

However, as we have seen, **God works in sanctification and we work**. It is an ongoing cooperative process. God's work is primary and **our effort is secondary**. Therefore we are called to **God-dependent effort** throughout the New Testament. This can be seen in several places. Consider that we are "**led by the Spirit**" indicating that our very lives are directed by the Holy Spirit as we progress toward Christlikeness.

Romans 8:12-14 - 12 So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh — 13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; **but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.** 14 **For all who are being led by the Spirit of God,** these are sons of God. NASB

Galatians 5:16-18 - 16 But I say, **walk by the Spirit,** and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. 17 For **the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another,** so that you may not do the things that you please. 18 **But if you are led by the Spirit,** you are not under the Law. NASB

Moreover, we are commanded by God to "**work out**" our "**salvation**" and in a very ardent and reverent way he says, "**with fear and trembling**" (Phil 2:12).

Philippians 2:12-13 - 12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your salvation** with fear and trembling; 13 **for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.** NASB

And when Paul says "**work out your salvation**" he uses the term **salvation** here **NOT** as the **initial justification** that occurred when we believed, but **as the ongoing process** of further realizing the blessings and benefits of salvation (or sanctification) in our daily lives. We are to **exert God-dependent effort** to press on toward Christlikeness, thus **bearing His image** in greater degree, and experiencing the enjoyment of Christ's virtue more and more as a result.

2 Corinthians 7:1 - Therefore, having these promises, beloved, **let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness** in the fear of God. NASB

Philippians 3:10-14 - 10 that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; 11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. 12 **Not that I have already obtained it, or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.** 13 Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and **reaching forward to what lies ahead,** 14 **I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.** NASB

Hebrews 12:14 - **Pursue** peace with all men, **and the sanctification** without which no one will see the Lord. NASB

Notice here in these Scriptures that we are to "**cleanse ourselves**" and to "**press on toward the goal**" and to "**pursue...sanctification,**" clearly showing that we are called to exert effort by the Spirit to "**perfect holiness**" in this life. Many passages in the Bible describe different aspects of our role and explain it as an **active role** on our part.

Romans 8:12-13 - 12 So then, brethren, **we are under obligation,** not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh — 13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if **by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body,** you will live. NASB

1 Thessalonians 4:3-8 - 3 For **this is the will of God, your sanctification;** that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that **each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor,** 5 not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; 6 and that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is the avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you. 7 For **God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification.** 8 Consequently, he who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you. NASB

1 John 3:2-3 - 2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is. 3 And **everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.** NASB

1 Corinthians 6:18-20 - 18 **Flee immorality.** Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. 19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy

Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20 For you have been bought with a price: **therefore glorify God in your body**. NASB

Further, this **active role** that we play is also seen with hearty images in the New Testament which show the **Christian maturing process** as one of **great difficulty**. These images are but not limited to:

- **Struggle/Race –**

1 Timothy 4:10-11 - 10 For it is **for this we labor and strive**, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers. NASB

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 - 24 Do you not know that **those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win**. 25 And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. 26 Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; 27 but **I buffet my body and make it my slave**, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified. NASB

Hebrews 12:1-2 - Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and **let us run with endurance the race that is set before us**, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. NASB

- **Conflict/Tension –**

Romans 7:15-23 - 15 For that which I am doing, I do not understand; for **I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate**. 16 But if I do the very thing I do not wish to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that it is good. 17 So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which indwells me. 18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for **the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not**. 19 **For the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish**. 20 But if I am doing the very thing I do not wish, **I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me**. 21 I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wishes to do good. 22 For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, 23 but I see a different law in the members of my body, **waging war against the law of my mind**, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. NASB

Galatians 5:17 - 17 For **the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another**, so that you may not do the things that you please. NASB

- **Battle/Warfare –**

Ephesians 6:10-13 - 10 Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. 11 **Put on the full armor of God**, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. 12 **For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places**. 13 Therefore, **take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day**, and having done everything, to stand firm. NASB

1 Timothy 6:12 - 12 **Fight the good fight of faith**; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. NASB

2 Timothy 2:3-4 - 3 **Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus**. 4 No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier. NASB

- **Chastening/Suffering -**

Philippians 1:29-30 - 29 For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, **but also to suffer for His sake, 30 experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me**, and now hear to be in me. NASB

Hebrews 12:10-11 - For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but **He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness**. 11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; **yet to those who have been trained by it**, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness. NASB

1 Peter 4:15-19 - 15 By no means let any of you suffer as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; 16 but **if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not feel ashamed, but in that**