

THE SANCTIFIED LIFE OF THE TEACHER AND PUPIL: A LIFE OF RESPONSE TO GOD’S GRACE, TO HIS GLORY, IN THE SERVICE OF HIS KINGDOM.

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A Definition Of Terms

Before we begin the paper itself, it is well to clarify the use of certain terms. Sanctification, as Scripture uses it in the wide sense, refers to all that the Holy Ghost does to bring us to faith in Christ so that we may live for him and serve him. It includes our conversion, justification, inner transformation, preservation in the faith, and complete renewal on Judgment Day. Sanctification, as Scripture employs it in the narrow sense, refers to our inward renewal or new life which follows faith in Christ. It is in this latter sense in which the term sanctification is being used in this paper.

At the same time we should also note that the Formula of Concord distinguishes between sanctification and good works. Sanctification refers to the new spiritual nature within the Christian, and good ‘works are the acts which flow from this nature.’¹ In another respect, however, good works are identical with sanctification, since sanctification in the concrete takes place through the doing of good works. Sanctification is not a dormant state, but an unceasing activity constantly called forth and sustained by the Holy Ghost.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TEACHER’S FAITH-LIFE.

Jesus said to his disciples, “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven” (Mt. 5:16). Jesus would have us ponder that we as Christians have a preserving and promoting influence in this world. Through our lives and testimony we check, to a certain extent, the coarse outbreak of sin in the world. This is our preserving influence. We also promote the cause of Christ by the lives we lead. Our words and deeds serve as living epistles for Christ (2 Cor. 3:2-3). What we say and do may lead others to learn more about the Savior whom we serve.

Our Lord would also have us contemplate what the results are when the preserving and promoting influence of the Christian is lacking. Sacred as well as secular history is full of examples of the devastating consequences when Christians do not act as salt and light, as preservers and promoters of God’s kingdom in this world. Salt does not lose its saltiness, but Christians do lose their influence. When that happens, moral decay sets in. Where the light of Christ fails to shine, the darkness of Satan envelops the earth.

At the dawn of history we see an example of this. In Genesis, Moses portrayed the Cainite line as godless, living only-for this world. The Sethite line was depicted as Godfearing, characterized by public worship. Over a period of time, however, the Cainite line enveloped the Sethite line. What happened? We read, “The sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose” (Gen. 6:2). Mixed marriages between believing Sethites and unbelieving descendants of Cain resulted in mixed-up children. The Christian education of the children suffered. The believing Sethites did not act as salt and light. They allowed the influence of the unbelieving Cainites to overcome them. The result was universal depravity which occasioned the universal flood. Thus God wiped mankind from the face of the earth, with the exception of Noah, who found favor in his eyes.

¹ Formula of Concord: Sol. Decl. III, 41.

The history of Israel is replete with examples of what happens when the preserving and promoting influence of the godly is not felt. The sudden and shocking decline of the Israelite morality at the time of the judges should come as no surprise in the light of her conduct in the wilderness. Nonetheless, it stands as a monumental warning to what happens when God's people do not live as God's people. Instead of living as God's people and evangelizing the heathen, the people of Israel were soon Caananized and Baalized, living worse than the heathen. Why did this happen? Scripture states, "After that whole generation (of Joshua's) had been gathered to their fathers, another generation grew up, who knew neither the Lord nor what he had done for Israel." As soon as the godly influence of Joshua's generation was gone, the Israelites slipped into a period which has been called her dark age. It was not until God sent a Samuel and a David that the light again shone clearly to guide Israel. When the light from Solomon became dim, Israel slipped back into darkness which led to her captivity.

Even Christians who become weary of the fight of faith or who wish to rest on their laurels are jeopardizing the future of the church in their midst. To the church of Ephesus, Jesus said, "You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place." The Christians in Ephesus had been severely tested. Errorists in the form of early gnostics invaded their ranks. The Nicolaitans, advocates of overcoming the flesh through indulgence of the flesh, urged the Ephesians to loose living. The Ephesians took their stand against these false prophets. They suffered persecution and hardship for the sake of their faith. Yet, at the time Jesus addressed these words to them, they no longer had the same zeal they once had. Thus, their church was in danger of losing the gospel. The sad report of history is that they did. The ancient church of Ephesus is no more.

