

Summary

- a) This session is the fourth of ten sessions that looks at a vital principle that fosters Spirit-led living.
- b) The fourth principle that we will examine is this: To live in victory, you must live from victory—the victory Christ won for you through His crucifixion and resurrection.
- c) To live in victory, you must live from your legal position in Christ, confident God sees you righteous, crucified, resurrected, ascended, enthroned, and victorious.

Reigning By Divine Life

- a) Romans 5:17 states, “For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.”
- b) Examining the phrase “reign in life,” the word *in* could be translated *in*, *by*, or *with*. The KJV translates this Greek word as *in* 1,902 times, as *by* 163 times, and as *with* 140 times. The context determines the best way to translate it.
- c) Since the word *life* is *zoe*—divine life—a better translation, in my opinion, is “will reign *by* life through the One, Jesus Christ.”
- d) In other words, if you receive an abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness, you will reign as a king by divine life through Christ in you. You will live in victory when you live from victory.

Cooper Kupp’s Vision

- a) After the Los Angeles Rams defeated the Cincinnati Bengals 23-20 in Super Bowl LVI, Rams wide receiver Cooper Kupp was named the game’s most valuable player (MVP).
- b) In an interview following the game, Kupp described an extraordinary vision he received three years prior, after the Patriots defeated the Rams in the 2019 Super Bowl, in which the Lord revealed to Kupp the Rams would make it to a future Super Bowl and he would be the MVP.
- c) “I don’t know what it was,” Kupp said. “There was just this vision that God revealed to me that we were going to come back; we were going to be a part of a Super Bowl. We were going to win it. And somehow—somehow I was going to walk off the field as the MVP of the game.”
- d) Kupp only shared this vision with his wife, likely not wanting to appear crazy just in case it didn’t come to pass.
- e) Nevertheless, this vision enabled Kupp to play each game loose and relaxed, confident in the Lord’s promise of victory and success.
- f) “It was written already, and I just got to play free, knowing that I got to play from victory, not for victory,” he said. “I got to play in a place where I was validated not from anything that happened on the field but because of my worth in God, in my Father.”

Victory in the Finished Work of the Cross

- a) Playing *from* victory not *for* victory was a key to Kupp’s success. And it’s a key to your success as well. Not in football, of course, but in living by Christ’s indwelling life.
- b) To live in victory, you must live *from* victory—the victory Christ won for you through His crucifixion and resurrection.

- c) To live in victory, you must live from your legal position in Christ, confident God sees you righteous, crucified, resurrected, ascended, enthroned, and victorious.
- d) Conversely, the quickest way to defeat is to live for victory rather than from victory. Living this way shifts all the focus away from Christ to you—how well you perform, conform, measure up, comply with God’s righteous requirements, and live the Christian life.
- e) If you have ever lived this way, you know it’s a recipe for burnout and resounding defeat.
- f) This in mind, I want to explain how to live from victory in the finished work of the cross. This includes receiving imputed righteousness and experiencing justification by faith.
- g) Both of these precious gifts of grace enable you to live from victory rather than for victory. To live from love rather than for love. To live from acceptance rather than for acceptance. And to live from righteousness rather than for righteousness.
- h) This brings me to the fourth law of the Spirit-led life: To live in victory, you must live from victory—the victory Christ won for you through His crucifixion and resurrection.

Reigning By Divine Life

- a) Back to Romans 5:17, you are called to reign as a king by divine life. That said, think about some of the issues that cause you to be defeated. It may be:
 - Pride;
 - Lust;
 - Anger;
 - Bitterness;
 - Anxiety;
 - Depression;
 - Bitterness;
 - Insecurity;
 - Rejection.
- b) You are called to overcome all of these through living by divine life.
- c) You are called to reign in life—or to live in victory—through living by divine life. However, as Romans 5:17 states, this hinges upon you receiving the gift of imputed righteousness.

Your Legal Position in Christ

- a) Jesus said, “In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you” (John 14:20).
- b) You in Christ is your legal position. Christ in you is your living condition.
- c) Paul said, “But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Cor. 1:30).

