

**Back to Basics part 9**  
**“My Identity in Christ”**  
**1 Peter 2:9-12**

Today we continue our series called back to basics and we will be dealing with our identity in Christ:

*Music*

Please turn in your bibles to 1 Peter 2 and let's all stand together. Repeat after me these words:

**God is who He says He is**  
**He will do what He says He will do**  
**I am who He says I am**  
**I have all that He says I have**  
**I can do all that He says I can do**

**1 Peter 2:9-11**

**Pray** (pray Eph. 1 and 3)

**Introduction**

After the Civil War and the Emancipation Proclamation where slaves were legally declared free, many blacks in the south continued to live as slaves and those that did go free lived with great fear. Though they were legally free, most were not experientially free. Some were ignorant of their freedom. Others knew it but really didn't believe it. Many felt more secure as a slave, though the treatment was horrible than to go free and try to make a better life for themselves.

**Many Christians are like that today.** Though they are spiritually and positionally free in Christ, they continue to experientially live as though they were still slaves to sin and negative thoughts and guilt and bondage. Some are ignorant of their freedom and their position in Christ, others know it intellectually but not really in their spirit and heart.

**Well, today** we want to help change that as we look at a very important topic “Our Identity in Christ.” I believe that Understanding your identity in Christ is absolutely essential to your success at living the victorious Christian life.

**Personal:** the truths that we learn today have had a wonderful impact on my life. For the first few years of my Christian life, I lived a very performance based Christian life. I felt that I had to always do more in order for God to love me or be pleased with me. I never felt like I ever did enough. If I relaxed or even read the newspaper, I felt guilty. Though I was saved, I was under a load and not experiencing freedom and joy. Until I read a book called Victory Over Darkness and Tired of Trying to Measure Up, and God used the truths in these books to show me who I was in Christ and how my security and significance should come from who I am in Christ and not from what I do. And I can honestly tell you, learning who I am in Christ has had a huge impact on my life in terms

of joy and freedom and not having to perform to be OK with myself but getting my security and significance from what God says about me. And I want to live for Christ more because of this.

**TS** And that leads right into my first point:

### **1. How we view our self has a huge impact on how we live.**

The Bible speaks of this when it says:

Prov. 23:7 As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.

Even our secular society speaks of this when they have shown in study after study that a person who hears negative messages like “you are a lazy bum; you will never amount to anything; you are such a loser” often these people end up living irresponsible and unproductive lives. But those who are raised with a healthy self image are often the ones who go on to do something productive with their lives.

This is an important lesson for every parent here. We will go much further giving positive and affirming messages to our children than being critical or attacking or saying things that tear them down. This doesn't mean that we don't discipline and correct when needed but we should deal with behavior in a way that doesn't attack their identity.

By the way, many eating disorders like anorexia are due to the person seeing themselves as fat and in need of losing weight when in fact they are skinny and starving themselves to death. But they are so convinced they are fat. How we view ourselves has a huge impact on how we behave.

Here is the way it works:

**Beliefs about self --- thoughts about self ---- behavior**

This is why the Word of God puts such a premium on our thought life

**Rom. 12:1-2** transformed by the renewing of the mind..... regarding what? Who you are:

**Romans 12:3-4**

Don't think too highly of self and don't think too lowly of self. Think accurately about self. That is what we should be after: accurate self image.

How you view yourself is huge in terms of how you live. And the problem is that most either have an elevated view of themselves or a deflated view of themselves. It seems to be either Empire State Building or worm theology.....

Neil Anderson says it well in his book Victory Over the Darkness:

**“People cannot consistently behave in ways that are inconsistent with the way they perceive themselves.”**

Neil Anderson in [Victory Over the Darkness](#), p. 45

This is why in Paul's 13 epistles of the NT he uses the phrase "in Christ" 130 times. He wants us to grasp who we are in Christ.

This is why book like Romans and Ephesians are laid out like they are: often starting off with truths about who God is, and then what Christ has done for us, and then who we are in Christ before getting into the how we should live stuff. God wants our obedience and behavior to flow out of an accurate understanding of who He is and who we are in Him.