Luther's Germany stands as another testimony to what happens when Christians fail to act as salt and light. Luther and others after him guided the early Lutheran church through some difficult times. The compromising influence of Melancthon and others, however, gradually took over when the legacy of Luther waned. Today, the church in Luther's homeland is indeed in a sorry state.

All of this should remind us of the maxim that we are only one generation removed from losing the church. When the next generation lacks the guidance of consecrated Christian leaders, they will lose the truth. A lack of leadership on the part of those called to serve most certainly has devastating results for the future of the church. In addition, a generation which is not trained thoroughly for faith and life will not be able to guide the next generation after them.

Individually and collectively, our Lord has given us an important responsibility. Not only has our Lord called us to the faith, he has called us to teach the faith, publicly, in the name and stead of others. Thus, our doctrine is to be sound and so are our lives. Paul wrote to Titus, "Encourage the young men to be self-controlled. In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us" (Titus 2:7-8). The Lord has called us to teach his word and set an example that others may follow.

Our Lord certainly left an example which his disciples could follow. At a time when they were interested in lording it over each other, Jesus became their servant, washing their feet on Maundy Thursday evening. When he finished, Jesus said, "I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you" (Jn 13:15). The Apostle Paul was very conscious of the need for setting an example for his early congregations. He wrote to the Corinthians, "In Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. Therefore I urge you to imitate me. For this reason I am sending to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church" (1 Cor. 4:15-17). Paul did not encourage the early Christians, "Do as I say, not as I do." No, he told them, "Do as I do." His life and his teaching stood as examples to his flock. He urged other called servants to do as he did. To Timothy he wrote, "Set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity" (1 Tim. 4:12).

Our Lord has called us to teach and live in such a way as to be examples to others. Peter wrote, “Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve, not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock” (1 Peter 5:2-3). Mediocrity and laxity in sanctification are not satisfactory for those whom the Lord has called to feed his lambs. We certainly will plead guilty of our sins before the Lord, but we will not use God’s grace as an excuse for sloppy sanctification. Though our sanctification will remain imperfect until the day we die, we will not accept anything less than perfection as the goal at which we aim. “Do as we do,” is the aim of our teaching.

Looking at the world we live in today, we realize the extreme importance of being models for the children we teach. Who are the models the world holds out to the youth of today? Here consider the amount of time our children spend under the influence of radio, television, and the movies. It may have been easier for a parent or teacher to act as a model when he was one of the people the child saw most. In today’s age of instant communication when the media comes into our homes with its messages and values, we must compete with those the world establishes as models. Let us remember that the media of today intends to do more than entertain. They intend to offer social and moral commentaries, set values, and shape attitudes. Couple this with their graphic depictions of violence and immorality, the unabashed proclamation of the philosophies of materialism, humanism, and hedonism, and we can see the battle we have on our hands.

Who are the people our children imitate? The insensitive, conniving J. R. Ewing, or, the suave and debonair James Bond? The witty John Ritter or seductive Suzanne Sommers from *Three’s Company*? The refined Mr. Rogers or the uncouth Conan the Barbarian ala Arnold Schwarzenegger? In the area of music there are many unsavory influences to which our children have a great deal of exposure. To whom are our children listening? In the locker rooms, on the bus trips, on the playground, after school, in their bedrooms, to whom are our young people listening on their walkmans or from their boom boxes? A casual survey would reveal names such as John Lennon, Paul McCartney, David Bowie, Boy George, Mick Jagger, Alice Cooper, and Ozzy Osborne. Groups such as Kiss, Led Zeplin and Black Sabbath may be mentioned. These names and groups barely scratch the surface of “who’s who” in the world of rock music today. What are the messages which these people are promoting? They are most often anti-Christian in content. Immorality, perversion, drug abuse, occult practices and even suicide are advocated by these people. A random sampling of some of this fare leads one to see why much of it could be reclassified as “rock and raunch”. An investigation of the country western field of today reveals a similar picture, where infidelity, immorality, and passion are often glorified in song.

