

WHAT IS MY IDENTITY IN CHRIST

One of the issues that people struggle with the most in today's society is that of personal identity. What we believe about who we are in this World, and our value and worth determines so much of the direction our life will take and the decisions we make. Personal identity affects how we view circumstances, how we deal with others, and even who we choose as friends, partners and spouses.

Your identity in a natural sense is determined by factors such as ethnicity, height and weight, vocation, race, etc. However, we are not just natural beings... we are also supernatural. We have a Heavenly Father and the King of Kings lives inside of us. We are much more than the labels the World tries to place on us.

YOUR TRUE IDENTITY

- If you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior, you have an identity that you may not be aware of. Your true identity stems from God and His Word. Toward the end of the lesson there is a list of many of the things God says about you.
- Your identity in Christ doesn't depend on your hair color, body type, or how many followers you have on Instagram. Have you allowed other people to define you and to tell you who you are and who you aren't? God has already defined you as a beloved member of the family of God!
- Sometimes we forget our true identity. Often, we gain our sense of worth based on people's applause and approval and what others think. In order to fit an image, we might try to portray ourselves as something we are not, and become someone we were never meant to be. As Paul said in **Galatians 1:10** (NLT)

Obviously, I'm not trying to win the approval of people, but of God. If pleasing people were my goal, I would not be Christ's servant.

- Your true identity contains a reality much more precious than anything this World has to offer. It's the eternal truth that the One who created you, says that you are the apple of His eye.

A FRESH START

If you're a follower of Jesus Christ, your life began anew at the moment you chose to follow Jesus. When you invite Jesus to become your Lord and savior, the person you used to be no longer exists in God's eyes. Just as Jesus died on the cross, I also die to all of my past failures and mess-ups and regrets. The

person I used to be with all of my sins and ungodly habits and addictions is gone, and I now have a new nature. I am now called an overcomer, more than a conqueror and the righteousness of Christ.

Scripture References:

Galatians 2:20 (NIV) *“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. This life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me”*

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV) *You're a new creation in Him; the old has passed and the new has come*

The reality is that If you've decided to follow Jesus with all your heart, you're never going to completely "fit in."

But the world's approval doesn't matter. You have a Heavenly Father who loves you more than anyone on this earth ever could. His love for you doesn't change, like people who fall in and out of love with you. It never fails. God's love is unconditional and without end.

Not all your friends will accept and be happy with your new Christian lifestyle.

As **1 Peter 4:3-5** (The Passion Translation) states: *For you have already spent enough time doing what unbelievers[a] love to do—living in debauchery, sensuality, partying, drunkenness, wild drinking parties, and the worship of demons. [c] They marvel that you no longer rush to join them in the excesses of their corrupt lifestyles, and so they vilify you. But one day they will have to give an account to the one who is destined to judge the living and the dead*

As you walk with Jesus you will discover that the love of God far outweighs it all.

YOU ARE WORTHY—EVEN IF YOU DON'T FEEL LIKE IT.

Many of us feel unworthy or down on ourselves at times in life. Often that's because we keep trying to find our worth and security in the wrong things. In Christ, we are firm and secure in Him (**Hebrews 6:19**). He's always with us, and we'll always have His stamp of approval. We never have to feel as if we have to earn His love. We never have to beg Him to stay, because He has promised to never leave or forsake us. His unshakable love is the essence of His nature. As 1 John 4:8 tells us: *God is love.*

God doesn't approve of all of our attitudes or behaviors but as is usually the case with a parent – child relationship, those things don't lessen our value in His eyes.

Again, as Christians, our true value comes from who we are in Christ, rather than from what we can do for him. Finding our value in our identity in Christ gives us freedom to:

- love more because we won't be afraid of rejection
- risk more because we aren't afraid of failure
- live with less fear of what others think of us.

Scripture References:

1 Peter 2:9 (NIV) *"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light."*

1 John 3:1 *See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.*

YOUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST

Do you know how special you are in God's eyes? If not, that's likely why you're still trying to fit in with the world. Here's what the Bible says about YOU once you have a new identity in Christ:

You are His own special possession. (1 Peter 2:9, Deuteronomy 14:2)

You are chosen, handpicked by the God who created the universe. (1 Peter 2:9, Jeremiah 1:5, Ephesians 1:3-4)

You are treasured. (Deuteronomy 7:6 14:2, 26:18)

You are irreplaceable. (1 Thessalonians 1:4)

You are loved beyond compare. (1 John 4:19, 4:10, 3:16, Romans 5:8, 8:35-39)

You are worth dying for. (1 John 3:16, Romans 5:7-9)

You are forgiven. (Ephesians 1:7, 1 John 1:9, Romans 8:1, 33-39)

You are His child. (1 John 3:1, Galatians 3:26)

You are set free. (Romans 6:18, Galatians 5:1)

You are precious to Him. (Isaiah 43:4)

You are set apart. (John 15:16, 19, 1 Peter 2:9)

You are complete in Christ. (Colossians 2:9-10)

You are free from any condemnation brought against you, and you cannot be separated from the love of God. **(Romans 8:31-39)**

Let these verses sink in deeply. Don't skim over them.

