

The Doctrine of Divine Incentives That Enable Abundant Life

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The Days of Intensified Evil

The inspired Word of God reveals to the diligent student that in “end times” the spread of evil will permeate even the church, producing a corporate apostasy from “the truth.” Many born again believers will become infected and operate in a religious mental attitude, even with much external production, although they will be, “carnal, ... babes in Christ.” Even a casual glance at the following verses of scripture will show the preceding statement to be true, and reveal that we are truly living in “hard times.”

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;” (1 Timothy 4:1)

The definite article before the word “faith” (tes pisteos) shows that the writer is not speaking about faith as an act, but “the Faith,” that body of doctrine that forms the basis of what we as Christians believe. The word “depart” (apostesontai), means to “stand away from.” In these “latter times”, believers shall stand away from the very Word of God, which was sent to heal, cleanse and transform them, (Psalm 107:20, John 15:3, Romans 12:2) and be seduced by demonic doctrine, all the while remaining in churches and claiming to be led of The Spirit.

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.” (2 Timothy 4:3-4)

The words, “not endure” (ouk anexontai), literally means that they will not have the patience nor the hunger to discover truth through in-depth study for themselves, as the believers in Berea did in Acts 17:10-11; when they “received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily.” Instead these believers, as many do today, follow after teaching that has no biblical basis yet satisfies their emotions temporarily and tells them what they want to hear but not what they need to hear.

The most alarming situation revealed here is found in the “voice” of the Greek text. “They shall turn”, is in the “active voice”, which reveals that the subject performs the action of the verb. In other words, they shall, using their own free volition, perform the action of turning their ears away from the truth.

But notice carefully, they then “shall be turned.” This is in the “passive voice”, which means the subject receives the action. Therefore this reveals that after they turn away using their freedom of choice, demonic spirits will now control them and will be turning them unto “fables” (muthos), untruths, myths. Can you begin to see how difficult it will be for any believer that desires to adhere to biblical truths and “live by every Word of God”?

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.” (2 Timothy 3:1)

The word for “perilous”, (chalepoi), literally means difficult, hard to live in. This word is used in the gospels to refer to that which is demoniacal, demon possessed, or demon obsessed. (Matthew 8:28). Therefore these “last days” will not just be hard in the sense of physically tough times but emotionally difficult times because of increased demonic activity against the believers who desire to “walk in the light” (1 John 1:7), and follow Christ on the “narrow way” (Matthew 7:14).

“The whole world lieth in wickedness” (1 John 5:19)

The “whole world” (holos kosmos) refers to every thought, every opinion, every scheme, every goal, every ambition and every rationalization, of humanity, including its morality as well as its immorality. And the word “lieth” (keitai) indicates that the world is in the passive state of receiving infections from (to ponero) “the evil”. The Greek word “poneros”, is the word for infectious evil. This passage clearly tells us that the world system has been breathing in the very nature of the evil one, and by doing so without the immunization of God's Word on a daily basis, as is God's prescription for maintaining a strong spirituality, the infection spreads to all unchecked.

Where are we In all this?

As we have stated the Word of God describes our times as perilous (2 Tim. 3:1), and just an objective look at the increased violence in the world, and the lowering of moral standards every where from Hollywood to the White House has intensified the infection. 1 John 2:18, calls this the “last time.” 1 Peter 4:7 says “the end of all things (in this present age) is at hand; and 1 Cor. 7:29, tells us “the time is short.”

Almost every believer today who is asked, if they believe we are in the end times responds with a yes! But very few believe there is a collective apostasy away from God's Word. Yet Matthew 13:25 tells us that the enemy will sow tares among the wheat, and verse 32, of the same chapter tells us that “birds of the air”, (satanic forces) will lodge in the branches of the tree, and finally verse 33, tells that leaven (false teaching) will be hidden in the meal until the whole lump is leavened. Finally, as if we needed more proof, Christ himself tells us that we are living in the “Lukewarm” days of church history, the final church addressed in Revelation 2-3, which represents the final period of church history. What are we to do?

Individual Responsibility

In the book of Revelations, chapter 2-3, we see the Lord Jesus Christ commanding the Apostle John to write to seven churches. Many Bible students believe, as I do also, that this portion of scripture is what is called, “dual prophecy”. This means that while He was speaking to seven specific churches located in Asia Minor, He also was referring to seven periods of church history culminating with the church of the Laodiceans in Revelations 3:14-22.

Therefore for us to get a picture of God's prophetic look through time at the condition of the universal church just before His return we must look there. In these passages, God does not call out to the collective church, but to the individual believer. Notice in Revelation 2:7; 2:11;2:17; 2:29; 3:6; 3:13; 3:32; the address is to the singular, “He.”

