

Commissioned!

Part 1: No Compromise; No Condemnation

PETER DEWITT
AGATHOS CHURCH
SEPTEMBER 4TH, 2016

Full Text (for reading on your own)

Introduction

It's time for measurably more! We've been learning about how Jesus said in John 10:37 "If I don't do the works of the Father, don't believe Me." James 2 says "faith without works is dead." This message is the start of a new series called "Commissioned!". Notice that there is an exclamation point! It is a good thing to be commissioned. It's a good thing to know your commission and to be walking in your commission. In fact, if something wasn't operating according to its commission, what would we call it? "Out-of-commission." So, we don't want to be out-of-commission Christians.

Knowing What your Job Is

It's important to know what your job is. Your commission is your job description. Recently some co-workers of mine went to hear a CEO-type give a keynote speech and they came back with rave reviews of their time listening to her. One of the things she shared was "as an employee, if you don't know how your boss defines success for YOUR job, you are in a really difficult spot." She was emphatically stating that if you don't know what your boss's vision is for your success, you ought to be asking them - in order to make sure that you know what their vision of your success is. When you know your boss's expectations of you, it becomes much easier to meet their expectations, doesn't it?

A similar principle plays out with parenting. In fact, if you went to any parenting conference across the nation, there is a strong chance that one of the topics of presentation would be "having clear expectations for your children and their behavior." Notice that they wouldn't just say to have clear expectations, they would say to have "clear and consistent" expectations. If you were clear in your expectations in one moment and then you were clearly different in your expectations in another moment, the lack of consistency would muddle your overall clarity. Expectations - specifically the clarity of expectations - make a big difference in how people perform.

My professional background is in education, and there is a lot of research done in education about what makes students learn - what makes students succeed. Research has shown that one of the factors that is most influential in student success is their parents' socio-economic backgrounds. In other words, successful parents make successful kids; successful families make successful kids. This is not a

big surprise - nut and tree. Because of this, educational research is always on the lookout for what teachers can do in a classroom that has the power to influence student learning even beyond their socio-economic background. This sort of research has shown over and over that when teachers have high expectations of students, students achieve greatly - far beyond what their socio-economic background would predict! When you have clear, consistent, and high expectations for your students, or children, or employees, they achieve them.

Let me highlight one last study. A typical educational research study may be based on 500-1000 students in order to allow the statistics to be strong enough to draw some conclusions. Some researchers will do a study called "meta-data analysis." In these studies, a researcher will pull together a whole group of studies on just one topic (such as project-based learning) and see what all of those studies say in aggregate about project-based learning. This can be very helpful because it allows you to not rely on any one study. Similarly, during presidential election seasons, many organizations will poll about 1000 randomly selected individuals and present their polling results, but real statistical power can come from aggregating all of those different polls together to see what they are saying in concert with each other.

There was one gentleman in Australia who took 800 meta-data analysis studies and put them together into one study! Perhaps we should call this one a "mega-study." His study pulled together the research on 80 million students! He then saw that in all of these studies there were 159 different generalized ways researchers had tried to positively influence students' growth and learning. Do you know what the most effective way to cause student growth was? It was when students have their own learning expectations!

It has been shown that high expectations from the teacher cause students to learn, but the thing that causes students to learn even more is when they've internalized those expectations for themselves! That's where the real power is. The power is not just knowing your Christian Job Description, it is your rendition of the Christian Job Description that is really powerful! More important than the actual job description of a Christian is what YOU THINK the job description is. That's where the power's at. Why? Because you will always do what you think your job is.

A commission is a job description. An NFL football team is commissioned, by their coach, to win their division and then hopefully go to the Super Bowl. A team like the Ohio State Buckeyes has probably been commissioned to win the Big Ten Conference - and then hopefully have a chance to compete in the Bowl Championship Series. An Olympic swimmer is commissioned to do what? Win gold! A salesman is commissioned to make - sales. A restaurant manager is commissioned to make - a profit. A teacher is commissioned to teach Algebra. But what are we commissioned to do as Christians? What's our job description as Christians? It's a very important question so we should look at the Great Commission!

Our Commission

We will start by reading the Commission from the four different gospels. There is more in Matthew in Mark, but there are a few facets of it in Luke and John that we will grab as well - and then we will pull all of the pieces together into a list format job description. Remember, it is important to know your job description. Now we are going to talk about the Christian Job Description, which is the Commission.

