

THE TEACHING  
**LEGACY**  
 OF DEREK PRINCE

## What God's Word Will Do For You, Part 5

In our Teaching Legacy letters over the past few months, we have been engaged in a six-part series dealing with the topic, “What God's Word Will Do For You.” Each of us could give testimony to the significant impact the Bible has had upon our lives along the lines of the topics we have covered so far: *God's Word is Alive*; *How Faith Comes*; *The New Birth*; and *The Word as Food*.

### Cleansing and Sanctification

It is a wonderful experience to consider and chronicle all that God's Word provides for us. Each of us could put together a long list of the personal benefits that have come into our lives from the Bible's impact upon us. But in this series, “What God's Word Will Do For You,” we have been examining the broader scope of what the Word accomplishes for us as we study it and apply it.

In the fourth teaching of our series on this topic, I explained how, through His Word, God provides us with spiritual nourishment to sustain and strengthen the new life we received through the new birth. In this Teaching Legacy letter, I am going to examine two further effects that God's Word will have upon your life: cleansing and sanctification.

### The Washing of the Word

For this study we will begin by looking at Ephesians 5:25–27. Although Paul addresses these words to husbands, the main thrust of what he is saying is not about human husbands in their relationship to their wives. Rather, it is about the relationship of Christ as the bridegroom to His bride, the church. In this passage, Paul tells us two very important provisions that Jesus Christ—as our Savior and Lord, and also as bridegroom of the church—has made for His people. Here is what Paul says:

*Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory,*



*having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless.*

Here we see two essential provisions Jesus has made for the well-being of His people, His church. The first is that Jesus gave Himself up for her. On the cross, He shed His blood and died so that His people might be redeemed. Therefore, the first provision of Jesus Christ is complete redemption by His blood. He has redeemed us for Himself. But for what purpose? The passage above tells us that He redeemed us by His blood in order that He might do something further: that He might cleanse us and sanctify us through the washing of water with the Word. The Word referred to here, of course, is the Word of God. These verses express the same thought found other places in Scripture, where God's Word is compared to pure water which, as it works upon us, cleanses and sanctifies us. This Ephesians citation indicates that both these provisions of Jesus Christ are essential for us to become the kind of church He wants as His bride.

### What the Water Does

First, we must know that we have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus. But that, in itself, is not all. Beyond that, we must submit to the operation of His Word in our hearts, minds and lives to cleanse and sanctify us so we can be holy and blameless. This pursuit is a tremendous goal that God has set for us. But since God has set the goal, we know He has also given us the means to achieve it.

At this point, it is important for us to clearly understand the difference between cleansing and sanctification. The word "cleansing" is a familiar word—even in daily life. It means to make clean or pure. The first operation of God's Word upon us is purification. Through His Word, God purifies our minds, our hearts, our thoughts, and our motives. He washes away that which is sinful, unclean and degraded.

However, God also sanctifies us. The word "sanctify" tends to be a rather religious term which frightens ordinary people. Let me explain it to you this way: any

word that ends in "-ify" or "-ification," just means "to make something into whatever it is that comes at the beginning of the word." Therefore, to *purify* means "to make pure." *Purification* means "making pure." In the same way, to *sanctify* means "to make *sanct*." You may well ask, "What in the world does *sanct* mean?" It is the same word as *saint*. And what is "saint"? In the original language of the Scripture, it is the word for someone who is *holy*. Very simply, sanctification means "making us holy."

Now, there are two aspects of sanctification: first, the negative; then the positive. The negative aspect of sanctification is a separation. It means being separated from sin, being separated to God from all that is impure and unacceptable to God. Beyond that, however, there is a positive aspect of sanctification. It also means partaking of God's own holiness—that is, becoming holy with God's holiness. We see this clearly in Hebrews 12, verses 10 and 14. In verse 10, the writer talks about the correlation between the discipline of human fathers and the discipline of God, our heavenly Father. He says:

*They [our human fathers] disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in His holiness.* NIV

We see here that the ultimate purpose of God's dealings and discipline in our life is that we may share in His holiness. This experience of holiness is not merely negative—abstaining from sin and impurity. On the positive side, it is actually receiving within us the very nature and holiness of God Himself, so that we become holy with God's holiness. What is the purpose of this goal? We see the answer in verse 14. In the same context of holiness, the writer of Hebrews goes on to say:

*Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.* NIV

This is a very solemn truth: we must become holy if we are ever to see the Lord. How is it possible? God's provision for us is to make us holy by the "washing of water with the word." His Word both cleanses us and sanctifies us—washing us thoroughly and also making us holy.

