

# The Gospel Motivates Obedience

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Scripture is written in “indicative” and “imperative” format. An indicative is defined as “showing, signifying, or pointing out”. An indicative is used to show the cause behind a behavior. We are sinners, so we sin. The phrase “we are sinners” is indicative. It states what has already happened and is a foregone conclusion. “We sin” is what the indicative points out. An imperative is a command. “Go clean up your room” is an imperative statement. Scripture uses these two types of writing to show what the gospel (the indicatives) should produce in us (the imperatives).

Colosians 3:12-13 is a concise example:

“Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you

also must forgive.”

The indicative (the reasons behind the commands) are that we are already chosen by God. We are holy and beloved. We’ve been forgiven by the Lord.

**Therefore** (Scripture often uses “therefore” or “so that” to separate indicative from imperative)

The imperatives then state that we are to be compassionate, kind, humble, meek, patient, bear with one another, and forgive.

The only hope we have to live this way is what Christ has already done for us (the indicative). Jesus came and endured every type of temptation and did not sin. Jesus was mocked and beaten and hung on the cross without sin. Jesus took all the sins of all believers of all time on himself and was crucified and forsaken by God satisfying the holy and just God’s wrath against sin. He then arose, setting us free from death and sin, and ascended to heaven where He continues to be enthroned and is our Mediator before God. He left the Holy Spirit to empower us **so that** we can be obedient to His commands to continue His work of glorifying God by the way we live.

That’s why the gospel matters everyday. What Jesus has accomplished and completed, allows us to put off our sinful ways through His Spirit, and put on Christlike desires, attitudes, words, and actions.

Look at Romans 6:5-14.

In Romans 6:5-10 Paul tells us what Christ has already accomplished. Paul even “sandwiches” the rest of the passage by going back to indicatives in verses 12-14. Make a list of the “indicatives” about what Christ has done:

1. Vs 5 - we are united with Christ in death
2. Vs 5 - we are united with Christ in resurrection - raising from the dead

3. Vs 6 - our sinful self was crucified with him
4. Vs 6 - we are no longer slaves to sin
5. Vs 8 - we are raised from the dead and will not die again
6. Vs 9 - death has no dominion over Him
7. Vs 10 - He died to sin, once for all (only one time sacrifice was necessary)
8. Vs 10 - He lives for God
9. Vs 14 - Sin has no dominion over you
10. Vs - You are under grace, not law

As a result of the things listed above, what Christ has already accomplished for us, we are given “imperatives” or commands to be followed. Make a list of what we are to do.

1. Vs 11 - **So** consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to Christ
2. Vs 12 - Let not sin **therefore** reign in your body
3. Vs 13 - Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness
4. Vs 13 - Present yourselves to God as one brought from death to life
5. Vs 13 - Present your members to God for instruments of righteousness

These are only possible when we are saved by grace through faith in Christ for God's glory. All of what Christ accomplished is a gift (grace). God opens our eyes to our need for Christ (faith) and we put our trust in Him. It is only Christ, Son of God and Son of man, who could be the perfect sacrifice for our sin. And our motive for being obedient, must be for God's glory, that as we live God's power and holiness is evident and others see it and give God praise.

Summary:

Indicatives are facts. They are realities. And in the Bible, they are firm and secure because the Bible is the unchanging Word of God.

The imperatives are commands or implications. They are statements of direction, made with authority, that have a direct and expected act of obedience expected to follow.

Your turn. The book of Ephesians is written in this format (as is most of the bible!). Read Ephesians chapters 1 - 3 and make a list of ALL that God has done through Christ (indicatives). You should have at least 25 things that have been accomplished by Christ for your salvation.

Then, read Ephesians 4 - 6. Because of what Christ has done, **therefore**, you are to live obediently to God. Make a list of God's commands (imperatives) in these chapters.

As you practice obedience this week and for the rest of your life, you must recall what Christ has done for you. Be awed, amazed, thankful, and excited to love God for who He is and what He has done. That is where God glorifying lives come from.

Other passages to consider: Make lists for these passages over the next few weeks.

Colossians 3:1-17

Romans 1-11 (indicatives) and 12-16 (imperatives)

Philippians 2:1-17

Be on the lookout for this pattern in Scripture. It is only through Christ that we can be obedient, to His praise, glory and honor!