We see this in our passage in 1 Peter as well: chapter 2 about Jesus being the rock, and then

**v. 9** ... that you may declare His praises

**v. 11** .... Abstain from sinful desires and live holy

What we are after today is not just a **good self image** but rather an **accurate self image**.

What is important is not to just think positive of yourself, but rather to think accurate about yourself. And nothing is more true about you than what God says about you.

**TS** Therefore,

## **2. God wants us to see ourselves as He does.**

Since it is true that nothing is more accurate about us than what God says about us, it only makes sense that we should learn what God does say about us and then it is an issue of faith as to whether or not we will choose to believe and accept what God says about us.

Turn with me please to:

**Rom 12:3-4** (right after the charge to be transformed by the renewing of our mind)

3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

Accurate view of self and then the faith to believe it!

And this is why in Ephesians Paul takes time to pray for them to grasp....

**Eph. 1:17-19** Paul prays for the eyes of their heart to be enlightened concerning all they have in Christ...

**Eph. 3:14-20** he prays that they will grasp the incredible love of God.

So, here is the way God wants it to work:

**Truth about Our Identity ---- Thinking on these Truths ----- Behavior Pleasing to God**

**TS** Now the 3<sup>rd</sup> point is the question that we really want to camp out on today:

## **3. So what is our true identity in Christ?**

What is it that God says about those who are in Christ, and this is only for those who are in Christ and Christ in them. If you have not received Christ, hopefully this will show you how much you will receive when you do that.

### **1 Peter 2:9-12**

You will notice that as he talks about who they are in Christ, he reminds them of who they were before Christ. It can be as important to remember where you came from as it is where you are now. We appreciate more what we have in Christ when we remember where we were without Christ. The more you see your sin for what it is, the more you appreciate how wonderful grace really is.

**Ex. Jim B.** this week I had breakfast with a man who comes from a very difficult background (orphaned, abuse, abandonment)... so much more appreciative for what he has and so much more compassion for others because of his painful past. He appreciates what he has because he knows what it was like to not have.

We all love **Eph. 2:8-9** by grace are you saved through faith ....

But did you know that the verses before Eph. 2:8-9 tell us that that apart from Christ we are:

## **Outside of Christ**

### **Dead in sin:**

Eph 2:1

As for you, you were **dead in your transgressions and sins,**

Our spirit was dead and without life and unable to connect with God. People who don't have Christ can try to resurrect their spirit by transcendental meditation or yoga or other forms of modern spirituality but these things cannot make one's spirit alive. Only Christ can do that. Since our spirit is dead, we are:

### **Without God**

Eph 2:12

remember that at that time you were **separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.**

We don't have God in our life. Our sin separates us from God. And thus we have no real hope. So descriptive of so many today. And even though we may not realize it, if we don't have Christ in our life then we are:

### **Under Satan's Influence**

Eph 2:2

in which you used to live when you **followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.**

Satan is the one who blinds the minds of unbelievers and has them in his kingdom. You are either in the kingdom of darkness or the kingdom of light. Furthermore, without Christ we are:

## Object of Wrath

Eph 2:3-4

All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, **we were by nature objects of wrath.**

Because of our sin, we deserve the wrath and judgment of God, ultimately hell. **But** praise God Jesus came to die for us and to take that penalty of sin for us and literally bear the wrath of God for sin for us! He bore the wrath of God for us so what we would not have to bear it. That is called grace my friends.

**TS** When we recognize our sin, repent of it, trust in Christ alone for forgiveness and receive Him, in an instant we are born again and changed and made new!

**2 Cor. 5:17** if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation, the old has gone and the new has come. And 1 Peter 2 tells us some of what that new is, so let's look at that.

