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The Mountain Trek of Christian Living Avoiding Growth-Stunting Detours

by G. Richard Fisher

B. B. Warfield once observed, "It is mere superstition to imagine that only good books sell well."

Every road leads somewhere, even if it is to a dead end. In life it is not just where I have been, but where I am going, how I am going to get there, and what it will be like upon my arrival. Not any old road will do, and so the urgency and practicality of right views of sanctification.

The little-known book, *Preaching on the Life of Christ*, published in 1958, studied Jesus from the standpoint of the mountains in His ministry. From Bethlehem (built on the ridge of a mountain), author W.S. McBernie traces Christ's life to the Mount of Temptation and on to the Mount of Beatitudes. McBernie then goes from the Mount of Beatitudes to the Mount of Transfiguration; from there to the Mount of Olives and Mount Calvary. The book concludes at the Mount of Ascension. This is a great way to encapsulate the highlights of Christology. The mountain theme in Jesus' ministry is a fascinating paradigm for the Christian life.

Four years earlier, a missionary to Mexico, F.J. Huegal published his



High Peaks in Redemption. It was dedicated to "All Spiritual Mountain Climbers."¹

Israel's covenant relationship to God began at a mountain and often Israel's great events and turning points took place on mountains, as in Deuteronomy 27-28 and 1 Kings 18. The Christian life could be viewed from the perspective of a mountain called "sanctification." Caleb's request was, "now therefore give me this mountain" (Joshua 14:12).

There are some religious groups that thrive on strange and unhealthy views of sanctification. The Bible presents the view that sanctification is an ongoing aspect of one's salvation received at conversion. It is an outworking of conversion just as human growth flows from human birth. It is not a separate and distinct work apart from salvation.

Sanctification is a progressive outworking of the grace that is in every believer, as we will see. It is a lifelong
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