

# AN INFINITE JOURNEY

# ENDORSEMENTS

RARELY HAVE I READ A book on sanctification that is simultaneously serious and fresh, at once reflective and accessible. Andy Davis combines analytical astuteness with pastoral passion. Those who think of themselves as Christians but who have no desire to grow in holiness need this book; Christians who want to be increasingly conformed to Christ will cherish this book.

— **DR. D. A. CARSON**

Research Professor of New Testament  
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

WE CAN BE GRATEFUL TO Andy Davis for writing a much needed book on sanctification. The book is biblically grounded but also pastorally warm and wise. Readers who desire to grow in Christ or who long to teach others about spiritual maturity will find this book to be an invaluable resource.

— **DR. THOMAS R. SCHREINER**

James Buchanan Harrison Professor of New Testament  
Interpretation and Associate Dean of Scripture and  
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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

*AN INFINITE JOURNEY* IS A labor of love from the heart of a faithful pastor who dearly loves his people. It is a marvelous treatment of the doctrine of sanctification and a call to grow in Christlikeness. It is biblically grounded, theologically rich, and practical in application. It felt like I was reading a modern Puritan. Do not be hesitant to delve into this treasure because of its size. The precious nuggets of truth that leap from its pages will make the investment a wise one indeed.

— **DR. DANIEL L. AKIN**

President  
Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

I LOVE ANDY DAVIS' EXTRAORDINARY mind. I love the breadth of his reading. Most of all, I love his terrific understanding of the Christian life and his grasp of the gospel. He is a faithful brother, and this book is a gift to the church.

— **DR. J.D. GREAR**

Lead Pastor of The Summit Church and author of *Stop Asking Jesus Into Your Heart* and *Gospel: Recovering the Power that Made Christianity Revolutionary*

BESIDES THE BIBLE, IT WOULD be difficult to find any other single resource with more biblically sound, theologically rich, pastorally helpful, and practical insight about Christian growth than this book. Moreover, it's not just a book about progress in Christlikeness, for I know Andy Davis and I can affirm that there's a life of growth in grace behind the book. I recommend it to anyone on the Infinite Journey.

— **DR. DON WHITNEY**

Associate Professor of Biblical Spirituality  
Senior Associate Dean for the School of Theology  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary



AN  
INFINITE  
JOURNEY

Growing toward Christlikeness

ANDREW M. DAVIS



AMBASSADOR INTERNATIONAL  
GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA & BELFAST, NORTHERN IRELAND

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# An Infinite Journey

## Growing toward Christlikeness

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*It is a joy to journey with you toward mutual Christlikeness!*





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# FOREWORD

DURING MY TEENAGE YEARS, I became steeped in evangelical revivalism. I often got the impression from pastors and evangelists that salvation more or less equaled justification. From time to time, we learned about sanctification and glorification, but these truths were often assumed more than they were expounded. The real action was in getting saved, which meant being justified by faith in Jesus Christ as one's personal Lord and Savior.

I spent several years trying to nail down the exact moment I had been justified, since I was taught that my assurance of salvation is based almost entirely upon my decision to believe in Jesus for salvation. I often worried that I had not been sincere enough in my faith, because I still struggled with indwelling sin. I prayed some version or other of the “sinner’s prayer” dozens of times in an effort to be sure I was really saved. As far as I knew, the Christian life was about getting justified, knowing you were justified, and helping other people get justified.

I was in college when it first dawned upon me that salvation is not a single moment in time, but rather is a spiritual journey. Justification is not an end unto itself—it is the beginning of a spiritual pilgrimage that begins in this life and ultimately ends in the next life. I had been saved by grace through faith (justification), I was being saved as the Holy Spirit conformed me more to the image of my Savior (sanctification), and I would be saved at the last day when I am finally and forever freed from sin, sickness, sorrow, and suffering (glorification). It was liberating to finally understand that “he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:6, ESV).