Look at **1 Peter 2** in your bible as we go through this. We learn that in Christ we are:

## In Christ

### Wanted

1 Peter 2:9

**But you are a chosen people ...**

**Eph. 1** says he chose us before the foundation of the world. God wanted you.

This is a quote from

**Dt. 7:6-8** where God tells the Israelites that they were chosen not because they were better than other people but just because God loved them and wanted them. God loves you and wanted you.

Gal. Says we are adopted and what often happens with adoption is that you pick your child. You wanted that child.

God wanted you and He still wants you.

**TS** Furthermore, in Christ you are:

### Welcomed

1 Peter 2:9

**But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood ...**

A priest in the time this was written was the only one who could come into the part of the Temple where God's presence dwelt in the most powerful way. He had access to the Holy of Holies. He was welcome there: to fellowship with God.

Through Christ, we have access to God. That is why the veil of the Temple was ripped in 2 when Jesus died. That is why

**Hebr. 4:14-16** says we can come boldly to the throne of grace.

You don't have to perform to a certain level to come to God. You simply have to be in Christ and that gives you a ticket 24/7/365!!! He welcomes you into His presence. You come boldly by the blood of Jesus and not by good works. Even when you have failed or fallen short, if you come through Christ you can come boldly.

The other thing the priest did was to intercede for others, to help others be right with God. As royal priesthood, we can do that as well, and having an eternal impact on others should give us a healthy sense of significance in life.

**TS** Now this next one is huge:

**Pure**

**1 Peter 2:9**

**But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation ....**

This is one of the hardest ones for people to accept. We are spiritually pure before God. This is why all Christians are called saints. This is why we can have a relationship with a holy God and know we are going to heaven.

Let me show you what this looks like, because this idea of being pure, holy, a saint is so hard for so many to grasp:

***White board this showing 3 circles:***

**The Bible says we are body, soul and spirit ....** It is our **spirit** that is holy and pure and righteous. Our spirit is the deepest and truest part of who we are, because it is eternal. What happens at this level when we are saved, cannot be changed or taken away. It was dead and is now alive. It was without God and is now the place where the H.S. resides. When God says we are holy; when the bible calls us saints; when the Word says we are righteous, this is where it is talking about. **Justification** means to be declared righteous. That happens at a moment in time. And we are sealed with the Holy Spirit until the day of redemption. **Sanctification** is the process of becoming more like Jesus at this level (mind, will, emotions), and **glorification** is when we receive a new and glorified body in heaven when Christ returns.

**Read Grudem on this:**

**(This is why the Bible says:**

**Col. 2:13-14**

**Ps. 103:12**

**Jer. 31:34**

**Micah 7:19**

**Let these truths just sink into your mind and spirit!**

Now listen carefully because this will make it very practical to you.

*Diagram from 1 Peter 2 message where arrow go from spirit to mind, will, emotions...*

This diagram shows you how sanctification occurs. Look at the arrows. What is true of our spirit is what is most true of us. It is who we are in Christ. We must meditate on these truths. We must renew the mind and take every thought captive concerning who we are in Christ. This is why you have what you have in the bulletin today: tools by which you can focus the mind on what is most true about you. As you think these thoughts, then it will affect your decisions (will). I will live holy because I am holy. I will love because I am loved. I will obey God because He has blessed me so much. And as we obey God and make godly decisions, our emotions are affected and even our physical health as well. This is how God designed it to work. It all begins with what is true about you and you believing it!

The more you think about the truths of who God is and who you are in Him, the more you will behave in a way that pleases God and the more your feelings will line up with God's will and your physical health will likely improve as well.

You might think this is just the power of positive thinking. NO. It is the power of truth believing.

(Ex. Think you need drugs or alcohol or other means to make you feel better or deal with stress or whatever, so you do that and it ends up affecting you in many negative ways. Vs. go to God with your anxiety and needs and you experiencing the peace that He gives and your physical health improves as well.

Neil Anderson nails it again when he says:

“As believers, we are not trying to become saints; we are saints who are becoming like Christ.”

Neil Anderson in [Victory Over the Darkness](#), p. 49

**TS 3<sup>rd</sup> truth.** In Christ we are:

**Accepted**

1 Peter 2:9-10

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God ... Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God ...

