

## **BY THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, YOU UNDERSTAND GOD'S WILL FOR YOU**

1 Thessalonians 4:3 "For this is the will of God, your sanctification"

I'm sure you have heard someone speak or you have read about your sanctification. Sanctification is a significant theological word explaining the special work of the Holy Spirit. The Small Catechism describes this work of the Holy Spirit with these words: "The Holy Spirit sanctifies me (makes me holy) by bringing me to faith in Christ, so that I might have the blessings of redemption and lead a godly life."

Actually, theologians use the word sanctification in two ways. The Small Catechism explains: "1) The wide sense – the whole work of the Holy Spirit by which He brings me to faith and also enable me to lead a godly life. 2) The narrow sense – that part of the Holy Spirit's work by which He directs and empowers the believer to lead a godly life." The Biblical foundation for this work of the Holy Spirit is 1 Corinthians 6:11 ". . .you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."

Why do you need the Holy Spirit to do the work of sanctification in you? The simple answer is you are a sinner and, in your sin, you are actually God's enemy. (Romans 8:7) Without the Holy Spirit you cannot accept the blessings God wants you to have. (1 Corinthians 2:14) By God's undeserved love and the faith in Jesus the Holy Spirit has worked in your heart, you have been saved. (Ephesians 2:8-9) Here is Martin Luther's answers to this question in his explanation to the third article of the Apostle's Creed: "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith." (Small Catechism) "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!' And let him who hears say, 'Come!' Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life." (Revelation 22:17)

God wills that all people become believers in Jesus Christ. (1 Timothy 2:4) God sends His Holy Spirit wherever the Holy Scriptures are taught and the sacraments are administered to work faith in the hearts of those who are present. You are sanctified by the Holy Spirit to believe in Jesus and do works that are pleasing to your heavenly Father.

Prayer: Holy Spirit, enter into my heart to work in me faith in Jesus, forgiveness of my sins and the gift of everlasting life. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord, With all your graces now outpoured  
On each believer's mind and heart; Your fervent love to them impart.  
Lord, by the brightness of Your light In holy faith Your Church unite;  
From ev'ry land and ev'ry tongue This to Your praise, O Lord, our God, be  
sung: Alleluia, alleluia!

Come, holy Light, guide divine, Now cause the Word of life to shine.  
Teach us to know our God aright And call Him Father with delight.  
From ev'ry error keep us free; Let none but Christ our master be  
That we in living faith abide, In Him, our Lord, with all our might confide.  
Alleluia, alleluia!

Come, holy Fire, comfort true, Grant us the will Your work to do  
And in Your service to abide; Let trials turn us not aside.  
Lord, by Your pow'r prepare each heart,  
And to our weakness strength impart That bravely here we may contend,  
Through life and death to You, our Lord, ascend. Alleluia, alleluia!  
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