- d) Later in the same book, he said, “For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:12-13).
- e) Jesus is your New Covenant representative, you are in Christ by God’s doing, and the Holy Spirit has baptized you into Christ’s body. This means whatever is true of Christ is imputed to you.
- f) As a result, you are reckoned to be righteous, crucified, dead, buried, resurrected, ascended, and enthroned in Christ (see 2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 6:3-6; Col. 3:1; Eph. 2:6).
- g) You are reckoned to be dead to sin, to self, and to the Law (see 2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 6:11; Gal. 2:20; Rom. 7:4).
- h) You are reckoned to be seated with Christ in heavenly places and are an overcomer (see Eph. 2:6; Rom. 8:37).
- i) This is your legal position because of the finished work of the cross and is the basis for all of God’s dealings with you. Paul detailed this concept of imputation in Romans 4-7.
- j) If you want to learn more about your legal position in Christ, here’s a link to an online article I wrote. <https://thectp.s3.amazonaws.com/lifeschool/Books/IndwellingLife/Articles/YourLegalPosition.pdf>

Imputed Righteousness

- a) Back to Romans 5:17, here’s the idea Paul had in mind. Christ’s impeccable righteousness, stemming from His divine nature and perfect obedience to the law as a Man, has been imputed to all who are in Him.
- b) This means you are declared righteous, not by what you do or how well you obey, but because of Jesus Christ’s flawless obedience.
- c) Because you are in Christ, His righteousness is imputed to you. Therefore, you are reckoned to be righteous in Jesus Christ before the Supreme Court of heaven and God the righteous judge.
- d) Paul said, “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21).
- e) While on the cross, your sins, my sins—the sins of the entire world from the garden to the end of the age—were imputed to Christ.
- f) As result, Christ became sin even though He was sinless, and the Father dealt with Christ as if He were a depraved sinner, even though He was perfectly innocent.
- g) The punishment, wrath, and condemnation you deserved was unleashed upon Jesus Christ. Now, in Christ, God reckons your sins already punished, judged, and condemned (see Rom. 3:25; 8:1-3).
- h) But it doesn’t end there. Jesus Christ’s perfect righteousness is also imputed to you, and as a result, a holy God now deals with you as if you have impeccable obedience to His commandments, even though you don’t.
- i) Since the concept of imputation is foreign to many believers and because it is vital to living from victory, let me take a few minutes to explain imputation in more detail.

What Does Impute Mean?

- a) If you want to understand the gospel, what it means to be included in Christ's death and resurrection, and how to live by Christ's indwelling life, you really need to grasp the concept of imputation.
- b) The word impute means "to attribute or ascribe to a person; to assign as a characteristic; to credit to one's account; or to reckon something as belonging to someone."
- c) Legally it means to place responsibility or blame on one person for acts committed by another because of a particular relationship, such as a mother to a child, a guardian to a ward, an employer to an employee, or a business associate to a business associate.
- d) For example, a child's negligence in driving a car without a license may be imputed to the parent. Did the parent drive the car without a license? No. But in a court of law, because of the parent's relationship to the child, the child's offense is imputed to the parent, so the parent is treated by the judge as if they drove without a license.
- e) To impute can also mean attributing knowledge to a person because of their relationship to one who actually possesses the information. For example, if one partner in a business is informed of something, from a legal perspective, that knowledge is imputed to the other partners, preventing them from claiming ignorance before a court of law. Even if no other business partner truly knows the secret information, the judge imputes the knowledge of the one business partner to all the business partners, reckoning them all informed about a particular subject.
- f) In addition to these modern-day examples, Scripture also contains numerous accounts of the Lord dealing with humanity by imputing the actions of a leader to those they represent.
- g) To begin, Adam's sin was imputed to the entire human race, making every person a sinner because of the actions of their representative in the first covenant (see Hosea 6:7; Rom. 5:15-19).
- h) In addition, Abraham's tithe to Melchizedek was imputed to Levi, so Levi was reckoned to have paid tithes to Melchizedek in Abraham—even though Levi was not born until many years later (see Heb. 7:9).
- i) Another example is when Achan stole some Jericho treasure, which by God's decree had been devoted to destruction. Consequently, in God's eyes, it wasn't just Achan who sinned, for the Lord said, "the sons of Israel acted unfaithfully" and "Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them" (Josh. 7:1, 11). The Lord imputed Achan's sin to the entire nation, and as a result, Israel was reckoned to have broken the covenant and sinned against God in Achan.
- j) Finally, we have the ultimate of example of imputation, when the Father imputed the sins of everyone, from the garden to the end of the age, to Christ the sinless Lamb, who then became sin (see 2 Cor. 5:21).
- k) Because Jesus experienced the punishment, wrath, and condemnation we deserved, God reckons our sins punished, judged, and condemned on the cross (see Rom. 3:25; Rom. 8:1-3).
- l) As a result, the Father imputes the righteousness of Christ to all who put their faith in Him, crediting righteousness to their spiritual bank account and making us legally righteous before the Supreme Court of heaven (see Rom. 4:3-5; 4:22-24; 5:12-21).