“He (the individual) that has an ear (capacity for truth with meekness) let Him (singular) hear what the Spirit says to the churches. (parentheses mine).

All throughout history, even though God works through corporate expressions, such as Israel, and the Church, when the volition is in view, the emphasis has been on the individual. Notice and remember that when all of Israel rebelled against God and worshiped the golden calf (Exodus 32:26) the call to repentance was an individual one, “Who (which of you) is on the Lord's side? Let him (singular) come unto me.” Joshua, said, concerning who would serve God in Israel, “As for me (singular) and my house, we will serve the Lord.” In the New Testament the emphasis is even more on the individual, “If any man, will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross.” (Matthew 17:24)

This pamphlet is not written for the mass conversion of all people, but it is written for YOU and ME! In this day of corporate apostasy, and lukewarm attitudes towards God's precise Word, what will we choose to do? Will we join the ranks of those who change God's Word for convenience sake, or to justify our sin? Will we choose to live a cross-free lifestyle? Or will we choose to deny ourselves? Will we choose to mix faith with the promises and live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God, experiencing abundant life? Or, will we be like the majority of believers today, living in excuses and the misery of unbelief? The choice is an individual one ... your wife may not choose with you ... your husband may not wish to follow Christ ... your friends may mock your decision to pursue holiness ... will you still choose to receive all the benefits Christ has deposited in your account, by faith? For those who choose to exercise their free volition in a positive way towards God, the Word of God offers more than enough incentive to produce tremendous growth by faith.

The Foundation of The Building

“Therefore this saith the Lord, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation, He that believeth will not make haste .” (Isaiah 28:16)

The foundation of all things spiritual and all things acceptable is Jesus Christ. “There is no other foundation which can be laid.” (1 Cor. 3:11) Paul the apostle, laid the foundation, as a “wise master builder”, (1 Cor. 3:10) and that foundation was the focus of his preaching, “I have determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” (1 Cor. 2:2) Paul's foundational preaching concerned what Christ had done not what people should do.

His foundational teaching was Jesus Christ and His life laid down in sacrificial, substitution for our sins. His foundational teaching concerned our salvation by “grace through faith ... a gift from God ... not of works.” (Eph.2:8-9) His foundational teaching was the justification of the ungodly by faith apart from the works of the law. (Rom. 4:6; 3:28)

Notice Isaiah 28, states that a person “that believes (not works) will not make haste.” The word for “haste” (chuwsh) means literally that the believer, who believes that Christ is the foundation of his salvation, and life, will not be rushing to and fro to establish his own righteousness, but will rest entirely on the work of Christ, on his behalf.

All spiritual production and progress in the Christians life must have this foundation, or it will be considered by God, as a production of the flesh and be consumed at the Bema seat. (1 Cor. 3:12-15) The eternal security of the believer rests on the work of Christ at Calvary and not the believer's works as he tries to obey God. Notice carefully the following verse:

“Nevertheless (that is, even though many reject and distort foundational truth, as indicated in 2 Timothy 2:16-18) the firm foundation of God stands having this seal (or this inscription is written across God's foundation) The Lord knows those who are His”

There are two great aspects to the foundation of God, concerning Christ Jesus, which He Himself voiced with power and authority, while He was on the earth during the incarnation. They are, IT IS WRITTEN, (Matthew 4:4,7,11) and IT IS FINISHED (John 19:30). Both of these statements are vital to the believers abundant life, for they bring the assurance and security in which progress is inevitable.

Bema Seat Destiny

As we begin building a doctrinal structure which will lead the believer to Bema seat approval, we must again explore the Bema seat reality.

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in body, according to that he hath done whether good or bad.” (2 Cor. 5:10)

“Every mans work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, the fire shall try every mans work of what sort it is “ (1 Cor. 3:13-15)

“There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed and hid that shall not be known” (Matt. 10:26)

There is more than ample proof that the believer will face a judgment for his works, to reveal whether they were a production of the flesh through a self righteous, religious, attitude towards God or whether they were a production of the Holy Spirit as He worked in us, and through us, as we yielded to Him and God's word in meekness.