Years ago athletes were often considered to be models by the world. Today even their ranks have been invaded by drug abuse on a wide-spread scale. The materialistic philosophies of both players and management are not something young people should model themselves after. The literature of today does not afford our children models to follow. Often it presents them with a distorted view of God’s creation. The skin magazines which befoul our drugstores, convenience stores, gas stations, and the like proclaim a distorted view of human sexuality. Sometimes young people model their peers. What do they often see, however? Young people of today face intense peer pressure to experiment with sex, drugs, and alcohol. In addition, the homes of today too often do not afford the models children need. Mixed marriages where the believing spouse does not practice a faith-life will produce mixed up children. Homes in which alcoholic parents abuse each other and their children produce confused children who desperately need guidance.

The world we are living in today confronts us with a host of models whose influence to the child can be devastating. Yet, before we run for our ivory towers or into our monastic communities, let us realize that isolation from the world is not the answer. What the world needs is more-salt and light from us. In Jesus’ day the whole religious and moral establishment was a threat to his infant church. Yet, the Lord did not take his disciples from the world. Instead, he sent them into it to act as salt and light. To his apostles he said, “I am sending you out like sheep among wolves” (Mt. 10:16). In his high-priestly prayer, Jesus said, “My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one” (Jn 17:15-19). Things were bad in Paul’s day also. Yet, he did not advocate escape from the world. Rather, he advocated setting an example to the world. He commended the Thessalonians for serving as models for all in Macedonia and Achaia.

Our Lord wants us to let our Christian light shine in the world. He said to His apostles, “All men will know you are my disciples if you love one another” (in 13:35.). The early Christian martyrs prayed for those putting them to death. The blood of the martyrs became the seed of the church. The pagans had to marvel, “How they love one another.”

We today have a calling to live as the redeemed and ransomed children of God, acting as salt and light in the world. We know that living is caught as well as taught. The Lord has given us the privilege of being in a position where we may have a great influence on the youth of tomorrow. In the 1960’s the hippies claimed they dropped out of society’s mainstream because of the hypocrisy or double-standard of their parents. A bad example will negate sound teaching. There is a great need for us to act as examples for those whom the Lord has entrusted to us. We have an awesome responsibility. Let us turn from the need for the sanctified life to the means through which it is accomplished.

THE SANCTIFIED LIFE OF THE TEACHER AND PUPIL: A LIFE OF RESPONSE TO GOD’S GRACE.

Our own sanctification is always in need of improvement, for we still have the old Adam within us. Even the Apostle Paul cried out, “What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?” (Ro 7:24). We are also daily impressed with the need for growth in the sanctified lives of those whom the Lord has called us to serve. Who of us has not become impatient with a pupil who constantly misbehaves? In our impatience to see an increase in sanctification, we may resort to methods of behavior-modification which appeal to pride or fear to achieve changed behavior. Though we may obtain results in this way, we need to ask ourselves whether they are God-pleasing.

We recognize that when a child misbehaves, we must do two things. First of all, we will need to reprove and check sin. This we do through an application of God’s law. It exposes sin as being at variance with God’s will and deserving of God’s wrath. The disciplinary action which we take may serve as an experiential reinforcement of the message that sin is wrong. Yet, we will not foster a desire in the child to serve God through fear of punishment. It is only through the faith that God has forgiven sin that a new life will be produced. Thus, the second action which we need to take in dealing with the child is to apply the gospel to his case. Through thankful appreciation for God’s forgiveness the child will be led away from sin and to the service of the Savior. It is the Holy Ghost who initiates and implements the new life in a Christian through the gospel.

Thus, lest we become impatient with the work of the Holy Ghost, it is important for us to review again the way in which sanctification is achieved—in ourselves and others. Let us first review the fact that the Holy Ghost produces sanctification through the gospel. Then let us review the use the law has in the Christian’s life.

