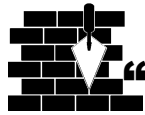


PAUL - "One Holy Passion"



"Building Blocks"

1. **(Intro Scriptures)** It is immensely significant that the long and impressive list of accomplishments and various "works" that Paul credited to himself *prior* to his conversion are held in contrast to his salvation and sanctification. This is an excellent illustration regarding the difference between "works" for merit with God versus obedience and perseverance in God's plan for his children. Paul talks about actually "working" *harder* AFTER he was "saved" (justified) than before!
2. **(Intro Scriptures)** Paul's choice of verbs in this passage is very revealing:
 - "knowing Christ"
 - "gain Christ"
 - "know the power of his resurrection"
 - "share in his sufferings"
 - "becoming like him"
 - "I press on" (2x)
 - "straining forward"

These are all process verbs; they indicate unfinished, continual effort in a specific direction.

3. **(Q4)** It is worth pointing out here that God promises to keep us "on track" (guidance, conviction of sin, etc.), if we are committed to growing and maturing in our knowledge of Him.
4. **(Q5)** Paul's word, "*conformed*" (*summorphos*) in Romans 8:29 is the same word he uses in Philip-
pians 3:21 to speak of what will happen to our *bodies* when we see Jesus. Paul is talking about a radical and permanent change. In fact, the Greek word is actually an *adjective describing us* rather than a verb expressing what is happening to us.
5. **(Q5)** Also, his word "*transformed*" in 2 Corinthians 3:18 Paul also uses in Romans 12:2. It is the Greek word from which our English word, "metamorphosis" comes (*metamorphoō*). Paul is here too portraying a radical and permanent change in the believer. The Greek verb here indicates an on-going and continuous process, *not* an event or finished state.
6. **(Q5)** The Greek word translated, "*beholding*" (KJV, NAS, ESV) or "*reflecting*" (NIV) is word that refers to the reflection one beholds in a mirror. It can mean "to mirror," or "to see what's in a mirror." Either meaning carries with it the idea of Christ becoming increasingly visible in my life over time.
7. **(Q6)** The NIV rendering of 2 Cor. 3:18, "...with ever increasing glory..." misses the image Paul was painting here. The Greek is "*out of glory into glory*" or "*from glory into glory.*" The idea of stages in a progression is in view here, rather than a container getting more and more full. This agrees with Paul's image of "transformation."
8. **(Q7 - Philippians)** Paul clearly links this "working out" of their salvation with obedience. In other words, to *not* be "working out their salvation" is disobedience!
9. **(Q7 - 2 Peter)** Peter's comments here are virtually bursting with meaning and insight. There is no clearer or more profound passage in the NT on the subject of sanctification. His list begins with "faith" and ends with "love," the goal of all of Paul's teaching (cf. 1 Tim. 1:5).

Peter makes a stinging statement near the end about those who choose *not* to "nourish" their faith. He says they are "ineffective" (ESV), "useless" (NAS), "barren" (KJV). The Greek word here, *argos*, is a very negative word. It means lazy, or leisurely. It's the word used for the laborers who were standing around in the marketplace instead of being out working in Matt. 20:3. Peter also says that this type of Christian is "unfruitful" (ESV, NAS, KJV) or "unproductive" (NIV). This word is used for a plant which does not yield the very thing that by nature it *should* produce.

10. **(Q11) - Ephesians** My salvation is a “work” of God. I need to realize that I *am* his work, more than me *doing* his work.
11. **(Q13b)** Make sure that any applications that come from this chapter fit our “model” and are:
- specific and not general (E.g. one person, one step, etc.)
 - realistic (they actually can be accomplished)
 - measurable (a specific day/time/person can be established)
 - accountable (someone in group will check up on them)



“Stumbling Stones”

1. **(Overall)** Be careful not to get sidetracked on the topic of “perfection.” Paul’s message (and Peter’s too) here is *not* perfection but growth; movement and progress in our spiritual lives. It is odd that Christians will seek progress in their financial lives, in physical fitness, in vocational goals, etc. Yet feel that their spiritual lives will sort of “unfold” by themselves. It is worth noting that the Greek word translated “perfect” is the word “*telios*,” which means “the end.” It’s where we get our word, “telescope” from; to “see the end.” (Mature is a better modern idea for what the word means.)
2. **(Overall)** Another common distraction from the rigors of our part in sanctification involves confusion over the role of the Holy Spirit versus our own efforts. That is the subject of the next chapter, so don’t entertain questions on it in this chapter.



“Going Deeper”

1. **(Q2)** Paul’s perspective on his salvation is revealed in his choice of verbs. Not just the words, but the *type* of verbs he used. What do you see in them? (**Note:** They are all *process* verbs, not completed action verbs.)
2. **(Q3)** What is the “this” and “it” that Paul is talking about in Philippians 3:12 that he is “pressing on” to “make his own”?
What do you think it means to “make this one’s own”?
3. **(Q4)** What are some of the things God uses to “keep us on track” in regard to our sanctification? (**Note:** Scripture, other believers, the Holy Spirit dealing directly with us, even unbelievers!)
4. **(Q5-1 Thess)** Paul’s statement in this verse is in the context of a prohibition against illicit sex. What guiding principle do you see here about lifestyle choices and your sanctification? (**Note:** Paul lays sexual immorality over against their sanctification. We too should weigh choices of vocation, location, spending, possessions, etc. against our own sanctification. The issue here isn’t just whether it’s “right or wrong,” but whether or not it’s moving me forward in my growth.)
5. **(Q6 - John 16)** What seems to be the relationship between the Holy Spirit, Truth and my own sanctification?
What are the qualities implied in Paul’s use of this “runner-race” metaphor? (**Note:** focus, discipline, self-control, perseverance, pain, endurance, a clear idea of the “course” [*“I don’t run aimlessly...”*]).
6. **(Q7)** Do you see a “sequence” or “order” in vv. 20-24? What are the four stages/steps here? Do you think the *order* is important? Explain. (**Note:** (1) taught (2) put off (3) renewed (4) put on)
7. **(Q11 - Philippians)** What difference does it make in my perspective on my life as a Christian if I think of the “good work” as including my *sanctification* and not just my justification? (**Note:** If I limit God’s “good work” to my justification, this verse seems to be talking about God *keeping* me. But if I see in light of my sanctification, then it is the assurance of God *changing* me.)