity
    2. The redemption of Christ for the sins of those who believe
      - a. Faith and repentance open the door of salvation
      - b. God justifies and regenerates our relationship with Him
      - c. New life is birthed around truth and love
    3. The conviction of the Holy Spirit in judgment, righteousness and sin
      - a. Spirit of Truth – *John 15:26*
      - b. Spirit of Holiness – *Romans 1:4*
  - C. Sanctifying Grace – **Finding the Life**
    1. The life of God in the soul of the believer
    2. The Lordship of Christ in the life of the believer
    3. The freedom of the holy Spirit in the discipleship of the believer
  - D. Glorifying Grace – **Finding the House**
    1. New bodies for a new heaven and enw earth
    2. No more death, mourning, cring or pain – Alleluia!
- II. Practical Steps on the Road to Holiness
  - A. Set your life on God – *Colossians 3:1-4*
    1. Set your hearts on things above – Jesus Christ
    2. Set your mind on things above – Kingdom thoughts
  - B. Put sin to death – *Colossians 3:5*
    1. First, listen to the conviciton of the Holy Spirit
    2. Second, read the Word of God – brings renewal and faith
    3. Third, go to God with faiht in your heart
      - a. Is is helpful – physically, spiritually and mentally?
      - b. Does it brign me under its power?
      - c. Does it hurt others?
      - d. Does it glorify god?
  - C. Clothe yourself with righteousness – *Colossians 3:12-14*
    1. Godly Character – compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience
    2. Diving Forgiveness – three dimensional – God, self, others
    3. Agape Love – leads to and completes perfection
  - D. Live in the peace of God – *Colossians 3:15-17*
    1. Assurance and evidence of salvation
    2. Gratitude and freedom in life

## **ROAD TO HOLINESS**

---

*Midwest City Free Methodist Church*

### III. Blessings of Full Surrender

#### A. Sanctification comes from a Full Surrender to God

1. Faithfulness to the will of God – attention to God
2. Submission of the will of God – attention to the will
3. Obedience to the will of God – attention of the act
4. Surrender to the will of God – attention to the moment

#### B. The Sacrament of the Present Moment

1. State of Surrender
  - a. Souls living in God – exploration, examination, resolution
  - b. God living in Souls – complete and utter providence – union
2. Purity of faith, hope and love
  - a. Possessing the virtues of God – salvation
  - b. Growing in the virtues of God – sanctification
3. Treasury of Grace
  - a. A pure heart – holiness of heart and abundance in Spirit
  - b. A good will – nature of God in action and reactions

### **Reference Books on Holiness**

*The Joy of Full Surrender* – Jean-Pierre de Caussade  
*The Practice of the Presence of God* – Brother Lawrence  
*The Pursuit of Holiness* – Jerry Bridges

### **Periodicals on Holiness**

*A New Crisis Ensues* – Preacher's Magazine, Volume 73, No.2