The Imputation Chapter

- a) If you have ever read Romans 4, you probably noticed the concept of imputation leaping off the pages. It seems Paul described imputation in each verse. That's why I call Romans 4 the Imputation Chapter.
- b) The idea of imputation did not originate in the New Testament, however. It started all the way back with Abraham. Paul said,

For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS." Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness. (Rom. 4:2-5)

- c) In this passage, Paul quoted Genesis 15:6, when Abraham believed God and God therefore credited righteousness to his account. Paul wanted his readers to know God justifies the ungodly by faith in the New Testament just like He did in the Old Testament.
- d) To better understand how God credits righteousness to your account, let's look at the Hebrew word for credit in Genesis 15:6. This word is *chashab*, and it means "to charge, impute, reckon, to be accounted, to be considered."
- e) Now let's look at the Greek word for credit in Romans 4:3. This word is *logizomai* and has a similar definition as *chashab*, meaning "to reckon, count, compute, calculate, count over, to pass to one's account, to impute."
- f) *Vine's Expository Dictionary* states this word primarily signifies "to reckon," whether by calculation or imputation.
- g) *Logizomai* was so important to Paul's articulation of the gospel he used it nineteen times in the book of Romans—eleven times in Romans 4 alone. That's why I call Romans 4 the Imputation Chapter.

An Example of Imputation

- a) From both the Hebrew and the Greek words for credit, you have the concept of crediting to one's account either by calculation or imputation. Thus, you have a financial analogy (to credit) and a legal analogy (to impute). Since we just looked at a few legal examples of impute, let me give a financial example of crediting.
- b) Let's say I will go into foreclosure if I don't make my next mortgage payment of \$2,000. The problem is I have only \$100 in my bank account. Wouldn't you agree I have a real problem?
- c) Suppose my dad has \$100,000 in his bank account and agrees to make the payment for me. He pays the mortgage company directly, but my loan is reckoned to have been paid by me. Did I pay the loan? Of course not! My generous dad did. But to the mortgage company, it does not matter who paid the mortgage. It only matters \$2,000 was credited to my mortgage account as if I paid it myself.
- d) If you think about it, money can be credited to your account either as wages you earn or as a gift you receive.
- e) When you are employed, your wages are credited to you by your employer as a right, a debt, and an obligation, for you earned your payment by the work you performed.
- f) The gift of righteousness, on the other hand, is entirely different, for it is not based upon your right doing or right being but solely upon the perfect righteousness of Christ.
- g) Thus, the gift of imputed righteousness is an unearned, unmerited gift of grace, not given to those who work and attempt to be justified by obedience, but rather to those who put their faith in the One who justifies the ungodly.
- h) Whether you understand the gift of righteousness through the financial imagery of crediting or through the legal imagery of imputing, both mean to reckon something as belonging to someone, whether it's money, status, innocence, or guilt.