We'll start in Matthew 28:16-20: *"Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen."*

In Mark, there is a parallel account of what appears to be the same or similar event seen in Matthew 28. Surely you have seen this happen a lot in the gospels - when multiple gospels each record the same story. If the Lord is speaking to you out of a certain account, then make a good habit of looking up the different accounts and read them each through quickly. You will find that if you read a second account immediately after reading the first account, you will immediately pick up on any difference that are present in the second account. I have personally found that by reading a few accounts of the same event, I will get a more well rounded testimony of the scene and allowing me to receive revelation from the Lord about that set of scriptures more easily. This is nor different than if you asked a friend about an event they had gone to and they gave you a very good recounting of their time there. You may think "why would I need any more information." But if you ask another person for their experience of the same event, surely you will hear much of what you've already heard, but there are likely to be a few points that are new to the second testimony that help give you a fuller picture of the event. A third accounting of the event would likely give you an even more well rounded account. This is how the gospels are on certain stories. It is beautiful how they are like that and it is a help to us if we make a good habit of reading each account while we are studying a certain account from the gospels.

Now let's look at Mark 16:15-18 and see what aspects are different in this account. *"And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."* Sure enough there is an additional aspect at the end of this account (the part about the signs that will follow), so it is good that we looked in Mark in addition to Matthew!

Luke 24 records a bit of the backstory about what should happen prior to walking out the Commission: *“Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.’ And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven.”* Remember in Genesis when God blessed Adam and Eve. What did God then tell them as part of that blessing? “Be fruitful and multiply!”

This account in Luke 24 is the New Testament version - the spiritual version - of the Genesis blessing! In Genesis God gave Adam and Eve dominion over the earth and said “be fruitful and multiply - take dominion and subdue it.” Jesus then, in a spiritual version of the same says “I have all the authority and you are going to operate under My authority; you have the power of attorney to operate under My Name ... and I am blessing you (which is a be fruitful and multiply command) to spread the gospel!”

Let’s look at one more account - John 20:21. This is not right at the end of John, but it is commissioning-type language. “So Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.’”

The Christian Job Description

Since we are looking at the Commission from multiple gospel accounts, it is helpful to pull them all together and look at it in bullet point format. So, what’s the commission?

- Go everywhere
- And, everywhere you go, preach the gospel to every creature
- Make disciples of all the nations
- Baptize those that believe in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit
- Teach them to observe all things that I (Jesus) have commanded you

That’s the commission. Now, remember, the Mark account was very helpful because it says that some signs are going to follow you because you believe - and because you are going about this Commission. And it makes clear that these signs should also follow those that believe because of your ministry to them. These signs should be handed-off generationally in the same way that the commission is handed off generationally:

- Cast out demons
- Speak with new tongues

- Pick up serpents
- If you drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt you (*note: this says “IF you drink anything deadly” ... it does not imply that we should tempt God by trying poison to test our faith*)
- Lay hands on the sick and they will recover

Don't Avoid the Commission

I want you to “lock eyes” with the Commission. Sometimes we are very bashful with the Commission. We see it out of the corner of our eye, we glance at it, and just as we are about to squarely make eye contact with it, we startle and look away. We think “I don’t want to look at that too deeply” and we gloss over it. Don’t do that any more. Lock eyes with the Commission.

Often we avoid seeing things because we want to deny them. Avoidance is a characteristic of denial. Some of us might not want to step on a scale. Some of us might not want to look in our bank account. Some of us might not want to talk through our marriage or our parenting. When we want to deny the need to act, we avoid seeing what we don’t want to act on.

So, when we look at the Commission and we look at the signs that are to follow us who believe, we want to lock eyes with it. We don’t want to just get it in a fleeting glance. We want to really look at it. Don’t be sheepish about it; look at the Great Commission! Look at the signs that will follow. Look at them square in the eyes and don’t let your gaze depart from it. Keep looking at it.

Don't Average the Parts of the Commission Out

My wife had a neat experience with the Lord recently which she told me I could share. In this experience the Lord told her to think through all the different facets of her role as a homemaker, housewife, mother, homeschool teacher, et cetera. So, on the Lord’s encouragement, she thought through - item by item - the different particular aspects of her role. As she paused on each individual aspect, the Lord would ask her a question: “for that one part of your job would you be hired again based on your performance of that part of your job?” When she shared this with me, I thought “that is so good!” and it gave me a great new lens to run the different aspects of my role through.

This is exactly what I am encouraging you to do with the individual components of the Commission and the individual signs that are to follow those that believe.