We need to remember that sanctification is not the basis for justification but the fruit of justification. To put it another way, God has declared us righteous for the sake of his Son. The new life we lead in Christ flows from appreciation for what Christ did for us.

Scripture makes it crystal-clear that God has justified the world solely on the basis of Jesus Christ’s sinless life and substitutionary death. To the Roman Christians Paul wrote, “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. The basis for God’s verdict of righteous was Christ’s merit, not ours. Faith is not a work by which we accomplish or complete justification, but faith is the medium through which we personally receive the benefits of justification. Paul stated, “We maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law” (Ro 3:28).

What we classify as objective justification took place outside of man. God declared an ungodly world righteous for the sake of his Son. “For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God” (1 Peter 3:18). In subjective justification, faith receives a righteousness which lies outside of man. It is provided by Christ and offered in the gospel. Faith, although in man, is placed in opposition to all righteousness which is in man.

Yet, there is an inseparable connection between justification by faith and sanctification. Where you have one you will have the other. Faith produces as a natural byproduct the fruits of faith, such as love, joy, peace,

patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal. 5:22-23). This was the point that James wished to make when he wrote, “As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without the deeds is dead” (James 2:26). The Formula of Concord quotes Martin Luther’s statement to this effect, “There is a beautiful agreement between faith and good works; nevertheless, it is faith alone which apprehends the blessing without works. And yet faith is at no time ever alone.”² Though justification precedes sanctification in the order of cause and effect, they both take place at the same time.

It is God’s love for us that moves us to love him and our neighbor in return. There is what has been called a “psychological connection” between justification by faith and sanctification. God loves us with a love that transcends all understanding. Paul wrote, “God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom 5:8). When God convinces us of his love for us, we cannot help but love God in return. He proclaims his love for us as a fact, and by this proclamation of his love he creates faith in our hearts. (Ro 10:17) When we are brought to faith in Christ, then we love God and hate sin.

God’s love for us serves as the basis for the new lives we lead. Paul wrote, “The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Gal. 3:20). To the Corinthians Paul declared, “For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again” (2 Cor 5:14-15). God’s love for us serves as the basis for our love for him and for our neighbor. John wrote: “This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another ... We love because he first loved us” (1 Jn 4:10-11;19). The more certain we are of God’s grace and eternal life, the more ready we are to serve him and follow his will. As the Psalmist stated, “I will run the way of Your commandments because You give me a broader understanding” (Psalm 119:32 AAT).

The Formula of Concord again quotes Luther to this effect: “Faith is a vital, deliberate trust in God’s grace, so certain that it would die a thousand times for it. And such confidence and knowledge of divine grace makes us joyous and merry toward God and all creatures. This the Holy Spirit works by faith, and therefore without any coercion a man is willing and desirous to do good to everyone, to serve everyone, to suffer everything for the love of God and to his glory; who has been so gracious to him.”³

The Holy Ghost works sanctification through the gospel. By it he creates and nourishes faith so that it produces in us a new life with works that serve God and our neighbor. Paul wrote, “Therefore, I urge you brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—which is your spiritual worship” (Ro 12:1). The strength to do good works and to abstain from evil comes only from the good news of God’s love for us: We need to remember that though the law does have a place in the life of the Christian, it does not supply the motivation or means for sanctification. The gospel is the means through which the Holy Ghost effects and increases sanctified living.

Why shouldn’t we use the law in order to effect sanctification? What will happen when we use threats, fear, and appeals to pride instead of the gospel as the motivation for sanctification? In the first place, we need to remember that it is only the gospel which dethrones sin; the law can only multiply it. When Paul states that “sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace” (Ro 6:14), he is telling us that the law makes sin our master. Only God’s grace through faith can free us from the dominion of sin.

