



The Gospel & Your Identity ***Bringing the Bible to Life TRACK I, SESSION 3***

Remembering Your Gospel-Identity

Incredibly Wealthy Slave

In Colonial US the story is told of a wealthy plantation owner who died and left an exorbitant inheritance of \$50K to his chief of slaves. The money was deposited in the local bank in the slave's name, and several months passed without the slave making any draw on the money. Finally the banker called the slave to remind him that this huge wealth of money was available to him in his own account at the bank, and when he finally convinced the man that this wealth was indeed legally his... the slave meekly asked, "Then do you think it possible for me to have 50 cents to purchase a bag of cornmeal?" This man was living in severe poverty while at the same time possessing a great fortune beyond his understanding!

The Blessed Beggar

I got off at the Pennsylvania depot as a tramp, and for a year I begged on the streets for a living. One day I touched a man on the shoulder and said, "Hey, mister, can you give me a dime?" As soon as I saw his face I was shocked to see that it was my own father. I said, "Father, Father, do you know me?" Throwing his arms around me and with tears in his eyes, he said, "Oh my son, at last I've found you! I've found you. You want a dime? Everything I have is yours." Think of it. I was a tramp. I stood begging my own father for ten cents, when for 18 years he had been looking for me to give me all that he had.¹

To grasp an understanding of who we are in Christ, we first must know who Christ is and what the message of the gospel has to offer. *"It [Gospel] is the key to all doctrine and our view of our lives in this world. Therefore, all our problems come from a lack of orientation to the gospel. Put positively, the gospel transforms our hearts and thinking and approaches to absolutely everything."²*

Ephesians 1:17-19

that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, [18] having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, [19] and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might

Ephesians 2:4-10

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, [5] even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— [6] and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, [7] so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. [8] For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, [9] not a result of works, so that no one may boast. [10] For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

¹ J. Wilbur Chapman As quoted by John MacArthur, *Ephesians: New Testament Commentary*, page 111

² Dr. Timothy Keller, *The Centrality of the Gospel*

Ephesians 5:1-2

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER:

1. Truly Born-Again believers
 - a. have their sin-debt and record erased (Col.2:14)
 - b. have all of the Righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed to their “account” - God sees Jesus’ righteousness, NOT yours! (Rom.2:20-25)
 - c. all this is a GIFT OF GOD, (Eph.2:1-9) a work of God. (Jn. 3:3-16)
2. Love (towards God and towards others) is *responsive* in its nature. You can’t self-lecture unto greater love. Your love for God will grow in response to your knowledge of God and the Gospel.
3. Sanctification is not achieved merely by human effort; self-directed anger, penance, hard work, nor is it realized by harboring and obsession over your guilt and failures. Sanctification is a work of the Holy Spirit (2Cor.3:18), energized and driven by love (1Jn. 4) and joy (1Jn.1:3). Sadness, self-hatred won’t bring about God-honoring obedience... only love and joy can do that.
4. You can only be empowered to do good because of this wild claim that everything regarding your salvation has already been done for you in Christ!

1 John 4:7-21;

⁷*Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.* ⁸*Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.* ⁹*In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.* ¹⁰*In this is love, not that we have 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.* ¹²*No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.* ¹³*By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.* ¹⁴*And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.* ¹⁵*Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.* ¹⁶*So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us.* *God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.* ¹⁷*By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world.* ¹⁸*There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.* ¹⁹*We love because he first loved us.* ²⁰*If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.* ²¹*And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.*

Luke 7:47-48;

⁴⁷*Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little.”* ⁴⁸*And he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."*

Galatians 5:6;

⁶*For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.*

2 Corinthians 5:14-15;

¹⁴*For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; ¹⁵*and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.**

Nehemiah 8:8-10;

⁸*They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.* ⁹*And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep." For all the people wept as they heard the words of the Law.* ¹⁰*Then he said to them, "Go your way. Eat the fat and drink sweet wine*

and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready, for this day is holy to our Lord. And do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."

Hebrews 4:9-11

⁹So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, ¹⁰for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his. ¹¹Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.

Scriptures command God's people to hold on to the hope of the gospel

Col 1:5

because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel,;

Col 1:23

if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

The following are examples of how we live when we forget the gospel (forget our sin, forget God's love)

1. We try to reconcile ourselves to Him through good works or flawless performance.
2. We try to appease Him instead of resting in the promise that Christ's sacrifice has appeased God's righteous anger. .
1Jn.2:2
He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.
1 Jn. 4:10
In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.
3. We think of ourselves as hired servants when Jesus describes us much differently.
Jn 15:15
No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.)
4. We think/act/function as though everything revolves around me/my needs, etc. and forget that *everything* is for Him and through Him
Rom 11:36
For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.
5. We live in the present and forget the future.
Phil. 3:7-16
⁷But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—¹⁰that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. ¹²Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. ¹⁶Only let us hold true to what we have attained.