You see, we tend to average out the parts of our job description. We think “I am honoring to my boss, I am pleasant to my co-workers, and I have great ideas.” But what about the paperwork? If your job was just the paperwork, would you be hired again for that job? Obviously we all have different gifts, but if our job includes paperwork, it is part of our job description and we should not just average out all of the pieces and parts of job together. The Bible is clear that we should do

EVERYTHING as unto the Lord! “Everything” does not mean in aggregate. It means individually, task-by-task, item-by-item. We should go through each part of our job description and say “am I doing that part with excellence as unto the Lord - such that I would be gladly hired again for just that component of my job?”

We do this with the Great Commission. Either we don’t look at it because we want to deny that there is really a job description for us as Christians, and/or we average all the components of the Commission together. We think “wow this is great, I shared the gospel with someone!” But are you discipling anyone? Are you teaching anyone all the things that He commanded us? Are we discipling nations? Are we seeing the sick healed? Are we casting out demons? They are all there in our job description, so we want to go through and look at those each, individually, and not just aggregate them.

It is worth noting that it seems that a lot Christians take the Fruit of the Spirit and make that their job description. The fruit of the Spirit is the “style” in which we operate, but it is not the “what” of our job description. The fruit of the Spirit is “how” or the manner in which we do the “what” of our job description. I am not discounting the value of the fruit of the Spirit - in fact, it would probably be worth putting it next to the Christian Job Description to clarify the Spirit in which the work of the Commission should be done. BUT, the fruit of the Spirit is not the Christian Job Description.

Imagine having someone in your office who was so good with customer service, and so good with employee relations, and so good at answering the phone ... it turns out that they were supposed to be an accountant and they never kept a book! “But they did it all so well.” But they didn’t do THEIR JOB! It is really important that we know our boss’s job expectations of us - what He considers success. It is really important that we know what our commission is - what our job description is. We need to look it square in the eye and take it piece-by-piece.

Don’t be Self-Deceived about the Commission

James 1:22 says “*but be doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*” What does that mean? Imagine it like this: You go to a fitness gym and your world-renowned trainer gives you the workout plan but you don’t actually do the workout plan. You think you’re official because you have the plan from this great trainer all written up on a sheet for you, but you don’t actually do the plan. After about 6 months, you still look and feel the same. Do you know what your conclusion would be? “I don’t think I’m really capable of being in shape like that.” In other words, you have become deceived because you think your trainer’s plan doesn’t work for you. You have deceived yourself because you’ve told yourself that you are actually doing the workout plan. Then when your non-completed workout plan sure enough does not produce results, your conclusion is “that workout plan doesn’t work for me!”

That is what we can do with the Word. We hear the Word. We say “I am hearing the Word praise God! That was a great quiet time!” But then if we don’t walk the Word out in our lives, very rarely will we get Word-type results if you don’t walk the Word out. You can get a little benefit from hearing it, but not much! You have to do the Word! And when you become a doer of the Word, you get Word-type results. But when you are not a doer of the Word, you don’t get Word-type results. But if you think you are doing what the Word says and you don’t get Word-type results, you deceive yourself into thinking that you shouldn’t trust the Word!

As it relates to the Great Commission, we’ve all seen it! Some of us are walking in it some. Some of us are walking in it not much. Some of us are walking in it more than we personally have before, but there is still so much more. But, don’t be deceived! Don’ think “been there, done that, didn’t work!” Don’t be disillusioned concerning the Commission! There is no second Christian job description. God is not going to transfer you to a different department!

There is only ONE Christian Job Description. You don’t have another option of another job as Christians. Every Christian has the same job. I will say it again: *Every Christian has the same job.* It is written for us: “this is your job description!”

That’s not to say that there are not five-fold ministers for the equipping of the saints for the works of service (Eph. 4). I’m equipping you, through this teaching, right now for your job! But do you know who else has the same Christian Job Description? Me! Every Christian has the same job! Some people will be called to minister to the Body of Christ to equip them for their job.

Your Homework

Again, your homework is going to be to keep the piece-by-piece Commission before your eyes. Sometimes as a teacher, you will tell your students about their homework with a little bit of time left in the period in order to get them started on it while you are still with them. That way, if they have any trouble with it, you can help them before they go home with it. I have a hunch how some of us might struggle with keeping the Commission before our eyes, so I am going to give you some coaching to help with that.

To the Pure All Things are Pure

Let’s look at Titus 1:15. I am going to unpack this scripture for you, but it is going to take me a couple of paragraphs to do so. I think it is going to really bless you.

“To the pure, all things are pure, but to the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure ...” Let’s look at that again *“To the pure, all things are pure, but to the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure”* then it goes on to say *“their minds and their consciences are defiled.”*

Have you ever met someone who seems like they just can't take anything well? You tell them bad news, they blow up. You tell them good news, they blow up. You tell them news that doesn't even relate to them, and they blow up. Have you experienced this before with someone? To them, everything that they receive as input comes with baggage. They can't take anything well.

