

## THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22

HOLY UNTO THE LORD: LEVITICUS 27:28

The Church of God has a theological heritage which emphasizes “entire sanctification,” a second experience after receiving Jesus’s salvation. In this second experience, a believer is filled with the Holy Spirit in a way that completely refocuses the course of that person’s life; from that point on, he or she will work wholeheartedly to accomplish God’s mission in this world. Entire sanctification is all about being completely devoted to the Lord. The first few generations of believers in the Church of God called people in this situation “holy unto the Lord,” borrowing King James language from Leviticus and several other places in scripture.

The last chapter of Leviticus contains several regulations regarding offerings and sacrifices made to God by his people. Throughout the chapter runs the idea of “redemption,” that is, buying back what has been offered to God, whether an animal, a house, a piece of land, or (in biblical times of slavery) a person. In this way, God would still be honored by the sacrifice of the worshiper, and the worshiper would still have the use of the offering.

The situation was different, though, for offerings which were “completely devoted” or “set apart” for God. These special offerings - described with a Hebrew word that otherwise means “utterly destroyed” - could not be redeemed at any price. Anything that is fully given over to God is most holy to God and must remain under God’s ownership forever.

Entire sanctification is the New Testament equivalent of this state of being “completely devoted” to God. A person who has been saved by Jesus Christ, filled with the Holy Spirit, and given completely over to God is a person who belongs - heart, soul, mind, and strength - to God.

In the history of the Church of God, our belief in entire sanctification has taken a few different flavors. Sometimes, we have interpreted this to mean “completely moral purity,” so we have abstained from anything worldly that might pollute our lives: alcohol, movie theaters, playing cards, wedding rings, or neckties, just to name a few examples. But entire sanctification isn’t about moral purity. It’s about complete devotion to God, union with Christ, unending fellowship with the Holy Spirit.

What’s more, our devotion to God is God’s work, not our own. Read 1 Thesalonians 5:23-24 today and ask yourself this question:

How is God asking, prompting, and empowering me to be completely devoted to him?