Providentially, my wife and I became a part of the First Baptist Church of Durham, North Carolina in 2005. We had learned of Andy Davis and his ministry at the church from some mutual friends. We wanted a church that emphasized expositional preaching, God's sovereignty in salvation, meaningful church membership, and the importance of evangelism and missions; we found it at FBC Durham. Once we joined the church, we discovered that Andy often speaks of the Christian life as two infinite, interrelated journeys. In the past eight years, my own spirituality has been shaped by the awareness that I am on an inward journey toward sanctification and ultimately glorification, and an outward journey to proclaim the lordship of Jesus Christ here, there, and everywhere.

*An Infinite Journey* is the fruit of many years of preaching and teaching on the nature of the Christian life, primarily in the context of a local church. I have watched Andy Davis faithfully model the two infinite journeys for the people he shepherds. I have seen this vision of the Christian life shape the spirituality of public school teachers, medical doctors, lawyers, businessmen, stay-at-home mothers, retirees, converted convicts, international graduate students, seminary students and professors, and foreign missionaries. I have become convinced that speaking of two infinite journeys is a helpful and memorable way to describe authentic, biblical Christianity.

I am glad you have decided to read this book; I do not believe you have done so by accident. My prayer is that *An Infinite Journey* will be a means of sanctifying grace in your own spiritual walk as you continue on the two infinite journeys of the Christian life.

Nathan A. Finn

Elder, First Baptist Church of Durham

Associate Professor, Southeastern Baptist Theological  
Seminary

October 15, 2013

SECTION 1

UNDERSTANDING  
SALVATION'S  
INFINITE JOURNEY





# AN INFINITE JOURNEY MAPPED OUT

GOD HAS SET BEFORE THE Church of Jesus Christ two infinite journeys. These two journeys have one destination, one ultimate goal, and in the end will prove to have been one and the same journey after all. Before the foundation of the world, God ordained these two journeys for his glory and for the joy of his people. He ordained that the Church would make them, and that the Church would finish them. Both journeys require immense human effort and untold suffering in order to be accomplished. If you are a Christian today, these journeys are your central work, your central means of bringing glory to God. And what are these journeys? 1) The external journey of the worldwide advance of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ to all nations. 2) The internal journey of an individual Christian from being dead in sin to gloriously perfect in Christ.

These two journeys are referred to directly and indirectly in many places in Scripture. They are not always referred to as journeys, but that is what they are. The essential idea of a journey is progress; i.e., advancing gradually to a desired destination. The external journey of the worldwide advance of the Kingdom of Christ—from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth, through the ministry of the gospel—is a gradual process requiring great effort, labor, and suffering. The internal journey of individual, personal salvation—from justification, through sanctification, into glorification—is also a gradual process requiring great effort, labor, and suffering.

Both infinite journeys are displayed in Paul's letter to the Philippians, chapter 1.

- 1) The external journey of the gospel: "*I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to **advance the gospel***" (Philippians 1:12).
- 2) The internal journey of sanctification: "*Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your **progress and joy in the faith***" (Philippians 1:25).

Both verses use the same Greek word, *prokopē*, to speak of "progress" or "advance." This word, used twice, thus speaks of two journeys.

### THE EXTERNAL JOURNEY OF GOSPEL ADVANCE

In the first case, Paul wants the persecuted Philippian church to know that his arrest and chains have actually helped the gospel make progress throughout the Praetorian Guard (Philippians 1:13). These elite soldiers were among the finest in the entire Roman empire, the toughest, most loyal, and most dedicated men the emperor had. It seems that Paul may have been chained to some of these Praetorian guardsmen, and had seized the opportunity to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to them one after the other. Undoubtedly Paul's supernatural joy in Christ—despite his dreadful circumstances—must have made quite an impression on many of them, and they gave his message a careful listening. Paul hints that some of them may even have become Christians as a result (note that there are believers in "Caesar's household," Philippians 4:22). What is more, once the rest of the church saw how courageously and joyfully Paul was suffering for Christ, they were now emboldened to share the gospel fearlessly (Philippians 1:14)! Church history shows that, within one generation of Paul, there were Christian churches as far north as wild and forbidding Britain. Could it be that some Praetorian Guards believed Paul's

gospel and became even more loyal to Christ than they were to the emperor, and spread the gospel to such distant places?