Let me give you another story. While taking course during my principal licensure program, our professor (who was a very good researcher) gave us a survey to take in class one day. It took about 10 or 15 minutes and had about 100 questions. He told us to "think of the most difficult person that you have to work with and while keeping that specific person in mind, I want you to go through his survey and you will find that there are about 100 questions about this person." So I took the survey.

At the end, we graded our surveys. He had a table for us to reference which decoded our score for each question and then we added up our total score - and you end up with this score from "0" to "100." It turns out he tricked us. The survey had nothing to do with the person. It had everything to do with our leadership dispositions towards the difficult person. So, I tallied my score up and got a "50" and thought "hmm, apparently I am only half-way good." It turns out with this scale that a score of "0" meant that you were perfectly harsh about this person's failings. "100" meant that you were perfectly acquiescent about this person's failings. The person with a score of "0" is exceptionally critical of the difficult person, whereas the person with a score of "100" cannot even bring themselves to acknowledge the difficulty of working with this person! To my surprise, my score of "50" was perfect - "perfectly neutral." It meant that there was I denying the difficulty of working with this person, but I was also in no way in angst or offense towards this person. They were just a difficult person to work with. That's it, nothing more, no baggage.

To the pure, all things are pure. What does pure mean? Have you ever had pure orange juice? It has no additives and no baggage! To the pure, all things are just what they are!

The context of this scripture is Paul is writing to Titus, instructing him to set order to these churches and put the elders in place. He tells Titus to particularly watch out for the circumcision party. "They are big on things like special days, genealogies, types of meats, circumcision ... all of these sorts of fleshly things." But really, meat is just meat. A day is just day. And not to be crude, but a foreskin is a foreskin. It's about the circumcision of the heart, not the flesh. So, I am extending this verse a little bit, but you can see the principle at play here.

So, according to this verse, who's pure? They are the ones that opposite of those who are "defiled and unbelieving." So, you're pure when you believe in Jesus and you know what He did for you on the Cross! When you are saved and you know it! It makes you pure! Your identity gets set straight in Christ! When your identity is set straight in Christ, all the other stuff is JUST WHAT IT IS. Why? Because you are not looking for your identity in your interaction with a co-worker! You are not

looking for your identity in your feedback from someone! When I mentioned that there are some people who just can't seem to take anything well - that's an identity issue; it's not a feedback issue.

When you're pure and you know that you are pure - when you know your identity is set - it doesn't matter what feedback you get because it doesn't shake you! To the pure all things are pure - meaning there's no baggage coming in with these things! The feedback is without baggage. It just is what it is!

What's the Difference Between Correction and Condemnation?

A question that will come up is "what's the difference between correction and condemnation?" I am aware that when you start looking at the Great Commission like I am telling you to do, there are going to be metrics that start coming up in your head. I want them to. God wants them to. Jesus said "if I don't do the works of the Father, don't believe Me." James said "faith without works is dead." Measurably more! Move the Needle! It's Joe's shoulder really healed! It's Kara's elbow, really healed! It's Erin, really healed! It's two ladies, really healed! It's a co-worker really healed! It's a breathless and blue newborn starting to breath - really healed! It's real people that you've led to the Lord! It's real people that you've disciplined! I know that as you look at the Great Commission and the fruits that are to follow, you are going to have metrics that come up in your head. Good; I want them to! They should.

But I also know that there is something else that can start to come into your head. It's condemnation. We don't want it. Absolutely zero condemnation. Because of our foundation in grace, you have the unique ability that we can do the Great Commission with absolutely no compromise to what it actually really says - and absolutely no condemnation! Both! That's the title of this teaching about *Commissioned!* ... "No Compromise, No Condemnation."

So, a question that may come up in your own mind is "what's the difference between correction and condemnation?" Well let's look at Titus 1:15 again. Remember that "to the pure all things are pure." If you get feedback that is kind of harsh from someone, and you know that you are pure before God, you will think "well, they kind of delivered that harshly, but there are some helpful things in there, so I will take what is helpful and implement them. I don't feel badly. They didn't deliver the feedback the way I would, but it's OK." No baggage!

