

Evidence Proves Identity NOT Identity Creates Truth

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Certainty: Absolute Truths that Produce Joyful Assurance / Critical Theory; Assurance; Confidence / 1 John 2:3-11

As review, the first three sermons were: the word of God preserves the absolute truth of Jesus Christ; the unchangeable message is that *God is light, and in him is no darkness at all*; there is no confident assurance apart from accepting our utter sinfulness.

Let's imagine that you were having a conversation with someone who was not a believer today, and you said something like this: "I know that Christianity is real because of the experience of what Jesus has done in my life." What would you do if they responded by saying, "I know that postcolonialism is real because of the experience of oppression in my life"? This immediately creates a problem for you. Because you have based your ultimate argument on your experience, you now will have a difficult time in convincing them that your worldview is right and better as opposed to their worldview — this is partly because we cannot really argue well from this standpoint.

We must be able to give clear, objective truth. In our culture, it is becoming increasingly accepted that a person's oppressed identity is the better source of truth rather than reason and evidence:

Social Justice scholarship takes umbrage with anything that foregrounds reasons and evidence as the way to know what is true...demands "epistemic justice" ...it means...lived experiences, emotions, and cultural traditions of minority groups... [should be] given privilege over reasons and evidence-based knowledge. (Pluckrose & Lindsay, 187).

For this worldview, "Identity creates truth." In the scripture though, we are given a different pattern. Notice that 1 John 2:1-2 shows how Jesus Christ is the Advocate and Propitiation for sinful men. **Our identity is that we are sinful people who have a sufficient Savior.** But can we be 100% sure that we have this eternal life? What if I doubt in my heart who I am? Am I really able to live this kind of a Christian life? Is there Someone (celebrity, pastor...etc.) I can look to for the Example of living this life?

(1) You can be 100% sure that you have eternal life.

1 John 2:3 KJV 1900

³ And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

There were some things that had happened in the life of the Christians that caused them to lack assurance as to whether they had the truth — whether they had eternal life. John assures them that what is being written is so they might know that they actually know the Lord.

For example, Dude Perfect is a show where some men attempt pretty crazy things. On one episode, they do a pizza taste test with Cody. In preparation for the pizza taste test, they put blue, non-see-through goggles on Cody. He has to taste pizza from the following places: 7-Eleven, Pizza Hut, Red Baron, Papa John's, Domino's. After tasting all of them, he makes one change on a selection he'd previously given. When everything is done, Cody was 100% right. He successfully selected and named all 5 pizzas from all 5 places perfectly.

In something more important than pizza, that is eternal life, John is saying you can know 100% that you know the Lord. What is the evidence that you know the Lord? It is obedience to his commandments (1 John 2:3-6). Obedience to the commandments of the Lord proves that you have eternal life.

You will have to test whether you have eternal life or not based on your present obedience to the Lord's commandments — commandments both of heart and of life; commandments towards God and towards your fellow brethren.

There are four kinds of people being addressed:

- (a) Those who are worried about whether they have eternal life though they should NOT be.
- (b) Those who are NOT worried about whether they have eternal life though they should be.
- (c) Those who are 100% secure about eternal life because they do keep the commandments of the Lord.
- (d) Those who know they do not have eternal life, but they are interested in learning about it.

Which of these people would you consider yourself? If it is true that the evidence of us having eternal life is based on the keeping of the Lord's commandments, then we must be truly committed to the scriptures wherein we learn his commandments.

(2) The Bible tells us the truth about eternal life, even if how we feel may be different.

1 John 2:4 KJV 1900

⁴ He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

Imagine it is two weeks before your birthday, and your mom takes you to the Lego Store. While there, you see the *Death Star Escape* Lego set. You know that this is what you have wanted since you were a baby, and now is your chance. So, you beg mom to please get it for you. She tells you, "No, I have a bigger surprise for you later." Wait, you are too smart for that because you have heard that line before, and what could be bigger than the most wanted *Death Star Escape* Lego set? So, you allow your thoughts, your emotions to control you. You keep begging and begging. You don't believe what mom said about a "bigger surprise."

Instead, you start crying because you believe that this may be the only chance you have to get this set, and you NEVER come to this store EVER. Mom finally says, "No," and you leave the store. You are so sad because you are convinced that you will never get that set. When the day of your birthday comes around, you get to the time that you open your gifts, and not only are you surprised that you got the very Lego set you were wanting — *The Death Star Escape* Lego set; but you also received the *Darth Vader Transformation* set. Guess what? What mom said was right. She was telling you the truth, even though you did not believe her at the store. You were believing you.

