

In his *Systematic Theology*,<sup>1</sup> Grudem discussed sanctification [746-762], baptism in and filling with the Holy Spirit [763-787], and union with Christ [840-850].

Regarding baptism of the Holy Spirit, he refuted the Pentecostal position, saying true baptism is into the body of Christ, occurring at the time of salvation, and there is no scriptural support for a necessary subsequent Spirit baptism experience [766-775]. However, he did allow that people who believe they are having this experience might be experiencing something both real and divine, explaining that the preparation these people often go through – confession, repentance, trusting in Christ for forgiveness, consecration of every area of their lives to God’s service, submitting to the Holy Spirit, and having faith in the empowerment of Christ and the Holy Spirit – would certainly lead to a filling of the Spirit and consequent increase in spiritual empowerment and passion [779-780]. He then elaborated the Evangelical position that filling of the Spirit is an ongoing exercise, not a one-time experience, and that it does not necessarily result in speaking of tongues as Pentecostal theology teaches [781-784].

His views on sanctification had much in common with the views held in common by the five theologians in Gundry’s *Five Views on Sanctification*.<sup>2</sup> He discussed the three stages of sanctification [747-750], the need to strive for holiness while realizing we can never achieve it in this lifetime [748-753], that both God and man have a part in the experiential stage [753-756], that it is a transforming experience [756-757], and that even the experiential stage begins and is founded on the union with Christ that comes with salvation [842-842-847].

The highlight of his discussion was about baptism in and filling with the Holy Spirit. He explained the Pentecostal position [764-765], but then gave a thorough look at the scripture passages in question [766-773], rebutting the Pentecostal position and proving his own, yet in a non-contentious manner. He gave a scriptural explanation for the experiences of Pentecostal believers, suggesting they were for the most part real but misinterpreted because of misinterpretation of scripture [777-780]. Thus, he reminded us to interpret experiences through scripture, showed the scripturally correct teaching on both baptism and filling [the latter, 781-784], and softened a point of contention between Pentecostal and Evangelical teachings.

His writing on sanctification was not as useful. He placed the interesting implications of our identity and fellowship with Christ [840-850] five chapters away from the rest of the discussion about sanctification. In discussing God’s role in progressive [or experiential] sanctification, he identified the Holy Spirit as the agent producing holiness [753-754], but separated this from any discussion about being filled with the Spirit [781-784]. He did not make clear what God is doing, and he identified intimacy with God as an aspect of adoption [777], not filling. He also did not define our “transformation,” though he identified the fruit of the Spirit as primary evidence of the process, with another consequence being that we walk by, and are led by, the Spirit more [754]. He equated spiritual maturity with sanctification [746, 777]. In discussing our role in the process, he brought up our need to yield to the Holy Spirit, trust in God, obey, read and meditate on scripture, pray, worship, witness, be in Christian fellowship, and be a part of the corporate church body [754-756], but he offered no explanation of how the process works as a whole or how exactly these ingredients promote sanctification.

Grudem did a good job of presenting the theological basis for expecting progressive sanctification to occur and an overview of what is going on, but – other than about the baptism of the Holy Spirit issue – the discussion lacked the depth characteristic of most of his other chapters, and did not provide enough to help someone who was seeking to grow or be healed.

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<sup>1</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994).

<sup>2</sup> Stanley N. Gundry, ser. ed., *Five Views on Sanctification* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1987).