

IDENTITY

(EXPERIENCING YOUR TRUE IDENTITY)



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CHRIST IS LIFE MINISTRIES

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(Experiencing Your True Identity)

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Christ Is Life Ministries

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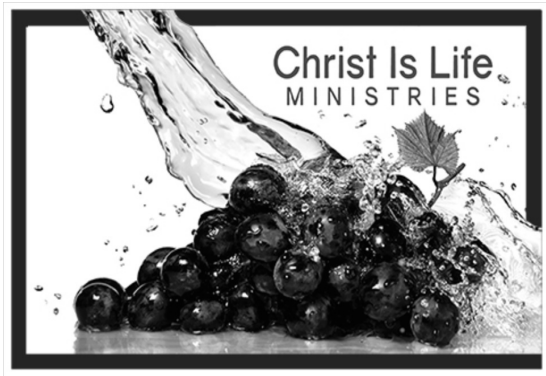
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Introduction

I have written a four-part series based on what I believe is our calling as Christians:

"We are called to grow into Christ-likeness and experience our true identity in order to live life for others and experience a deep relationship with God."

The series is called: ***Growing Up–Growing Out–Growing Deep***. Below is an overview of the study.

Growing UP – What it means to grow into Christ-likeness and to experience your true identity.

Book One - Growing Into Christ-Likeness

Book Two - Experiencing Your True Identity

Growing OUT – The overflow of Christ-likeness through you to selflessly live your life for others.

Book Three - Living Life For Others

Growing DEEP – Understanding the depth of God's love for you and how to experience a deeper relationship with Him.

Book Four - Experiencing A Deeper Relationship With God

This booklet, IDENTITY, is a summary of Book Two – *Experiencing Your True Identity*. I hope that, as a result of what the Holy Spirit reveals to you in this booklet, you will continue on by going through Book Two.

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Introduction

*“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a **new creation**; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.”*

2 Corinthians 5:17

When I ask the question (especially to Christian men), “Who are you?” most of them answer that question by telling me what they do for a living. In other words, who they are is what they do. This may work for non-Christians, but is this the right answer for Christians?

You see, for thirty years as a Christian, I answered this question like these men did. Only to discover in 1998, the words “new creation” in 2 Corinthians 5:17 mean that I have a “new” identity. Even though I had read that passage for years, I had no idea what it really meant that “I am a new creation” with a new identity. Do you?

As I learned more about what it meant that I have a new identity, how I saw myself increasingly changed. My personal life, my marriage, and my Christian walk began to radically change, as well. As a result of my experience, I discovered that knowing and living from our true identity in Christ is essential for Christians to experience a transformed life.

So, my initial question is: Do you want to know your true identity? If so, in the following chapters we will examine how your old identity was formed; the consequences of living from your old identity; how God gave you a new identity; and who you really are in your true identity in Christ. Let’s first look at what identity means, and then see how your old identity was formed.

CHAPTER ONE

Our Identity and How It Was Formed

What Do I Mean By “Identity”?

Since I will be using the word “identity” throughout this booklet, let me share with you what it means.

Your IDENTITY

***is defined as how you FEEL or what you
BELIEVE about yourself.***

As you read this, what are you thinking, believing, or feeling about yourself? A crucial question we need to ask ourselves as we think about this is, “Does what you believe or how you feel about yourself line up with God’s truth?” If it doesn’t, what might be the consequences of living from a lie versus God’s truth? Think about this verse for a moment:

“You will know the truth and the **truth will set you free.**”

John 8:32

I think you would agree that this is an incredible promise because we all want to live in greater freedom. What kind of freedoms are we talking about concerning our identity? Here are just a few:

- Freedom from the false beliefs that you believe about yourself
- Freedom from the fleshly emotions and behaviors that flow from your false beliefs

- Freedom that results in seeing yourself the way God sees you
- Freedom to experience your true identity and its effects on your personal life, your marriage, your parenting, and your workplace

Think about the converse of this verse for a moment. If the truth will set you free, then what will be the consequences of living from lies or false beliefs about yourself? (I define a false belief as any belief that does not line up with God's truth.) The answer is: bondage. Bondage is the consequence of not knowing or living from the truth. We will examine the types of bondage and their various consequences in the next chapter.

How Was Your Identity Formed?

Think back to your childhood for a moment. Do you remember any repetitive statements that your parents made to you about yourself? Maybe you heard positive statements like: "You are special." or "There is nothing you can't do." Or you may have heard negative statements like: "You are a failure." or "If only you could do better." or "Why can't you be like _____?" You may have grown up in a home where you heard mostly positive messages, a home where you heard mostly negative messages, or even a home where you heard mixed messages.

In addition to verbal messages, we all received non-verbal negative or positive messages. In my case, my father never said he didn't love me – he just never said he did love me. You might even remember body language from your parents that positively or negatively impacted you.