We often tell ourselves lies, so we need God's word to help us see the lies we tell ourselves and to help us see if others are lying about themselves. We must believe what the scripture says about us over what we say about us.

There are some professing Christians whose hearts are so bitter and cold. You are full of hatred and unforgiveness. You must see that this ongoing pattern in your life is disobedient to the commandments of God. This shows that you do NOT have eternal life.

James 1:26 KJV 1900

²⁶ If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion *is* vain.

There are some Christians who feel tremendously insecure wondering if they have eternal life, but your life shows an increasing pattern of obedience to the Lord — your desires for him, your love for the brethren, your giving of yourself for the body — these patterns prove that you do have eternal life.

James 1:22–25 KJV 1900

²² But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. ²³ For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: ²⁴ For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. ²⁵ But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

The source for your confidence must not be you. Scripture is the true reflection.

(3) The Lord gives you the love to lovingly obey Him.

1 John 2:5 KJV 1900

⁵ But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

It is not mere obedience that proves you have eternal life; it is loving obedience that proves you have eternal life.

One of the big opportunities that children enjoy is the opportunity when they first get to go into a store by themselves to make a purchase of something either they want or that is needed. Honestly, it's a reality check for a parent too. So, you give your teen the money and proceed to tell them what to get: milk, eggs, and a lot of chocolate. They walk into the store, make the purchase, and then return to you who is waiting to make sure they got everything. There is a smaller

version of this around Christmas time at the MCS “Christmas Shop.” The kids can take money to school, make purchases, get them wrapped, and then take them home for family gifts for Christmas.

There are a few things that are happening: (1) the parents are equipping the children with the money to make the purchase, (2) the parents are equipping the children with confidence in them, (3) the children are doing what they have been equipped to do, and (4) this gives the children greater confidence that they can do it. You see, our obedience to the Lord is similar. Sometimes we get the idea that our obedience to our Father is in our own strength, but loving obedience to the Father is because He has equipped us to love and obey Him:

1 John 4:19 KJV 1900

¹⁹ We love him, because he first loved us.

Romans 5:5 KJV 1900

⁵ And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

A true believer both loves and obeys God because God has made this possible through the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ. You should decide whether you will trust in the effectual working of God or in yourself. Trusting in yourself to live the Christian life is pride. Trusting in the Lord for the strength to obey requires a God-given humility. The humility required here means that we should be more committed to seeking the Lord through prayer.

(4) You should obey like Jesus obeyed the Father.

1 John 2:6 KJV 1900

⁶ He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

In the game called “Simon Says,” a good leader does not just yell out “Simon Says.” He or she will say, “Simon Says” and then also do whatever the command is such as “Simon says touch your nose” (the leader says the command and touches his/her nose) ...etc. The key to this game is to not be distracted by what everyone else is doing and to pay close attention to the leader. Sometimes the others playing in the game are not paying close attention to the instructor, and they do something without the code words: “Simon says...”

In the Christian life, we often get our eyes on everyone else and off of our Leader, Jesus Christ. We are so concerned with the disobedience of other people that we forget we are to walk as Jesus Christ walked. Listen to the words of Jesus:

John 4:34 KJV 1900

³⁴ Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

John 6:38 KJV 1900

³⁸ For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

John 17:4 KJV 1900

⁴ I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

Listen to what this writer says about the obedience of Jesus:

Hebrews 5:8 KJV 1900

⁸ Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

Intentional study of the life and ministry of Jesus should be a part of our life. While Jesus had a unique role to fulfill in history, this does not mean that there are not ways to live that we can identify in his life. When someone receives eternal life, they repent of sin and believe on Jesus as Lord. Jesus becomes their Master, and their lives should increasingly look like their Master's. Who is the Lord of your life? Your Christian life should not be characterized by defiance or rebellion but by submission. We need to be people who are learning obedience from Jesus.

Adults, you need to decide what is the basis of what you know: the gospel, your experience, your cultural identity. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Full-time Christian workers in corporate America, your life should be increasingly characterized by humility rather than pride. Husbands, you cannot have the confident assurance that you should if you are not loving your wives AS CHRIST loved the church. Wives, submission is the high calling for every believer but especially for you. Jesus Christ was characterized by submission, so don't see your submission to your husband as something you stoop to but rather as

something you are equipped to rise to. Those questioning whether you have eternal life — right now, where you sit, confess your sins to God, ask God to save you. Will you receive Jesus Christ as your Lord today?

The evidence of obedience proves your identity. You and I don't create truth because of our identity.