

RELIGION VS. THE GOSPEL

{RELIGION}

- "I OBEY-THEREFORE I'M ACCEPTED."
- MOTIVATION IS BASED ON FEAR AND INSECURITY.
- I OBEY GOD IN ORDER TO GET THINGS FROM GOD
- WHEN CIRCUMSTANCES IN MY LIFE GO WRONG, I AM ANGRY AT GOD OR MY SELF, SINCE I BELIEVE, LIKE JOB'S FRIENDS THAT ANYONE WHO IS GOOD DESERVES A COMFORTABLE LIFE.
- WHEN I AM CRITICIZED I AM FURIOUS OR DEVASTATED BECAUSE IT IS CRITICAL THAT I THINK OF MYSELF AS A 'GOOD PERSON'. THREATS TO THAT SELF-IMAGE MUST BE DESTROYED AT ALL COSTS.
- MY PRAYER LIFE CONSISTS LARGELY OF PETITION AND IT ONLY HEATS UP WHEN I AM IN A TIME OF NEED. MY MAIN PURPOSE IN PRAYER IS CONTROL OF THE ENVIRONMENT.
- MY SELF-VIEW SWINGS BETWEEN TWO POLES. IF AND WHEN I AM LIVING UP TO MY STANDARDS, I FEEL CONFIDENT, BUT THEN I AM PRONE TO BE PROUD AND UNSYMPATHETIC TO FAILING PEOPLE. IF AND WHEN I AM NOT LIVING UP TO STANDARDS, I FEEL HUMBLE, BUT NOT CONFIDENT-I FEEL LIKE A FAILURE.
- MY IDENTITY AND SELF-WORTH ARE BASED MAINLY ON HOW HARD I WORK. OR HOW MORAL I AM, AND SO I MUST LOOK DOWN ON THOSE I PERCEIVE AS LAZY OR IMMORAL. I DISDAIN AND FEEL SUPERIOR TO 'THE OTHER.'
- SINCE I LOOK TO MY OWN PEDIGREE OR PERFORMANCE FOR MY SPIRITUAL ACCEPTABILITY, MY HEART MANUFACTURES IDOLS. IT MAY BE MY TALENTS, MY MORAL RECORD, MY PERSONAL DISCIPLINE, MY SOCIAL STATUS, ETC. I ABSOLUTELY HAVE TO HAVE THEM SO THEY SERVE AS MY MAIN HOPE, MEANING, HAPPINESS, SECURITY, AND SIGNIFICANCE, WHATEVER I MAY SAY I BELIEVE ABOUT GOD.

{THE GOSPEL}

- "I'M ACCEPTED-THEREFORE I OBEY."
- MOTIVATION IS BASED ON GRATEFUL JOY.
- I OBEY GOD TO GET TO GOD-TO DELIGHT AND RESEMBLE HIM.
- WHEN CIRCUMSTANCES IN MY LIFE GO WRONG, I STRUGGLE BUT I KNOW ALL MY PUNISHMENT FELL ON JESUS AND THAT WHILE HE MAY ALLOW THIS FOR MY TRAINING, HE WILL EXERCISE HIS FATHERLY LOVE WITHIN MY TRIAL.
- WHEN I AM CRITICIZED I STRUGGLE, BUT IT IS NOT CRITICAL FOR ME TO THINK OF MYSELF AS A 'GOOD PERSON.' MY IDENTITY IS NOT BUILT ON MY RECORD OR MY PERFORMANCE BUT ON GOD'S LOVE FOR ME IN CHRIST. I CAN TAKE CRITICISM. THAT'S HOW I BECAME A CHRISTIAN.
- MY PRAYER LIFE CONSISTS OF GENEROUS STRETCHES OF PRAISE AND ADORATION. MY MAIN PURPOSE IS FELLOWSHIP WITH HIM.
- MY SELF-VIEW IS NOT BASED ON A VIEW OF MY SELF AS A MORAL ACHIEVER. IN CHRIST I AM SIMUL IUSTUS ET PECCATOR—SIMULTANEOUSLY SINFUL AND LOST YET ACCEPTED IN CHRIST. I AM SO BAD HE HAD TO DIE FOR ME AND I AM SO LOVED HE WAS GLAD TO DIE FOR ME. THIS LEADS ME TO DEEPER AND DEEPER HUMILITY AND CONFIDENCE AT THE SAME TIME. NEITHER SWAGGERING NOR SNIVELING.
- MY IDENTITY AND SELF-WORTH ARE CENTERED ON THE ONE WHO DIED FOR HIS ENEMIES, WHO WAS EXCLUDED FROM THE CITY FOR ME. I AM SAVED BY SHEER GRACE. SO I CAN'T LOOK DOWN ON THOSE WHO BELIEVE OR PRACTICE SOMETHING DIFFERENT FROM ME. ONLY BY GRACE I AM WHAT I AM. I'VE NO INNER NEED TO WIN ARGUMENTS.
- I HAVE MANY GOOD THINGS IN MY LIFE—FAMILY, WORK, SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES, ETC. BUT NONE OF THESE GOOD THINGS ARE ULTIMATE THINGS TO ME. NONE OF THEM ARE THINGS I ABSOLUTELY HAVE TO HAVE, SO THERE IS A LIMIT TO HOW MUCH ANXIETY, BITTERNESS, AND DESPONDENCY THEY CAN INFLICT ON ME WHEN THEY ARE THREATENED AND LOST.

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