Using the law to motivate people for sanctification will cause them either to puff up with pride (the Pharisee, Luke 18:11-12) or give in to despair (the jailer at Philippi, Acts 16:27). In either case, sanctification has not been achieved. Instead, sin has been increased and faith may be destroyed. The Formula of Concord states it this way: “For as long as a person is not reborn, lives according to the law, and does its works merely because they are commanded, from fear of punishment or in hope of reward, he is still under the law. St. Paul calls the works of such a man ‘works of the law’ in the strict sense, because his good works are extorted by the law, just as in the case of bondservants. Such people are saints after the order of Cain. But when a person is born anew by the Spirit of God and is liberated from the law (that is, when he is free from this driver and is

² Ibid.

³ Op.Cit., Article IV, 10-12.

driven by the Spirit of Christ), he lives according to the immutable will of God as it is comprehended in the law and, insofar as he is born anew, he does everything from a free and merry spirit. These works are, strictly speaking, not works of the law but works and fruits of the Spirit.”⁴ Luther attributed the lack of good works to a use of the law rather than the gospel to achieve sanctification.

All of this has very practical implications for those who serve as teachers of the Savior’s lambs and examples to the flock. If we check church attendance, we need to ask ourselves the question, “Why am I doing this?” Are we doing this in concern for the spiritual welfare of the child? If we see a neglect of the means of grace, do we intend to follow up with a visit to the parents? Or, do we hope we can shame the child into attending church? Perhaps we feel that an appeal to pride can produce results. Yet, pride and fear are not the motivation for sanctification. If we become impatient with those we are serving, let us remember that we cannot produce sanctification. The Lord sanctifies through his gospel. We are to motivate through the gospel and wait for the Lord to produce the results.

While we steer clear of the Scylla of attempting to produce sanctification through the law, we also need to be careful we do not become shipwrecked on the Charybdis of antinomianism. Let us now turn our attention to the use of the law as it applies in the Christian’s life. There have been those in the history of the church who have maintained that the law should not be preached in Christ’s church but only the gospel. This is called antinomianism. Within the past decade, our own Synod has had to deal with the issue. Though the law does not produce sanctification, it has its place in the Christian’s life. It serves the gospel.

Luther recognized the danger antinomianism posed to sanctification. He wrote, “For they (antinomians), having rejected and being unable to understand the Ten Commandments, preach much about the grace of Christ, yet they strengthen and comfort only those who remain in their sins, telling them not to fear and be terrified by sins, since they are all removed by Christ. They see and yet they let the people go on in their public sins, without any renewal or reformation of their lives. Thus it becomes quite evident that they truly fail to understand the faith and Christ, and thereby abrogate both when they preach about it.”⁵ Luther warned that a failure to preach the law would result in a fruitless faith and end in Epicureanism.

The law has its place in the Christian’s life. It is true that believers are free from the threats, curses, and coercion of the law (1 Tm 1:9). The threats and curses of God’s law do not frighten us because Christ has kept the law for us. He suffered its curse on our behalf (Gal 3:3). As a result, we are under grace, freely serving God without coercion (Ro 6:14). According to the new man, we delight in God’s law (Ro 7:22). We desire to conform our lives to God’s law out of appreciation for his grace to us. The gospel of Jesus Christ moves us to do good works, and faith makes the works we do acceptable to God.

Yet, until the day we reach heaven, we will have the old Adam with us. Our renewal is not perfect in this life, nor are our works perfect. Because of the old Adam, everything we touch is corrupted by sin. We are at the same time both saint and sinner. Because of this, we need instruction from God’s law as to what is his will. If we do not receive this instruction, we may mistakenly set up our own standard of what works please God. Christians could very well follow the urging of their own sinful flesh and yet believe they are doing God’s will. Horrible things have been done in the name of Christianity. It is only the law of God which can instruct us as to what God’s will is. The Roman Catholic church and the movement of pietism are prime examples of what can happen when men determine what is a good work.

Not only does the Christian need the law of God as a guide, but also to reprove his sin. He needs its threats, curses, and coercion to subdue his rebellious flesh. Since we have our sinful flesh with us, we still sin. That same law which shows us how we may please God also shows us how we displease him. Luther’s conclusion was, “If we cast the law aside, we shall not long retain Christ.”⁶ As we see our sinfulness, we will flee to the arms of our Savior where we have forgiveness and the strength to live the sanctified life.