"Failing to concentrate on God's love for us in Christ isn't a trivial thing. It will always eventuate in apathetic living. Only the gospel can so invigorate us that we burn with ardor for him in all that we do." Elyse Fitzpatrick

How You Think is a Test of Gospel-centered living

1. when you sin – are you fearful? Do you do penance? OR are you enabled to overcome by finished work/resurrection of Christ?
2. when you are sinned against – Are you self-righteous, judgmental, critical OR Are you humble, merciful, forgiving?
3. when you suffer – Do you think you deserve better? OR do you trust in God's purposes and Christ's glory?
4. when you pray – Are you timid & fearful? OR are you bold and confident in Christ
5. when you think about God – Do you think of him as judgmental, angry, "out to get you"? OR Do you think of him as a loving Father who sees you as His beloved?

6. when you are criticized – Are you surprised, offended? OR Do you expect to fail and yet hold fast to Christ's performance?
7. regarding obedience – Do you expect that your obedience would merit some special relationship? OR Are you confident that your relationship is sustained by your position in Christ? Do you obey because of that relationship?
8. regarding the commands of God - do you consider them to be burdensome?
9. regarding your own righteousness – Do you believe that you have something to offer God? OR Do you recognize that your self-righteousness is perhaps the greatest enemy to Gospel centered living?
10. regarding evangelism – Do you view this as an obligation? OR Do you desire to share the GOSPEL out of love for God and others?

When we forget that we are sinful and flawed, we become

1. Self-righteous
2. Harsh
3. Demanding
4. Unloving or impatient
5. Views other's failures as a direct attack on his leadership
6. Insists on perfect obedience from others
7. Compare ourselves among ourselves
8. Critical spirit
9. Unrealized expectations
10. Quick to note and judge inconsistencies and failures
11. Perfectionistic
12. Filled with fear
13. obsessed with
 - a. performance
 - b. acceptance
 - c. respect
 - d. being loved
 - e. being appreciated
 - f. one's own failures

When we forget we are loved and welcomed by the King of Kings we are

1. Tempted to cover up failures and put on a front
2. Slow to admit guilt
3. Slow to ask forgiveness
4. Pursuing performance-oriented relationships
5. Working at proving you are worthy of love (either from God or others)
6. Men-pleasers
 - a. Overly committed to work (proving his commitment to provide)
 - b. Super Mom (trying to avoid all criticism)
7. Dare not rest, relax, or enjoy time off
8. Not easily satisfied with others– always desiring more affirmations of love from others
9. Needy sponges in relationships-seeking to receive from others vs. investing in relationships.
10. Always looking for signs of love from others (either from God or people)
11. Afraid of correcting others
12. Fearful
13. Manipulative

Why is it so easy to forget?

1. Gospel is offensive to our pride
2. We desire autonomy and independence
3. We desire our own kingdom and acclaim
4. We believe lies about:
 - a. God's Past Faithfulness
 - b. God's Providence
 - c. God's Power

- d. God's Protection
 - e. God's Promises
 - f. God's Plan
 - g. God's Provision
5. Gospel is a stumbling block to our ambitions
 - a. To be in control (to be like God)
 - b. To define our own standards (to be the law-giver)
 - c. To be the one who either condemns or saves (judge and/or savior)
 6. Gospel is assumed in Christianity (it has become "white noise", something in the background that is so common, it goes unnoticed altogether, therefore its power and glory have no life-transforming effects)

Examples of how we live when we remember the gospel

1. A life of love towards others
1 John 4:11
Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.
2. A life of Humility;
Psalm 51:1-4
¹ *Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.*
² *Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin!*
³ *For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.*
⁴ *Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you may be justified in your words
and blameless in your judgment.*
3. A life lived from an attitude of meekness/Trusting;
Romans 8:28-39
²⁸ *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. ³¹What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³²He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? ³³Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. ³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶As it is written,
"For your sake we are being killed all the day long;
we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." ³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
4. A Forgiving heart/attitude;
Matthew 18:33
And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?';
Ephesians 4:32
Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.
5. A Generous heart
2 Corinthians 8:8-15
⁸ *I say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine. ⁹For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich. ¹⁰And in this matter I give my judgment: this benefits you, who a year ago started not*

only to do this work but also to desire to do it. ¹¹So now finish doing it as well, so that your readiness in desiring it may be matched by your completing it out of what you have. ¹²For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have. ¹³For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened, but that as a matter of fairness ¹⁴your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need, that there may be fairness. ¹⁵As it is written, "Whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack."

6. A life that pursues Holiness

Romans 6:1-6

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? ²By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? ³Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

Heb. 12:1-14

¹Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ²looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

³ Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. ⁴In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. ⁵And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?

"My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord,
nor be weary when reproved by him.

