

Appropriating Biblical Truths

Biblical imperatives are based on Biblical indicatives. We act based on what God promises is true. Different *types* of indicatives play different roles in spiritual growth. The three most common types of indicatives are substitution truths, identity truths and eternal life truths. As we remember substitution truths, know and believe our new identity in Christ, and hope for eternal life we will have a balanced walk with God. This chart shows how all three of these types of indicatives help our spiritual growth.

SUBSTITUTION	IDENTITY	ETERNAL LIFE
Past event	Present reality	Future event
Jesus died for me	I died & rose with Jesus spiritually	I will physically rise with Jesus
Justification	Sanctification	Glorification
Motivation	Ability	Perseverance
Answers “Why”?	Answers “How”?	Answers “Why”? or “How”?
Appeals to emotional senses	Appeals to rational senses	Appeals to the unseen reality
In the moment	Day to day	Long term
When feeling guilty / bored	When insecure / fatalistic	When suffering / distracted
Love ¹	Faith ²	Hope
Blood ³	Cross	Resurrection

Learn to read the bible with these distinctions in mind. In the examples below, the imperatives (or implied expectations⁴) are underlined and the indicatives are italicized. As you read, ask “why” for the underlined imperatives in the substitution passages with the answer being the italicized substitution truth. Ask “how” for the identity passages, and either “how” or “why” for the eternal life passages. Also, consider how they deal with motivation (substitution passages), ability (identity passages) or perseverance (eternal life passages).

There are many more examples. These are just examples where the indicative and imperative are located near each other in the passage.

¹ Jn 3:16, Rom 5:8, 1 Jn 4:10

² Rom 6:8, 11; Gal 2:20

³ Read Watchman Nee’s first two chapters in *The Normal Christian Life* for a fuller treatment of this row.

⁴ Sometimes the verbs are in the subjunctive or even indicative mood rather than imperative, but are still implying action (eg – “We do not lose heart” in 2 Cor 4:1, 16).

Substitution

- **Rom 3:24-27** *being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; 25 whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; 26 for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. 27 Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith.*
- **Rom 5:8-11** *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. 11 And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.*
- **Rom 8:3-4** *For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, 4 so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*
- **1 Cor 4:4-5** *For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord. 5 Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then *each man's praise will come to him from God.**
- **2 Cor 5:14-15** *For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; 15 and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for *Him who died and rose again on their behalf.**
- **2 Cor 5:20-21** *Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*
- **2 Cor 8:8-9** *I am not speaking this as a command, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity of your love also. 9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.*
- **Gal 2:20** *I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.*
- **Eph 4:32** *Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.*
- **Eph 5:2** *Walk in love, just as *Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.**

- **Col 3:13** bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as *the Lord forgave you, so also should you*.
- **2 Tim 2:8-9** Remember *Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel*, 9 for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal; but the word of God is not imprisoned.
- **Titus 2:11-14** *For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men*, 12 instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age. 13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, 14 *who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed*, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.
- **Phil 2:3-8** Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; 4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. 5 Have this attitude in yourselves which *was also in Christ Jesus ...*
- **Heb 4:15-16** For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. 16 Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that *we may receive mercy and find grace* to help in time of need.
- **Heb 9:14** How much more will *the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God*, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?
- **Heb 10:19-25** Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the *blood of Jesus*, 20 by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; 24 and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.
- **Heb 12:2-3** Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him *endured the cross*, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.
- **1 Pet 1:18-23** knowing that *you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers*, 19 *but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. ...* 22 Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, ferently love one another from the heart, 23 for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God.

- **1 Pet 2:24** and *He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.*
- **1 Jn 4:9-11** By this the love of God was manifested in us, that *God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.* 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that *He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.* 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.
- **1 Jn 4:18** We love, because *He first loved us.*

Identity

- **Rom 6:3-4** Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? 4 Therefore *we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.*
- **Rom 6:11-12** Even so consider yourselves to be *dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.* 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts
- **1 Cor 1:29-30** so that no man may boast before God. 30 But *by His doing you are in Christ Jesus,* who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption.
- **1 Cor 3:21-23** So then let no one boast in men. For all things belong to you, 22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things to come; all things belong to you, 23 and *you belong to Christ; and Christ belongs to God.*
- **1 Cor 6:18-19** 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?*
- **1 Cor 7:3-5** The husband must fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband. 4 *The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.* 5 Stop depriving one another ...
- **1 Cor 15:10** But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.
- **2 Cor 5:17** Therefore *if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.*
- **Gal 2:20** *I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.*
- **Eph 1:1-4:1**⁵ ... 1 Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called.

