

The Compass

A tool for disciplers

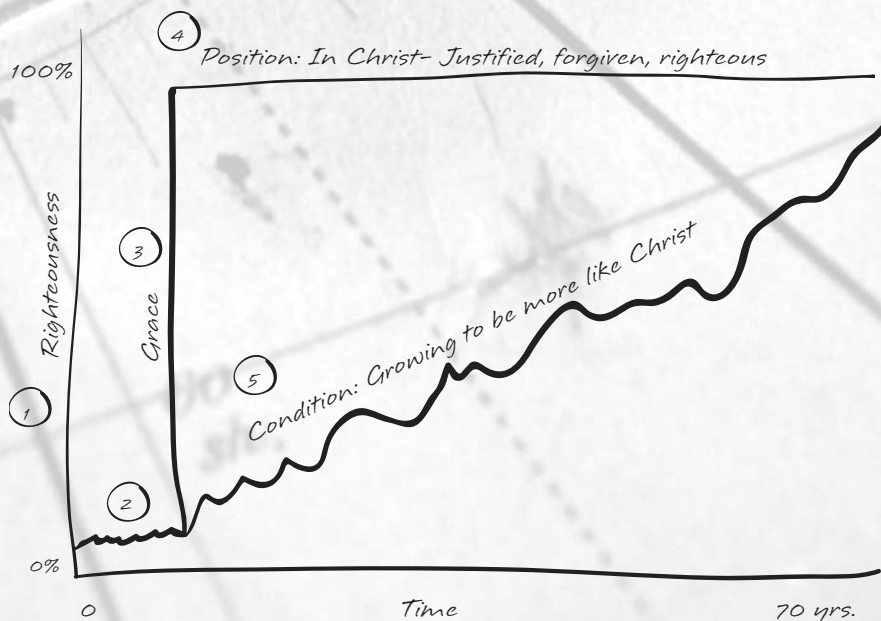
WALK BY FAITH



POSITION IN CHRIST

CONVERSATION ON THE JOURNEY

To help make the difference between our position and our condition clear, you can draw a simple diagram and share a few passages of Scripture. As you look through the following passages of Scripture and ask the following questions, draw the corresponding parts of the diagram.



1) The vertical axis is meant to show righteousness, while the horizontal denotes time over the course of your disciple's life.

Our Position

Before we knew Christ

2) Take a look at Ephesians 2:1-3.

What was true of us in our position in Adam before Christ?

Spiritually dead (no life of God within us), enslaved to sin.

Walked according to the world, flesh, and the devil.

We were children of wrath (confer John 3:36).

Rom. 5:12-19 - death, judgment, condemnation, made sinners.

THIS WEEK'S EXCURSION

Your objective in this lesson is to help your disciple understand his position and identity in Christ. Help him internalize that his position is secure because of what Christ has done, and is not based on the daily condition of his life.

We want to hear from you! Please send your feedback on this guide to centerfield@uscm.org

POSITION IN CHRIST • PG 2

MORE OF THE CONVERSATION

When Christ came into our lives

3) Now read Ephesians 2:4-7.

What motivated God to take action on our behalf?

His love and mercy.

What did God do for us at salvation?

He made us alive with Christ.

He raised us up with Him.

He seated us with Him in the heavenly places.

On what basis did He do it?

By grace, not because we deserved it, not based on our merit.

Grace means unmerited favor - "even when we were dead."

What does His action in saving us display to the world?

The surpassing riches of His grace.

Now that we are in Christ

What is true of us in the following passages since we are in Christ?

4) Romans 5:1-2

We are justified, declared not guilty, standing in grace.

Hebrews 10:11-18

We have complete forgiveness, and perfect standing before God.

2 Corinthians 5:21

We are righteous before God with the righteousness of Christ.

Our Daily Condition

5) Though we are "perfect" in our position in Christ, we obviously are not perfect in our daily condition. When we trusted Christ, He not only gave us a perfect position in Him, He also began the work of making our lives look more and more like His. We want to continue making "progress" in our daily walk, so that our life in this world becomes more like who we already are in Christ. This is a life-long process that involves several spiritual disciplines that God has given us to help us grow and mature. These disciplines will be discussed in other lessons. Phil. 2:12-13 and 3:12-14 are just a couple of the many exhortations to pursue growth and maturity.

Summary – Living out of our Position

The primary emphasis of this lesson is who we are in Christ and the fact that God wants us to see ourselves "in Christ" and focus on our position, not our condition. The enemy wants us to focus on our condition as the basis for our acceptance before God. If we are doing poorly, we tend to condemn ourselves and live in guilt. If we are doing well, we can be tempted with pride and thinking that God accepts and loves us more because of our spiritual performance.

The main point is that God's love and acceptance toward us has always been based on grace (unmerited favor). We have not earned it nor deserved it from the beginning, and never will deserve His love based on our spiritual performance. We are accepted by God based on the righteousness of Christ, not based on our own self-righteousness, which we often erroneously think comes from sinning less, or exercising certain spiritual disciplines, or attempting to act righteously. We stand in grace and rest in our new position. We employ spiritual disciplines, like prayer, Bible study, worship, etc., to grow and get to know God better, but not to gain favor and right standing with God. We already have right standing because of who we are in Christ.

NEXT STEPS

Here are some questions you can ask your disciple:

1. What are some ways that you try to earn right standing before God?
2. When do you doubt God's love and acceptance of you?
3. When you sin, instead of claiming God's forgiveness and acceptance by faith based on His grace, what are some things you do to try to work your way back into believing that God loves and accepts you?
4. In what ways have you begun to see God change you in practice toward what you already are positionally?
5. Why do you think God does this through a process? What is gained?

Memory verse to meditate on :

Romans 8:1 "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

SIDE TRAILS

Justification by Faith Alone.

Sproul, MacArthur, Beeke. Soli Deo Gloria Books.

The Cross of Christ. John Stott. IV Press.

Discovering your Identity in Christ (#17 In touch series).

Charles Stanley. Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Order at christianbook.com