Your identity was formed as you heard these positive and/or negative verbal or non-verbal messages over and

over again. As you heard these messages, you began to draw conclusions about yourself. A positive conclusion might be: "I really am special." A negative conclusion might be: "I really am a failure." The more you heard such messages, the more they became reinforced and the stronger became your belief that they were true of you.

These are some of the conclusions I came to as a result of the negative messages I heard:

- I am not loved/lovable.
- I am rejected/rejectable.
- I don't measure up.

Equally, the person who heard positive messages, could also draw conclusions about themselves that contradict the truth of who they are in Christ. Here are some examples of those conclusions:

- I am self-sufficient.
- I can handle or fix any situation.
- There is nothing I can't do.

***These positive or negative conclusions lead
to two kinds of FALSE BELIEFS:***

POSITIVE False Beliefs and NEGATIVE false beliefs.

Let's look at some examples of both kinds of false beliefs.

NEGATIVE False Beliefs

Unworthy
Unacceptable
Rejected
A failure
Anxious
Inadequate
Weak
Defeated
Insecure
Fearful

POSITIVE False Beliefs

Secure in self
Self-confident
Self-sufficient
Successful in self
Self-reliant
Self in control
Resourceful in self
Competent in self
Fearless in self
Strong in self

When you look at the list on the left, it is pretty easy to spot those beliefs as not lining up with God's truth. However, when you look at the positive false beliefs, you might be saying to yourself, "What is false about those beliefs? They sound pretty good to me."

The clue as to why everything in that column is a false belief is the word "self." You see, in the Christian life you are either living "**in self**" or you are living "**in Christ.**" The truth is that God has designed us to live "in Christ." If this is a little confusing, I will clear this up as we get further down the road.

For now, I would like for you to pick out three of the false beliefs above, either positive or negative, that you feel or believe are true of you. Be honest with yourself. You might even ask the Holy Spirit to give you insight as you look down the list concerning your false beliefs.

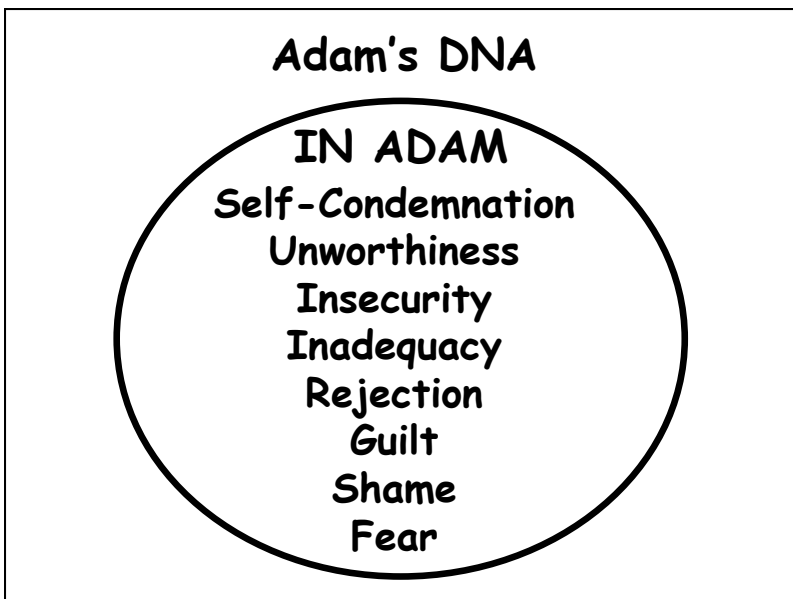
Positive False Beliefs Are Just A MASK To Cover Up Your Negative False Beliefs

Let me explain this with my story. Because of my upbringing, all of my false beliefs were on the negative side: inadequate, unworthy, and rejectable to name a few. However, I didn't want anyone to see that so I started wearing masks of self-confidence, self-reliance, and success so that you would not see my negative false beliefs.

However, you may be saying that you don't identify with the negative false beliefs because you are self-confident, self-reliant, etc. The truth is that you are just covering up as well because deep within each of us is insecurity, inadequacy, and unworthiness.

How can I be so sure this is true? If experience is any guide, I have discipled many self-confident, self-reliant, and successful Christian men and women. As a result of asking them a few questions, the Lord pulls off the masks of their positive false beliefs to expose their insecurities, inadequacies, unworthiness, etc.

Another way that I am certain that positive false beliefs are simply masks to cover our negative false beliefs is that we were all born with Adam's DNA. Let me illustrate on the following page what I mean by Adam's DNA.