Our old Adam also must be held in check by the threats of the law. The Formula of Concord states, “The old Adam, like an unmanageable and recalcitrant donkey is still a part of them and must be coerced into the

⁴ Op. Cit, Article VI, 16-17.

⁵ Luther’s Works, American Edition, Vol. 41, p. 147.

⁶ Luther’s Works, American Edition, Vol. 22, p. 146.

obedience of Christ, not only with the instruction, admonition, urging, and threatening of the law, but frequently with the club of punishments and miseries, until the flesh of sin is put off entirely and man is completely renewed in the resurrection.”⁷

In his letter to the Ephesians, the Apostle Paul tells us that sanctification involves a putting off the deeds of the old man and a putting on the deeds of the new (Eph. 4:20-32). Getting rid of the deeds of the old man may involve using the scalpel of the law. Luther directs us to the Third Commandment to deal with the devil’s temptations aimed at keeping us from praying. “Thus we must drive out the devil’s suggestion with God’s command.”⁸

There are many thoughts and desires which are active within us, warring against the spirit. Greed, envy, jealousy, discontent, hatred, and lust are part of the old man each of us possesses. If we indulge these desires they will destroy our ability to serve as examples to the flock. They may even destroy our faith if they are left unchecked. While it is true that good works do not preserve faith (for God preserves faith), it is true that evil works destroy faith.

In our own lives, then, let us deal with those elements which threaten our faith. There will be disparities in this life. Someone may have a higher salary than we have. Another may have a more prominent position than we have. Someone else may receive more recognition than we receive. Though such things may not be fair, yet the answer is not to allow greed, jealousy or discontent to consume us. When such feelings arise within us, it is time to excise these spiritual tumors with the scalpel of God’s law. Then, the healing balm of the gospel will move us to serve our Lord cheerfully. A cheerful service rendered in view of God’s grace will encourage others to serve their Lord cheerfully. If we are always grumbling and complaining about the difficulties we encounter, we will turn people off. Our attitude is catching. May we serve our Lord cheerfully. In that way we will encourage others to cheerful service in his kingdom.

As those who teach others, we also need the law to instruct our pupils as to what God’s will is. Our society is dominated by an existential and humanistic philosophy which denies that there are any absolutes. Truth is thought of as something no one can ever possess. Nothing is regarded as either right or wrong; it all is said to depend on the situation. Sin is called virtue and virtue is called sin. Man is regarded as the measure of all things. The devil maintains a constant barrage of propaganda whereby he seeks to dull and deaden our consciences. He also knows that where the knowledge of sin is lost, Christ is lost.

We have a very important task. First, we must keep our own bearings straight. If our own consciences become dull, our light will become dim and we will lose a positive influence on others. Then, we need to teach what God’s will is so others may follow it. Young people need to be taught that such things as profanity, promiscuity, and pornography are sin. They need to recognize that abortion is not an act of love, for the Lord has called it sin.

As we teach what is pleasing to God, we also need to be careful that we do not give the impression that the church is in charge of classifying what is a good work. We do not want to give the impression that a child is doing more of a good work if he works for a YPS fundraiser than if he is doing his chores at home. If fact, we must also be careful in all levels of our church activity that we do not cause people to forget or neglect their obligations at home in order to serve in the church.

In concluding this section, we will want to avoid two extremes. One is attempting to foster sanctification through the law. When that is done, moralizing takes place, and faith is injured or destroyed. On the other hand, we will want to use the law in its place, reproving sin, curbing the old Adam, and guiding the Christian in his sanctified life. We need to remember that the Christian is a saint to whom the Lord issues the promise, “I know my sheep and my sheep know me ...I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish” (John 10:14,28). At the same time the Christian has an old Adam. Thus, God also warns the sinner, “So if you think you are standing firm be careful that you don’t fall” (1 Cor. 10:12). May the Lord ever help us rightly to divide the law and gospel to the glory of his name and in the service of his church.