⁵ Ephesians is difficult for this practice since there is only one imperative in the first three chapters: 2:11 – “Remember”.

- **Phil 2:12-13** 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.*
- **Phil 4:13** I can do all things through *Him who strengthens me.*
- **Col 1:29** For this purpose also I labor, striving according to *His power, which mightily works within me.*
- **Col 2:8-10** See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. 9 For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, 10 and *in Him you have been made complete*, and He is the head over all rule and authority.
- **Col 2:18-19** Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind, 19 and not holding fast to *the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God.*
- **Col 2:20** If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, 21 “Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!”
- **Col 3:1-5** Therefore if *you have been raised up with Christ*, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. 3 *For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.* 4 When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory. 5 Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.
- **Col 3:9-10** Do not lie to one another, since *you laid aside the old self with its evil practices,* 10 and *have put on the new self* who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him.
- **Col 3:12** So, as those who have been *chosen of God, holy and beloved,* put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.
- **Col 3:15** Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed *you were called in one body;* and be thankful.
- **2 Tim 1:7-8** *For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.* 8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God
- **2 Pet 1:3-5** seeing that *His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness,* through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge ...

Eternal Life

- **Rom 5:2-5** we exult in hope of the glory of God. 3 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; 4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; 5 and *hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*
- **Rom 8:25** But if *we hope for what we do not see*, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.
- **Rom 15:13** Now may the *God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing*, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- **1 Cor 7:31** and those who use the world, as though they did not make full use of it; for the form of this world is passing away.
- **2 Cor 1:9-10** indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead; 10 who delivered us from so great a peril of death, and will deliver us, *He on whom we have set our hope. And He will yet deliver us*
- **2 Cor 3:12** Therefore *having such a hope*, we use great boldness in our speech.
- **2 Cor 4:16-17** Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. 17 For momentary, light affliction is producing for us *an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison,*
- **Col 1:4-5** since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints; because of *the hope laid up for you in heaven*, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel
- **Col 3:23-24** Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive *the reward of the inheritance*. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.
- **1 Thes 4:13-18** But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do *the rest who have no hope*. ... 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.
- **1 Thes 5:9-11** For *God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ*, 10 who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him. 11 Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.
- **1 Tim 4:10** 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.
- **1 Tim 5:5** Now she who is a widow indeed and who has been left alone, has *fixed her hope on God* and continues in entreaties and prayers night and day.
- **1 Tim 6:18-19** Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, 19 *storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future*, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.
- **2 Tim 2:10** For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain *the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory.*

- **Tit 2:13-14** Looking for *the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus*, 14 who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.
- **1 Pet 1:3-7** Blessed be *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope* through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 *to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you*, 5 who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, 7 so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.
- **1 Pet 1:13** Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the *grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ*.
- **1 Pet 4:7-9** *The end of all things is near*; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer. 8 Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. 9 Be hospitable to one another without complaint.
- **1 Jn 3:2-3** Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that *when He appears, we will be like Him*, because we will see Him just as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

Sub-category – Eternal Rewards

- o 1 Cor 3:10-15, 1 Cor 9:25, 2 Tim 4:7-8, 1 Cor 3:14, 2 Cor 5:10, 1 Thes 2:19-20, 1 Pet 5:4, Jam 1:12, 1 Tim 6:19, Rev 2:10

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is interwoven in all three types of indicatives. He is the one who performs the actions *objectively*. He regenerates us (substitution), places us in Christ (Identity), and is our down payment, and even raises us from the dead (eternal life). He also *subjectively* testifies of these truths in our lives as seen below. In other words, he informs us and reminds us of these positional truths. Romans 8 is the best chapter, demonstrating five of the six categories below!

Objective work of the Spirit

- Substitution
 - o **Rom 8:2** For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.
 - o **Rom 8:9** However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.