⁶For the Lord disciplines the one he loves,

and chastises every son whom he receives. ⁷It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? ⁸If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. ⁹Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. ¹¹ For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. ¹²Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, ¹³and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed. ¹⁴ Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.

7. A Life of Worship!!

Romans 12:1-2

¹ I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

8. A life that seeks God's glory (giving other people a right opinion of HIM) and the GOOD OF OTHERS,\

Rom.8:28-29

¹ I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

How can I remember the Gospel?

1. By seeing your own need for a savior in everyday life, walking in the light with a sensitive attitude for your sins; when you are sinned against, look first for you own sins against God; *become a lumber-jack before you become an eye-surgeon*" [Higbee].

Matt. 7:3-5

³Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? ⁴Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? ⁵You

hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

2. Through consistent, BIBLICAL thinking

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

³*For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. ⁴For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. ⁵We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,*

3. Renewing your mind with TRUTH;

Ephesians 4:22-24

²²*to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, ²³and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.*

4. Preach the TRUTH to yourself

Zech.8:16

These are the things that you shall do: Speak the truth to one another; render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace; 2cor. 10:3-5 For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh.

⁴*For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. ⁵We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,*

- a. Much of our struggle is due to the tendency to listen to our own repetitive thoughts and ideas, which tend to be a compilation of what we've heard, seen, experienced and learned over the course of our life-time. (Psalm One refers to this as "*The counsel of the ungodly*").
- b. We must be disciplined to preach TRUTH to ourselves and demand that our hearts focus on what is TRUE, etc. Phil.4:4-9
⁴*Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; ⁶do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. ⁸Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ⁹What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.*
- c. "*Most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself.*" D. M. Lloyd-Jones

Gospel-centered living starts with biblical thinking. Are you going to build your life on what you feel, or on what is real³

1. Memorize the Gospel of Christ
2. Pray the Gospel of Christ
3. Sing the Gospel of Christ
4. Review how the Gospel of Christ has changed you
5. Look for & Study the Gospel of Christ

What does it mean to walk "by faith and not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7 for we walk by faith, not by sight.)?

1. Believe that God continues to love you despite your continual sin.
2. Believe that God has committed Himself to your sanctification.
3. Believe that everything you've ever needed to be pleasing to God has been given to you in the Gospel, by the Son.
4. Believe that you can be bold and courageous in your war against sin because you know that He's forgiven you and continues to love and support you.
5. Believe you will complete the work He's given you to do, because He's already completed it for you.

Christ is my life...by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

1. Believe that God is as good as He says He is.

³ The following were taken from *The Cross-Centered Life*, C.J. Mahaney

2. Believe that God is too holy to deceive you.
3. Believe that God is too powerful to disappoint you.
4. Believe that His love is able to keep you.
5. Don't think your sin/record is too great.
6. Don't think you're able to heal yourself.
7. **Simply look and live...live in fellowship with the KING!**
 - a. Jn. 3:14-15 ⁴And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.
 - b. John 15:15 No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

1) Track I Class-Session #3	Summarize your main take-aways from this session, especially noting any areas that were either unclear to you or that you might disagree.
2) <u>FUNDAMENTALS OF FAITH</u> workbook.	Lesson #6, MAKE SURE TO LISTEN TO THE AUDIO MESSAGE FIRST
3) read and review often the handout <u>REMEMBERING YOUR GOSPEL-IDENTITY</u>	Keep this for continual reference. Read, review, talk about this with your family, accountability-partners, Sunday School Class, etc. SOLIDIFY WHAT THE GOSPEL REALLY MEANS TO YOU by spending good, quality time reviewing the truths of this handout often.
<p>GOING DEEPER - Additional materials, recommended for further study not required</p> <p>1 John; Ephesians 1-3; Galatians 1-3; Romans 1-11 <i>The Gospel Primer</i>, Milton Vincent Booklet: <i>Knowing God</i>, J. I. Packer Article <i>The Centrality of the Gospel</i>, By Timothy Keller Pamphlet: <i>A Gracious Dismissal</i>, Charles Haddon Spurgeon Small book: <i>The Cross Centered Life</i>, C. J. Mahaney Small book: <i>How Good is Good Enough</i>, Andy Stanley Chapter 6 <i>The Work of the Holy Spirit & Biblical Counseling</i> from the book, <i>Counseling; How to Counsel Biblically</i>, by John MacArthur Other books: <i>Knowing God</i>, J.I. Packer <i>The Discipline of Grace</i>, Jerry Bridges <i>The Gospel for Real Life</i>, Jerry Bridges <i>What is the Gospel</i>, Greg Gilbert <i>Because He Loves Me</i>, Elyse Fitzpatrick <i>The Cross of Christ</i>, John Stott <i>The Power of the Cross</i>, Charles Spurgeon</p>	

*All Scripture quotations are taken from the ESV