This is the progress of the gospel that Paul was speaking of: the gradual advance of the Kingdom of Christ through the verbal proclamation of the gospel message. “*Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice*” (verse 18). This worldwide advance of the gospel is the heroic story of missions, commanded and predicted by the resurrected Christ: “[*Jesus*] said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem’” (Luke 24:46–47).

The Church has been traveling this journey for almost two thousand years. Since the time when *Philippians* was written, the gospel has been carried heroically to the most distant parts of the earth’s surface. Missionaries have crossed the burning sands of the Arabian Desert, the forbidding slopes of the Karakoram Mountains, the measureless expanses of the Pacific Ocean, and the dangerous wilds of the jungles of Irian Jaya. Martyrs have suffered persecution and died, families have suffered tropical illnesses and died, missionaries have suffered starvation and died, all to accomplish the “advance of the gospel,” to make progress along this external journey.

## THE INTERNAL JOURNEY OF SANCTIFICATION

The Apostle Paul also mentions the other of our two infinite journeys, in *Philippians* 1:25 : “*Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your **progress** and joy in the faith.*”

The issue here is Paul’s ongoing concern for the individual Philippian Christians after they have trusted Christ and been baptized. He is immensely concerned about their “*progress and joy in the faith.*” Another name for “progress in the faith” is sanctification, the internal journey of gradual growth into Christlikeness. This internal journey is as important to Paul as the external, and

that is why he wrote Philippians to begin with. His desire is that his letter will help them make “*progress in the faith*,” and to this end he constantly preaches, teaches, prays, and labors. He is greatly concerned that they become fully mature in Christ, letting the manner of their life be worthy of the gospel of Christ (1:27), responding to persecution with his same joyful attitude (1:28), putting others’ needs ahead of their own with the perfect servant heart of Christ (2:1–11), working out their salvation with fear and trembling (2:12–13) as Paul did, by focusing totally on Christ, pressing on toward the goal for the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (3:7–14), and learning to constantly rejoice, trust, think, and be content in Christ (4:4–13).

This internal journey is the personal struggle of each Christian with the world, the flesh, and the devil. It requires a different kind of valor in the face of suffering than does the external journey, but it is the essence of the ongoing saving work of Christ in the individual Christian. This internal journey is a major and constant emphasis in the New Testament. Christ spoke of two roads, a narrow one leading to life and a broad one leading to destruction, and commanded us to “*enter through the narrow gate*” (Matthew 7:13–14). He also taught of the “*way*” to the Father, saying, “*I am the way. . . . No one comes to the Father except through me*” (John 14:6). Christianity itself was originally called “*The Way*” (Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 24:14, 22), indicating this sense of a “*way of salvation*” (Acts 16:17). The book of Hebrews commands us to “*run with perseverance the race marked out for us*” (Hebrews 12:1), while Paul commanded that we should “*run so as to obtain*,” and said he did not “*run like a man running aimlessly*” (1 Corinthians 9:24, 26). In many of his epistles, he spoke of his own “*race*” (Acts 20:24, Galatians 2:2), and at the end of his life, he said “*I have finished my race*” (2 Timothy 4:7). All of Peter’s and Paul’s references to Christian spiritual growth (e.g., 1 Peter 2:2, Colossians 1:10) are allusions to the same issue—the internal journey—using different metaphors.

