

“The Cross Chart”

“The Context of Holiness

is Justification Through Jesus Christ” – by J. I. Packer

God’s free gift of justification (the pardon and acceptance here and now through Christ’s perfect obedience culminating in his substitutionary sin-bearing for us on the cross) *is the basis on which the entire sanctifying process rests.* It is our union by the Spirit, through faith, with the Christ who died for us and whom first we trust for justification,^a that our subsequent life of holiness is lived.^b Holy people glory, not in their holiness, but in Christ’s cross: for the holiest saint is never more than a justified sinner and never sees himself in any other way. [^aRom. 3-5; ^bRom. 6-8]

John Bradford, considered by those who knew him as the saintliest of the English Reformers, constantly described himself when signing his letters as a hard-hearted sinner. One Puritan in his last illness testified: “*Never did I so feel my need of the blood of Christ—and never was I enabled to make such good use of it.*” John Wesley on his deathbed was heard to whisper: “*No way into the holiest but by the blood of Jesus.*” It looks as if Paul himself as he advanced in years, and presumably in holiness too, *grew downward* into an increasingly vivid and humbling sense of his own unworthiness: for whereas in 1 Corinthians, (c. 54 A.D.) he called himself the least of the apostles and in Ephesians (c. 61 A.D.) the very least of all the saints, in 1 Timothy (c. 65 A.D.) he describes himself as the foremost of sinners (*see* 1 Corinthians 15:9; Ephesians 3:8; 1 Timothy 1:15).

This may, of course, be reading too much into three isolated phrases; yet... it is the most natural thing in the world for a Christian at any time to see himself as the foremost of sinners, so the apostle’s phrase should cause us no surprise. Why is this a natural judgment for any Christian to pass on himself? Just because he knows the inside story of his own life—the moral defeats, hypocrisies, lapses into meanness, pride, dishonesty, envy, lust, exploitative thinking, and cowardice at motivational levels, and all the rest of his private shame—in a way that he does not know the inside story of anyone else. Increase in holiness means, among other things, an increased sensitivity to what God is, and hence a clearer estimate of one’s own sinfulness and particular shortcomings, and hence an intensified realization of one’s constant need of God’s pardoning and cleansing mercy. All growth in grace is *growth downward* in this respect.

We need, then, to remember that any ideas of self-satisfied or self-righteous holiness or of a divinely imparted righteousness that in any way reduces our need for Christ’s imputed righteousness are delusive and ungodly will-o’-the-wisps.† They are, indeed, contradictions in terms. The correct name for them is Pharisaism; they are not in any sense Christian holiness.

J. I. Packer, *Keep in Step With The Spirit*, 1984, Fleming H. Revell, Old Tappan, NJ, pp. 105-106 (italics mine).

† will-o-the-wisps— definition: foolish, unrealistic goals

THE PARADOX OF GROWTH in Holiness

An Introduction to "The Cross Chart"

Thoughts on Luke 7:36-47, I Corinthians 15:9, Ephesians 3:8 & I Timothy 1:15 (texts on next page)



OUR THESIS: As you become more holy, you will feel less holy.

1. WE THINK: "Truly mature Christians do not sin. I sin, so I am not very mature."

THE TRUTH: While it is true that more mature Christians have greater holiness, they *feel* like they are big sinners. Because they are more sensitive to the Holy Spirit, they see not only the outward *fruits* of sin, but the deep *roots* of sin in their hearts (Paul in 1 Tim. 1:15).

2. WE THINK: "I will leave sin completely to prove how much I love Jesus."

THE TRUTH: You will never stop sinning completely until you see Jesus' face in heaven.