This is our appointed destiny, and we can either have it be a tremendous experience of joy as we receive rewards, or it can be a time of great shame, and loss. (1 Cor.3:15, 1 John 2:28) The decision is ours as individuals. God has saved us by His grace, completely erasing all of our sins and then provided us with, “All things that pertain unto life and godliness.” (2 Peter 2:13)

He has provided us with His indwelling Spirit, and promised us in His eternal Word that He “will never leave us nor forsake us” (Hebrews 13:5). These realities of the new creation believer enable us to say with truth and power, “that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.” (Phil. 4:13)

“Let us now go on unto maturity, not laying again the foundation.” (Hebrews 6:1)

Because, many will refuse to go on to maturity by frustrating the grace foundation of Calvary’s accomplishments, trying to proclaim by their false doctrine that the work is not finished. Instead of building themselves up in the most holy faith, through God's grace incentives and appeals, constantly are trying to reestablish another foundation that will allow them to build their own super structure of human effort and works. Nothing can be added to or taken away from the foundation of who Christ is or what He has finished. Let us rejoice together that **“IT IS WRITTEN AND IT IS FINISHED.”**

Indicatives and Imperatives

These two words hold such amazing truth and power when understood from God's viewpoint. It is my prayer that we not only read and intellectually agree with the truth that is revealed but that we mix faith with these truths so that they impart power in our experiential walk with Christ so that our life is abundant and overflowing in victory. This is God's desire for His children, therefore let us have faith.

Indicatives are biblical incentives which empower God's Imperatives. An Indicative, is, an assertion of fact and reality, declarations of divine truth, with which there is no debate. We have taught thoroughly the truth of Isaiah 1:18, which states, “Come let us reason together.” In this passage God is not requesting that we come and share our fallen human reasoning with Him. On the contrary, the Hebrew word for “come” (yalak) is in the imperative mood, which is the mood of command. Therefore God is not requesting that we come to Him, but is commanding it. Also, the Hebrew word for “reason” (yakach) means to rebuke or to correct. Therefore with this in mind we see that God is commanding humanity to come to Him so that He can rebuke their thoughts and correct them. In the precise interpretation of this verse He wants to correct their thinking concerning the completeness of his forgiveness, and regardless of what they thought, there was to be no debating God's declaration of divine truth. Once again for clarity, an Indicative is, an assertion of fact and reality, declarations of divine truth, with which there is no debate. Here are some examples to rejoice in:

- **“You are washed (cleansed by Christ's blood), you are sanctified (actually holy), you are justified (declared not guilty by God)” (1 Cor. 6:11)**
- **“You are unleavened [free from sin)” (1 Cor. 5:7)**
- **“You are the temple of God “ (1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Cor. 6:16)**
- **“The temple of God is holy... which you are” (1 Cor. 3:17)**
- **“You are Christ's [speaks of possession)” (1 Cor. 3:23)**
- **“You are not your own” (1 Cor. 6:19)**
- **“You are bought with a price” (1 Cor. 6:20)**

As we have already stated the indicative mood is an divine statement of reality and fact, so anyone in deception who debates with God's word concerning these truths, “deny the Lord, that bought them.” [2 Peter 2:1)

These wonderful truths, are the reality of the believers position and when “mixed with faith” (Heb. 4:2) they profit the believer in his experience by becoming “engrafted” (James 1:21), that is to say, they “transform” (Rom.12:2) our whole mental attitude and therefore our entire being, body, soul, and spirit.(1 Thess. 5:23). Remember “as a man thinks in his heart, so is he” (Prov.23:7). Now here are some more great examples of God's indicatives:

“You are not under the law, but under grace” (Rom.6:14)

What a beautiful statement of truth from God's indicative viewpoint, and any believer who attempts to place you or I under the law, knows neither God nor His grace. As a matter of fact, these are the very ones that have “fallen from grace” [Gal.5:4) Which does not mean that someone has lost their salvation, but teaches that they have removed themselves from the very means of growth (2 Peter 3:18), and from the very power for service (Heb.12:28) And they have also fallen from the only thing which can teach a believer “to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts.” (Titus 2:11-12) . And they are left trying to serve under a system that was designed to reveal guilt.(Rom. 3:19) All that is attainable under the law is either condemnation or self-righteousness, but never abundant life.

- **“You are my friends” (John 15:14)**
- **“You are not of the world” (John 15:19)**
- **“You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood” (1 Peter 2:9)**
- **“You are sealed unto the day of redemption” (Eph. 4:30)**

** Please note that our being sealed is not until we fail again or even fall away, but our being sealed, which speaks of ownership and security, are until the day of redemption. (the final stage of our redemption, which is our body.) (1 Cor.15:53-54)

- **“You are accepted in the beloved” (Eph. 1:6)**

So many people in today's society are suffering in their emotions because they do not “feel” that they are accepted. And this “feeling”, leads people into abnormal behavior as they attempt to gain acceptance or retreat from others into isolation. The truth is that our emotions will not experience the rest it needs to operate properly, until our emotions submit to God's Indicatives ,and find their acceptance in “ the beloved”, which is Christ. He “will never leave us nor forsake us”(Heb. 13:5), nor will He, for any reason cast us away. (John 6:37)

These truths are not a matter of our understanding, since damaged emotions cannot understand properly, but these truths are a matter of belief. When I believe that they are for me personally, my damaged emotions and soul scars begin to experience the healing God's word brings (Psalms 107:20). And once the healing begins then the understanding can receive precise illumination.

