

The Trinity At Work

Ephesians 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints *who* are at Ephesus and *who are* faithful in Christ Jesus:

The unseen member of the Godhead, not mentioned in verse one who is the Holy Spirit, bestows spiritual gifts. Here, the Holy Spirit bestows the gift of apostle on Paul at the point of Paul's faith in Jesus the Christ as his personal savior. So, Paul starts off in verse one with the function of all three members of the Godhead.

Our custom is to sign our names at the end of a letter, but at this time in history, you would often start off by identifying yourself, as Paul does here.

1. This was not his name. He was Saul, and to distinguish himself from other Saul's he was Saul of Tarsus.
2. But after his salvation he took on the name Paul. (Acts 13:9).
3. Paul means 'little' or 'diminish' or 'reduced.'
4. This is one of the most important lessons every believer in Jesus Christ must learn. It is given succinctly by John, the forerunner of Jesus Christ: **He must increase, but I must decrease (John 3:30)**. While it is admirable to give your life for another, to live your life for another is of greater virtue. This decision must be made many times every day. I would rather not go to Bible class but for Him, I must go. I would rather spend my money on myself but I must give

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it to His glory. I would rather spend my time on something I want to do but I must spend this time to serve Him, etc. I would rather live in my flesh, satisfying myself but I must live in the power and leading of His Spirit.

5. His Jewish name was Saul, which of course was an honor for it was the name of the first Jewish King. But he took a Roman name *Paulos*—*Paul* which by the way no Roman would take for it means little or ‘diminish.’ But Paul entered his ministry with grace orientation, that he did not earn nor deserve anything from God. John the voice and Paul the apostle, were great men of history. Paul is the human author and if we left it at that then we would not need to study this letter. We must understand that this is the Word of God, which means a Divine author.
1. God the Holy Spirit is the Divine author under the all-important doctrine of Divine Inspiration of Scripture. I do not know of any doctrine more important than your view of the Holy Bible. Never forget the most dangerous thing you will do in life is to open the Bible to read and study it. So many people read this book from the viewpoint of man. We must be empowered by the third member of the Godhead, God the Holy Spirit.
2. Many people do not believe the Bible because they believe it was written by man alone. Therein lies the miracle of Divine Inspiration. The Bible is one book made up of 66 books and it’s compilation covers some 2000 years: from Job, written circa 2000 B.C. to the writers of the New Testament in the first century A.D. And yet, it is absolutely consistent – about God, His Plan, about

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Salvation from His anointed Messiah, about history. People, that is a miracle, until you realize that God the Holy Spirit is the Divine author of all 66 books.

3. Therefore, His book, the Bible, is the inerrant and infallible Word of God. This book is not to be set aside from all disciplines in life but is the truthful guide to science, history, politics, morality and of course God's gracious plan of Salvation, Spirituality and how to live a life free of SAD (Stress, Anxiety and Depression).

4. Inspiration

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

2 Timothy 3:17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

(1) Plenary (absolute) inspiration = **all**.

(2) Complete plenary = **all Scripture** Old Testament and New Testament.

(3) Divine authorship = inspired by God; God breathed.

(4) Complete and full value of all Scripture to the spiritual life of those who believe it = **profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.**

(5) Given by God that the believer may be adequate before God in all he does = **adequate, equipped for every good work.**

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5. A pastor-teacher who does not believe that this book is the completely God breathed, inerrant, infallible Word of God is not worth listening to. But the fact that he does believe these things does not guarantee that he will be accurate in all his teaching of the Word of God, but it is the right place to start.

Paul an apostle. If I were to write to the church down the street, I would have no right, no authority to do so. But Paul, being an apostle has both the right and authority to write this epistle.

Apostle

1. The Greek word apostle is filled with interest. First, it comes from the Greek word *apostello*. This is a beautiful word. There are two Greek words meaning ‘to send,’ the other being *pempo*, which emphasizes the relationship between the one doing the sending (God) with the one being sent. Our word emphasizes the relationship between the one doing the sending (God) with those to whom he is sent, the Church. So, this word emphasizes God’s interest and love for the Church.
2. It specifically refers to one sent by God, as an ambassador or messenger to a group loved by and cared for by God. It is an office established by God, or by Christ as head of the Church.
3. Apostle was a spiritual gift bestowed by God the Holy Spirit on chosen men. 1 Corinthians 12:11, 28; Ephesians 4:11.
4. Apostleship was a temporary spiritual gift. It was designed to bring in the new dispensation of the Church until the canon of Scripture was completed by the apostle John near the end of the first century

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with the book of Revelation. Throughout the Church Age, various ‘charismatic’ people called themselves apostles or were called so by others. The gift was chosen and given by God, not by man.