⁷ Formula of Concord: Sol. Decl. Article VI, 24.

⁸ Luther’s Works, American Edition, Vol. 44, p. 62.

**THE SANCTIFIED LIFE OF THE TEACHER AND PUPIL:
A LIFE OF RESPONSE TO GOD’S GRACE, TO THE GLORY OF GOD,
IN THE SERVICE OF HIS KINGDOM.**

The ultimate purpose of our lives is to glorify God (1 Cor. 10:31, Eph. 1:12) . It is therefore obvious that we will avoid sin. It is not possible to sin to the glory of God. Out of love for our Lord we shall strive to do what he wills and avoid what he forbids.

We also want to note that the Lord has told us there are concrete ways in which we may serve him. We serve our Lord when we serve our neighbor. Let us turn our attention to ways in which we and our pupils can be of service to others with the lives we lead, always keeping in mind that the aim of our lives is to glorify God.

Let us first examine the impact which our lives can have on the pupils whom we serve. We know that children often model their behavior after people whom they respect. Little children will play school. They imitate the behavior of their teachers. Given this fact, your example can have a great influence on these young children. As they grow up, children are inclined to imitate their teachers in another way. They imitate the idiosyncrasies which we all have. Yet, we can have a positive and steadying influence on a pupil who has entered into the turbulent teen years. Your Christian influence can counter the attraction a teen might have for the idols of the world.

In striving to serve as examples for the children we teach, there are a number of qualities which are worthy of cultivation in our lives. One is an evangelical attitude. An evangelical attitude is one which reflects the love of Christ. Paul wrote, “Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God” (Eph. 5:2). Each of us is to act as a mirror, reflecting God’s love for us in our love for others. An evangelical attitude will move us to be forgiving, kind, and gentle. It will not, however, move us to excuse sin or to be wimps when it comes to dealing with error. Our Lord had the perfect evangelical attitude. Yet, he dealt with the sins of the Pharisees in a very firm way.

A love motivated by God’s love will move us to have a genuine interest in those whom the Lord has entrusted to our care. They are precious souls, bought by the blood of Christ. They deserve the best attention we can give them. Recognizing that we are forgiven will help us to forgive them. It will also help us to ask them to forgive us when we wrong them. It is not demeaning for us to admit our errors. Even here, we are teaching a lesson.

Another quality which we will strive for is to have a conscience guided by God’s word. The same barrage of propaganda which desensitizes the consciences of others can dull or deaden our consciences. We are not immune to the philosophy, “Everyone else is doing it.” Many people cheat on their income tax. This does not make it right for us to do it. Many people drink too much. That doesn’t make it all right for us to over-indulge once in a while. The world may set a standard for dress which we may not share. It may accept premarital and extramarital sex, but we cannot. The children whom we teach will be very quick to pick up the difference between what we say and what we do. A correlation between what we say and what we do is very important in setting an example for the children we teach. If there is a gap between what we say and do, the pupils will more quickly model what we do than what we say.

Self-sacrifice is another quality we need to cultivate. Self-sacrifice is not a byword in the world. It is foreign to human nature. Our human nature is more interested in “what’s in it for me?” Self-sacrifice is learned from the sacrifice of our Savior on the cross. There he gave his all for us, and we didn’t deserve a bit of it. In view of the Savior’s love for us, and in view of the high calling which he has given us, we will be willing to sacrifice in the service of his kingdom, in the interest of those whom we serve.

We are called on to make sacrifices in doing the Lord’s work. Our work may call on us to travel long distances away from our families. Great demands are placed on our time. Many of our nights are involved in meetings. It is not uncommon to miss a birthday celebration in the family because we are involved in our work. These are things which we do because we appreciate the sacrifice which our Lord made for us. In view of his great sacrifice, we are willing to give of ourselves in service to him and those in his kingdom.

