

Session 2

Our Identity in Christ and Baptism

Our Identity in Christ

Once we become followers of Jesus Christ, we receive a new identity. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”* So, it is important to discover what God’s Word says about us as new creations in Christ.

Many people have a negative self-image based on what others have said about them, their past failures, or lies they have believed from the enemy. Others have a false identity based on their personal accomplishments and successes, not on what God says.

When we do not know who we are in Christ, or we believe the enemy’s lies about us, we can feel condemned, defeated, insecure, prideful, self-reliant, or fearful. Knowing our identity in Christ helps us feel secure in God’s love, and ready to discover and fulfill the purpose He has for us.

Read the following Bible passages to learn what God says about us as Christ Followers:

1 John 3:1-2. What does God call us?

2 Corinthians 5:21. What does this say we become?

Ephesians 2:10 says we are God’s _____ created to _____

Romans 8:15-16. This says we are _____ by God as His child.

1 Peter 2:9 says we are these four things, and called to declare His praise:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Ephesians 1:7. God’s grace provided for us _____ and _____

As a new creation in Christ:

- ▶ I am part of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27).
- ▶ My body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who lives in me (1 Corinthians 6:19).
- ▶ I am called a friend of Jesus (John 15:15).
- ▶ My citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20).
- ▶ God gives me every spiritual blessing I need (Ephesians 1:3).
- ▶ I am more than a conqueror (Romans 8:37).
- ▶ I no longer live in condemnation (Romans 8:1).
- ▶ God is for me and helps me through opposition (Romans 8:31).

It is important to see ourselves as God sees us. Satan, our enemy, wants us to believe lies about our identity, purpose, and value. Jesus is truth (John 14:6) and the truth will set us free (John 8:32).

Of all the things God says about us, what encourages you most right now?

Why is it important for us to know who we are as a new creation in Christ?

We all have a sinful past and have done things we regret. Many of us have had hurtful things done to us. However, God sent Jesus to set us free from sin, guilt, and shame. He adopted us as His children and gives us our new and true identity in Him. Knowing who we are in Christ helps us feel secure in God's love and gives us confidence to accomplish the purposes He has for each of us. He forgives us of all our sins (Ephesians 1:7) and puts His Holy Spirit in us to guide us (John 14:26) and empower us (Acts 1:8) to live for Him!

You are a whole new you! God invites you to know Him deeply, experience His life-changing love, and find great purpose in living for Him!

Baptism

Once a person commits his/her life to Christ, the next step in following Jesus is to be water baptized. However, for some this can be confusing. Many believe they were baptized because their parents had them sprinkled or dedicated in church as a baby. But there are no Bible verses supporting baptizing babies or for being baptized before making a personal decision to follow Jesus.

Others believe baptism saves them. In Luke 23:39-43, a thief on the cross put his faith in Jesus while hanging next to Him. In verse 43 Jesus told him, *"Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."* Jesus said the man would with him in heaven even though he was never water baptized.

Baptism is sometimes compared to a wedding ring. Wearing a wedding ring does not make you married; it is an outward sign to others of your marriage covenant with your spouse. In the same way baptism does not save you but is an outward visible sign that you have chosen to follow Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 1:14-17, *"I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, ¹⁵ so no one can say that you were baptized in my name. ¹⁶ (Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don't remember if I baptized anyone else.) ¹⁷ For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with wisdom and eloquence, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power."*

Romans 6:3-4

“Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”

Matthew 28:19

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,…”

Acts 8:12, 35-36, 38

“¹²But when they believed Philip as he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.”

“³⁵Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.³⁶ As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, ‘Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?’³⁸ And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.”

As Paul traveled throughout the world facing great opposition, he shared the Gospel so people would be saved by putting their faith in Christ. If baptism was necessary for salvation, then Paul would have made sure that the many he led to Christ were baptized. However, he tells us in the verse above, he only baptized a few. Paul wanted people to follow Jesus, not himself.

According to Romans 6:3-4, list three parts of Jesus’ life depicted by baptism:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

In Matthew 28:19, how do we relate to God as the Trinity when we are baptized?

In Acts 8:12 and 35-36, 38 what was the first thing people did after believing in Jesus?

Why should we be water baptized?

- ▶ We want to begin our new life with Christ in obedience. It is the first command Jesus gives us as believers (Matthew 28:19).
- ▶ Jesus modeled it (Luke 3:21-22).
- ▶ We want to allow Jesus to circumcise our hearts (help cut away the power of sin in our lives) to give us greater intimacy with Him (Colossians 2:11-12).
- ▶ Baptism helps us grow in our new life in Christ (Romans 6:3-4).
- ▶ It is a public example to others. Jesus was baptized in water, not because He needed to repent of sin, but as an example to us (Matthew 3:13-17).

Water baptism was instituted by Jesus Christ to be practiced until He returns. It symbolizes our faith in Christ's life, death, burial, and resurrection. It is a public declaration that, "I have faith in Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior." In Scripture people first made a confession of faith in Jesus Christ, then they were immersed in water. Some cannot be physically put completely under water for various reasons, but they can have water poured over them by church leaders, which serves as water baptism.

Summary Points:

- ▶ As a follower of Jesus Christ, I am given a new identity in Him.
- ▶ I am now a child of God.
- ▶ After becoming a follower of Jesus Christ (disciple), Jesus commands me to be water baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19).
- ▶ Water baptism identifies me with Jesus' life, death, burial, and resurrection.

Next Steps:

- ▶ Divide a sheet of paper into two columns. In the first column list some of your characteristics before putting your faith in Jesus. In the second column, list what God says about you now.
- ▶ Choose to believe what God says about you more than your feelings.
- ▶ If you have not been water baptized (full immersion), commit to do it the next time your church offers it.

"And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name."
Acts 22:16