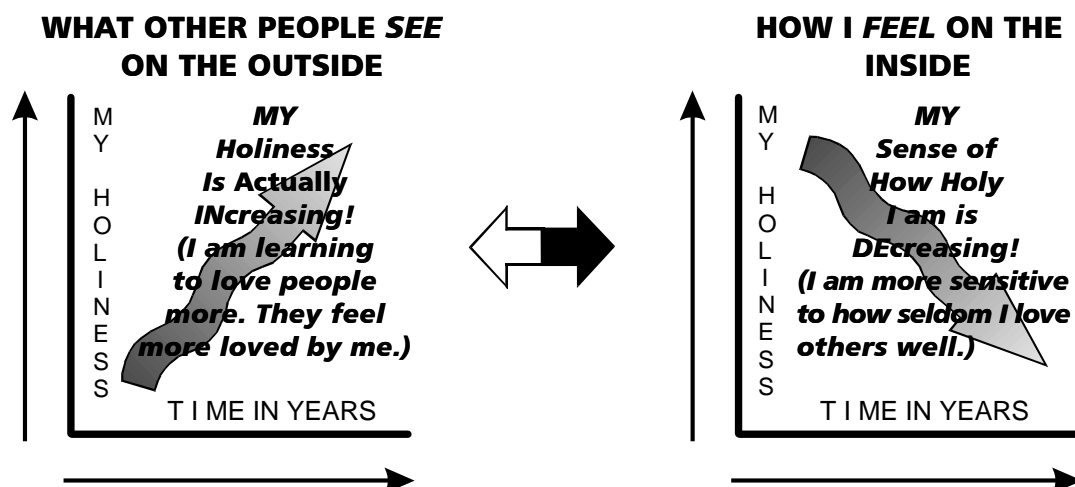
a. WE OFTEN CONFUSE the *outward results* of sanctification (visible holiness) with the *internal process* of sanctification which always includes a deepening sense of our sin and need.

b. GETTING IT STRAIGHT: Becoming holier does not equal *feeling* holier. In fact, the more holy you actually become, the *less* holy you will *feel*. (But rejoice. You *really* are maturing!)

c. "GROWTH never feels like maturity. If you think you are mature, you are not. If you think you are not, you may be, but you will be the last one to know. Growth feels like death. Are you thirsty? (Isa. 55:1-3; Jn. 7:37) Thirst will produce sanctification. The Pharisees were not thirsty. They had no needs. The Publican had nothing but need." — Dr. Dan Allender, Christian psychologist

COMPARE THESE DIAGRAMS

The True Measure of Holiness is Matthew 22:36ff — Your love for God and your neighbor.



SCRIPTURES FOR REFLECTION

Luke 7:36-47 Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, so he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume, and as she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.

When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, *"If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner."* Jesus answered him, *"Simon, I have something to tell you."* *"Tell me, teacher,"* he said.

"Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?"

Simon replied, *"I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled."* *"You have judged correctly,"* Jesus said.

Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, *"Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little."* (NIV)

THE APOSTLE PAUL'S SELF-IMAGE

1 Corinthians 15:9 *"For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God."* — c. A.D. 54

Ephesians 3:8 *"Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ..."* — c. A.D. 61

1 Timothy 1:15 *"Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst."* — c. A.D. 65 (the year of his martyrdom)

A LITTLE QUIZ

FOR YOUR COMMENT: These verses by Paul, coupled with his battles with sin reflected in Romans 7, show that: (Circle TRUE or FALSE.)

1. Paul was neurotically preoccupied with his sins and could neither forgive himself, nor believe that Jesus had completely forgiven him. **TRUE or FALSE**
2. Paul must have suffered from "a poor self-image." **TRUE or FALSE**
3. Paul had a realistic, healthy self-image. **TRUE or FALSE**
4. Paul could never forget that whatever good was in him, and all that God had accomplished through him, was due solely to God's grace and the power of the Holy Spirit—nothing else. **TRUE or FALSE**
5. When Paul tested himself by the PURE LAW OF LOVE (Matthew 22), he knew that he had failed and that he needed the cleansing blood of the interceding Christ every day of his life. **TRUE or FALSE**

But ... ISN'T ALL THIS TALK ABOUT "SEEING YOUR SIN" NEUROTIC?

