

THE PRACTICE OF RELIGION

I obey - therefore I'm accepted.

Motivation is based on fear and insecurity.

When circumstances in my life go wrong, I am angry at God or myself, since I believe, that anyone who is good deserves a comfortable life.

When I am criticized I am upset because it is critical that I think of myself as a 'good person'. Threats to that self-image must be avoided at all costs.

My prayer life consists largely of requests and it only heats up when I am in a time of need. My main purpose in prayer is control of my 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 insecure and inadequate. I'm not confident and 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 look down on those I perceive as lazy or immoral.

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 PERSON OF JESUS

I'm accepted - therefore I obey.

Motivation is based on grateful joy.

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 performance but on God's love for me in Christ.

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 myself as a moral achiever. In Christ, I am simultaneously sinful and yet accepted. I am so bad he had to die for me and I am so loved he was glad to do it. This leads me to deeper humility and confidence at the same time.

My identity and self-worth are centered on the one who died for me. I am saved by sheer grace. So I can't look down on those who believe or behave differently. Only by grace, I am what I am.

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.