If you have given your life to Jesus, each of these Scriptures pertain to you. This is your permanent identity. It can never be removed, messed up, forsaken, taken away, or changed. This is your identity in Christ.

- This is who you are when you feel rejected and alone.

- This is who you are when you feel sad and overwhelmed.
- This is who you are when it seems like nothing is going right
- This is who you are when you've sinned so severely it doesn't seem forgivable, yet when we confess and repent of the sin we are cleansed, restored and made whole.

DO YOU BELIEVE IN YOUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST?

On good days, it might be easy to agree with who God says you are, but when the bottom falls out from under you, do you still believe it? Are you secure in your identity even after a huge failure?

No matter how you feel today, or who you used to be, or what you're going through, your identity in Christ is who you are for all eternity (meaning forever). Because Jesus died and rose again for the forgiveness of your sins, when you received His sacrifice on the cross as a gift to you, you instantly became His.

Your identity in Jesus doesn't change because of

- Failures or mistakes
- Mistreatment or abuse at the hands of others
- Abuse and wounds you may have experienced
- Your past sins
- Negative words or gossip spoken against you
- Your economic, or social or educational statuses
- Your nationality or family background

LIVING WITH YOUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST

Not only is it important to understand your identity, but it's important to actually live life like you know who you are. When's the last time you've looked at yourself like you're God's special, chosen child? When's the last time you have made a decision with the confidence that you've been set free in His love and grace?

How often do we see ourselves as stupid or ugly or a loser? That's not who we are. You were made in God's image (**Genesis 1:27**). God isn't ugly or stupid, and He doesn't make ugly or stupid. He makes masterpieces (**Ephesians 2:10**). YOU are a masterpiece of God—chosen and made by His hands. Hear the Lord singing over you, rejoicing in your new identity in Christ, embracing you as His child, and expressing how He loves you more than you can imagine (**Zephaniah 3:17**).

However, receiving these truths requires humility. We can bring our trophies, ribbons, and achievements before God, thinking that's what makes us special or desirable, but they are insignificant in comparison to our identity in Christ. Yes, our accomplishments can be great (and we don't mean to diminish them) but they don't qualify us for God's love. They don't add any value on our behalf in God's eyes. His love for us is truly unconditional, for once we have our identity in Christ, we become who we really are: Children of God.

Take some time to reflect on these truths of who you are and receive them in humility. Read that list regularly (and the Bible references) to remind yourself of your true identity. It's only through Jesus that we are these things. We didn't earn it, so we can't brag about it or take advantage of it. But we can claim it and hold our heads up high, put our shoulders back, because, in the end, we will stand victorious in Christ.

When you see yourself as Christ sees you, others may begin to see you that way too. If you are steady and secure in your identity in Him, your actions, speech, and life will express God's love. You may find more opportunities to share the Gospel, and Christ will be all the more glorified.

Remember who your Father says you are, because it's in Him where your true identity can be found. You're a child of the One True God. That's worth celebrating. You're worth celebrating.

Discussion

1 - Have each person read one of the truths from the list under the section: Your Identity in Christ. Have each one substitute the word "I" for the word "you". For example instead of reciting:

You are His own special possession, have the person declare I am His own special possession

Instead of *You* are chosen, handpicked by the God who created the universe..... it would be

I am chosen, handpicked by the God who created the universe.

2 – Ask the question: *What does it mean to you that God thinks of you as a masterpiece?*

Various answers will be given. Talk about how this is true of us when we become a Christian – not just when we reach a high level of spiritual maturity. Our value to God is not in how little we sin or how much we go to church, but in the fact that we are His children and that Jesus has forgiven our sins.

3 - How would it affect a person's life if they were a follower of Jesus but didn't believe that their true identity comes from who God? Say the person sees him/herself according to all the negative treatment they have received in the past.

Allow them to discuss. You're likely to keep living consistently with your pre-Christian identity (even though you don't have to anymore) and continue to experience the consequences of that lifestyle.