The Gift of Imputed Righteousness and Sanctification

- a) When God imputes righteousness to you, it doesn't mean you are made righteous.
- b) You are not transformed and conformed into the image of Christ instantly through this gift. Instead, you are reckoned, or counted or considered, to be righteous and treated as if you are righteous in the Supreme Court of heaven. This ensures you spend eternity in heaven rather than in hell.
- c) Unlike the gift of imputed righteousness, which gives you a new righteous status, you are made righteous through the lifelong process of sanctification. This produces a righteous nature in you.
- d) And as you saw in session 9, one-third of your being has already been sanctified. At new birth, your spirit was instantly made righteous, conformed into Christ's image and likeness.
- e) Now the Spirit is focused on making your soul and body righteous. He is jealous to conform your mind, will, emotions, and body into Christ's image and likeness. This lifelong process of sanctification is accomplished by the Spirit's transforming grace and the power of His Word.
- f) But here's the good news for you. The gift of imputed righteousness covers you legally as you become righteous in your heart, soul, and body.
- g) Back to Romans 4, Paul made two things clear. First, God does not impute sin to those in Christ, although it's part of your fallen nature (see Rom. 4:7-8). And second, God imputes righteousness to you, as He did to Abraham, although you are actually unrighteous in many ways.
- h) This gift of imputed righteousness is not based upon your obedience to God's Word. It is based entirely upon faith in the finished work of the cross and is solely a free gift of God's unmerited and unearned grace.
- i) Thus, you are not righteous because of what you do right but because of what Jesus has done right. Nor are you righteous because you are good but rather because Jesus is good. This is what makes the gospel such good news.

Justification By Faith

- a) Because the righteousness of Christ has been imputed to you, you are justified by faith in the finished work of the cross.
- b) Paul said, "The free gift [the gift of imputed righteousness] arose from many transgressions resulting in justification" (Rom. 5:16).
- c) In short, imputed righteousness results in justification. But what, exactly, is justification?
- d) Justification is a judicial pronouncement that one is innocent, or just, in a matter and is therefore acquitted from every charge, accusation, and punishment.
- e) Think of justification as the opposite of condemnation. When a judge pronounces condemnation, the condemned is deemed guilty of a crime, or unjust act, and is sentenced to some form of punishment, whether time in jail, the revoking of a privilege, or community service.
- f) Justification, on the other hand, means a judge reviewed a case carefully, found the accused innocent, pronounced a verdict of not guilty, and set the prisoner free.
- g) Justification is different from a pardon. Where a pardon removes a deserved penalty or debt, justification goes a step further and bestows a righteous status.
- h) Pardon says to the guilty, "You may go free; you have been released from the penalty your sin deserves."

- i) Justification, on the other hand, says, “You may go free, for you are righteous in the matter in which you were accused.”
- j) Pardon is the remission of a deserved punishment; justification is the declaration that no ground for punishment exists. Thus, justification involves two components: The declaration of righteousness and the release from the guilt or penalty of punishment.
- k) Justification not only differs from pardon but also from sanctification. To justify is to declare or to pronounce righteous, not to make righteous. Sanctification is to make righteous.
- l) Put a little differently, justification gives you a new status, while sanctification gives you a new nature. Every justified believer has been regenerated and is now progressing down the road of sanctification.
- m) Simply put, justification makes you as if you had never sinned.

Justification Precedes Obedience

- a) God gave Abraham a commandment—not an option or a suggestion but a firm directive from heaven that “every male among you shall be circumcised” (Gen. 17:10).
- b) The answers to the following questions are crucial and cannot be overstated:
 - Was Abraham required to obey this commandment to be right with God or did he obey because he was already right with God?
 - Was Abraham obligated to keep this commandment to be justified or because he was already justified?
- c) Many people, including numerous Christians, are trying to obey their way into heaven or into favor with God. They believe if they obey God then they will be made righteous, then they will inherit eternal life, then they will go to heaven, then they will receive blessings, then they will be loved and accepted, then they will experience victory.
- d) But let me ask you a question. Does your obedience *precede* your faith or *proceed* from your faith? Stated another way, what comes first: Obedience or faith? The difference between the two is the difference between living under the law and living under grace. Let me explain.
- e) Obedience before faith is what Paul termed the “works of the Law” (Rom. 3:20). This type of obedience severs you from Christ, nullifies grace, and places you under a curse (see Gal. 3:10; 5:4).
- f) This is why your obedience must proceed from your faith rather than precede your faith. This was so vital to Paul he made “the obedience of faith” one of his ministry goals (Rom. 1:5).
- g) Simply put, you don’t obey God to be justified but because you are justified.

