

Sanctification 101

Lesson 6 Mortification and Chastening

PART I EXPLANATION

Introduction: In the sanctification process there are two primary processes that work to produce holiness in the life of a Christian: mortification and chastening. While mortification is an active process, chastening is a passive process. In mortification, the individual is actively involved and is the one controlling the process. In chastening, the individual is passive, and is the one who is acted upon or the recipient of the process. The active person in the chastening process is obviously God Himself, who is our Father.

In order to properly sanctify ourselves, it is necessary to understand and engage in the process of mortification. However, the greatest cause of discouragement is often due to the overwhelming size of the task. A good practice to learn is to focus upon one particular sin at a time. Depending on the difficulty of the particular vice it may be necessary to devote an entire year to overcoming and putting to death an individual besetting sin. The goal is to identify and reveal the sin along with its damaging effects in our lives along with a spiritual game-plan for overcoming it.

Because there are so many areas in our life that need to be put to death it is easy to learn to live with them. This is particularly true in dealing with our sinful flesh. This struggle is illustrated in the scripture by the example of the children of Israel under Joshua in their settlement of the promised land. They had subdued the armies and conquered the land just as Christ has given us victory over sin by His death and resurrection. However, they also needed to expel the inhabitants of the land they had inherited by faith. In the same way the Christian needs to mortify the flesh with the affections and lusts and possess his vessel in sanctification and honor.

The Israelites failed to ever expel the inhabitants and allowed them to continue their existence and plague them to the present day. They were overwhelmed by the size of the task facing them and chose to live in subjection rather than subdue them. The failure to subdue the Promised Land is what led to their constant warfare with their enemies. Failure to mortify and conquer the lusts of the flesh gives opportunity for the devil to build strongholds that will be a constant thorn in your side. Let us as Christians not be guilty of the same mistake by giving place to the devil and allowing him to build up strongholds in our lives.

This failure to subdue the land also resulted in the chastening of the Lord, who used these nations to teach Israel spiritual lessons. Mortification and chastening have this connecting link. When we are unwilling to mortify our flesh, God in His grace chastens us for our good. Hebrews 12 explains to us God's method of chastening His children. It tells us that He does it for our profit that we may partake of His holiness and that it yields the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them who receive it.

It is important to understand and accept that God never deals with His children out of anger, resentment, and frustration. All Christians have been cleansed from all sin by the blood of Jesus Christ His Son. We have open access to His throne at any time and are bidden to come boldly as His adopted children. We have been completely reconciled to God by the death of His Son. However, because we are still living in sinful flesh, we do not always respond to Him with perfect obedience and submission.

While the child of God has been made a partaker of the divine nature and has a hunger and thirst for righteousness, he is still living in the 'body of this death'. In essence, while we have been reconciled completely to God, sad to say, He has not been completely reconciled to us. If our flesh is not mortified it will soon rebel against the clear teaching of God's Word. God's chastening is given as a correction and instruction, training us to be obedient children.

Definitions: *For English use the Webster's 1828 Dictionary and copy all appropriate definitions for each word. For the Greek and Hebrew use a Strong's Concordance and copy the definition. The Strong's number is in parenthesis.*

English: **Mortification** -

Mortify -

Chastening -

Chasten -

Greek: (3499) **nekroo** *nek-ro'-o*

(2289) **Thanatoo** *than-at-o'-o*

(3809) **paideia** *pahee-di'-ah*

(3811) **paideuo** *pahee-dyoo'-o*

Hebrew: (3198) **yakach** *yaw-kakh'*

(4148) **musar** *moo-sawr'*

(3256) **yasar** *yaw-sar'*

Quotation:

“You must fight the good fight of faith and endure hardships if you would lay hold of eternal life. You must take up your mind to a daily struggle if you would reach heaven. There may be short roads to heaven invented by man, but ancient Christianity, the good old way, is the way of the cross, the way of conflict. Sin, the world and the devil must be actually mortified, resisted and overcome.” JC Ryle

