

**The Most Subtle Form of Garden Gnosticism in Sanctification**  
**The frustrated life of Performance-based Self-Righteousness that leads to deconstruction**

Philippians 3:9 "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith"

Ephesians 2:8-9 "For by grace are ye save through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast."

***The self-righteous Christian reverberates sentiments of Garden Gnosticism in the face of the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ (Gen.3:1 -7)***

- They are rooted in self-reliance and seek to be "god" of their own life (Prov.3:5-6, 12:15, 14:12, 16:25; Jms.4:6)
- They forget the work of Christ's atonement and imputed righteousness through their own performance and works/rituals (II Pt.1:8-10)
- Their identity is in what they have done or do for Christ, not what He has done for them (I Cor.15:10, I Tim.1:15-16, Col.2:9-10)
- They constantly attempt to sit on the throne of God and display His non-communicable attributes (Is.14:13-14):
  - self-sovereign (life must go as they deem), self-reliant (no one is good enough to help them), omnipotent (controls others w/ anger), & omniscient (no need to listen when they know everything)
- They inevitably fail and struggle with the reality of their old nature (Rom.7:24). Misplaced identity in performance instead of Christ results in frustration.
- Dissatisfaction with God's plan and frustration with the inability to perfectly maintain external or internal standards opens them up to alternative knowledge.
  - Attracted to secret knowledge of "no restraint," "liberty," "freedom" apart from God's plan of salvation (Repentance) and sanctification (Holiness).

**Orthodoxy** (doctrine of justification): salvation is based on the doctrine of Christ's righteousness imputed to our account through faith and repentance (II Cor.5:21)

**Orthopraxy** (practice of doctrine): how does Christ's justification impact our identity?

- One's sanctification is inhibited through the spiritual pride of performance-based externalisms and forgetfulness of God's grace (II Pt.1:9-10)
- performance-based practice through fear of man instead of the fear of the LORD & rejoicing in Christ's work (Heb.12:28).
- Sanctification efforts through an external checklist that is detached from the grace and mercy of God after repentance of sin is ineffective (II Pt.3:18).
  - Exposure of the reality of one's heart sin → Repentance = put off, renew the mind, put on Christ (Eph.4:22-24)
- Examples of Self-righteousness in Christians: "I earned..." or "I am better than \_\_\_\_\_ because I do \_\_\_\_\_" (cf. Jms.3:13-16).

**1) Performance-Driven**

The Adamic Curse drives us to insincerely perform spiritual rituals, add meritorious works, & boast in our own power (cf. Eph.2:8-9).

- Genesis 3:3 "...God hath said, ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die" (cf. Gen.2:17)
- Deut.8:17-18 "...my power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God..."
- Isaiah 29:13 "...this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men"

**2) Comparison Trap – beguiled by alternative knowledge that seems superior to truth (II Cor. 10:12, 11:3)**

- Measure oneself against others success, beauty, achievement, relationships, and spiritual success. Focus on ability and self-worth.
- Compare oneself to the idealized version of themselves instead of resting in the finished work of Christ as a forgiven sinner who obtained mercy (I Tim.1:15)
  - The reality of our self-comparison and ability within ourselves– "O wretched man..."

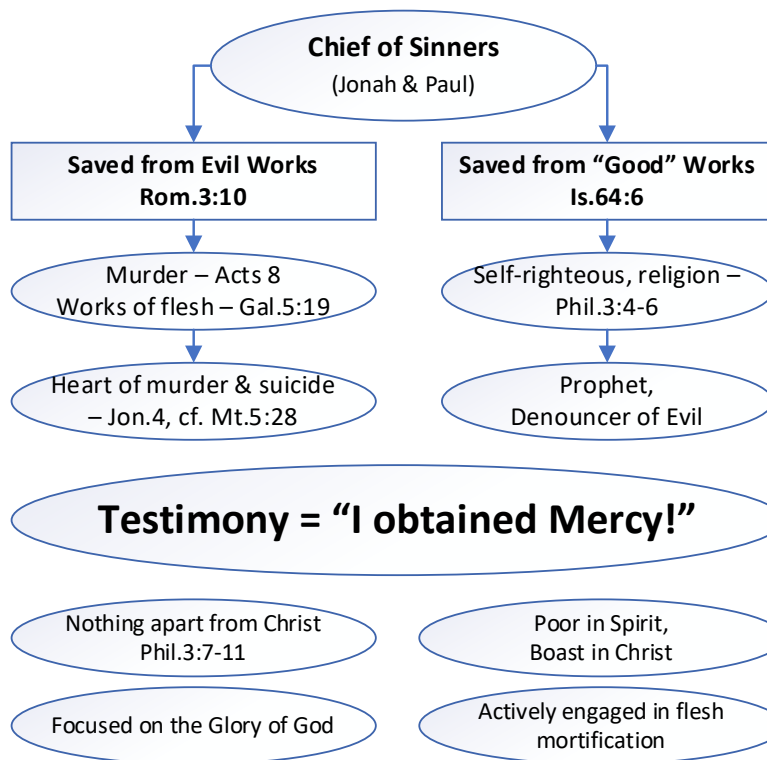
**3) The Performance-based Pendulum of Self-Righteousness and Self-Pity**

- Elation and joy when things are "going well" because of their clever skill ("look what I did...")
- Self-Pity (false humility) occurs when one laments the entitlement they are not receiving ("how come I am no receiving praise...")
  - sense of being owed respect, recognition, reward, etc.