Similarly, you could have someone give you bad input. Have you had someone give you bad input before - even with the best intentions? Remember, we are pure in Christ! Our identity is completely secure in the finished work of the Cross! So, what's it matter that they are giving you bad input! Just smile, thank them for their intention and move on! You don't even need to tell them that their input is bad! Let it roll off you like water off of a duck's back! If you fee like you need to tell them so that they get feedback, that's fine, but it's not about you! It just is what it is and if it wasn't helpful, just leave it! No problem, amen!

Catch this! Isaiah 54:17 gives even another, more extreme, example. It says that if a tongue rises against you in judgement - to accuse you, to condemn you - what do you do? You condemn it! Why? Because you know you're pure! You know you are good to go! If a tongue is leveling false accusations against you, you still, even in that extreme circumstance, don't need to be getting all bent out of shape about it. You know who you are, you know it's not true and has nothing to do with you! You condemn that tongue. And how do you do that? Because *"your righteousness is from Me declares the Lord!"*

We know who we are in Christ and we don't need to be getting all bent out of shape about feedback! So, "what's the difference between correction and condemnation?" Well, someone who knows who they are in Christ, who knows the purity that they have in Christ. They know that they are not perfect in practical terms. They know that they need feedback in order to be a better parent, boss, employee, etc. And even if the feedback is bad, it doesn't fluster them!

But as a counter example, there are other believers who do not yet realize who they are in Christ. For them, even the Word of God itself or a loving Word from their Father in prayer will be filtered through a lens of condemnation. To them, even the corrective words of a very loving Father are impure to them. To them, nothing is pure, because as a man thinks in his heart, so is he. (Prov. 23:7) When you are condemned in your heart, you find the next opportunity to provide evidence of your condemnation. When you are pure in your heart, you are looking for your next opportunity to be righteous.

So one type of person because of their mindset about their righteousness before God can take all sorts of feedback - kind or harsh, wrong or right - and not get bent out of shape. Whereas for the other person with a different mindset, even the very loving Word of God can condemn them. The answer is the difference between correction and condemnation is in the heart of the hearer, not the voice of the giver!

Now, as believers, we should always be sensitive to deliver messages as well as we can. But, as believers who know who we are in Christ, we should be so easy to talk to in corrective ways. It should be effortless for our boss to talk with any of us! It should be effortless for the Word to talk with us!

A 3-Step Scriptural Pathway out of Condemnation

Now, if you get stuck in condemnation, I am going to give you three scriptures that form a pathway right out of condemnation!

Romans 5:19 says *"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."* Here's the takeaway: Your righteousness in Christ is COMPLETELY

TOTALLY and ENTIRELY INDEPENDENT OF YOUR OBEDIENCE! Your obedience cannot make you righteous. And once you are saved, your obedience cannot make you more righteous. Your obedience never made you righteous. When you believed in Jesus, it was HIS OBEDIENCE that made you righteous!

Now, you can do war with that Romans 5:19 scripture! I am giving you a three-scripture set that will punch the accuser's lights out - and it will change your own thinking if your thinking is bad! 2 Corinthians 10:5 tells us how to use Rom. 5:19 in spiritual warfare "*casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.*" If you are condemned because you don't measure up, you say "wait a second! I measure up before God because Jesus measured up before God! I'm in Christ! My righteousness is IN CHRIST and His obedience! And then if the accuser of the brethren says "yeah, but you didn't measure up over here" you point the enemy to Jesus and say "look at HIS OBEDIENCE - that's where my obedience lies!"

Now look at Romans 8:1! What's the result? "*There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.*" Now look at verse 3! "*For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the (our) flesh, God did ...*" That's it! God did it! We couldn't do it, but God did it in Christ on the Cross! Romans 10 says "Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness for all who believe!"

So, you say "there is no condemnation because God already did the work!" REMEMBER, our Christian Job Description (our Commission) has NOTHING to do with our identity in Christ! Nothing to do with our identity in Christ! Your job description has nothing to do with our identity in Christ! Jesus already took care of all the obedience for your righteousness. The great commission is not "the great commission for righteousness ... to earn righteousness!" It is just the Christian Job Description!