5. Time frame of the gift of apostle. The apostles to the Church were appointed after the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Ephesians 4:8-12.

This means of course that they must be distinguished from the apostles to Israel. Matthew 10:2ff. The giving of the gift ended with the completed canon of Scripture, which took the place for final authority over men, and local churches throughout all the Church Age. No one man has authority over more than one local church, and each local church is autonomous under the authority of the canon of Scripture and one local pastor-teacher.

6. Qualifications to be an apostle - had to be an eyewitness to the Resurrected Jesus Christ. Paul met and saw and spoke to the Resurrected Christ. Acts 1:22; 1 Corinthians 9:1; 1 Corinthians 15:8-9.

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus - of Christ Jesus. These two genitives mean that Paul belongs to Christ Jesus and serves the one to whom he belongs. We belong to Jesus by His being our Redeemer and therefore we are here to serve Him.

It is interesting that Paul places *Christ* first. Christ is not His name but His authority-the anointed one. The one, who on the road to Damascus, Paul came to realize was the one he had been waiting for. The Anointed by God the Father as the Savior of the World. God the Father appointed

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Jesus. And Jesus appointed Paul. Jesus is the name of His humanity. And in His humanity He is above Paul.

By the will of God. And this is important to Paul and to each of us. This is the Greek word *thelema*. The definition of this word covers thirteen columns in one lexicon and four in another. We will simplify it into three words: God's *will*, God's *purpose* and God's *design*. And God is without the definite article which places emphasis on the quality of the noun, here the quality of God, not defining Him but emphasizing His quality. And therefore, Paul is emphasizing the quality of the will, and the quality of the purpose and the quality of the design as being of the Highest quality.

**Ephesians 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus
by the will of God...**

We can learn some wonderful lessons from this opening phrase.

1. It was 'the purpose' of God in eternity past to take the worst sinner who ever lived and make him one of the greatest saints who ever lived.

**1 Timothy 1:12 I thank Christ Jesus our Lord,
who has strengthened me, because He
considered me faithful, putting me into
service,**

**1 Timothy 1:13 even though I was formerly
(1) a blasphemer and
(2) a persecutor and
(3) a violent aggressor...**

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Please notice he was not a ‘hell raiser,’ or some person we normally think of as a sinner, but he was a strong religious person.

1 Timothy 1:13 ...Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief;

1 Timothy 1:14 and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, (notice mercy and grace) with the faith and love which are *found* in Christ Jesus.

1 Timothy 1:15 It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.

1 Timothy 1:16 Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.

Ok, I hope you see it from this passage: the worst sinners are most often the most religious people. This can be pagan religion like Baal worship or Allah worship. This can be religion under the umbrella of Christianity. Like all the saints through history the Roman Catholic Church has martyred. Next, God can take the

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worst sinner and use that person to His Glory, so never give up on an unbeliever or even a sinful believer for that matter.

2. Under His Mercy and Grace everything depends on who and what God is, what His plan is, His purpose and design.
3. Remember, we do not have a definite article in front of the word God, which emphasizes the quality of God. And the quality of God is absolute perfect righteousness.
4. Since God is perfect, His Plan is perfect, His Salvation is perfect, His design is perfect – His design of salvation and spirituality are perfect. And remember, once you believe in Jesus Christ as Savior, you are in His plan. You and I are imperfect, so His plan cannot depend on us, in any way, it can only be by our faith. Faith is the only action compatible with grace and mercy. Sometimes you may not like God's plan, sometimes you may not understand God's plan. But, you just remember it is impossible for a perfect God to come up with an imperfect plan, so just relax and move on in the faith life.
5. Just a note to address some questions some of you may have. Historically, in God's plan and design, Paul was the 12th apostle appointed by God to replace Judas Iscariot. The election recorded in Acts 1:15-26 was all man-made and man-centered. Matthias was elected by man, not God, and therefore never heard of again. He would have been wise to have declined the vote. Apostles are appointed by God. In the Church Age, pastors are appointed by God.

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Next, we have a note to whom this letter was addressed.

