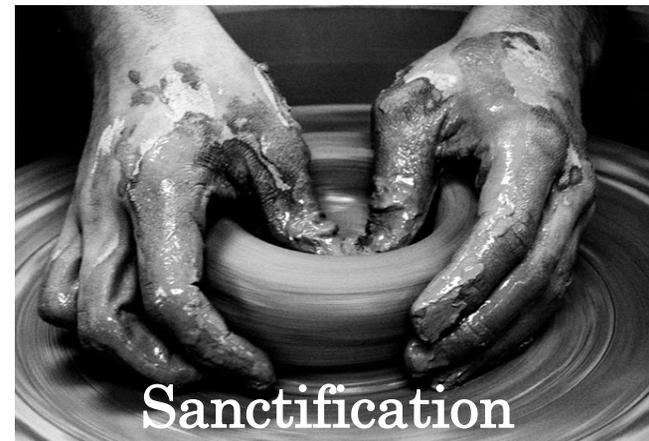




# *FALL 2018 DEVOTIONAL*

*WEEK 4: Nov. 5<sup>th</sup> – Nov. 9<sup>th</sup>*



## ***I AM HOPE***

**Good Hope Missionary Baptist Church  
Dr. D.Z. Cofield, Senior Pastor  
Mark Slone, Devotional Editor**



**Monday, November 5, 2018**

## **“Fit for Purpose”**

*Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.*

### **John 17:17 (ESV)**

When it comes to doing things around the house, I consider myself to be a pretty good DIY (Do-It-Yourself) kind of person. Most of what I learned, I learned from my father, who was sort of a “jack of all trades.” I was always amazed by the number and different kinds of tools, he possessed. One day he told me that the reason for all of the different types of tools, was that they all had different purposes or different functions. To drive a nail into some wood, he would use a hammer and not a saw, because that was the proper function of a hammer. Or if he wanted to measure the length of a wall, he would use a tape measure or a ruler, and not a screw driver, because that was the proper function of the tape measure. Each of my dad’s tools were designed and set apart for a specific use or purpose. As a Christ-follower, do you know your designed purpose? Do you know your proper function? Your designed purpose, or proper function, is to represent our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ in the world. This is His intended purpose for our new life in Him.

But, in order for a Christ-follower to faithfully and progressively live out their intended purpose, in every area of their everyday life, Jesus knew that His followers were impotent to do this on their own. So, in today’s text, Jesus in His high-priestly prayer, petitions His Father to do something for His followers, those present, and by extension, all those

who trust in Him for salvation, that they cannot do for themselves.

To “*sanctify*” means “to be holy,” “set apart for special use.” A believer is to be distinct from the things of the world: its sin, values, priorities, and goals. Jesus’s disciples are to be in the world, representing Him, but not of the world, living according to world.

Note that Jesus says the means of God’s sanctifying work, to make Christ-followers fit for purpose, is God’s “*truth*.” God’s “*truth*” is communicated in His “*Word*,” the special revelation of Himself to mankind, the Bible. As the message about Jesus was heard, believed, and understood, the disciples’ hearts and minds were captured. This change in their thinking results in changes in their living. As they appropriate God’s “*Word*” to their lives, they are sanctified—set apart for God and changed in their living in order to honor God. God’s “*Word*” sets Christ-followers apart from the evil world, so that they would do His will, not Satan’s.

Christ-follower, it is not enough merely to study the Bible and learn a great deal of doctrinal truth. We must also grow in our love for Jesus as we learn all that He is, all He has done for us, all that He is doing in us and wants to do through us. Learning and loving should lead to living, allowing the Spirit of God to enable us to obey His Word. This is how we glorify Him in this present evil world.

In John 15:3 (ESV), Jesus says, “*Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you.*” When you are saved, you are set apart for God. As you grow in your faith, you are more and more experiencing sanctification. You love

sin less and you love God more. You want to serve Him and be a blessing to others. All of this comes through the Word.

God's Word works as a divine cleansing agent that God uses to bring about our sanctification.