In the final analysis, these two journeys are really one and the same thing, and they are carried on for the same ultimate goal—the glory of God in the final perfection of the Church. God has ordained that his chosen ones shall most certainly be saved to the uttermost; they shall be resurrected from being “*dead in transgressions and sins*” (Ephesians 2:1) and brought to absolute perfection in Christ. Christ came to “*save his people from their sins*” (Matthew 1:21), and that means to save his chosen ones from everything that sin has done to them. The final end of salvation is total conformity to Christ (Romans 8:29), and he will not stop until each of the elect are brought into this perfection. Thus do the two infinite journeys become one: only when each individual elect of God is 1) brought to personal faith in Christ through the missionary work of the Church (the external journey), and 2) totally glorified in Christ, perfect in body, soul, and spirit in the Kingdom (the internal journey), will the work of God in this world be complete. These two journeys have one goal: “*the praise of his glory*” (Ephesians 1:12, 14).

### WHY I CALL THESE JOURNEYS “INFINITE”

The word “infinite” is perhaps misleading, if one gathers from it that we will never reach our destination in these two journeys. The astonishing fact is that perfection is actually guaranteed in both of them! The Church of Jesus Christ will most certainly finish these journeys, and will enjoy the fruit from them forever. Personal perfection cannot be attained in this lifetime, but it will be granted us when we see the Lord. But we will attain the goal of the internal journey, total conformity to Christ.

So why call them “infinite?”<sup>1</sup> Simply because only an infinite power source can accomplish them, and because both will extend to the ends of our lives. Only the infinite power of God can enable the Church to advance the Kingdom of Christ to the end of the earth. As we quoted above, Christ said, “*You will receive **power** when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in*

*Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth*" (Acts 1:8). Paul said it was only by his power which works so mightily in him that he was able to carry on his ministry as apostle to the Gentiles (Colossians 1:28–29, Ephesians 3:7, 1 Corinthians 15:10). Without the infinite power of the Holy Spirit, the gospel message would never make a single convert, and the messengers would give up because of Satan's overwhelming opposition.

In the same way, it takes the infinite power of God and the infinite effectiveness of the ongoing priestly work of Christ to save us "*to the uttermost*" (Hebrews 7:25, ESV). Concerning the infinite power at work in us to complete our salvation, the Apostle Paul prayed specifically that the Ephesian Christians would be able to grasp the magnitude of the power that God is exerting to complete our salvation (see Ephesians 1:18–19). He said that this power was like the working of God's mighty strength in raising Christ from the dead and seating him at his right hand in the heavenly realms. And in the same way, God had raised us up from being dead in our transgressions and sins and will sit us with him in heaven as well. Therefore, sanctification is an infinite journey, because only the infinite power of God can complete it. And only the infinitely powerful priestly ministry of Christ at the right hand of God can keep us from all spiritual harm and enable us to make a single step forward in our sanctification.

Jesus summed it up when he said "*Apart from me, you can do nothing*" (John 15:5). Only with a lively sense of dependence on the infinite power of God will we make progress in these two journeys.

## EVANGELICALISM'S NEGLECTED JOURNEY: SANCTIFICATION

The modern evangelical movement has been far more concerned about evangelism than about discipleship. "Bible-believing" churches have seen the church somewhat as a "weekly, stationary evangelistic rally."<sup>2</sup> The success of the church is measured in

weekly attendance, finances, and especially in “soul-winning,” measured through baptismal statistics. Pastors are measured by their success in attracting an ever-larger congregation. Evangelical denominations continually develop and market new strategies to win the lost. If the person “makes a decision” for Christ, they are quickly baptized and counted in the all-important statistics for reporting success to the outside world. Church-planting missionaries working with unreached people groups are frequently held accountable to report their progress to their superiors in statistical terms; reporting that the people of a ministry are growing in grace and in the knowledge of Christ (2 Peter 3:18) is not easily quantifiable, and therefore not welcome. If people becoming more and more Christlike is “all”(!!) that missionaries have to report, they may be reprimanded for neglecting evangelism!

