

"What the Bible says about consecration."

In the Bible the word consecration means “the separation of oneself from things that are unclean, especially anything that would contaminate one’s relationship with a perfect God.” Consecration also carries the connotation of sanctification, holiness, or purity.

Sanctification

The generic meaning of sanctification is "the state of proper functioning." To sanctify someone or something is to set that person or thing apart for the use intended by its designer. A pen is "sanctified" when used to write. Eyeglasses are "sanctified" when used to improve sight. In the theological sense, things are sanctified when they are used for the purpose God intends. A human being is sanctified, therefore, when he or she lives according to God's design and purpose.

Holiness

Holiness in the highest sense belongs to God (Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 15:4), and to Christians as consecrated to God's service, and in so far as they are conformed in all things to the will of God (Romans 6:19 Romans 6:22; Ephesians 1:4; Titus 1:8; 1 Peter 1:15).

Personal holiness is a work of gradual development. It is carried on under many hindrances, hence the frequent admonitions to watchfulness, prayer, and perseverance (1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Cor. 7:1; Ephesians 4:23 Ephesians 4:24).

Purity

Purity is related to guiltless, blameless, or innocent behavior. In Exodus 23:7, an innocent person is portrayed as someone who is righteous as measured by the demands of the law.

The importance of being consecrated or pure in our relationship with God is emphasized in an incident in the book of Joshua. After forty years in the wilderness, the children of Israel were about to cross over the Jordan River into the Promised Land. They were then given a command and a promise: “Joshua told the people, ‘consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do amazing things among you’” (Joshua 3:5).

The people of God were commanded to bathe and change their clothes; the married couples were to devote themselves wholly to the Lord (1 Corinthians 7:1-6). The significance of this command was that in ancient times water was considered a luxury and wasn’t used often for personal hygiene.

The bathing and changing clothes symbolized making a new beginning with the Lord. The picture here is that sin is defilement (Psalm 51:2, 7), and we have to be cleansed before we can truly follow God.

Upon consecrating themselves, the children of Israel were assured of God's promises. The Lord promised that He would do amazing things among them (Joshua 3:5). Just as He opened the Red Sea to deliver them from their Egyptian bondage, He would open the Jordan River and take them into the Promised Land.

In fact, this was just the beginning of the miracles God would perform for them in the conquest of the Promised Land. It's no wonder the psalmist declares, "Your ways, O God, are holy. What god is so great as our God? You are the God who performs miracles; you display your power among the peoples" (Psalm 77:13-14).

Another good example of consecrating oneself is that of David upon confessing his sin of adultery. He bathed and changed clothes before he worshiped the Lord (2 Samuel 12:20). This same imagery is also used in the New Testament (Colossians 3:5-14; Ephesians 4:26-27).

The Bible tells believers to be a holy people, separate from the world:

"Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you" (2 Corinthians 6:17).

Being consecrated is a critical component in our relationship to God and to those in the world.

Paul tells us, "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will" (Romans 12:1-2).

In other words, as true believers in Christ, the act of consecration involves our lives being a living sacrifice to Him; we are totally separated from the defilement of the world. Each day, we are to live out our lives as a "holy" and "royal" priesthood to the glory of God, for we are now God's people (1 Peter 2:9-10).