- **1 Cor 6:11** Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.
- **Tit 3:5** He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit
- **Heb 9:14** How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?
- Identity
 - **Jn 3:5-6** Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”
 - **Rom 8:11** But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.
 - **1 Cor 12:13** For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.
 - **Eph 1:13** In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed⁶ in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise
- Eternal Life
 - **Rom 1:4** who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord
 - **Rom 8:11a** But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead...
 - **2 Cor 1:22a** [God] who also sealed us ...
 - **Eph 4:30** Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Subjective work of the Spirit

- Substitution
 - **Jn 16:8** And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.
 - **1 Pet 1:12** It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look.

⁶ The sealing ministry of the Holy Spirit has to do with both identity (“sealed in Him”) and eternal life (“sealed for the day of redemption” Eph 4:30). The pledge of the Spirit (Eph 1:14, 2 Cor 1:22) is in the same verses as the sealing, but refers to the subjective work of the Spirit regarding eternal life.

- Identity
 - **Rom 8:15-16** For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"
16 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,
 - **Gal 4:6** Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"
- Eternal Life
 - **Jn 16:13** But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.
 - **Rom 8:16-17** The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.
 - **Rom 8:23** And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.
 - **Rom 5:5** and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.
 - **Rom 15:13** Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - **2 Cor 1:22b** ... gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.
 - **2 Cor 5:5** Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge.
 - **Eph 1:13-14** In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation--having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.

All are necessary for growth

- If lacking *substitution*
 - Deficient emotional drive, pushing me to succeed
 - Plenty of power to serve God, but no thrilling excitement
 - See Vincent's exciting language as he discovers justification by faith¹
- If lacking *identity*
 - Plenty of excitement and commitments, but no lasting change
 - Lack of steps of faith due to lack of focus on power
 - See Stanford's thoughts on recommitting year after year to serve God on your own power and Murray on sanctification being by our power in gratitude for justification.²
- If lacking *eternal life*
 - Plenty of power to serve God, but no perseverance
 - Likely to lose it during suffering or conflicted passions

- See Tripp's thoughts on how 1 Peter connects endurance to an eternal perspective. ³

How to grow deficiencies

Substitution

- Memorize 1 John 4 or Isaiah 53
- Listen to good Christian music
- Walk in the light which leads back to the cross
- Read testimonies, and remember your testimony
- Books
 - John Stott: *The Cross of Christ*
 - Milton Vincent: *The Gospel Primer*

Identity

- Memorize Romans 6
- Purposefully consider the "in Him", "in Christ", "with Him" language of the Bible
- Engulf yourself in community to see the need for the power through union with Christ
- Books
 - Watchman Nee: *The Normal Christian Life / Sit, Walk, Stand*
 - Miles Stanford: *The Green Letters*

Eternal life

- Memorize 2 Cor 4:7-5:10 or 1 Peter 1
- Purposefully consider the "glory", "hope", "eternal", "redemption" language of the Bible
- Develop a fuller understanding of Heaven
- Pray for a weakened hope for the things of this world
- Books
 - Randy Alcorn: *Heaven / Money, Possessions, and Eternity*
 - Paul David Tripp: *Forever*

Possible scenarios and example prayers

Substitution

- I am feeling unmotivated to attend my church meeting, and would rather do something else.
 - *Thank you that you've sprinkled my heart clean from an evil conscience. Motivate me to continue to attend meetings and consider how to stimulate others to love and good deeds (Heb 10:22-25).*
- I feel guilty for some recent sin.
 - *Thank you for justifying me by Christ's blood and saving me from your wrath through Him. Help me to accept this with confidence and boldly approach your throne of grace (Rom 5:9, Heb 4:16).*
- I feel self-righteous and judgmental.

- *Thank you that you loved me enough to send Christ to be the sacrifice for my sins. Help that fact to enable me to get my mind off myself and fuel my love for others (1 Jn 4:9-10).*
- I'm bored with my Bible reading plan.
 - *Thank you for leaving your throne to die for me. Help me to have the appropriate earnestness and sincerity in my love toward you (2 Cor 8:8-9)*
- I do not feel burdened to share my faith.
 - *Thank you that you made Christ to be sin on my behalf so that I might be made righteous. Help inspire me through this to be a good ambassador for you (2 Cor 5:20-21).*

