

IDENTITY

An identity is what makes a person who they are. God's word describes the life of a disciple of Jesus as one that is new and has a transformed identity. Once we are united in Jesus by faith in His death and resurrection, we become one with Him, meaning we take on His identity and His life. That means that the way we were defined before trusting to follow Jesus is gone and a new person with a new defined being now lives. Our new identity receives its worth and purpose in Jesus' living by the power of the Spirit to act accordingly. The challenge comes when sin and the things of this world try to give us an identity crisis. We can sometimes forget who Jesus re-created us to be and we can try to find ourselves defined by things other than Him. But we have confidence and we fight those battles from our new nature and identity in Jesus.

2 Corinthians 5:16-18

John 1:12

Galatians 3:27-28

Starting with Identity

Most of the epistles in scripture are divided into two sections. There is a theological section with positional truths for a believer and there is a practical section with truths on how to live in light of position. In other words, the rhythm of the Christian walk always starts with identity and flows to practice.

Ephesians chapters 1-3 are all about the believer's identity.

Read Eph. 1:3-5; 1:13-14; 2:4-6; 3:6

Ephesians Chapters 4-6 are all about the believer's walk.

Read Eph. 4:1; 4:17; 5:1-2; 6:1-4

God always begins by making sure we are secure in who we are first, then calls us to live accordingly.

Discuss: Based on these passages in Ephesians, how would you describe your identity in Jesus?

Spotting Identity Crisis

Often we fall into patterns of defining ourselves by something other than Jesus. This usually shows up when our walk doesn't match our position.

This happens when identity is found in...

What I do - When we think that our performance defines us, whether good or bad, past or present this could lead to either guilt or pride in our lives.

What I have - When we think that how much or how little we own on earth defines us, this leads to a lack of contentment and trust that God is sufficient.

Who I was - When we think that our past defines us, this leads to allowing previous strongholds or successes to keep us from getting better and moving forward.

Who's in my life - When we think that people in and around our lives define us, this leads to holding unhealthy expectations for others to live up to.

Proper identity perspective is to be fully secure in who we are because of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection for us.

(Philippians 3:7-14)

Discuss: What are factors that lead to these mistaken identities?

Remembering your Identity

When the Spirit of God convicts us of finding our identity in the wrong things, we must fight by God's grace to remind ourselves of who God has declared us to be in the gospel. When we are again secure in our identity by renewing our minds, we can then live accordingly. (Ephesians 4:20-24)

Practical tips

1. Memorize 3 verses that state the truth of your position in Jesus.
2. Preach them to yourself
3. Ask God to help you believe them in fresh ways.

Discuss: What about your identity in Christ can you praise God for?

Which of the mistaken identities challenge you the most?

What are some ways in which you strive to remember your identity in Jesus?

Pray

Ask God to help you walk confidently in the identity He has purchased for you.