“You are complete in Him” (Col. 2:10)

The wonderful truth of this verse is clearly seen in the word “complete” (pepleromenoi) which in the Greek language means that the object completed (which is you) has been brought to the position of conclusion. Therefore God can say, that we who believe in Christ are already “glorified” [Rom.8:30), and already “perfected forever” (Heb. 10:14). I use the word “already” because the tenses of the verbs reveal that truth. “Glorified”, is in the “aorist” tense which tells us that this action took place at a point of time, in the past and is not repetitive action.

Thus, we are already glorified from divine viewpoint. And the word for “perfected”, is in the “perfect” tense, which describes a present state resulting from a past completed action. So it is the truth of God's divine Indicatives, “we are complete.”

Power For The Imperatives

The Imperatives of God, are those commands and exhortations found in scripture which God expects the believer to walk in. It must be stated at the beginning of this section that all “weaknesses” of our fallen nature and “Adamic” excuses will never be acceptable to God, neither now nor at the Bema seat. We find far too many believers living in their past experiences and their genetic weaknesses instead of the power of God which is available to all and every child of God regardless of physical ability or past upbringing. The Word of God is true and it reveals that He has already “given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness” and that we “can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.” (2 Peter 1:4; Phil. 4:13)

So you see that when a believer makes excuses for not having abundant life, he or she doesn't believe the indicatives which empower the imperatives. It is true “that in my flesh dwelleth no good thing.” (Rom. 7:18), by why would I choose to live in my flesh, when Jesus Christ gave His life to set me free from the flesh, and gave me the Holy Spirit, which gives me the power to go through every test of the details of life, abundantly!

Imperative Examples

- **“Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18)**
- **“Be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 2:1)**
- **“Be strong in the Lord and the power of His might” (Eph. 6:10)**
- **“Present your bodies a living sacrifice unto God” (Rom. 12:1)**

When a believer has a “finished work” foundation established in his heart by faith, and has through divine illumination, come to an understanding of God's viewpoint in the indicatives of God's Word concerning the believer, the believer is ready to receive exhortation to obedience, which are the imperatives of God. The Indicatives are the incentives for the believer to begin living the abundant life of God, which will reap experiential righteousness in time, and in eternity. (James 3:18, Luke 8:15) No longer does a believer need to fear God's commands, on the contrary, once the believer realizes by faith all the power available to him because of positional indicatives, he will find delight in obedience and a deeper reliance upon the strength of the Lord.

Momentum Progress

Once the believer has a secure foundation through faith in Christ's finished work, and by faith has received the Indicatives of God's word for himself personally, he begins to walk by faith in the Imperatives of God. And yet in these days of intensified evil, many believers begin to move forward towards God (James 4:8) and then find themselves being hindered by obstacles, which causes them to cease in their progress. We need to have momentum progress so that all obstacles to our walk with God are overcome rapidly.

“Let us lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily besets, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us” (Heb. 12:1)
“You did run well, who did hinder you” (Gal. 7)

There are a wide variety of obstacles that could hinder our spiritual progress, including Satanic schemes, (2 Cor. 2:11), Trials of faith (1 Peter 1:7), and the Details of life. But the believer who consistently is gaining momentum through the constant intake of God's Word, and the application of the Word by faith will not be hindered because of increased discernment in battle. (Heb. 5:14) Spiritual momentum is gained through the consistent intake of bible doctrine and the application of the Word by faith. Temptation, distraction, and the sin nature are overcome more easily when the believer treasures the Word of God in his heart.

“Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee”
(Psalm 119:11)

That is why God encourages us to “not forsake the assembling of ourselves together”, but to “do it even more as we see the day approaching” (Heb. 10:25) As we see the increase of evil, we are to draw near to the word for our daily immunization. Instruction in doctrine, from a pastor- teacher who “labors in the word” (1 Tim. 5:17, 2 Thess. 5:12-13) insulates us from the infectious evil in the world system and literally keeps us spiritually healthy.

As I close out this segment of our pamphlet, let me encourage all believers to gather together more than ever in these last days to fellowship around God's Word and to stop allowing the world to hinder spiritual progress through the acceptance of excuses, as believers choose to live in a comfort zone apart from a personal cross. Remember there is a “Bema Seat” awaiting, where excuses will not be accepted.