“None but the godly are capable of desertion. Wicked men know not what God’s love means, nor what it is to want it... You fear you are not God’s child because you are deserted. The Lord cannot be said to withdraw His love from the wicked, because they never had it. The being deserted, evidences you to be a child of God. How could you complain that God has estranged Himself, if you had not sometimes received smiles and tokens of love from Him?” Thomas Watson

“We may feel God’s hand as a Father upon when He strikes us as well as when He strokes us.” Abraham Wright

“Whatsoever we have over-loved, idolized, and leaned upon, God has from time to time broken it, and made us to see the vanity of it; so that we find the readiest course to be rid of our comforts is to set our hearts inordinately upon them.” John Flavel

“God’s wounds cure, sin’s kisses kill.” William Gurnall

“Better to be pruned to grow than cut up to burn.” John Trapp

“Thou art beaten that thou mayest be better.” John Bunyan

“Especially look to those sins to which your crosses have some reference and respect. Are you crossed in your goods? Think if you did not over-love them and get them unjustly, or if in your children, see if you did not over-love them and cocker them, and so in all things of like kind. In what God smites you, see if you have not in that sinned against Him, and so frame to lament your sins and to seek help against them.” William Whately

“It is in mercy and in measure that God chastiseth His children.” John Trapp

“Just as in a conquered city some yield eagerly to the new government while others continuously plot its overthrow, so some parts of our old nature refuse to give up without a fight. For this reason, it takes the same power to keep a heart as to win it at the first.” William Gurnall

"If you are a serious soldier, do not flirt with any of your desires that are beneath Christ and heaven. They will play the harlot and steal your heart." William Gurnall

Confessions (Look up and read these articles)

London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689

Chapter 13: Of Sanctification - paragraphs 1-3

PART II EXPLORATION

Key Questions (*Answer in writing*)

1. What are the two processes involved in our sanctification?
2. What is the difference between an active and passive process? Which process is active and which is passive?
3. What is the greatest cause of discouragement causing Christians not to mortify their flesh and what is the solution?
4. What is an Old Testament example illustrating this struggle with our flesh?
5. What two things can happen as a result of our failure to mortify the flesh?
6. What is the difference between mortification and chastening?
7. What two purposes does God have in mind when He chastens His children?
8. What does it mean to say “God has not been completely reconciled to us”?
9. What does Webster say is the purpose of chastening?
10. Give a summary of the London Confession on sanctification in your own words.

Key Scriptures:

Deuteronomy 8:5 If we will _____ how God is dealing with us, it is as a man that is chastening his _____.

II Samuel 7:14 Because David desired to build God a house, God promised to reward him. One of the blessings God promised was to treat David's children as His own. He promised that if he committed _____ He would _____ him and not take His _____ away.

Job 5:17 _____ is the man that God corrects therefore _____ not His chastening.

Psalm 6:1 David requested that God would not rebuke him in _____ nor chasten him in _____.

Proverbs 3:11 Solomon instructed his son not to be _____ of God correcting him.

Proverbs 13:24 Someone that refuses to use the _____ on their child really hates them. True love will chasten them before it is too late.

Proverbs 19:18 We must chasten our children while there is still _____ and not stop because of their _____.

Isaiah 26:16 Chastening caused _____ from the people.

Daniel 10:12 Fasting is a way to _____ yourself.

Romans 8:13 If we live in the flesh we shall _____. Rather through the Spirits leading we are to mortify the _____ of the _____ which will cause us to live.

Colossians 3:5 We must mortify our _____.

Revelation 3:19 Those that Christ loves He will _____ and chasten. Our response is to be _____ and _____.

Key Chapter(s) (*Read daily and summarize in your own words the meaning of the chapter*):
Hebrews 12

PART III EXPECTATION

Memory verse: Hebrews 12:6

Personal definition: (*Write a definition in your own words*)

Mortification -

Chastening -

Personal application: Choose one sin or weight in your life to mortify and abstain from it until you no longer have the desire for it.

Meditation question: *(be prepared for discussion)*

How do you determine the difference between chastening and circumstance?

Extra credit:

Give an example of God's chastening in your life.

Give an instance when you despised the chastening of God in your life.

What is a sin in your life that needs to be mortified? Develop a spiritual game plan to subdue it.