Identity

- I am anxious about a conversation I need to have.
 - *Thank you that your divine power has given me everything I need to live a godly life, including the words to say here. Speak through me clearly and boldly (2 Pet 1:3).*
- I have no confidence to share my faith with my friend.
 - *Thank you Lord that I have died with Christ and my life is hidden in you. I have all the resources I could ever need to adequately present the Gospel. Help me to set my mind on that (Col 3:2-3).*
- I feel like a complete failure.
 - *Thank you that since I've been placed into Christ, I'm fully identified with Him. Everything that is true of Christ is now true of me. Far from being a failure, I overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved me (Rom 6:3-4; 8:37).*
- I'm comparing myself to others and feeling insecure.
 - *Thanks that it is by your doing that I am in Christ and you have placed me in the body just as you desired. I have no reason to compare myself to others (1 Cor 1:30, 1 Cor 12:11, 18).*
- I'm fatalistic about an area of sin.
 - *Thanks that I can labor to overcome this sin, striving according to your power which mightily works within me (Col 1:29).*

Eternal life

- I am anxious about a major life change.
 - *Thank you that you give me a hope of eternal life. Because of that, fill me with joy and peace, so that I will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom 15:13).*
- I am suffering with no clear answers why.
 - *Thank you that I need not lose heart for although my outer man is decaying, my inner man is being renewed day by day, producing for me an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison (2 Cor 4:16-17).*
- I am distracted by other passions which could compromise my walk with God.
 - *Thank you that you've given me a hope which I cannot see, so with perseverance I eagerly wait for it (Rom 8:25)*

- I hate my job.
 - o *Thank you Lord that this life is but a vapor waiting to vanish so I can be with you forever. Thank you that I can work hard even when I don't enjoy it, eagerly waiting to join you in Heaven (Jam 4:14).*
- I just want to quit following God.
 - o *Thank you that you are the Savior of all, and I can labor and strive because I have fixed my hope on you. Where else can I go? You have the words of eternal life (1 Tim 4:10, Jn 6:68).*

There are additional bases for spiritual. Find the different types in this paragraph from 2 Corinthians 5. I identified eight.⁴

2 Cor 5:8-17 We are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord. 9 Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. 11 Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest to God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences. 12 We are not again commending ourselves to you but are giving you an occasion to be proud of us, so that you will have an answer for those who take pride in appearance and not in heart. 13 For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are of sound mind, it is for you. 14 For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; 15 and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf. 16 Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer. 17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

“To please him”

- **Mt 3:17** and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.”
- **(Mt 25:21,23)** “His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’”
- **Jn 8:29** “And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.”
- **Rom 8:8** and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.
- **1 Cor 7:32** But I want you to be free from concern. One who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord;

- **2 Cor 5:9** Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.
- **(Gal 1:10)** For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.
- **Eph 5:10** trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.
- **Phil 2:13** for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.
- **Phil 4:18** But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.
- **Col 1:10** so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;
- **Col 3:20** Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.
- **1 Thes 2:4** but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who examines our hearts.
- **1 Thes 2:15** who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out. They are not pleasing to God, but hostile to all men,
- **1 Thes 4:1** Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you excel still more.
- **2 Tim 2:4** 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.
- **Heb 11:6** And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.
- **Heb 13:6** And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.
- **Heb 13:21** equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.
- **1 Jn 3:22** and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.

¹ Milton Vincent, *A Gospel Primer for Christians*, p 95-96.

I drank in the doctrine of justification like a thirsty man drinking a tall glass of water in the desert. The way those truths put my soul at rest was indescribable. ... I felt like a kid in a candy store. How did I not see these things before? The gospel is the craziest thing I've ever heard in my life. And it's true! ... I had never had such energy for ministry before, because so much of it was consumed with tending to my standing before God. I also found the grace of the gospel producing in me a huge passion to love and obey God. In moments of temptation, I enjoyed saying to myself, 'You know, I can commit this sin, and God's grace would abound to me all the more as He maintains my justified status. But it is precisely for this reason that I choose not to commit this sin!' In such moments I would walk away from sin with laughter in my heart."

(also see Spurgeon and Luther describe their discovering of justification by faith)

² Miles Stanford, *The Green Letters*, pp. 48-49.

This subject of consecration seems to be badly misunderstood by so many believers. Many, especially those young in the Lord, have been victimized time and time again in this matter of surrender, or commitment. The bludgeon most commonly used is: "The Lord Jesus gave His all for you, now the least you can do is give your all for Him!" The believer is exhorted and pressured to consecrate, surrender, commit his life to Christ on the basis of his love and gratitude for what has been done on his behalf at Calvary.