To the saints. Oh, we could have a lot of fun here. Let's start off by making one thing clear. Every person who believes in Jesus as their Savior is a saint, no matter how they may live their lives. We have the *dative plural* of the Greek word *agios* referring to the ones to whom this letter is addressed. If you are a believer, you are a saint and this letter is written to you. We will take care of 'at Ephesus' in a moment. You are not a saint because you live a 'good' life, but because you are in Christ and you share His sainthood. This is also a *dative of advantage*, it is to your advantage to have all the information in this epistle.

Please do not confuse this with the religious activity of the Roman Catholic Church, where they declare someone as a saint, and then they move into idolatry by praying to these saints along with Mary. That, people, is idolatry. And every time you pass a Roman Catholic Church you are passing a temple of idolatry, along with passing a Mosque.

So, you will be thankful for the grace of God, in making you a saint by just believing in Jesus as your Savior. Let's look at what it takes to be a 'saint' in Roman Catholic Church.

How does someone become a saint?

Step One: Wait five years. The process to make someone a saint cannot normally start until at least five years after their death. ...

Step Two: Become a 'servant of God' ...

Step Three: Show proof of a life of 'heroic virtue' ...

Step Four: Verified miracles. ...

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Step Five: Canonization. **Canonization** is the act by which a Christian church declares that a person who **has** died was a saint, upon which declaration the person **is** included in the list of recognized saints, called the "canon."

Sounds like one being voted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame. This is very important that every one of you remember that you are a saint, no matter what happens in your life. Unlike becoming a saint in the Roman Catholic Church, you do nothing to become a saint before God, save believe in His Son for Salvation. And the miracle is God saving you and making you a saint and you don't have to wait 5 years or 5 minutes. The second you believe in Jesus Christ as your Savior you become a saint or holy before God. This is the doctrine of Sanctification. People, this is you! Question: Who am I? You are sanctified by God, you are made holy before God. You may not look holy, you may not act holy, you may not live a holy life, but in Christ Jesus before God, you are holy.

Sanctification

1. Definition: Set apart (in union with God).
2. Etymology:
 - a. holy, saint,
 - b. holiness
 - c. sanctification
 - d. consecrate
 - e. sanctify
3. Three categories or phases of sanctification.

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- a. Positional Sanctification — Phase 1 or eternal life salvation. When an unbeliever believes in Jesus Christ as his/her savior, that person is positioned in Jesus Christ. This is part of the doctrine of Eternal Security. You cannot lose your position in Christ. 1 Corinthians 1:2, 30; 6:11; Hebrews 10:10, 14; 13:12; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Colossians 2:10.
- b. Experiential Sanctification — Phase 2 or during your life on earth when you are empowered by the Holy Spirit. John 17:17; Ephesians 5:26; 2 Peter 3:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; 5:23; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2; Colossians 2:6.
- c. Ultimate Sanctification — Phase 3 Set apart to God for all eternity. Resurrected Body without the sin nature. Colossians 3:4; 1 Corinthians 15:53; 1 Thessalonians 5:23, 25b. Philippians 3:21; 1 John 3:1-2; Permanently indwelt by God the Holy Spirit. John 14:16.

4. The Agent of Sanctification.

I used to teach there were four Agents of Sanctification: God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit and the Holy Scriptures. But after close examination of Scripture, there is only one declared agent. This takes some observation.

Right off in 1 Corinthians 1:2 ...sanctified **in** Christ Jesus. Nowhere are we said to be sanctified **by** Jesus Christ.

There are two pertinent passages on the agency and manner of our sanctification:

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Romans 15:16 to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, that my offering of the Gentiles might become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit

So, the divine agent of our sanctification is God the Holy Spirit.

But what about the means of our being Sanctification by the Holy Spirit?

Acts 26:18 to open their eyes (Satan seeks to blind our eyes) so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, (we have studied how history of man is history of two kingdoms, *tale of two Kingdoms*) in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'

Saved by Grace through faith, Sanctified by Holy Spirit through or by means of faith.

So, the agent of our sanctification is God the Holy Spirit and the means of our Sanctification is by faith in Christ alone.

Not by something we do, not by being moral or religious, etc.

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Both of these—agency of the Holy Spirit and the means by faith can be seen in one verse:

2 Thessalonians 2:13 But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. (Jesus Christ is truth.)

Ok, since the Holy Spirit is the agent of our Sanctification, where does Jesus Christ fit?