Of course, if counting baptismal results were ungodly or unimportant, Acts 2:41 would not have told us that three thousand souls were added to the church through baptism. However, Acts 2:42 goes on to tell us that these people “*devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayers,*” and Acts 2:43–47 describes an intense life of full commitment as growing disciples of Jesus Christ. It should be unsettling when evangelical churches constantly have to do “follow-up” to find some of their new “converts” who never attend church. It should be unsettling when statistics show that there is very little difference between the divorce statistics of born-again Christians and those of the surrounding culture. It should be unsettling when there is so little spiritual maturity, so little sacrifice for Christ, so little hunger and thirst for righteousness, so little suffering for his glory.

There are many contributing factors to this present situation, but among them must be a loss of focus on the internal journey of sanctification in the life of the Church. When so much of the church service is geared to being “seeker-sensitive,” when Sunday

School classes are totally focused on the visitors, actively seeking to make the lessons basic and simple and avoiding harder biblical content, when there seems no place for the meat of the Word of God in any church meeting or ministry, it should not be surprising that the church is suffering from such profound spiritual immaturity.

The Church needs to reclaim a Bible-saturated, Spirit-drenched emphasis on *both* of these infinite journeys, learning that they are absolutely intertwined. It is impossible for the Church to make progress externally to the ends of the earth if there are no Christians mature enough to pay the price to go as missionaries and martyrs. And it is impossible to make genuine progress in sanctification if the people only read good Christian books and stay in classrooms, but refuse to get out into the world as witnesses. These journeys are mutually interdependent: without progress in one, there can be no progress made in the other.

### CAPTAIN COOK & WILLIAM CAREY: “EXPECT GREAT THINGS, ATTEMPT GREAT THINGS”

On August 26, 1768, one of the most remarkable men in the history of the British Navy set sail for the Pacific Ocean. His name was Captain James Cook, and his voyage aboard a sturdy refitted coal ship named the *Endeavor* would change the course of history in many ways. The challenging purpose of Cook’s expedition was to explore and chart as much of the vast Pacific Ocean as he could.

As captain of the *Endeavour*, he would sight and survey hundreds of landfalls that no westerner had ever laid eyes on. . . . The most important prize of this and the two subsequent voyages that Cook would make was measured not in territory but in knowledge. Patient and methodical where his predecessors had been hasty and disorganized, he would sweep away myths and illusions on a prodigious scale, and in the end would give to the world a long-sought treasure: **a comprehensive map of the Pacific.**<sup>3</sup>



James Cook's voyages were followed with immense interest back in England, and after his shocking and sensational death in the Hawaiian Islands, his accounts of his voyages flew from British printing presses and made permanent imprints on the imaginations of countless English schoolboys. His astonishing rise from common seaman to ship captain, coupled with his bold and courageous accomplishments of discovery, gave English ambitions new fuel and wider scope. The name of his vessel, the *Endeavor*, matched the slogan on the coat of arms awarded him posthumously by the king of England: "He left nothing unattempted."

One of the schoolboys who thrilled to the accounts of Cook's discoveries was William Carey. His imagination was fired and his ambitions set in motion by reading Cook's *Journals*. His horizons expanded, and his dreams wafted across the seemingly endless expanses of the Pacific. But his ambitions took a completely different turn than he originally expected when he bowed his knee to the kingship of Jesus Christ and took Jesus' yoke upon himself. Once he combined his understanding of the spiritual needs of the natives who lived in these distant lands with the Great Commission of Jesus Christ to take the gospel to the ends of the earth, Carey's ambitions were cast in the same direction as those of the Apostle Paul in Romans 15:20: "*It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation.*" By the spring of 1792, Carey had published these convictions in a world-changing pamphlet, *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*.

On Wednesday, May 30, 1792, at Friar Lane Baptist Chapel, Nottingham, England, William Carey put this challenge into one of the most influential sermons ever preached in church history, what came to be called a "deathless sermon," based on Isaiah 54:2-3. Speaking to the Northamptonshire Baptist Association, Carey pas-

sionately exhorted his Baptist colleagues to: “Expect great things from God, and attempt great things for God.”