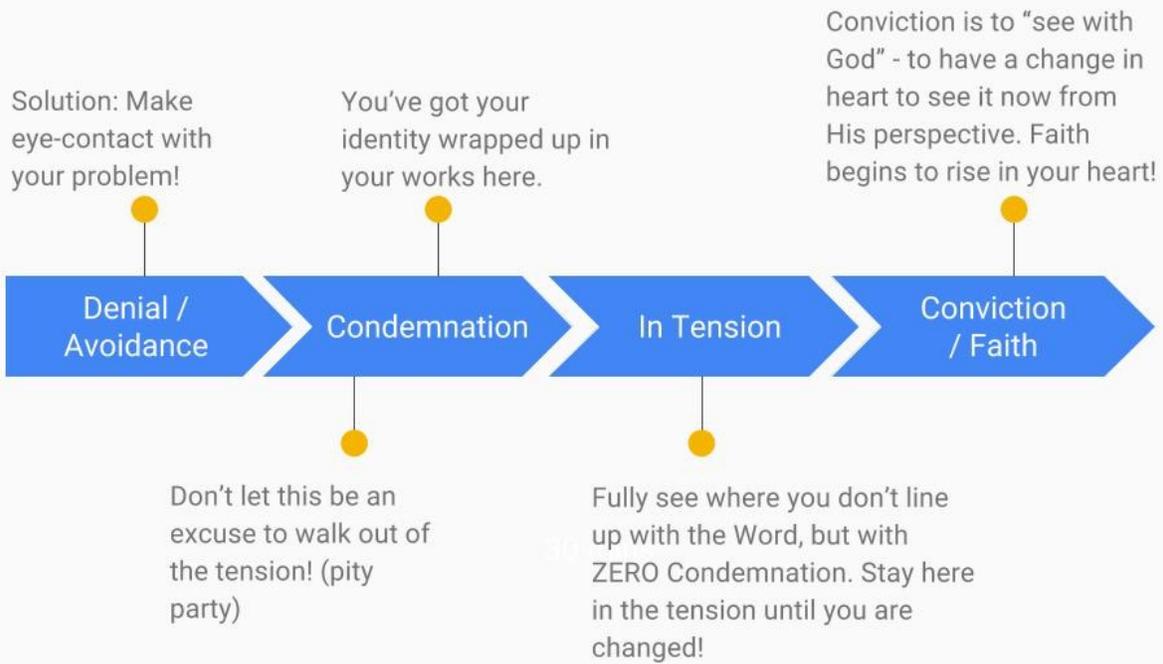
The Scriptural Learning Process

Now remember I said that your homework will be to keep the Commission before you. But, I didn't want you to struggle with that homework, so I am giving you some helpful hints. Let's recap and summarize those points by looking at the scriptural learning process:

- Remember that the first stage is ***denial / avoidance***. You shield your eyes from certain scriptures. Look at the Word square in the eyes - that's the solution. Look at the Commission and don't let it depart from your eyes. Don't gloss over it. Don't average it out (justify yourself). Don't claim that it doesn't work because you've tried it half heartedly before with correspondingly poor results.

- The next step can be ***condemnation***. In other words, after you get done denying that it is really there in the Word (or you have someone like me that puts it before you in bullet point format and tells you to look at it), what that can lead to is condemnation. At this stage, remember it is important to not let your identity get wrapped up in your job description. To the pure all things are pure. If you are looking at the Commission and you think “I don’t do any of this.” OK, that feedback is PURE. There’s nothing more to it. It’s just data. It’s feedback. It’s not your identity. Please!
- Now, the third stage is where you want to get for now (if you are not already there), but in order to get there you are going to need to look intently at the Commission and the signs that are to follow. Get past the condemnation. Do the spiritual warfare. Coach your mind - “wait a second, it’s His obedience, not mine. This doesn’t have to do with my identity, it’s just my job description! It’s just my job.” In fact, some of us need to stop getting your identity from your job anyway - your natural job. Seriously, that will wreck you. It will make you a slave, not as good as an employee as you could be, and make you nervous every night about the next day. Don’t do that. Stop getting your identity from your job; you get your identity from Christ, and then you help people.
- The third step is to ***embrace the tension***. You want to be look squarely at the Commission and the things that will follow and feel the tension in your heart. Feel the tension that says “I don’t see that.” Or feel the tension that says “I don’t want to do that.” Feel that tension and then do what Pastor Brad has taught us: when he sees something in the Word that he knows he doesn’t line up with yet, he says “Lord, burn it out of me.” That’s that step right here. When you stick in the tension. You say “I know, my heart’s going to change; I’m going to line up with that right now. And if I don’t line up with that right now it’s going to be tomorrow. And if it’s not tomorrow, it’s going to be a week from now, but I am not letting it depart from my eyes until I see my heart change to line up with the Word because that is my standard!”
- You have to hold the tension! Now, I need to warn you that some of you are going to be prone to throw a pity party for yourself and go back into condemnation in the midst of the tension. In other words, you make a villain of the voice that told you the truth - so that you can fight to not have to change yourself. (Now that part I only got by Word of Knowledge about the process that some of you have to go through in your heart - it had nothing to do with me :) ! Seriously, I know that process! Understand that we are prone to use condemnation as a cop-out. You are not victimized that someone told you the truth or that the Word told you the truth! Stay in the tension.
- When you stay in the tension, you start to have a conviction that rises in your heart. Remember that faith is a conviction of things not yet seen. (Heb. 11:1, ESV) Conviction is to see with God

- to see from His perspective. You start to get it! When you have the Word in you and you start to get it, you begin to have faith rise up in your heart for that very exact thing.



