

THE APOSTLES' CREED: THE HOLY SPIRIT
Gal 5:16–26

Entering the final section of the Apostles' Creed: "I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen."

Focus: the Spirit's role in making us more like Jesus, a doctrine known as progressive sanctification.¹

1. The need for sanctification: spiritual death
 - A. Man was made in the image of God (Gen 1:26–27), but fell from that estate.
 - B. Salvation restores the image of God in man
 - i. Eph 4:24: "and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness."
 - ii. Col 3:10: "and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator."
 - iii. 2 Pet 1:4: "participate in the divine nature" (see verse 5 and following).
2. The goal/essence of sanctification: transformation by the Spirit
 - A. Transformation into the likeness of Christ: "For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters" (Rom 8:29).
 - B. The Holy Spirit is the principal agent in the accomplishment of this transformation: "And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit" (2 Cor 3:18).
 - C. Definition of sanctification: the gradual transformation of believers into the likeness of Christ by means of the Spirit.
3. A picture of sanctification: dedicated by the Spirit
 - A. Lev 20:7–8: "Consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am the Lord your God. Keep my decrees and follow them. I am the Lord, who makes you holy."
 - B. Acts 26:18: "to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place

¹ Based on Ch. 7, "The Spirit of Holiness," in Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*.

among those who are sanctified by faith in me.”

- C. 2 Thess 2:13: “But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because God chose you as firstfruits to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth.”
- 4. The foundation of sanctification: the work of Christ and the Spirit
 - A. The work of Christ: “In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered. Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters” (Heb 2:10–11).
 - B. Regeneration and union with Christ by the Spirit: “What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life” (Rom 6:1–4).
 - 5. The expression of sanctification: walking in the Spirit (Gal 5:16–26)
 - A. “walk by the Spirit” (v. 16), “keep in step with the spirit” (v. 25).
 - B. Luther: “follow the Spirit as your captain and guide, and so also to resist the sinful nature, for that is all you are able to do. Obey the Spirit, and fight against the sinful nature.”²

² Martin Luther, *Galatians*, Crossway Classic Commentaries (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1998), 268.