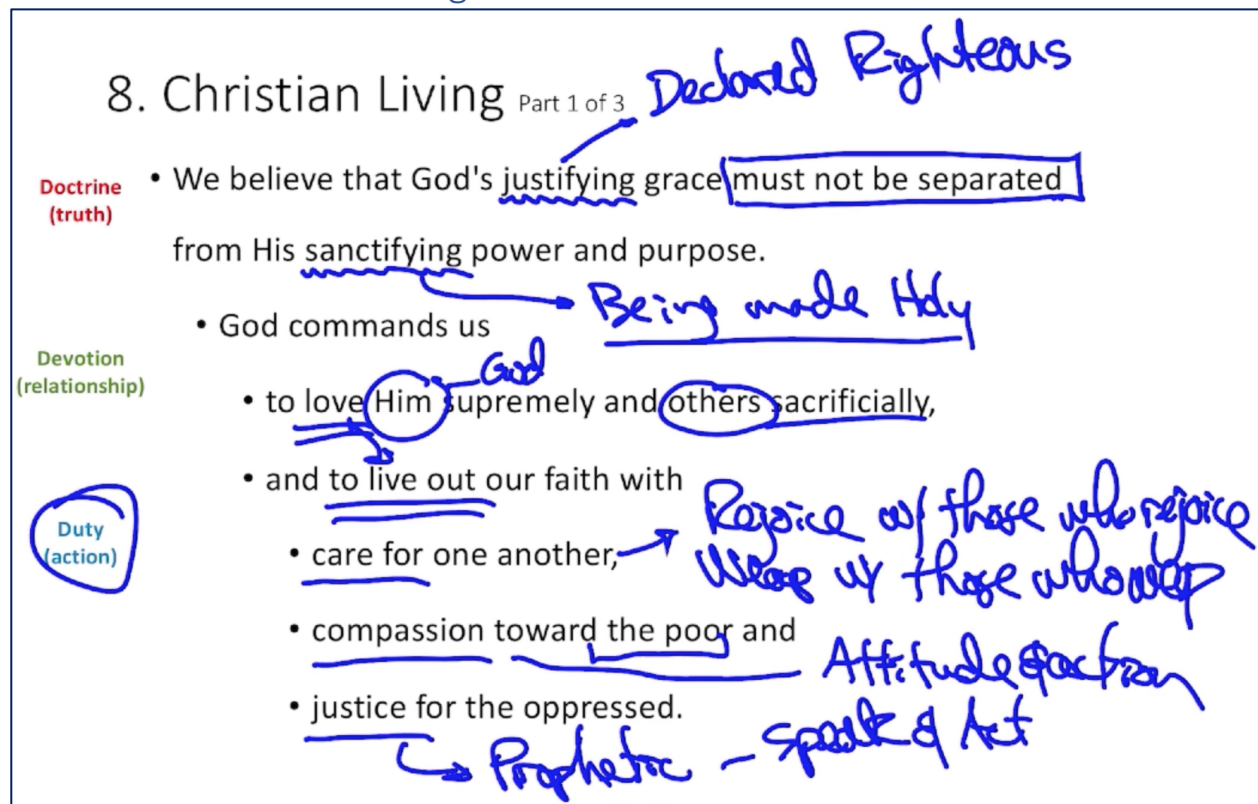


Doctrine 8: Christian Living



So we come to the section of our doctrine that relates especially to duty, to our behavior.

A core belief is that there are two aspects of our Christian life which must not be separated, and those two aspects are expressed with these religious words of justifying and sanctifying.

Justifying grace is the action of God that we would be declared righteous. We are declared to be seen by God in the holiness and the righteousness of Christ. And this is an action that He does, that is once for all. And our status changes from being an enemy of God to being, not only a friend of God, but being a child of God once for all.

And then the other is **sanctifying**. And this is being made holy. This is growing in the righteousness that is declared to be ours. And so one happens instantly and is true forever, and the other is a process that one day will be completed, when we see God face to face. But until then, we're on a journey.

And so the conviction is that these two things **must not be separated**. We can't say, "Well, it's wonderful that we have experienced justification. And sanctification? Well, you know, eventually that might happen." The pursuit of being sanctified, of being made holy aside from being declared righteous, is a problematic path as well. So we unite the two.

So what does it look like to be on this process of being made holy? Well, there are three categories of commands that we will look at. The first is to love. And given that God is love, it makes sense that Christian living would be expressed as love. We are to love Him, that is that we are **to love God** and we are to love others. We are to love God with all that we are.

And we are **to love others** as ourselves, and especially, **sacrificially**. To love others as ourselves is to bring others into the experience of who we are, and so, as we would love ourselves, we love others, sacrificing our own good for their good. A key thing is that love in a Christian sense is action. So this love is to be lived out. We are to put our faith into action, to put our love into action.

What does that look like? Well, three things in that are highlighted: it's to care for one another, it's to have compassion for the poor, and justice for the oppressed. And so a key expression in the Bible of what it means to **care for other people** is to rejoice with those who rejoice and it is to weep with those who weep. So we are to rejoice and to weep together. And we're to take action in that so it is not only an awareness it's taking action, and so that action is clearly expressed in the Bible as caring for those who have need in various ways.

And so we're to have **compassion toward the poor**, and this is both attitude and action. We aren't to do things aside from an attitude of compassion, in humility. But we aren't just to have an attitude; we are to take action on behalf of those who have need. And the poverty that we're called to have compassion with respect to is both the literal having not enough money to meet needs, as well as the figurative poverty that people are often in, such as in relationship or emotional well-being. And so we care for the poor.