"The person who thinks often of his sins, is sorry for them and repents of them is not a 'neurotic.' A neurotic is someone who endlessly repeats the same sins over and over again—but will not accept correction, or change." — Dr. C. John Miller



✠ THE CROSS CHART ✠

The Paradox of "Walking in the Light"

WHEN I am truly growing in grace, I will feel like more of a sinner, even though I will be sinning less and loving more! But, the more holy I think I am becoming, the less holy I really am!

Concepts by Richard Lovelace¹, Paul Miller² and John W. Long. Graphics by John W. Long for *SONSHIP for Africa* © 1995-1998. P.O. Box 76254 YaYa Centre, Nairobi - johnwadelong@bigfoot.com

¹ *Renewal as a Way of Life* IVP name 162. ² *Sonship USA*

THIS CHART ILLUSTRATES Jesus' Luke 7:47 Principle: "He who is forgiven much loves much, but he who is forgiven little, loves little."

The Absolute Holiness of God

This gray shaded area represents the fact that I cannot see God's holiness, so I am not "undone" by it like Isaiah was. (Isa. 6:1-5)

My New Birth!



My Time-Line

"B.C."



The Sinfulness of My Sin and the Power of My Flesh

This gray shaded area represents the way I am deceiving myself about my sin. I "walk in darkness." cf. 1 John 1:6ff

I Lower God's Standard (I insert the "Surely God can't be serious!" wedge.)

My Spiritual Blindness

A Babe

I begin to see God's holiness and my sin, and WALK IN THE LIGHT!

I see more of my deep personal and cultural sin patterns. I get tired of being such a needy sinner SO ...

My Spiritual Blindness

I Adjust My Record (I insert the "Surely I am not that big of a sinner!" wedge.)

I grow—then stop.

I see more of God's Law of Love and ...

The Gospel is just words. It is not changing me. Rather than repenting and running broken to Jesus, I try to protect my reputation. BUT, then... I Repent and Believe the Gospel... AGAIN!

WHO I TRULY AM IN CHRIST

SPRITUAL POWER!

Luke 7:47 Awareness that I'm... 1. a "BIG Sinner" leads to BIG love, 2. a "little sinner" leads to little love.

MORE PAIN- AS I SEE MY FLESH, MY SIN (FAILURE TO LOVE GOD AND OTHERS), AND MY NEED TO REPENT (Isa. 6:5; Rom. 7:24)

MORE JOY- AS I WALK IN THE LIGHT, TAKE MY SIN TO JESUS, AM CLEANSED AND EMPOWERED BY THE SPIRIT TO SIN LESS, AND LOVE MORE

MORE WONDER- AS I SEE GOD'S HOLINESS AND THE PURITY OF HIS LAW OF LOVE (Isa. 6:1-4; Gal. 6:14)

The Gospel "Flat-Lines"

AS I GROW AS A CHRISTIAN, I become more conscious of and sensitive to my sin, and more conscious of God's holiness. That is painful, but as I keep believing the gospel, the righteousness of Jesus "bridges the gap" and my conscience is cleansed. I grow as I repent and rest in my new identity in Christ (Col. 2:6; Phil. 3:9). "Cheap Grace" is talking about Jesus without daily walking with him (talk without change).

THINK OVER & DISCUSS: Every time I am exposed as a sinner, I must choose between two options:

1. I can forget the Cross of Jesus (that his blood covers all my sin) and try to make myself look righteous in the eyes of others. I can try to shift the blame, make excuses, insist that I am a "special case" (rationalize), or lie. OR, I can believe the Gospel! What does that mean? It means that...

2. In the shame of being exposed as a sinner, I remember that "Jesus died for sinners"—like me! I consciously clothe myself in Jesus. I "let the CROSS grow"—admit my sin to God and others, hate it, take it to Jesus, ask forgiveness for it, and turn from it to refocus on my new identity in Christ. I can easily identify with the sinful woman in Luke 7—just like her, I really need Jesus. **STUDY: Luke 7:36-47**

THE POINT? Spiritual growth comes as I see my sin and admit it by "letting the Cross grow bigger." The power to change flows from this faith-action.