Obedience and Faith

- a) Hear what Paul said about Abraham’s faith and his subsequent obedience: “And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised” (Rom. 4:11, emphasis mine).
- b) Abraham’s obedience was a sign and a seal of the righteousness God already imputed to him. Abraham obeyed because he was justified not to be justified. Abraham’s obedience was a sign he already received the gift of imputed righteousness by faith.
- c) Therefore, Abraham’s obedience demonstrated his prior justification. This in mind, consider some differences between obedience preceding faith and obedience proceeding from faith.

d) Obedience preceding faith is done:

- To gain God's approval,
- To become righteous,
- For acceptance,
- For favor,
- To avoid condemnation,
- So God will love you,
- And to prove your love for God.

e) Obedience proceeding from faith, on the other hand, is done:

- Because you have God's approval,
- Because you are declared righteous,
- From acceptance,
- From favor,
- Because there is now no condemnation,
- Because God loves you,
- And because you love God.

How You Obey Is Important

a) Here's a litmus test to see whether you still live under the law or you live under grace.

- Do you obey God for approval or from approval?
- Do you obey God for righteousness or from righteousness?
- Do you obey God for acceptance or from acceptance?
- Do you obey God for favor or from favor?
- Do you obey God for love or from love?
- Do you obey to prove your love for God or because you love Him?
- Do you obey to avoid condemnation or because there is now no condemnation?

b) Obeying for versus obeying from is the difference between living in bondage to the law and living in liberty by grace.

c) Many Christians who have been saved for years are still trying to:

- Gain God’s approval,
 - Achieve righteousness,
 - Feel accepted,
 - Obtain favor,
 - Avoid condemnation,
 - And prove their love for God by what they do for Him.
- d) They try their best to be good and do good.
- e) They attempt to achieve grace rather than receive grace.
- f) They strive to prove their love for God rather than resting in what Christ has already finished for them.
- g) This only demonstrates they lack real revelation of the finished work of the cross, the gift of imputed righteousness, and the power of justification.

Imputed Righteousness Is Not Elementary

- a) Some Christians who have been saved for decades look at imputed righteousness and justification by faith as elementary teachings, only relevant to new converts.
- b) They don’t view these two truths as the bedrock of the gospel, upon which everything is built.
- c) This was not the case for Paul, however, who toward the end of his life—after planting numerous churches, writing much of the New Testament, performing awe-inspiring miracles, and suffering immensely for Christ—still clung to the precious truths of imputed righteousness and justification by faith (see Phil. 3:9).
- d) If you don’t get imputed righteousness and justification by faith correct, everything you build will be crooked, shaky, and will eventually crumble.
- e) The only kind of obedience which pleases God is an obedience proceeding from justification. This is a grace-empowered, affection-based obedience, stemming from simple faith in Jesus and a deep revelation of the finished work of the cross.
- f) Make no mistake about it—no act of obedience can give you a right standing with God. Whether you pray or play, fast or feast, read the Bible or watch TV, go to church or sleep in, your obedience cannot justify you.
- g) No matter how noble and righteous your devotion appears. The only way for you to be justified is by faith in Jesus Christ and the finished work of the cross.
- h) When you are truly justified by faith, however, obedience will be the natural result. Just like an apple tree naturally produces apples and an orange tree naturally produces oranges, you will obey God’s commandments naturally after you have been justified by faith alone.
- i) As Abraham’s obedience proved his faith was genuine, your obedience proves your faith in Jesus and His finished work is genuine.
- j) Your obedience certifies you have been justified.
- k) Your obedience validates the authenticity of your faith.

- l) Therefore, if you are not progressively laying down your life in sacrificial obedience to God's Word and voice, it's possible you don't have saving faith at all (see James 2:14).

The Power of Christ's Blood

- a) Not only does imputed righteousness and justification by faith empower you to live from victory rather than for victory, but the power of Christ's blood is also essential for an overcoming life.
- b) Revelation 12:11 states, "They overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb."
- c) Studying the New Testament, you discover at least four ways the blood of Christ empowers you to overcome. Specifically, the blood of Christ: (1) cleanses your conscience, (2) delivers you from dead works, (3) enables you to draw near to God, and (4) gives you victory over the devil's accusations.
- d) Let's look more closely at these four ways the blood of Christ helps you live from a position of victory.

