

LOSING YOUR RELIGION—FINDING THE GOSPEL CENTERED LIFE[©]
LESSON THREE: BELIEVING THE GOSPEL

“Most people tell you they want to get out of Kindergarten, but don’t believe them. Don’t believe them! All they want you to do is to mend their broken toys. “Give me back my family. Give me back my job. Give me back my money. Give me back my reputation, my success.” This is what they want; they want their toys replaced. That’s all. Even the best psychologist will tell you that...people don’t really want to be cured. What they want is relief; a cure is painful.” Anthony DeMello

BIG IDEA: We have been focusing on the negative, the ways we minimize the gospel and how it impacts our life. Now, we turn to the power of the gospel, the positive, and how the gospel can empower us to not shrink the cross by depending on ourselves.

I. MATURITY IN CHRIST?

Q. What does maturity in Christ look like? What would make the list?

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 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; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 1:3-8

Q. How do you think you are doing according to this list?

Q. When it comes to growing spiritually, what challenges do we face?

II. BELIEVING THE GOSPEL: PASSIVE RIGHTEOUSNESS

At the root of the human condition is a struggle for righteousness and identity.

“They did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own...” Romans 10:3

Passive righteousness is the biblical truth that God has not only forgiven our sin, but also credited to us Jesus’ positive righteousness. Romans 3 speaks of a righteousness from God that comes to us through faith. “But now a righteousness, apart from the law, has been made known, to which the Law and Prophets testify.”

Forgiveness is great, but righteousness is even better.

Q. How are you right with God?

- A. Only by true faith in Jesus Christ. Even though my conscience accuses me of having grievously sinned against all of God’s commandments and of never having kept any of them, and even though I am still inclined toward all evil, nevertheless, without deserving it at all, out of sheer grace, God grants and credits to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ, as if I had never sinned, nor been a sinner, as if I had been perfectly obedient as Christ was obedient for me. All I need to do is accept this gift with a believing heart.

“If your ministry is not rooted in the finished work of Christ then you will look to ministry to save you. Pastors are weird, they are creepy, and some of them are freaks – because they are trying so hard to validate themselves with performance – trying hard to squeeze life out of success in ministry. Your biggest weakness is your delusion of strength.” Paul Tripp

III. BELIEVING THE GOSPEL: ADOPTION

ADOPTION is the biblical truth that God has welcomed us into his family as his own sons and daughters by virtue of our union with Jesus.

For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Romans 8:15-16

So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir. Galatians 4:7

*You sum up all of Christianity in a single phrase, if you speak of it as a revelation of the Fatherhood of the holy Creator. If you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the thought of being God's child, and having God as his Father. If this is not the thought that prompts and controls his worship and prayers and **his whole outlook on life**, it means that he does not understand Christianity very well at all.*

For everything that Christ taught... ..is summed up in the knowledge of the Fatherhood of God. "Father" is the Christian name for God. J.I. Packer

"Most necessary is it that we know the gospel well, teach it to others, and beat it into our heads continually." Martin Luther

"See, I have engraved thee on the palms of my hands..." Isaiah 49:16

"I have graven thee.' It does not say, 'Thy name.' The name is there, but that is not all: 'I have graven thee.' See the fullness of this! I have graven thy person, thine image, thy case, thy circumstances, thy sins, thy temptations, thy weaknesses, thy wants, thy works; I have graven thee, everything about thee, all that concerns thee; I have put thee altogether there." Charles Spurgeon

ORPHANS VS. CHILDREN APPENDIX

Updated January 2020

SELF-ASSESSMENT: ORPHANS VS. CHILDREN

This is a practical exercise to reveal our sinful tendencies to manipulate life and our daily need to return to Christ. This exercise will humble you, which is one of the first steps in serving Christ and others. Read through each bulleted description from left to right. Under “The Orphan,” check the box if you see that tendency in yourself. Underline the words that most apply. Under “The Son/Daughter,” check the boxes that describe where you most want to grow, underlining the key words.

THE ORPHAN

THE SON/DAUGHTER

- | | |
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| <p>Lacks a vital daily intimacy with God <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Anxious about friends, money, school, grades, etc. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p> Feels as if no one cares about you <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p> Lives on a success/fail basis <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p> Needs to look good <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p> Feels guilty and condemned <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p> Struggles to trust things to God <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p> Has to fix your problems <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p> Not very teachable <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Is defensive when accused of error or weakness <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p> Needs to be right <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p> Lacks confidence <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p> Feels discouraged and defeated <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Strong-willed with ideas, agendas, and opinions <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p> Solution to failure: “Try harder” <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Has a critical spirit (complaining and bitterness) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p> Tears others down <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p> A “competent analyst” of others’ weaknesses <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p> Tends to compare yourself with others <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p> Feels powerless to defeat the flesh <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Needs to be in control of situations and others <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p> Looks for satisfaction in “positions” <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p> Looks for satisfaction in “possessions” <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Tends to be motivated by obligation and duty, not love <input type="checkbox"/></p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Feels freed from worry because of God’s love for you</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Learning to live in a daily partnership with God</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not fearful of God</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Feels forgiven and totally accepted</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> A daily trust in God’s sovereign plan for your life</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Prayer is a first resort</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Content in relationships b/c you are accepted by God</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Freedom from making a name for yourself</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Is teachable by others</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Open to criticism b/c you rest on Christ’s perfection</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Able to examine your deeper motives</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Able to takes risks—even to fail</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Encouraged by the Spirit working in you</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Able to see God’s goodness in dark times</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Content with what Christ has provided</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Trusting less in self and more in the Holy Spirit</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Aware of inability to fix life, people, and problems</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Is able to freely confess your faults to others</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Doesn’t always have to be right</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Does not gain value from man-made “props”</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Experiences more and more victory over the flesh</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Prayer is a vital, ongoing part of the day</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Jesus is more and more the subject of conversation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> God truly satisfies your soul</p> |
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