WHY OUR EYES ARE NOT “FIXED ON JESUS”

Galatians 6:14

“May I never boast except in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, through whom I have been crucified to the world, and the world to me.”

We don't keep our eyes on Jesus because we are self-centered! So we choose to fix our eyes on our...

Hebrews 12:1-3

“...let us run the race marked out for us, *keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith... consider Him...*”

SUCCESSSES

OR

OUR

FAILURES

1. Self-reliance: “CAN DO!” (“*Hey man, I can handle this. I’m cool.*”)

2. Performance: Reputation Building—trying to make ourselves beautiful apart from Jesus’ righteousness

3. Pride In our spiritual activity—Doing many *good* things but neglecting the **FIRST** thing: “*keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus.*”

a) Prayer (for others, or for our own blessing, but not repentance for our deeper sins)

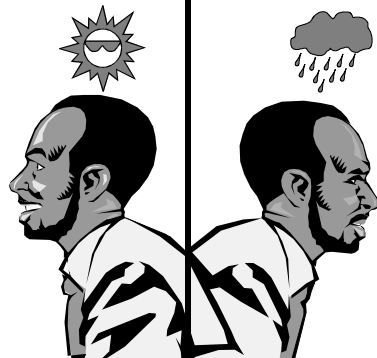
b) Bible reading (But we do it just to teach others or prove a point. Yes, we may be “*in the Word,*” but is the Word in us?)

c) Studying theology (etc.)

d) Kingdom work (busyness)

4. Comparing our successes with the failures of others of **LESS** ability

5. Penance: trying to “*atone*” for our own sins instead of admitting them and taking them to Jesus for cleansing



1. Frustrated Ego: “CAN’T DO!” (“*I can’t make life work!*” “*Things are not going my way—I’m not getting my way!*”)

a) Depression

b) Self-pity—“*Self-pity is such a wonderful virtue; it allows you to despise yourself and others at the same time.*”

– Dr. Jack Miller

c) Anger at others

d) Criticism of others

e) Worry

2. Making Excuses: Not seeing sin as sin. (“*I have a terrible record. This can’t possibly be my fault!*”)

3. Non-performance: Discouragement (“*Oh, what’s the use. I give up!*”)

4. Comparing our failures to the successes of others of **MORE** ability (“*Some people have all the luck.*”)

5. Penance: Feeling Guilty (“*dripping with guilt,*” putting ourselves down, denying ourselves good things)

Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies, who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus who died—and more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us! — Romans 8:33,34 ©1996–2002 World Harvest Mission

A ROMANS 7 “Q & A”

► Paul: A Model of Honesty Regarding His Problem With Indwelling Sin¹

What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, “Do not covet.”⁸ But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from law, sin is dead.⁹ Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died.¹⁰ I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death.¹¹ For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death.¹² So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.

¹³Did that which is good, then, become death to me? By no means! But in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it produced death in me through what was good, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.¹⁴ We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin.¹⁵ I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.¹⁶ And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good.¹⁷ As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me.¹⁸ I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.¹⁹ For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.²¹ So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me.²² For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; ²³ but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.²⁴ What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? — Romans 7:7-24