This slogan became a by-word for the modern missionary movement. The idea was simple and powerful: God’s eternal plan concerning the worldwide spread of the gospel cannot be thwarted, and therefore it decrees that energetic effort will succeed in accomplishing it. In other words, just because God has determined before the foundation of the world that “*this gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations*” (Matthew 24:14), doesn’t mean that the church should do **nothing**, and just let God do everything. On the contrary, the church will succeed precisely because God has ordained it! Therefore, the church should “use means for the conversion of the heathen” and should “expect great things from God and attempt great things for God.” We can expect great things from God because great things are both promised and required for the immense task of worldwide evangelization. We can attempt great things for God because great things will be rewarded by God with success, since they are required for the accomplishment of this infinite journey of worldwide evangelization.

The secular adventuring spirit of Captain James Cook was simply this: bold endeavor for the worldwide spread of the British Empire. “He left nothing unattempted.” The spiritual adventuring spirit of William Carey was simply this: bold endeavor for the worldwide spread of Christ’s empire. “Expect great things from God, attempt great things for God.” Now, what Carey applied to the external journey of worldwide missions, I would like to apply to the internal journey of personal sanctification. I yearn for a generation of Christians who will do the same thing in the internal journey of sanctification, while in no way neglecting the external journey of gospel advance. We need to spare nothing in our efforts to reach as high in personal Christlikeness as Carey reached wide in missionary achievement. We need to take on sin

patterns and defeat them by the power of the Spirit. We need to make ambitious resolutions in Scripture memorization and prayer and character development, and see those goals met to the glory of God. We should yearn to reach the end of our days here on earth knowing that we never rested in our efforts to grow to maximum Christlikeness. We should fear lying on our deathbed and groaning, knowing that we let some lust or sin habit rob us of the best years of our lives on earth. What was said of Captain James Cook concerning an immeasurable secular journey must also be said of us concerning our infinite spiritual journey in sanctification: “We left nothing unattempted.”

And we should do all this not neglecting in any way the passion of Carey for the external journey of worldwide evangelization. Perish the thought! Actually, we should be ambitious in the internal journey so we can be ever-more fruitful in the external journey. We should always be “*grow[ing] in the grace and knowledge of Christ*” so we can lead as many souls to Christ as he permits. We should run the internal race with perseverance so we can run the external race with eternal fruitfulness: more and more souls for Christ.

## TOWARD A COMPREHENSIVE MAP OF SANCTIFICATION

As noted above, one of the main goals of the meticulous and thorough Captain Cook was “a comprehensive map of the Pacific.” This map was of immense value to all navigators who followed Cook, for he took the immensity of that body of water and made it accessible on paper. I have a similar goal in the issue of sanctification.

Sanctification is growth into Christlikeness in all areas of life. Conformity to Christ in everything is an overwhelming concept. Thankfully, God has not left us in the dark, for the Bible gives us everything we need to know about what it means. But with every command from Jesus, every exhortation from Paul, every insight from John or precept from Peter, with every example from the

Old Testament that the Holy Spirit presses on our consciences, and with the weight of the Law of God still relevant in the New Covenant, the scope of what it means to be “spiritually mature” grows and grows. After a while, it becomes difficult to have a sense of everything that God wants us to be and do.

This becomes very acute for pastors and other disciple-makers, for such leaders need to know what they are to shoot for in their ministries. As they bring someone new to Christ, they need to have a sense of what the goal is in the spiritual growth of those now entrusted to their care. It is just as significant an issue for parents who are seeking to bring up their children in the “*training and instruction of the Lord*” (Ephesians 6:4). An accurate map of the journey from spiritual immaturity to maturity would be immensely beneficial.

This is one of the lasting appeals of John Bunyan’s classic book on sanctification, *Pilgrim’s Progress*: it lays out a roadmap from conversion to heaven. And even if it doesn’t systematically cover all areas of Christian life, so many are addressed, and with such power, that people have been moved by the English tinker’s astonishing masterpiece for over three hundred years.