This is huge. Because one of the greatest needs we all have is to belong, to be secure in belonging. This is why so many are looking for the perfect love partner and spouse today, thinking that that someone special will meet this need. Only God can meet that need at the deepest level. And He wants to meet that need to be secure and belong by having us grasp the awesome truth that we belong to Him.

We are a child of God.

**1 John 3:1** so how great a love ... that we should called children of God, and such we are!

These are direct quotes from

## **Hosea 1:10-11; 2:23**

### *Story of Hosea*

You are accepted by God. You belong to Him. You are one of His children. This means unconditional love. He loves us despite our harlotry!!!

Ex. Parent and child

No matter what you do, He still loves and accepts you. No one can snatch you out of His hand. What a great thing to know that you belong. You belong to God.

**Rom. 8** nothing can separate us from His love. "I can separate myself." No you can't.

**The 2 greatest needs everyone has is for security and significance and we have that in Christ!!**

TS Finally and this one may seem a bit odd,

### **Uncomfortable**

1 Peter 2:11

11 Dear friends, I urge you, as **aliens and strangers in the world**

Don't be surprised if you feel a little out of place here sometimes. An alien is someone who is living in a foreign country. We are living in a foreign country in that we are made for God and heaven but while on earth we are aliens. This is not our true home. We should expect it to be difficult at times, to feel out of place. If we are comfortable here, we might not be living fully for Christ. It should be difficult and uncomfortable to live for Christ in a very sinful and Satan infested country and culture.

Uncomfortable now but one day we will be real comfortable ... our true home is heaven with God forever!!!

### **Conclusion 1**

Consider this:

**Ex. 2 coats:** which do you have on

So many people view salvation like this: I am a sinner, dirty, unclean ... and when I accept Christ he puts his robe of righteousness over my old self and chooses not to see the old, but really the old is who I am but God just chooses to overlook that. NO. Here is what really happens. The old has gone, the new has come. This is who you truly are Christian!!!!

That is why:

Ezek 36:26-27

26 I will give you a **new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone** and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will **put my Spirit in you** and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.



Rom 6:6-7

6 For we know that our **old self was crucified** with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin-

Col 3:9-10

9 Do not lie to each other, since **you have taken off your old self** with its practices 10 and have **put on the new self**, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

Eph 4:24

put on the **new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.**

2 Cor 5:17

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, **he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!**

Is this not what the Word says about you? Will you believe it??? If you do believe it, it will change your life.

*Quote from Birthright p. 47*

"The more you reaffirm who you are in Christ, the more your behavior will begin to reflect your true identity!" Neil Anderson in [Victory Over the Darkness](#)

**(Conclusion:**

Nothing is more true of you than what God says about you. Now how do we apply this?

1. Garbage Out: If necessary, get in touch with any garbage in your past that might be affecting your view of self. If you were abused ... fed negative messages ... had to perform to feel loved. There is an entire chapter in VOD about healing from damaged emotions...
2. When you sin, be quick to repent and then re-affirm your identity in Christ. I acted inconsistent with who I really am.
3. Purity In: Renew the mind: Renew your mind daily with the truth of who you are. Replace lies about yourself with truth.

*Back of sermon notes.* Helmet of salvation is the armor to put on.

**God is who He says He is  
He will do what He says He will do  
I am who He says I am  
I have all that He says I have  
I can do all that He says I can do**

**Pray**

**Response:**

Now the rest of this service is designed to help you make this experiential. I encourage you to really receive from God during our next section ...

Now it is not enough just to be taught these things, we need to experience them and so now I encourage you to sit back and allow yourself to receive from God ... His love and grace and presence over you as we continue our worship...receive from God's heart right now:

**Video**

**Song**

**Communion/worship**

**End:**

- Benevolent offering
- Bulletin: new ID card; meditation verses
- sign up for freedom walk on 9-11
- John Starnes concert tickets
- Check out an ABF