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS ON ROMANS 7 & GALATIANS 3

- 1. According to Paul, what is the value of the law for the Christian?** Look at Romans 7:13 above. **HATARI!** (Danger!) This subject is like a “mine field” with danger on the right and left. Move too far to the right and you’re a legalistic Pharisee. Move too far to the left and you’re a lawless libertine.
- 2. In Galatians 3,** Paul speaks of the law as a “schoolmaster” (Greek: παιδαγωγός - “pedagogue”) – the term for a Roman child’s personal disciplinarian (*not* tutor). What does Paul say about the law and **unbelievers**? “*But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. So, the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ so that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*” (Gal. 3:23-26) **Now**, read 1 Timothy 1:8-14. What does Paul say about our relationship to the law as **believers**? Strange language indeed! Okay... let’s walk through the mine field. Look again at Romans 7:9-11 (top of the page). Think about it: Paul is telling us about a schoolmaster who kills all of his students! Who is he? The _____.
- 3. How does the fact that “faith has come”** affect our relationship to the law? (Gal. 3:25) In what sense are we free? Does Paul mean that since we are “no longer under a schoolmaster” that we are free to break the law? (Before you answer, review S4 pages 7, 8, and look at the picture on page S6-9.)
- 4. How does the fact that “faith has come”** affect our *ability* to bear the spiritual fruit that the law could not produce? See Romans 8:3! How does Jesus help us keep the law? (See Gal. 5:22 and Gal. 3:1-5)
- 5. Does Romans 7:20** mean that we are not responsible when we sin? If *not*, what *does* it mean?
- 6. How can we reconcile what Paul says** about himself in 7:20-24 (above) with his glowing affirmation in Philippians 4:13 that “*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me*”?
- 7. Paul ends Romans 7:** “*Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!*” (vs. 25a) But, then adds: “*So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God’s law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.*” Is Paul saying that we will never have any victory over our sins in this life? If not, what *does* he mean? **And, how does Paul’s struggle with his sins compare with your daily experience?**



¹ Once, as I was about to teach a class of 45 pastors at a theological school in Kenya, the principal leaned over and whispered, “*I trust that you realize that none of these people believe they have any sin.*” If we cannot see that Romans 7 describes us, we are deceived and dangerous teachers.

Who Am I? Self-Awareness & the Gospel

► Two Ways to View Myself: an Individual or Small-Group Workshop

THE TYPICAL MODERN EVANGELICAL VIEW OF SELF — I don't think of myself as a son. I am not worthy. I need to try harder and get better.* – Gal. 3:3

I = MY FLESH (i.e. the *real me*) My flesh defines me. I may *pretend* I'm holy (Pharisee), or act depressed (Failure) but in any case, I am defeated. I have no power over my besetting sins.

MY FOCUS: “*O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*” (Romans 7:24 *without* 25 and Romans 6 & 8) The new life Paul describes in Romans 12 is impossible to achieve because of my self-perception. I have become a “*sin manager*”—an actor—instead of a big repentor. I try to cover up my sins. I rely on my moral will-power to keep the law, and on my flesh for the strength to serve God and get victory over my sins—but it is not working!

i = me “positionally” in Christ We often use the doctrinal term “positionally” to mean “theoretically.” Yes, I am legally forgiven, but who I *really am* is a terrible mess!

I THINK: God can *tolerate* me because of the righteousness of Christ, but he doesn't *delight* in me. If he could, he would squash me like a bug. I am doomed to spiritual failure. When God looks at me, he frowns. My struggle against sin is an unwinnable war. I have lost my joy. (Gal. 4:6, 15)

RESULT: External obedience, Pharisaism, legalism, fear, failure, and eventual disillusionment with the Christian life. * Pharisees boast much in public, but they have these fears in private—especially when trying to sleep.

contrasted with...

THE APOSTLE PAUL'S VIEW OF HIMSELF — God *delights* in me. Although I am unrighteous, he *looks at me* as if I am righteous, and his heart *loves me* as if I am! - 2 Cor. 5:21

I = THE REAL ME! — The “New Creature in Christ Jesus” *IS* the “real me.” This is who I really am—and the way *I think of myself!* The Father's love *defines* me. I am a son! I look like Jesus to him!

MY FOCUS: Romans 8:2-16: I have power over “*the law of sin and death*” as I “keep my eyes fixed on Jesus.” As I: look at, abide in, fellowship with, and drink of Christ, the Spirit empowers me to bear the fruit of the Spirit. This brings great glory to God and great joy to me.