Conclusion

So we are going to do the Great Commission with zero modification AND zero condemnation! Commissioned! It's a good thing! The Commission has NOTHING to do with your identity in Him. It has everything to do with a job that needs done. Keep it before you and we're going to build from there. Amen!

Text Summary (for reading as a group)

It's a good thing to be commissioned. It's a good thing to know your commission and to be walking in your commission. In fact, when something isn't operating according to its commission, we call it "out-of-commission." We don't want to be out-of-commission Christians.

It's also important to know what your job is. Your commission is your job description. When you know your boss' expectations of you, it becomes much easier to meet their expectations. Similarly, having "clear and consistent" expectations for your children's behavior is essential to successful parenting. In terms of teaching and learning, educational research has shown time and again that when teachers have high expectations of students, those students achieve greatly! When you have clear, consistent and high expectations for your students, children or employees, they achieve them.

Recently an Australian researcher compiled data on 80 million students and 159 different generalized ways researchers had tried to positively influence their growth and learning. Do you know what the most effective way to cause student growth was? It was when students had their own learning expectations! High expectations from a teacher cause students to learn, but the thing that causes them to learn even more is when they've internalized those expectations for themselves! Similarly, knowing your Christian "job description" isn't enough—the power is in what YOU THINK the job description is. You will always do what you *think* your job is.

A commission is a job description. For example, an NFL football team is commissioned by their coach to win their division and then hopefully go to the Super Bowl. A salesman is commissioned to make sales. A teacher is commissioned to teach their subject matter. But what are we commissioned to do as Christians? What is our job description? This is a very important question and to get the answer we must look at the Great Commission! According to the Gospels, our Great Commission is as outlined:

- Go everywhere
- And, everywhere you go, preach the gospel to every creature
- Make disciples of all the nations
- Baptize those that believe in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- Teach them to observe all things that I (Jesus) have commanded you

We also see that these signs should follow those who believe:

- Cast out demons
- Speak with new tongues
- Pick up serpents
- If you drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt you
- Lay hands on the sick and they will recover

Often we avoid seeing things because we want to deny them. Avoidance is a characteristic of denial. Some of us might not want to step on a scale. Some of us might not want to talk through our marriage or our

parenting. When we want to deny the need to act, we avoid seeing what we don't want to act on. Don't be sheepish about it—look at the Great Commission! Really think about the signs that will follow those who believe. Look them square in the eyes and don't let your gaze depart from them.

We also tend to average out the parts of our job description. We think, “I am honoring to my boss, pleasant to my co-workers and I have great ideas.” But what about the specific tasks you were hired to do? Would you be hired again for each specific task? The Bible is clear that we should do EVERYTHING as unto the Lord! *Everything* does not mean in aggregate. It means individually, task-by-task and item-by-item. We should go through each part of our Christian job description and ask ourselves if we are carrying out each element with excellence as unto the Lord—such that we would be gladly hired again.

It is worth noting that many Christians take the Fruit of the Spirit and make that their job description. The Fruit of the Spirit is the “style” in which we operate, but it is not the “what” of our job description. Imagine having someone in your office who was great at customer service but they spent their time chatting with customers when they were supposed to be bookkeeping. The customers may like them but they're not doing their job!

It is really important that we know our boss' job expectations of us—what he or she considers success. We have been given a commission - a job description and we need to execute it to the best of our ability, line-by-line. James 1:22 says, “*but be doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*” If we hear the Word, but then don't walk the Word out in our lives, very rarely will we get “Word-caliber” results. If you think you are doing what the Word says and you don't get results, you deceive yourself into thinking you shouldn't trust the Word! As it relates to the Great Commission, don't think “been there, done that, didn't work!” Don't be disillusioned concerning the Commission!

There is no secondary Christian job description. God is not going to transfer you to a different department! There is only ONE Christian Job Description. *Every Christian has the same job.* That's not to say there are not five-fold ministers for the equipping of the saints for the works of service (Eph. 4). Some people will be called to minister to the Body of Christ to equip them for their job, but they also have the same Commission.