Another analogy for what I am attempting is found in the introductory volume to the Encyclopedia Britannica. That volume is called a “Propedia,” and in it there is a fascinating “Outline of Knowledge.” It divides all of human knowledge into ten major categories:

1. Matter and Energy
2. The Earth
3. Life on Earth
4. Human Life
5. Human Society
6. Art
7. Technology
8. Religion

9. The History of Mankind

10. The Branches of Knowledge

Of course, each of these major sections has major subdivisions as well. This kind of arrangement in zoology is called a “taxonomy.” In this book, I will attempt a taxonomy of sanctification, seeking to organize—as much as I can, and in clear headings—what the Bible lays on us as reasonable goals for spiritual growth. My goal is to be as thorough as possible without multiplying the length beyond accessibility.

When I was growing up, my mother taught me that the secret to an orderly room was: “a place for everything, and everything in its place.” I am seeking to organize the Bible’s teachings on sanctification so that there is a place for everything and everything can be put in its place. Final achievement of this goal will elude us, because the inner life is so deep and rich, and the standard of Christlike perfection is so high. Also, many of these areas strongly overlap, so that it’s hard to separate, for example, heart desire expressed in prayer, from the action of prayer itself. Yet I believe the effort to sort things out will prove beneficial in stimulating Christian growth.

In this book, I will argue that all of Christian maturity can be found under four major headings: Knowledge, Faith, Character, and Action. Each of these I will break into some major subdivisions, which I will seek to describe and support from Scripture. A “Map of Sanctification,” or perhaps better an “Outline of Sanctification,” would look like this:

1. Knowledge: Spiritual truth
  - a. Factual knowledge gained from God’s word
  - b. Experiential knowledge gained from living in God’s world
2. Faith: Assurance and Conviction of Spiritual Truth
  - a. Certainty that Invisible Spiritual Realities are True
  - b. Assurance of Things Hoped For

- c. Conviction of Sin
- d. Reliance on Christ as All-Sufficient Savior and Provider
- e. Reception of Spiritual Guidance
- 3. Character: Internal Nature Conformed to Christ
  - a. Affection: Loving What Christ Loves and Hating What Christ Hates
  - b. Desire: Yearning for What Christ Yearns for
  - c. Will: Choosing What Christ Would Choose
  - d. Thought: Having the Mind of Christ
  - e. Emotions: Feeling What Christ Would Feel
  - f. Virtues: Situational Heart Attributes Conformed to Christ
- 4. Action: Habitual Obedience
  - a. Main Action: Presentation of the Body as a Spiritual Sacrifice
  - b. Negative Obedience: Personal holiness/purity
    - i. Purity from sin
    - ii. Proper handling of sin's occurrence
  - c. Positive Obedience: Seven Key Arenas
    - i. Worship
    - ii. Spiritual Disciplines
    - iii. Family
    - iv. Ministry to Believers
    - v. Mission to Non-Believers
    - vi. Stewardship
    - vii. Work

Here is a graphical representation of this outline.

## A PATHWAY TO CHRISTIAN MATURITY

**KNOWLEDGE**  
 FACTUAL AND EXPERIENTIAL SPIRITUAL INFORMATION

**FACTUAL**  
 Gained from the Scripture

**EXPERIENTIAL**  
 Gained from living in God's world

Leads To  
 →

**Romans 10:17**  
 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

**FAITH**  
 ASSURANCE OF AND COMMITMENT TO SPIRITUAL TRUTH

- Certainty that specific invisible spiritual realities are true
- Assurance that hoped-for specific good thing promised in scripture will certainly come true
- Conviction that specific sin in me, and that God hates it and will judge people for such sins
- Reliance on Christ as all-sufficient savior, refuge, provider, shield
- Reception of spiritual guidance and knowledge

Leads To ↑  
**Psalms 119:100** I have more understanding than the elders, for I obey your precepts.

Leads To ↓  
**Ephesians 3:16-17** ...that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.