1st, Scripture does not say we are sanctified by Jesus Christ but we are sanctified in Christ. 1 Corinthians 1:2 emphasis here, is our position. The position of sanctification is in Jesus Christ and this cannot be lost. It is our position in Christ that makes us holy or sets us apart to God the Father.

Experientially, we are imperfect beings, but no matter how imperfect we may be, we are permanently sanctified in Christ.

2nd, We are sanctified through Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 10:10 By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. (Crosswork of Jesus Christ.)

Through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ. *Dia + Genitive* of means—the spiritual death of Jesus Christ, that is, Holy

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Spirit sanctifies us because of the spiritual death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Note how important this verse is.

- a) Ultimate source of our permanent Sanctification is by the Will of God the Father.
- b) Means or instrument of our Sanctification: **by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ.**
- c) Permanency of our Sanctification: **we have been Sanctified.**
Perfect Tense: it last forever.

And you combine this with

Hebrews 10:14 For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

So ends loss of sanctification, no loss of Salvation; therefore, Eternal Security in Christ.

Sanctification is by the instrument of the body of Jesus Christ.

By agency of the Holy Spirit, by means of Faith in Jesus Christ.

By the Will of God the Father. Hebrews 10:10.

We are Sanctified—set apart—in Word of truth.

John 17:17 "Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth."

The place or position of our sanctification is Jesus Christ.

The Agent is God the Holy Spirit.

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The Ultimate source of our sanctification: The Will of God. Result: Forever holy and set apart to God in Christ.

1 Corinthians 6:11 And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Preposition *en + locative*—in the name of Jesus Christ—also our prayers are in His name. God answers our prayers in His name.

and in the Spirit of our God. This time we have preposition *en + instrumental* **by means of Holy Spirit.**

And of course our part is **by faith in Jesus Christ** Acts 26:18.

Who sanctified us? The Holy Spirit.

On what basis did He Sanctify us? The Crosswork of Jesus Christ.

By whose authority or will did He Sanctify us? God the Father.

And what was our part? By faith in Jesus Christ.

5. Mechanics of Sanctification. 1 Corinthians 15:51-57.

a) Positional – by Baptism of the Holy Spirit at the point of **faith** in Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:13.

b) Experiential – grace recovery by **Faith** in the Holy Spirit; walk in light; Ephesians 5:8-10; Colossians 2:6.

c) Ultimate – three-fold:

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- 1) Body—blameless 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Philippians 3:21;
1 John 3:1-2.
- 2) Soul—blameless 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 10:39.
- 3) Spirit—blameless 1 Thessalonians 5:23; 1 Corinthians 1:8.

6. Let's look at two pertinent doctrines related to Sanctification.

a) Doctrine of Positional Truth.

- 1) Positional Truth is not experiential nor emotional.
- 2) Positional Truth is not progressive – cannot be improved.
- 3) Positional Truth is not related to human merit or performance.
- 4) It is eternal in nature.
- 5) It is known only by revelation of the Word of God in or by the Holy Spirit.
- 6) It is obtained by Grace at the moment of Faith in Jesus Christ.

b) Doctrine of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

- 1) Did not occur in the Old Testament.
- 2) 1st prophesied by Jesus Christ. John 14:20.
- 3) Is the basis of unification of all believers. Ephesians 4:5.
- 4) Because of Baptism of Holy Spirit there is no racial, social or sexual distinctions in the body of Christ. Galatians 3:26-28.
- 5) It is basis of victory over sin in the Holy Spirit. Romans 6:3-4.
- 6) It began in the Church Age. Acts 1:5; 11:15.

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7) It is the means of Sanctification. Ephesians 1:3-6.

8) It is not experiential...no feelings, or emotions.

2 Thessalonians 2:13 But we should always give thanks to God (prayer) for you, (for one another) brethren (we are related to every believer in Jesus Christ) beloved by the Lord, (every believer is loved by Jesus Christ) because God has chosen you from the beginning (chosen) for salvation-- through sanctification-- by Spirit and faith in the truth. (Gospel).

2 Thessalonians 2:14 And it was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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“At Ephesus” is not found in the original manuscripts. The epistle was written to be a circular letter to the early churches such as those in Laodicea, Hierapolis, and the seven churches mentioned in Revelation 2-3.

And faithful in Christ Jesus.