### **Sanctification grows in response to God's Word.**

- Min. Mark Slone

**Tuesday, November 6, 2018**

### **"Dare to be Different"**

*<sup>1</sup> I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. <sup>2</sup> Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

**Romans 12:1-2(ESV)**

As children, we all have a natural tendency to be genuine. What is inside, comes out; what you see is what you get. We stand out in our own unique way. However, as we age, especially in our teenage years, there is a challenge to fit in with the crowd. Standing out or being different is not something that we aspire towards. As we transition into our adulthood, the same can be true. We have a tendency to

not just try to fit in with the crowd, but also with our current circle of friends, family, or surroundings. Have you ever noticed yourself beginning to speak like those that you are speaking with? For example, I have heard people from New Orleans actually sound like they are from New Orleans, only when they get around others from New Orleans. At other times, many Black people, in particular, speak different forms of the English language depending on the immediate surroundings they find themselves in. We, at times can start to look, act, sound, and think like our surroundings. This can be done without much effort on our part and may just seem natural. On a larger scale, we are surrounded by this world, so we can sometimes begin to resemble the world in how we live our lives. However, as Christians, we are commanded to not be like the world, or our own small slice of it, but with the standards that God has set.

In Romans 12:1-2, we are asked to do 2 things. The first thing is to present our bodies as a living sacrifice. A sacrifice is something that is given up intentionally and offered to God. The problem with a *living* sacrifice, however, is that it can crawl off the alter. The thing that is to be given up can sometimes go its own way. So, we have a choice to make of whether, or not, we will commit to God or this world. Our beings literally belong to Him, so we are reminded to make the sacrifice of renewing that commitment each and every day of our lives.

The other thing that we are asked to do is to not conform to this world. 1 John 2:15 points out that to the things of God and the things of the world are at odds with each other. The word "conform" means "to comply with, to be similar to, or to agree with." Therefore, if we are similar to the

world or agree with it, then we, by default, will disagree with God. I have come to learn over the years that, if I am disagreeing with God, then one of us is wrong; AND ITS NEVER HIM! We are to be different from the world. We are to be set apart, and pure in heart, according to God. If we take a look the world, in its current form, we can see many problems. Selfishness and lack of love are manifested in so many different ways. We, as the children and ambassadors of God through Jesus Christ, carry the only solution to these various “heart issues”, that we see on this planet. If we are exactly like the world, complying, going along with, and agreeing with the ways that are so unlike God, how can we ever point people to God? Let us remember that God’s ways are the best ways and the world’s ways are flawed, even if the world’s ways seem easier to follow. And, typically, just 10 minutes watching the nightly news will give you a strong reminder of all that is wrong with this world.

What worldly concepts do you need to disagree with in your life.

**If you follow bad examples, you will get bad results!**

– Min. J. P. Whittaker

**Wednesday, November 7, 2018**

## **“Pursue Holiness in ALL Your Relationships”**

*Work at living in peace with everyone and work at living a holy life for those who are not holy will not see the Lord.*

**Hebrews 12:14 (NLT)**

There are two things that really matter to God; loving Him and loving people. Jesus told the disciples that all the laws and commandments were summed up in these two basic principles. However, as simple as loving God and people seem (sound) in reality, it is quite complex. Turn on the nightly news, listen to your local radio, drive down the highway and you are quickly reminded that we struggle in loving each other. People say and do some nasty things to people. Whether influenced by misunderstandings, offenses, our fears, or by pure self-centeredness, its far more common for us to struggle with *living at peace* with others and take a defensive posture.

But in our focal text for today, God’s Word says to, **“Work at living in peace with everyone...”** This is a command. The Greek word for **work**, *diōkō*, means to pursue, to follow after, to seek after eagerly. The implication of this verb means this is an action we do intentionally, not conditionally; not based on how we feel in a moment, but based on how we yield to the Spirit, moment by moment. Paul says, in Galatians 5:16 (NIV), that, *“Live by the Spirit and you will no longer gratify the desires of the sinful nature.”* Herein lies the secret to do the difficult, to be at peace with those who are hard to be in relationship with. The key is to rest in and rely on a resource that’s outside of ourselves — *to live by the Spirit*. The Holy Spirit enables us

**Thursday, November 8, 2018**

to resist and reject the inclinations of the sinful nature. Peter spoke to this saying, *“His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his glory and goodness”* (2 Peter 1:3 NIV).

It’s clear from these text that our capacity to do the seemingly impossible comes from *“His divine power.”* It’s the Spirit of God at work in the people of God demonstrating the presence of God. It’s the essence of what the second **work** in this verse means. This word, *hagiasmos*, means consecration or sanctification. It is evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a Christ-follower, demonstrated in how we live. The distinction in how we live speaks to the Lordship of Christ in our day to day lives. It is fruit that is produced from our allowing the Holy Spirit to conform us into Christ’s image and likeness. Because the greater one lives in us, we can live counter cultural lives and bear fruit that reflects our living a holy life.

Holiness causes the behavior, thoughts, and attitudes of Christians to be different from unbelievers.