And we are to see **justice for the oppressed**. A very significant part of the Bible is the prophetic voice that calls out the things where people are not experiencing justice. We are to speak and act on behalf of those who are experiencing injustice. And so that is what it looks like, in part, to love God supremely and to love others sacrificially.

8. Christian Living Part 2 of 3

Doctrine
(truth)

• With God's Word, → Has power

• the Spirit's power, →

→ Authority

Devotion
(relationship)

• and fervent prayer in Christ's name,

↳ devoted & persevering

• we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil.

Duty
(action)

↳ Evil is real

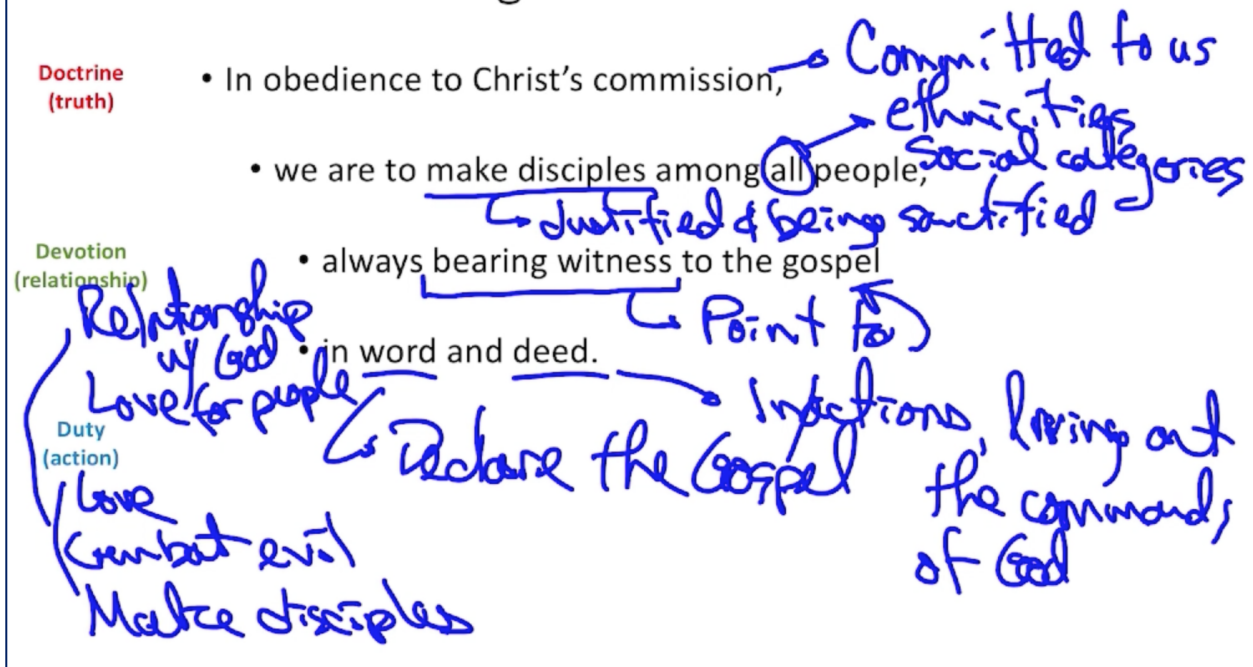
The second part of what we are to do the second command, in addition to love, is **to combat the spiritual forces of evil**. The world is not just a place of people who are doing their best. Evil is real and so we are to understand that we are living, not just among flesh and blood, but also forces that are opposed to God. And these things happen in others and they happen in us as we see sin and rebellion against God. And so we're to work against these things. And the metaphor of a battle is used in the Bible intentionally.

How do we do it? We do it **with God's Word**. We believe that God's word has power, that even as the spoken word of God brought the world into existence, the spoken Word of God brings life, and gives power against evil.

That is also expressed in the presence of the **Spirit**. And so there is again a power of presence that is in us that is greater than that which opposes God.

And a key way that we are to express this is **fervent prayer**. and so this is a devoted prayer and a persevering prayer. This is a key way that we express our belief that what we need is the power of God, the work of God. And so we pray for the Spirit's work. And this prayer is **in Christ's name**, that means in His authority, in the one who has conquered all evil. We now pray in that power. So we're to love God and others. We're to work against, to combat the spiritual forces of evil.

8. Christian Living Part 3 of 3



And the third is that we are to make disciples. And this is in **obedience to Christ's Commission**. And it is something that He has committed to us, that He has given to the church the message of reconciliation, the task of reconciliation. And so we are to **make disciples**. This is to make those who are both justified and being sanctified. And so just as justification and sanctification must not be separated, so also, what is narrowly defined as evangelism must never be separated from what can be narrowly described as discipleship. We would see discipleship as the whole process.

So we are to be active in this process and we are to do this **among all people**. And so for us, this is the conviction, that this is a work that's to be done among all ethnicities, all social categories, this is to be among all people. And in wisdom and love and humility, seeking to bring this work of God to people.

How do we do it? Well it's **bearing witness**. A key idea in the New Testament is that people are to bear witness, meaning, to point to. And what we point to is **the Gospel**, the work of Christ on our behalf, for people.

And how do we point to? Well, we point to Christ, and his work, **in word and deed**. It is necessary to declare truth. We must declare the Gospel. How can people believe in one they've not heard of? So somebody needs to tell them. We also declare this in deed, meaning, in actions. not inaction, but in actions, living out the commands of God so that people will know the reality of who God is, by seeing the life of His people.

And so we have the **duties** to love, to combat evil, and to make disciples. And it's clear how all of these things are an expression of a relationship with God, and a love for people. And that is the call for what it is to live as a Christian.