

The Gospel - Faith, Promises & Motives

Let us consider the **relation of faith to sanctification**. As we have seen, sanctification is that work of God conforming us into the image of Christ progressively over time. We have noted that it is a **cooperative process** where we are also called to **exert effort** and **diligence** to see it come to fruition. **God works in sanctification and we work**. It is an ongoing **cooperative process**. God's work is primary and **our effort is secondary**. Therefore we are called to **God-dependent effort** throughout the New Testament. Now what we mean by God dependent effort is that we are dependent on God's power to give us the **necessary energy** and **divine enablement** to both forsake the old nature of sin and also to exercise the virtues of the new nature within us by the Holy Spirit. As we **look to God in faith** in seeking these virtues, and seek the **filling** of the **Holy Spirit**, we receive power from God both to put off the old nature and to put on the new. This calling to exert effort is what we call **imperatives**. They are commandments, **exhortations** and **admonitions** to obedience.

This **dependence** of looking to God for His power is **an exercise of our faith** in God's promises to lead us, guide, us and fulfill His good work in us and through us. And this faith is **belief in God's Word** and **based** upon the grace that God has shown us in Christ, through His good work in the Gospel, and the **sufficient grace for us to persevere in faith** to the end of our life that is our possession because of Christ. Not only has God promised that we are now justified by grace, through faith in Christ alone, but He has promised to fulfill His good work of **sanctification** in us causing us to **bear His image** in greater degree over time until the Day of Christ when we are finally glorified.

Philippians 1:6 – 6 For I am confident of this very thing, that **He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus**. NASB

1 Peter 1:3-5 - 3 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. NASB

These **promises** to us are what we call **indicatives**. They *indicate* to us all of God's promises that are ours because of Christ and are also sometimes expressed as **warnings** and warnings with consequences. So we believe the powerful Word of God with all of its promises and warnings to us (**indicatives**), and we seek to obey its exhortations and admonitions to us (**imperatives**).

Imperatives always grounded in Indicatives

In believing the Gospel, we have been justified by grace, through faith in Christ alone. This justification we could not have achieved by legal obedience to the Law because all have sinned. He has merited God's favor for us, we have laid hold of it by faith, and Christ's life, death and resurrection have sufficiently covered all of our sins and provided perfect righteousness for us, reconciling us to God so that he has adopted us into His family as His own children, having caused us to be born again by the Holy Spirit resulting in eternal life (Rom 3:21-28, 5:8-10, 5:19-21, 6:23, 1 Cor 1:30, Eph 2:5-9, Col 1:21-22, 2:13-14, 1 Pet 1:3-5). These are the **indicatives** which indicate the fullness of the grace that we now stand in. Nevertheless, in the Gospel we have **imperatives** from Christ to repent of our sins, to trust in Him and believe Him fully for righteousness, and to go and sin no more, pursuing a life pleasing to God which expresses both love toward God and love toward our neighbor. These are the **imperatives** that are non-negotiable exhortations and admonitions to become in practically who we already are in