Self-sacrifice needs to be coupled with another quality which serves as an example to those we teach. It is sensitivity to the needs of others. Let us begin with an area where we often can become insensitive, and that is in our own homes. Spouses and children also have needs. Though we cannot and will not elevate anyone above the Lord, we cannot go to the other extreme and ignore the needs which our Lord has called us to fulfill for our own family members. With all the meetings and extra activities that go on in our busy schedules, it is easy for husbands and wives to shove the needs of their spouses into the background, to the point of ignoring them. We can become so involved with other people's children that our own go begging for attention: Permit me to call this form of neglect a new monasticism, where we feel that service prescribed by the church is on a higher plane than fulfilling our family obligations. Let us remember that though our Lord calls on us to serve him first, we still have an obligation he has given us toward spouse and children. We also serve him by being sensitive to their needs.

It is difficult for us to teach our children the values of life as we wave to each other on the way to different activities. Let us sit down and count the amount of time which we spend in an exchange of ideas and thoughts with our children. If we have allowed ourselves to become so busy with extra activities that we neglect training our own children, then we need to examine our priorities. We need to reshuffle or reduce our activities so that we have time to take care of our obligations at home. We are living in an age when the home is under brutal assault. Divorce, immorality, child abuse and alcoholism are tearing homes apart. We have an example to set with our own homes. Let us be sensitive to the needs of those who are with us there, so that we may set a good example for others.

Sensitivity to the needs of others will also move us to listen to our pupils rather than merely talk to them. We need to listen to the children whom we teach. Their lives and their actions are telling us of their hopes and fears, of their aspirations and their concerns. By listening we can show them we care. When dealing with our pupils, we will find that our opinions may not always agree. Yet, we can respect the ideas of others at the same time we hold to our own.

Pupils also can serve as examples to each other. We talk a great deal of peer pressure. Teaching positive peer influence is an avenue for teaching sanctified living. Those who say no to drugs or to the abuse of alcohol are setting good examples. Those who extend a helpful hand to another teach others in the class concern for those in need. We know how cruel juveniles can become when they gang up on someone in the class. Let us attempt to move our pupils to deal with each other in love. Let us strive to turn the influence of the class for good in dealing with those who misbehave or disrupt the class. Peer influence can be very effective, sometimes even more effective than when we deal with the problem as an individual.

The lives we lead can also serve as a source of stimulation to sanctified living for those with whom we work. We are all co-laborers with Christ, no matter what the scope of our call. We are all brethren in Christ. Therefore, let us strive to work in peace with one another. If someone else has a greater scope of responsibility than we do, we still can serve the Lord without becoming jealous. Let us remember that the Lord is the one who has called us to serve where we are. It is he who has assigned to us the position which we have. Let us labor faithfully in this position, avoiding the strife which jealousy and envy may cause. If we have a position which involves greater responsibility, let us do our work without becoming proud. If we have less responsibility, let us do work without becoming jealous. If differences of opinion arise, let us discuss them frankly yet lovingly. Let us go to a person with whom we have a grievance and discuss it privately. Let us avoid backbiting and gossip which do not further the Lord's kingdom-work but hinder it. Let us rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep. Let us encourage each other to greater service in the Lord's kingdom rather than hindering others in their kingdom work by our unsanctified living. The words of Paul to the Colossians serve as a fitting conclusion to this area of our study. "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" (Col. 3:15-17).

In conclusion, let us realize the great challenge which we have. Our Lord has called us to serve him as Christians and as ministers of Christ. We have a high calling and a high privilege—to teach the Savior’s lambs and flock with our words and deeds. We can view this in one of two ways. We can view it from the perspective of the old Adam, which feels we are being asked to do too much. We can complain that it isn’t fair that people expect more of us than they are willing to give of themselves. We can argue that we are no different from anyone else. Or, we can view the calling our Lord has given us as a high privilege. Our Lord has given wretched sinners such as we the high privilege of serving him in his kingdom,. He has given us the privilege of having an impact on the lives of future generations of the church by what we say and do. In view of his grace to us, may we respond with zeal and joy, devoting our time, talents, and energies, in serving the Lord who redeemed us, to the glory of his name.

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