Martin Luther's Discovery

- a) Eric Metaxas wrote a great book called *Martin Luther: The Man Who Rediscovered God and Changed the World* that tells the story of Luther's infamous confessionals.
- b) Prior to the Reformation, the church lacked revelation of justification by faith and the power of Christ's blood. Therefore, everyone struggled immensely with guilt, shame, and condemnation. Luther certainly battled a constant guilty feeling for the smallest of sins.
- c) Metaxas tells the story of one of Luther's confessionals in which he spent six hours confessing every sin he could fathom.
- d) He even confessed his pride for not having sins to confess, a bad thought he had about one of his brethren, his impatience earlier in the day, and a poor attitude during prayer.
- e) Not only was Luther haunted by an overly sensitive conscience, he also drove the priest who heard his confessions crazy.
- f) When Luther received a revelation of justification by faith, the truth delivered him from the obsessive compulsive need to confess the slightest tinge of every wrong.
- g) When Luther realized what Christ finished for him on the cross was enough, it liberated him—and later, much of Europe—from the bondage of sin and brought many into the freedom found in Jesus Christ.
- h) This revelation of justification by faith launched the Reformation, which reshaped Europe and even led to the birth of America.
- i) Just as Luther was liberated from the bondage and torment of a conscience plagued by guilt, shame, and condemnation when he discovered justification by faith and the power of Christ's blood, we too need an eye-opening revelation that the blood of Jesus Christ is enough.
- j) Understanding this truth cleanses your conscience deeply from your past and an overly obsessive focus on sin—what some call sin consciousness.

A Cleansed Conscience

- a) Hebrews 9:13-14 states, "For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

- b) Your soul's conscience, when muddied by guilt, shame, and condemnation, hinders you from serving, worshiping, and communing with God in your spirit.
- c) It also causes you to live by the principle of right and wrong rather than the principle of life. As a result, you live for God rather than from God. We will talk about this in a later session.
- d) To live by Christ's indwelling life, divine order of spirit first, soul second, and body third is essential.
- e) But when your conscience is tormented by guilt, shame, and condemnation, it hinders God's divine order within you. Like pain in your body, directing your entire focus to the pain point, guilt, shame, and condemnation shift your mind away from Jesus to yourself and all you have done wrong.
- f) This is why your conscience must be cleansed by Christ's blood. As Watchmen Nee said, "The blood has satisfied God; it must satisfy us also. It has . . . value that is manward in the cleansing of our conscience."

The Blood of Christ Atones

- a) The blood of Jesus Christ is at the heart of the atonement, providing forgiveness of sins, justification, redemption, reconciliation, access to the presence of God, a cleansed conscience, and victory over the devil's accusations.
- b) The shed blood of Jesus Christ restores you to God's ultimate intention of eternal fellowship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- c) When Jesus—the eternal, uncreated, fully divine Son of God—became a Man and died on the cross, His perfect blood fully satisfied God.
- d) Through Jesus' work on the cross, God satisfied Himself by substituting Himself for us. Jesus died as our substitute, and His sacrifice completely satisfied the Father.
- e) The blood Jesus shed on the cross has thoroughly atoned for your sins.
- f) As your substitute, Jesus sacrificed Himself by shedding His blood, and His perfect blood thoroughly cleanses your conscience from guilt, shame, and condemnation.
- g) Perhaps you have a deep, dark past. Maybe you have been entangled in sexual sin. Or you suffered abuse for years, struggle with an addiction, or are suffocating under the weight of anxiety and depression. Maybe you hate yourself and wish you had never been born.
- h) Whatever you wrestle with, to quote Louie Giglio, "Don't let the enemy define you by your scars when Jesus wants to define you by His."
- i) Let the perfect blood of Jesus Christ, shed for your atonement and redemption, cleanse your conscience from guilt and condemnation.
- j) Don't be defined by what was done to you or by you, but by what was done for you.
- k) Let Jesus' finished work establish your identity. Let His precious blood cleanse you thoroughly of all the shame you have carried. Let His precious blood wash you clean of guilt and the scars from your past. Let His blood cleanse your conscience completely.

Delivered from Dead Works

- a) If you desire to serve, worship, and commune with God through your spirit, your conscience must first be cleansed by the blood of Christ from dead works. What, exactly, are dead works?
- b) Dead works are anything you do from the power of the soul, using the mind, will, emotions, and five senses to appease a guilty conscience.

