
Sanctification

D&C 74: Introduction

In relationship to this revelation, the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote, “I ... received the following, as an explanation of 1 Corinthians 7:14, which reads, ‘For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy’” (D&C 74: Introduction). In the days of Joseph Smith, questions had arisen among the Saints about marriages between believers and unbelievers much like the days of the Apostle Paul when he addressed the people in the ancient city of Corinth. In his day, some contended that “when the husband, or wife, had been converted, he, or she, ought to abandon the unconverted partner as unclean and contaminating.” Paul countered by arguing that “the conversion of one of the partners has brought a sanctifying influence into the family.”¹

What is sanctification? Sanctification is the “cleansing from sin.” According to Elder D. Todd Christofferson,

Justification and sanctification are at the center of God’s gracious plan of salvation and are the essence of our witness of the Lord Jesus Christ. While justification and sanctification may be viewed as distinct topics, in reality I believe they are elements of a single divine process that qualifies us to live in the presence of God the Father and Jesus Christ.²

In the Book of Mormon we are taught, “Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me and be baptized in my name, that ye may be *sanctified* by the reception of the Holy Ghost, that ye may stand spotless before me at the last day” (3 Nephi 27:19–20; emphasis added). In the Doctrine and Covenants we are taught, “Sanctification through the grace

¹ Hyrum M. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl, *The Doctrine and Covenants Commentary* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1965), 432.

² D. Todd Christofferson, “Justification and Sanctification,” *Ensign*, June 2001.

of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is just and true, to all those who love and serve God with all their might, mind, and strength” (D&C 20:30–31).

Elder Jeffrey R. Hollard in his October 2000 general conference address said, “The call in every age—and especially our age—is Joshua’s call: ‘Sanctify yourselves: for to morrow the Lord will do wonders among you’”³ (Joshua 3:5). He then told a story about

how unexpectedly those tomorrows can come and in some cases how little time you may have to make hasty, belated preparation.

On the afternoon of Wednesday, September 30, 1998, ... a Little League football team in Inkom, Idaho, was out on the field for its midweek practice. They had completed their warm-ups and were starting to run a few plays from scrimmage. Dark clouds were gathering, as they sometimes do in the fall, and it began to rain lightly, but that was of no concern to a group of boys who loved playing football.

Suddenly, seemingly out of nowhere, an absolutely deafening crack of thunder split the air, inseparable from the flash of lightning that illuminated, literally electrified, the entire scene.

At that very moment a young friend of mine, A. J. Edwards, then a deacon in the Portneuf Ward of the McCammon Idaho Stake, was ready for the ball on a handoff that was sure to be a touchdown in this little intersquad bit of horseplay. But the lightning that had illuminated earth and sky struck A. J. Edwards from the crown of his football helmet to the soles of his shoes. ... A. J. Edwards lay motionless on the field.

Brother David Johnson of the Rapid Creek Ward, McCammon Idaho Stake, rushed to the player’s side. He shouted to coach and fellow ward member Rex Shaffer, “I can’t get a pulse. He’s in cardiac arrest.” These two men, rather miraculously both trained emergency medical technicians, started a life-against-death effort in CPR. ... The young defensive coach of the team, 18-year-old Bryce Reynolds, a member of the Mountain View Ward, McCammon Idaho Stake ... watched Brother Johnson and Brother Shaffer urgently applying CPR. He had an impression [to give him a priesthood blessing]. ...

³ Jeffrey R. Holland, “Sanctify Yourselves,” *Ensign*, November 2000.

Elder Reynolds said, "A. J. Edwards, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the power and authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood which I hold, I bless you that you will be OK. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen." As Bryce Reynolds closed that brief but fervent blessing offered in the language of an 18-year-old, A. J. Edwards drew his first renewed breath.⁴

Elder Holland said, "In frightening, even perilous moments, your faith and your priesthood will demand the very best of you and the best you can call down from heaven." He then explained, "You must, as Joshua said, 'sanctify yourselves.' You must be ready and worthy to act."⁵

⁴ Holland, "Sanctify Yourselves," November 2000.

⁵ Holland, "Sanctify Yourselves," November 2000.