I don't try to live and minister in my own strength. I am weak, but I know that “*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me!*” (Phil. 4:13) The Holy Spirit gives me the desire to repent and live for Jesus. I keep God's commandments from the heart. *They are not burdensome.* I am loved, accepted, forgiven, righteous! This is no theory. I am a son! “*For every I look I take at my sin, I take ten looks at Christ.*” (McCheyne) I Jn. 4:16, 17; 5:2-4; Matt. 11:28-30 “*...for my yoke is easy and my burden is light.*” I see the depths of my sin, face it honestly, and I take it to Jesus!

i = my flesh, NOT the real me Yes, I must still do battle with my flesh. I am a big sinner. “*Nothing good dwells in my flesh.*” **But still, who I really am is a son!**

I “*crucify the sinful nature with its passions and desires.*” Rom. 7:17,20; Gal. 2:20. I do this *by the Spirit*, not in my own strength. - Rom. 8:13

The Gospel gives me “*a good conscience*” in the sight of God and men. - Gal. 5:24; 1 Tim. 1:5

THINK IT OVER: If my new heart can produce a changed life operating by itself, then why did the Father send us the Holy Spirit? (Ezekiel 36:22ff promised us a new heart *and* the Spirit.)

RESULT: New life and inner holiness. I keep the Law (I love God and others) with a new heart energized by the Spirit. I am by no means perfect, but I *am* repentant. ©1996-2002 SONSHIP for Africa

HOW TO ACT LIKE A SON

"How can I love, forgive, be happy, or witness when I'm such a BIG MESS?"

I BEGIN BY REALIZING that there is a big difference between saying to myself, "I am a Christian therefore I *ought* to do this," and, "Dear Father, I am your loved child; **empower** me to do this!"

"I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you... I will send the Spirit... He will be in you." – Jn. 14:16-18

2 I think like an Orphan!

A NEGATIVE VIEW OF MYSELF

"Oh no, I am stuck in Romans 7!"

- I *don't* love people.
- I am *not* sharing the gospel.
- I *don't care* about the lost!
- I am hurt, angry & unforgiving.
- I am critical and *love to gossip*.
- I feel that God is far from me.
- I am worried about my future.
- I have lost my joy!

"What can I **DO** to fix this?"

Just ignore the items that don't apply to you, but if you can find the courage, ask a close friend first!

1 "You act like an Orphan!"

NEGATIVE INPUT FROM OTHERS

(from spouse, children, parents, family, other Christians, unbelievers)

- You're not loving me!
- You're a failure!
- You don't measure up!
- Basically, I reject you.
- You're not meeting my needs.
- But... if you try harder, I *might* accept you and love you.

(Their criticisms might even be true!)

Ignore the items that may not apply to you.

The Holy Spirit reminds me that . . .

I AM A SON!

SO, when by faith . . .



MY INSTINCTIVE REACTION TO THIS NEGATIVE INPUT?

THE "ORPHAN SHORTCUT" — I TRY TO ACT LIKE A SON!

Dripping with guilt and the fear of looking bad, I try hard to improve myself so that I will do better and look better. I try to fix it. I fail.

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM? You can't reach Box 4 from Box 2! **WHY?** Because holiness by human effort to keep rules didn't work for Moses, and it won't work for you! The only way to reach Box 4 is by the Gospel!" (Box 3) (See: Gal. 3:3; 5:16; Rom. 7:6)

3 I think like a son...

By the Spirit I cry, "Abba-Father!"

ROOT — Intellectually *and* emotionally I act on my sonship. (Rom. 8:15) How?

- a. "Father, you love, accept and delight in me! I am yours!"
- b. "Jesus, you died for me and are interceding for me!"
- c. "Father! You sent your Spirit to live in me! I *repent* of my unbelief and disobedience!"

When I **BELIEVE** right, the Spirit empowers me to **BEHAVE** right! When I believe the Gospel...

**S
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4 I act like a son!

SONSHIP

FRUIT — Acting like a SON or DAUGHTER!

- LJPPKGFSGS
- I love God
- I love others
- I love prayer
- I love the Word
- I obey joyfully and selflessly



- **GOD GETS GREAT GLORY**, and my joy returns as I use all I am and have to serve him.