## The Snare of Religion

This principle of the washing of the water of the Word of God is vital to our spiritual growth. However, there is an important difference between the way God works to make us holy and the methods so often followed by religion. Religion tends to work from the outside in. It starts with externals and says, “Do this and don’t do that, and then you’ll be holy.” Jesus addresses this religious kind of holiness in Matthew 23— where He dismisses it as inadequate and unsatisfactory. Here is our Lord’s description of the kind of holiness the scribes and Pharisees had. Jesus says to them:

*Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe the mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.*

*You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also.*

Here is what Jesus was saying to them: “You Pharisees! You are constantly working on cleaning the outside of the dish and the cup, but you haven’t cleaned what is inside. And what is inside is always going to make what is outside unclean again, no matter how many times you try to clean it.” The mistake of this kind of religion is that it tries to make people holy by working from the outside in. This approach is evident in many sections of the church today, where Christians are told that holiness is to be achieved by following a set of man made rules. Here is the problem with that approach: It never changes man inwardly.

In contrast, we see from Jesus’ words in Matthew 5:8 that God’s way of making us holy is to work from the inside out.

*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*

What Jesus is saying here is that if your heart is pure, that condition will take you right into God’s presence. If you

are pure in heart, then consequently your words, thoughts, and actions will all be pure. Proverbs 4:23 reminds us that the wellsprings of life come from the heart. Everything in your life ultimately proceeds from your heart. If your heart is pure, your life will be pure. However, it is impossible to have a pure life without a pure heart.

## Renewing Our Minds

How do we develop a pure heart? God’s way to make us pure within is by renewing our minds—by changing the way we think. This is clearly stated in Romans 12:2:

*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

The command is clear in these words of Paul. We are not to be like the people of the world who do not serve Jesus Christ and do not honor God. We are to be different. We are to be changed. But how does that change occur? We are to be changed—not by outward rules and regulations—but by the renewing of our minds. The change we need has to come from within us. In this Romans 12 passage, Paul tells us that once our minds are renewed, we will be able to prove—that is, to find out from experience—what is good, acceptable and perfect. In essence, we will know what the real will of God is for our lives. Please notice that God’s will is not revealed to the unrenewed mind. It is only the renewed mind which can appreciate and enter into the will of God.

Now for a very important question. How does God’s Word renew our minds? I would suggest that we can think of this renewing process in three stages. First of all, the Word washes away impurity. It cleanses us from defilement, from impure thoughts, from dirty speech and from evil desires. It washes those characteristics away from us.

Secondly, it changes our values. We begin to operate by different standards. We start to look at things differently. We evaluate issues the way God evaluates them. We begin to call sin, sin—and righteousness, righteousness. We stop being deceived by fancy psychological terms for that which is displeasing to God.

Thirdly, God's Word, working within us, causes us to identify with God's purposes. Our motives change. We are no longer primarily concerned with what we want. Instead, our greatest desire becomes what God wants. We identify with God's purposes being worked out in the earth. In The Lord's Prayer, Jesus taught us to say, "Thy kingdom come"—and this becomes the overriding motive and desire of our lives. Our greatest desire becomes seeing God's kingdom established on the earth. With this motive so primary in our lives, we cannot help but live differently.

When all these changes have come about in our minds they will be mirrored in changes in our outward behavior. Clearly, God starts the process in our lives by renewing our minds with His Word.

Have you asked the Lord to make these changes in your life? Do you know for sure that you have allowed the Word of God to cleanse and sanctify you—renewing

your mind to make His kingdom your greatest priority? If you would like to make certain this has taken place for you, or if you would like to reaffirm your commitment to these principles, please join me in the following prayer.

*Lord Jesus, I want to walk fully in every principle I have discovered afresh through this teaching. I thank You that You have redeemed me by Your blood. Please cleanse me and sanctify me completely through the washing of Your Word. Rescue me from my tendency to pursue religious ways to make myself holy in Your sight. Start Your process in me from within, purifying my heart and then renewing my mind. I open myself up totally to this process, and I commit myself fully again to You and to the establishment of Your kingdom on earth—beginning right now with me. Thank You, Lord—for the work You are doing in me through Your precious Word. Amen.*



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This teaching is taken from the *Derek Prince Legacy Radio* series entitled *What God's Word Will Do For You*. For further study, we are making the CD of the teaching "How to Overcome Evil, Part 2" available to you at no charge. Just use the enclosed reply slip to request your copy.

Other DPM resources on this subject that we recommend for purchase include:

- Books:** Faith to Live By                      Be Perfect—But How?  
**CDs:** The New Creation (2-pts)      Taking Time to Wait on God

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