**Progress towards holiness in your Christian life is vital.**

– Min. Dana Thomas

## **“Like Father, Like Son”**

*But as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”*

### **1 Peter 1:15-16 ESV**

You’ve probably heard the phrase “Like father, like son” used when a boy exhibits the exact same behavior as his father. Unfortunately, the problem for many is that their father did not set a very good example, or, for one reason or another, did not have a father present while they were growing up. My dad passed away when I was 13; but I was fortunate to have a few other men in my life who stepped in and provided me with guidance and were great role models. From my dad, I learned the value of education and hard work. From my stepdad, I learned how to treat a wife, and how to raise a stepchild, as my own. My high school track coaches also taught me how to push myself beyond what I thought I was capable of. Regardless of whether you had a father’s influence (good or bad) growing up, we all have a Father figure who is the ultimate good example.

Peter begins verse 15 with the word “but.” This is a connecting, contrasting word. So we must look at verse 14, to see what is being contrasted. It reads, *“As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance.”* Peter completes the thought in verses 15 and 16 exhorting Believers to be holy in their conduct, following the example of God the Father, who called us to Himself through the Gospel. Paul writes in Romans 8:15b, *“But you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry,*

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*“Abba! Father!”* In Christ, we are adopted into the family of God the Father; and as His children, we should aspire to be holy. But first, you must understand that being holy means to be set aside for a divine purpose. As Believers, we are to be counter to the examples of the world. That is why Jesus exhorts us to act not as the world does, but as the Father does. Just as God lets the sun shine on the good and the evil, so we should love our enemies. Being holy means modeling God’s love in all that we do – to present a living witness to Him, who is a Good Father to us all.

Pray for God’s guidance and power through the Holy Spirit to model His love for all people. Think about someone you know who is difficult to love and commit to pray for their welfare, and to model God’s love by extending grace, and being light to lead them out of darkness or to help them grow in their relationship with God.

God has called you into His family. In all that you do, strive to present yourself as a child of the One True King!

**How are you working out your divine family likeness in your day-by-day walk, behavior, and conduct?**

– Min. Russell De Pina

## **“Children of God – Be Like Him”**

*<sup>1</sup> See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. <sup>2</sup> Beloved, we are God’s children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. <sup>3</sup> And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.*

**1 John 3:1-3 (ESV)**

In 1 John 3, the apostle John writes with an encouraging conviction to his readers. He calls them, "Little children" and encourages them to abide in Jesus, so that when He appears, at His second coming, we may have confidence. He goes on to say that, as we know Jesus is righteous, we can know that whoever "does right" is born of Him. To put it simply, John is saying that the way to not be ashamed when Jesus returns is to remain in Him, draw your life from Him, wait on Him, turn your life moment by moment over to Him. The apostle John goes on to say that God’s love is even more than what a wonderful mother showers on her infant. God’s love and care are supplied all the time. God’s love is a constant bombardment of affection and care. We may be as oblivious as an infant to the presence of His love, but God continues to pour His love into our lives.

God’s love flows into us deeply and redefines who we are at the very core of our soul. It uplifts and give us “HOPE.”

When we open our hearts to God's love, we are transformed by it. We are going through a sanctification, (purification, or regeneration) process of both body and soul. Simply put, we are being remade, being regenerated into children of God.

John further develops these thoughts about *abiding* and *waiting* for Christ's appearing in the next three verses. He begins by exclaiming that they "see" or "behold", which means consider, dwell on, direct your attention to, this fact about the love God has for us. Its amazing John says, that we are called the children of God. God looks at us and He calls us His sons and daughters. And he goes on to say, this is not just a label, we really are the children of God. This indeed is a truth that we need to see and focus on. It is so easy to slip right by this and on to the next point in the Scripture. We belong to God as His children, not just by creation, but by redemption. Jesus Christ fully paid the sin debt against us, when He died for us. To be His children means to be born again; born by the Spirit of God, as a person trusts in Jesus Christ, God's eternal Son, alone, for salvation. God is not ashamed to call me daughter or son, to identify me as one who truly belongs to Him.

As 1 John 3:2 puts it, "What we will be has not yet been made known." We will only know when the time comes—and not before then.

But the Bible does tell us clearly about something that is much more important than those details. It says that "when Christ appears, we shall be like him."

**Our Prayer:**

God our Father, thank You for calling us Your children. Make us like Christ when He appears, so that we can be with You, forever. Give us patience as we wait on this mysterious hope. Amen!

**To have a hope of being like Christ leads us to try to be like Christ; hence, to be pure as He is pure.**

– Bro. Clifton Clark