Some of us might struggle with keeping the Commission before our eyes, so let's look at Titus 1:15, “*To the pure, all things are pure, but to the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure ...*” Have you ever met someone who seems like they just can't take anything well? To them, everything that they receive as input comes with baggage. But, to the pure, all things are pure. What does pure mean? Have you ever had pure orange juice? It has no additives and no baggage! To the pure, all things are just what they are! The context of this scripture is Paul writing to Titus, instructing him to set order to these churches and put the elders in place. He tells Titus to particularly watch out for the circumcision party because they are big on things like special days, genealogies, types of meats, circumcision—all fleshly things—when really, meat is just meat and a day is just day.

According to this verse, the ones who are pure are opposite of those who are “defiled and unbelieving.” So, you're pure when you believe in Jesus and you know what He did for you on the Cross! When your identity is

set straight in Christ, all the other stuff is JUST WHAT IT IS. Why? Because you are not looking for your identity in your interaction with a co-worker or feedback from someone. To the pure all things are pure—there's no baggage with these things. The feedback is without baggage. It just is what it is!

When you start looking at the Great Commission like this, there are going to be metrics that start coming up in your head. God wants them to. Jesus said, "If I don't do the works of the Father, don't believe Me." James said, "Faith without works is dead." Measurably more! Move the needle. It's real people, really healed! It's real people, really led to the Lord. It's real people, really disciplined!

But, in addition to the metrics, condemnation can also come into our minds. We don't want it. Absolutely zero condemnation. In looking at the Commission, we should be no compromise and no condemnation. So, what's the difference between correction and condemnation? It turns out that the difference is in the heart of the hearer, not the voice of the giver. It should be effortless for the Word to talk with us when we remember who we are in Christ!

If you start to feel stuck in condemnation, here are three scriptures that form a pathway right out of it! Romans 5:19 says, "*For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.*" Your righteousness in Christ is COMPLETELY TOTALLY and ENTIRELY INDEPENDENT OF YOUR OBEDIENCE! When you believed in Jesus, it was HIS OBEDIENCE that made you righteous! Now, 2 Corinthians 10:5 tells us how to use Rom. 5:19 in spiritual warfare "*casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.*" If you are condemned because you don't measure up, you point the accuser of the brethren to Jesus and say, "Look at HIS OBEDIENCE!"—that's where my obedience lies! What's the result? Look at Romans 8:1 and 3 "*There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus ... for what the law could not do in that it was weak through the (our) flesh, God did ...*" That's it! God did it! REMEMBER, our Christian Job Description (our Commission) has NOTHING to do with our identity in Christ! The great commission is not "the great commission for righteousness ... to earn righteousness!" It is *just* the Christian job description!

In wanting to be transformed concerning the commission, the first stage is **denial / avoidance**. Look at the Commission and don't let it depart from your eyes. Don't gloss over it. Don't average it out (aka justify yourself). Don't claim that it doesn't work because you've tried it half heartedly before with correspondingly poor results.

The next stage can be **condemnation**. At this stage, remember it is important to not let your identity get wrapped up in your job description. To the pure all things are pure. If you are looking at the Commission and you think "I don't do any of this." OK, that feedback is PURE. There's nothing more to it. It's just data. It's just feedback. It's not your identity. Don't get your identity from your job; you get your identity from Christ, and then you help people.

The third stage is to **embrace the tension**. You want to look squarely at the Commission and the things that will follow and feel the tension that says, "I don't see that" or "I don't want to do that." You stay in that

tension and say “I know, my heart’s going to change, but I am not letting it depart from my eyes until I see my heart change to line up with the Word because that is my standard!” Be careful not to throw a pity party for yourself and go back into condemnation in the midst of the tension. Understand that we are prone to use condemnation as a cop-out. You are not victimized because someone or the Word told you the truth! Stay in the tension - you can do it and you will be changed! You begin to actually have *faith* rise up in your heart for the scripture you are keeping before your eyes!

We are going to do the Great Commission with zero modification AND zero condemnation! Commissioned! It’s a good thing. The Commission has NOTHING to do with your identity in Him. It has everything to do with a job that needs done. Keep it before your eyes and we’re going to build from there. Amen!

Points to Ponder . . .

- What are the components of the Great Commission?
- How can avoidance, averaging, and “tried it already” keep us from seeing the Commission clearly?
- How are the fruit of the Spirit related to, yet different from our Christian “job description”?
- How can the truth in Titus 1:15 help us take correction for what it is and nothing more?
- What scriptures can help us stay out of condemnation as we press in to our Commission?
- What does it look like to “embrace the tension” of a challenging scripture until it changes you?