**4) The self-righteous, self-reliant mini-god:**

- internal heart posture that reveals how they view themselves before God & others ("good enough" or "better than")
- Steeped in anger and unforgiveness → able to justify holding onto grudges because they are morally superior

# Identity in Christ I Tim.1:15-16



## Where does your identity Rest?

- A non-transparent, guarded, and self-righteous individual who performs for self and others?

**Or**

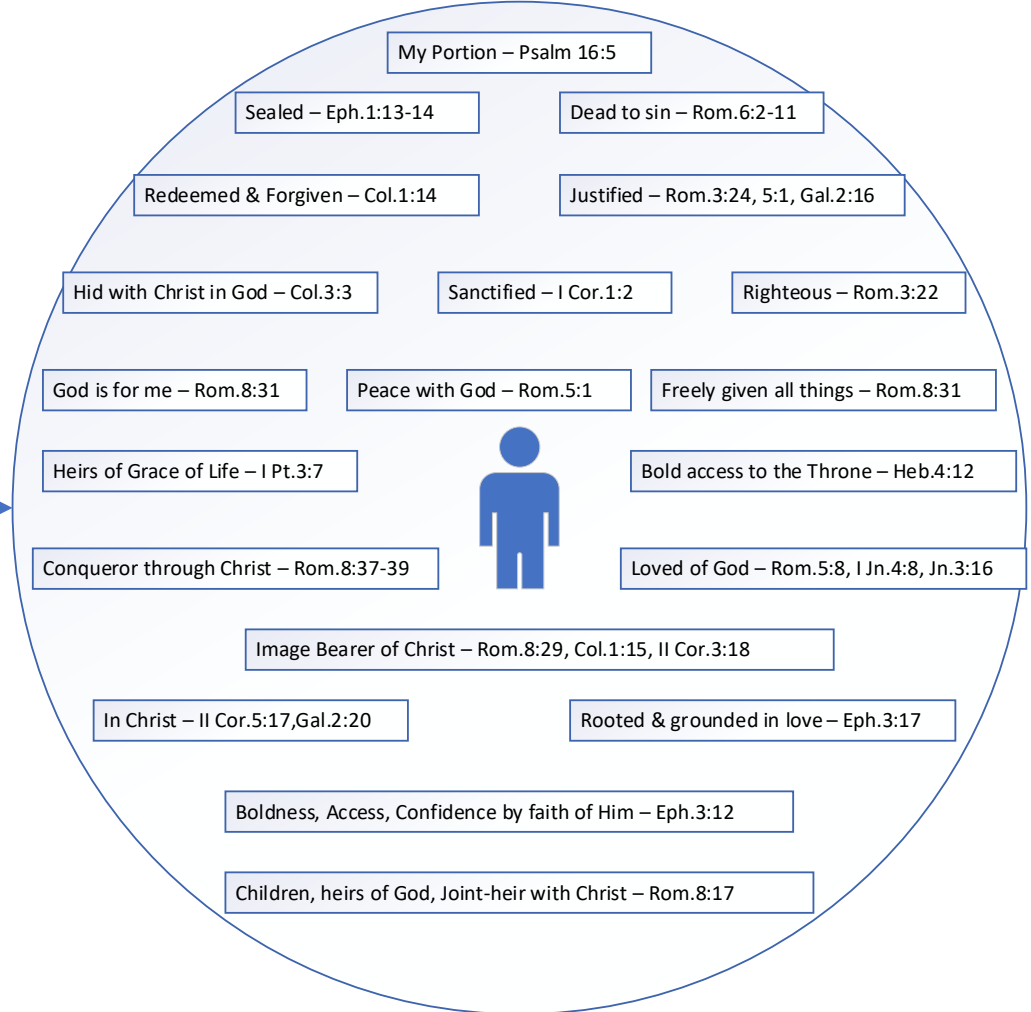
- Humbled, openly flawed, imperfect, struggles with old nature – “*I obtained mercy!*” (Rom.7:24)

- Resting in the finished work and righteousness of Christ, which satisfied the Father’s wrath?

- Walking after the Spirit to crucify the flesh for the glory of God today!

## Position in Christ

“For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him...” Col.2:9-10



**When we rest in our position in Christ, we are free to serve and love others without reciprocity...just as Christ did for us (Rom.5:8, I Jn.4:7)**