- c) Like Cain, who used the work of his hands and the power of his soul to offer an unwelcomed sacrifice to the Lord, many Christians today are still following in the way of Cain (see Jude 1:11).
- d) They are serving the Lord with their natural gifts, talents, strengths, influence, and resources, working hard in the power of their soul to try and please God. Why? Often, it's because their soul's conscience has not been thoroughly cleansed by the blood of Christ, liberating them from guilt, shame, condemnation, and self-righteousness.
- e) Whatever you do for God rather than from God is a dead work.
- f) From the Lord's perspective, a dead work can be what you consider a good work. It can even be prayer, fasting, evangelism, missions, acts of justice, worship, giving, and Bible study.
- g) The Lord doesn't look at what's done, even if it's a good work. Rather, He examines the source. Did this work originate from the spirit by the Spirit or from the soul by the mind, will, and emotions? Did this work stem from the principle of right and wrong or from the principle of life?
- h) When your conscience is plagued and haunted by guilt, shame, and condemnation, you are always in performance mode, trying to please the Lord by what you do rather than by what Christ did.
- i) You are always trying to do something for God in the power of the soul rather than working from the spirit by the Spirit.
- j) Guilt, shame, and condemnation keep you on a religious treadmill, always running but going nowhere.

Drawing Near to God

- a) A conscience muddied with guilt, shame, and condemnation always hinders your ability to commune with the Lord spirit to Spirit.
- b) Hebrews 10:22 states, "Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience." Your ability to draw near to the Lord in worship and intimacy is directly affected by an evil conscience.
- c) What does it mean to have an evil conscience? Most likely, this refers to a conscience damaged by the effects of sin. A conscience tormented by guilt, shame, and condemnation, keeping one in an endless cycle of sinning and repenting without breakthrough.
- d) To draw near to the Lord and commune with Him intimately, your conscience must be thoroughly cleansed by the precious blood of Christ, knowing the Lord is for you and not against you. He is the one who justifies you. He is not sitting up in heaven, waiting to condemn you for every mistake you make. Jesus died for you so you can enjoy Him forever.
- e) To draw near to the Lord, you can't have the slightest hint of accusation in your conscience. You must have full assurance of faith, knowing the blood of Christ has entirely atoned for every one of your sins.
- f) "Who will bring a charge against God's elect," asked Paul, for "God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ?" (Rom. 8:33-35).
- g) The slightest offense in your conscience can torment you with accusations, hindering you from communing with the Lord.
- h) When you experience this, your entire focus shifts away from Jesus to yourself. Your number one goal becomes eliminating the condemnation you feel, usually by some type of dead work. This is why you need the blood of Christ to thoroughly cleanse your conscience.

Overcoming the Devil's Accusations

- a) When your conscience is tormented by guilt, shame, and condemnation, accusations fly into your mind, like fiery arrows from the evil one, whom Scripture names the accuser of the brethren (see Rev. 12:10).
- b) If your conscience has not been thoroughly cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ, you have a bull's-eye on your chest for the accuser's fiery arrows of accusation.
- c) When these arrows hit you, it clouds your spirit's intuition, making it impossible to draw near to the Lord and fellowship with Him.
- d) Of course, if your conscience is haunted by accusations based in truth, then you need to repent. If you are living in sin and experience guilt, shame, and condemnation, then you need to confess your sins, turn from sin, and ask for the blood of Christ to cleanse you.
- e) But I'm not referring to this dynamic now. I'm focused on what Luther experienced—an obsessive focus on your sins, distracting you from the Lord, making your life miserable, and hindering your ability to experience intimacy with Christ.
- f) When the devil's accusations rail against you, when he shouts in your ear, "You are a hopeless hypocrite; you will never amount to anything; you are a sinner; you will never please God," raise up the only weapon that can defeat Him—the precious blood of Jesus Christ.
- g) Instead of allowing the devil to accuse you, take a stand against him. Say out loud to the enemy, "You are a liar. The blood of Jesus Christ has defeated you and has fully cleansed me. Depart from me devil. You have no authority over me."
- h) You overcome the accuser and his relentless accusations against you by the shed blood of Jesus Christ (see Rev. 12:10).