**ACTION**  
 EXTERNAL LIFESTYLE OF HABITUAL OBEDIENCE

1. Presentation of Body to God
2. Personal Holiness
3. Seven-fold obedience to God's commands

1. Worship	5. Mission
2. Spiritual Disciplines	to Non-Believers
3. Family	6. Stewardship
4. Ministry to Believers	7. Work

Leads To  
 ←

**Matthew 12:23**  
 Either make the tree good and

**CHARACTER**  
 INTERNAL NATURE CONFORMED TO CHRIST

<b>VIRTUES</b> What you are	<b>AFFECTION</b> What you love/hate
	<b>DESIRE</b> What you seek
	<b>WILL</b> What you choose/reject
	<b>THOUGHT</b> What you think about
	<b>EMOTIONS</b> What you feel

Furthermore, I will argue that sanctification occurs in a cycle that follows this order: growing knowledge increases faith, increasing faith transforms character, transformed character produces action, and action feeds knowledge. This arrangement of all the various elements of sanctification in their place and order may prove helpful to all Christians seeking to grow, but not knowing where to begin. It may also help parents, pastors, and disciplers in

knowing how to work with growing Christians, or missionaries in knowing what to seek in the people who are converting.

### BOLD ENDEAVOR IN SANCTIFICATION, UNDERSTANDING THE GREAT COMMISSION

In the end, knowing all of this information will be useless if it doesn't result in actual growth on the part of Christians. This growth happens only by the grace of God, but it also happens with solid effort on our part: *"Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to **work out your salvation** with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose"* (Philippians 2:12–13). I will describe how our efforts, so unwelcome in justification and impossible in glorification, are very much needed in sanctification. And I will urge that, like Captain Cook in his voyages and William Carey in his mission to India, we "leave nothing unattempted." Like Captain Cook's ship, we should be setting out in a bold endeavor for God's glory, in our personal growth into Christlikeness.

Every biblically literate Christian knows that one of the most important passages in the Bible is the so-called Great Commission, which is given at the very end of Matthew's Gospel:

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.  
(Matthew 28:18–20)

This one passage of Scripture has been the central motivation for more missionary sermons, books, strategies, and fruit than any other passage in the Bible. However, in an effort to



“get people saved” (by which they mean justified, these converts having merely “prayed the sinner’s prayer”), they have neglected the fullness of Christ’s command. As I will argue in this book, the goal is for the Church to make mature disciples (learners) of Christ: disciples who are taught the fullness of his word and obedience to all of his commands. We shall see that this involves an inherited pattern of right doctrine and right living being used faithfully to help new converts conform to Christ fully, with the goal being comprehensive obedience.

### MY GOAL: GOD’S GLORY IN YOUR INSIGHT AND ENCOURAGEMENT

In presenting a thorough description of sanctification with all its component parts, I am seeking to instruct people concerning the fullness of the Bible’s teaching on Christlikeness, and to encourage people to strive daily to reach that goal. Once we see all that God expects of us, it will easily become discouraging if not understood properly. It is the great blessing of the gospel that all the elements of our great salvation—justification, sanctification, and glorification—are by grace based wholly on the work of Christ for us and in us. In the end, not one of us will be righteous enough based on our efforts in sanctification to stand before our Holy God. But Christ has already worked at the cross an absolutely perfect righteousness for us, which he has given us in justification, received as a gift simply by faith alone.

Yet God does desire us to make strong efforts to “*grow in grace and the knowledge of Christ*” (2 Peter 3:18). It is my earnest prayer that God will use this book to motivate you to do precisely this, to the glory of God and for your eternal happiness in heaven.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

DR. ANDREW DAVIS HAS BEEN Senior Pastor of First Baptist Church (FBC), Durham, NC, since 1998. He came to faith in Christ his junior year in college. In 1984, he graduated with a BSME from MIT, and worked for ten years as a mechanical engineer. Davis received his Master of Divinity degree from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in 1990 and his PhD in Church History from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1998. He was married to Christi in 1988, and they served together on the mission field in Japan for two years. They have five children. The central passion of Davis's life is the glory of God as revealed perfectly in the written word of God.

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