How often the average congregation is put through this routine. How often the individual believer is maneuvered down front to consecrate and reconsecrate, surrender and re-surrender, commit and recommit himself to Christ! Why is it that after awhile the believer comes to dread such meetings and messages? Well, there are a number of reasons for all this frustration, floundering and failure; and, praise the Lord, there are scriptural answers available to all who need and want them.

First of all, it is utterly futile to expect a believer, by means of consecration, surrender, or commitment, to step from his ground of substitution (Rom. 3-5), onto that of the deeper truths in Romans 8 and 12:1.

There is the all-important area of Identity truth in Romans 6 and 7 that cannot be skipped over. Every hungry-hearted Christian yearns to be fully consecrated and conditioned for effective life and service. And from the very outset, until hard experience teaches him otherwise, the well-meaning believer thinks that since he has the will to obey God and to be what He intends for him, he should attempt to carry it out through personal consecrated effort with His help. He seeks to struggle forward via the love motive, i.e., He did for me, so I must do for Him.

The following two thoughts by Andrew Murray will help here. "A superficial acquaintance with God's plan leads to the view that while substitution is God's work, by faith in Christ, sanctification (growth) is our work, to be performed under the influence of the gratitude we feel for the deliverance we have experienced, and by the aid of the Holy Spirit. But the earnest Christian soon finds how little gratitude can supply the power. When he thinks that more prayer will supply it, he finds that, indispensable as prayer is, it is not enough. Often the believer struggles hopelessly for years, until he listens to the teaching of the Spirit, as He glorifies Christ again, and reveals Christ, our Sanctification, to be appropriated by faith alone.

Andrew Murray, *Abide in Christ*, p. 62.

A superficial acquaintance with God's plan leads to the view that while justification is God's work, by faith in Christ, sanctification is our work, to be performed under the influence of the gratitude we feel for the deliverance we have experienced and by the aid of the Holy Spirit. But the earnest Christian soon discovers how little *gratitude* can supply the power. And when he thinks that more prayer will bring it, he finds that, indispensable as prayer is, *it* is not enough. Often the believer struggles hopelessly for years, until he listens to the teaching of the Spirit as He glorifies Christ again and reveals Christ, our sanctification, to be appropriated by *faith* alone.

³ Paul David Tripp, *Forever*, pp. 105-106.

First Peter is written to people who were suffering. Peter's letter is a practical explanation of where hope can be found and what it looks like to live with hope in a broken world. Chapter 1 roots present hope in the promise of eternity (see vv. 3-9). This chapter also connects present obedience (vv. 13-23) to future hope (vv.24-25). In the chapters that follow, Peter keeps connecting practical, everyday living to the hope of eternity (see 2:12; 3:9, 21-22; 4:7, 13; 5:4, 10). First Peter 3:15 tells us what this book is about with these words, "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." Here's the scenario that Peter envisions: You're living in a different way than the average person because you have sturdy and reliable hope. A neighbor or friend has observed your living and comes to you and says, "You suffer the same difficulties and disappointments that I do, but you deal with them with hope that I don't have. Where can I get this hope?"

You see, Peter is arguing that we obey (1:13-25), not because God has made our life easy, but because we have eternal hope. We love the thought of being the temple where God dwells (2:1-10), not because God endorses our definition of the

good life, but because we have eternal hope. Peter says that we are willing to live here like aliens because we know that this is not our final destination (2:11-12). Peter teaches that we are to submit to the authorities over us and work respectfully in the workplace, not because our bosses are ideal, but because we live in the messiness of the workplace with eternal hope. Peter believes the only way we can deal with the insults of others is when they are not the source of our hope (2:23-25). He teaches that the only way we can have the kind of marriage that God has called us to is if our hope is not held by the hands of our spouse (3:1-7). For Peter eternal hope alone is what enables us to endure present suffering (3:8-22; 4:12-19). Only eternal hope keeps us from functional idolatry – asking things to provide what only God can give (4:1-11). And Peter teaches that the only way we can exercise authority in a way that is not self-oriented and abusive is when we are exercising it, not for our glory, but for the glory of the one with whom we have been chosen to spend eternity.

⁴ eternal life (5:8), pleasing God (5:9), spiritual rewards (5:10), the fear of the lord (5:11), a model for others (5:13), controlled by the love of Christ (5:14), substitution (5:15), Identity (5:17)