Every one of us descended from Adam and Eve. As a result, we inherited their DNA which is passed to us through Adam. Look at Romans 5:12 to verify this truth:

*"Therefore, just as **through one man (Adam)** sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus **death spread to all men**, because all sinned." (Parenthesis mine)*

Therefore, we are all born with Adam's DNA of self-condemnation, insecurity, unworthiness, inadequacy, rejection, guilt, shame, and fear. Since we don't want anyone to see these things in us, then we look for masks of self-confidence, self-sufficiency, success, etc., to cover them up. Much like Adam and Eve looked for fig leaves to cover their naked bodies, we, too, look for ways to cover up our insecurities, inadequacies, etc.

***Because we don't want anyone to see our
Adamic DNA, we use positive false beliefs to
cover over our negative false beliefs.
In other words, we are using a lie to cover another lie.***

We are going to see in Chapter Three that Christians no longer have Adam's DNA. Rather, they have a new identity. However, if you don't know you have a new identity in Christ, you will continue to live out of your false beliefs, continue wearing masks which will result in staying in bondage to your false beliefs.

Where Are We Tempted To Find Our Identity?

The truth is that God has "hard-wired" us to find our identity. If we are not saved or if we are saved but don't know our true identity, then we look outside of ourselves to find our identity. I previously mentioned that most men find their identity in their jobs.

However, you can also try to find your identity in your intellect, your hobbies, your finances, your looks, or where you live. You can even find your identity in being a spouse or parent. If we are good at these things, then we will develop masks of self-confidence, success, self-security, self-competence, etc. However, there is a problem with these masks:

***Events can take place in your life that will
eventually UNMASK you.***

Let me give you an example to illustrate. I have a friend who lived in the most affluent part of San Antonio. He shared with me that his identity was in his finances, his business success, and the expensive home he was living in. However, at one point he lost his business and along with it, all his money and his home.

How do you think his self-confidence was working then? He told me that after he lost everything, he felt that his masks of self-confidence and self-sufficiency were gone with the result that he felt insecure and inadequate, in addition to feeling like a failure.

The problem is that these self-confident and self-sufficient masks can be stripped off through such things as job loss, divorce, or some debilitating health issue. When we are unmasked, our Adamic DNA (self-condemnation, insecurity, unworthiness, guilt, inadequacy, rejection, shame, fear, etc.) is exposed.

Summary

How do you feel about what you read in this chapter? Did it reveal or expose some messages and false beliefs that you have been believing? Do you buy into the idea that positive false beliefs can be masks for our Adamic DNA? In the next chapter, we are going to talk about our old identity and what flows from continuing to live from it.

CHAPTER TWO

Your Old Identity and The Consequences of Living From It

The Problem: What You Believed About Yourself Before You Were Saved Is Who You Really WERE

*“As a man thinks in his heart **so is he.**” Proverbs 23:7*

Your positive and negative false beliefs made up your “old identity.” I define your old identity this way:

***Your OLD identity is made up of EVERY belief you had
about yourself BEFORE you were saved.***

We can apply Proverbs 23:7 above, to your old identity because everything you believed about yourself before you were saved is who you really were. Whether you had positive or negative false beliefs, the sum total of them made up your old identity.

Think about this question: Why did I say that what you believed about yourself before you were saved is who you really “were?” I will give you the answer in the next chapter.

What Are The Consequences of Living From Your False Beliefs?

The problem with living from your false beliefs is that there are consequences not only for you but for those around you. Those consequences can be summed up in one word: the FLESH. Paul refers to our “flesh” in Romans 7:14:

*“For we know that the Law is spiritual; but I am of **flesh**, sold into bondage to sin.”*

If you don't understand the word “flesh,” the biblical meaning of this word is man’s desire to live life with himself as the source, independent or apart from God as the Source. However, in the context of our false beliefs, flesh is defined as:

The sinful ATTITUDES and BEHAVIORS that result from our adopting FALSE beliefs about ourselves.

Below, in Galatians 5:19-21, are some examples of those sinful behaviors/attitudes:

“Now the **works of the flesh** are obvious: **fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these....”**

Galatians 5:19-21a

These sinful attitudes and behaviors not only negatively impact you but also your marriage, your children, your friends, and your co-workers. Let me give you some examples.

Personal Impact

If you have a false positive belief that results in your acting self-confident, then fleshly behaviors that flow from that false belief might be boasting about your accomplishments and seeing others as inferior. If you have

a negative false belief that you are inadequate, you might exhibit a fleshly behavior of being a people-pleaser.

Marital Impact

If you have a positive false belief that you are self-reliant, then you might have a fleshly attitude of selfishness towards your spouse. If you have a negative false belief that you are rejected, then you might in turn reject your spouse.

Parenting Impact

If you have a positive false belief you are successful in self then you might be demanding of your kids to be successful as well. If you have a negative false belief that you are unworthy, then you might try to manipulate your kids so that they will like you or love you.

Workplace Impact

If you have a positive false belief that you are successful in self, then you might be overbearing or demanding of others to perform to your level. If you have a negative false belief that you are insecure, then you might try to compensate for your insecurity by being controlling.

If you persist in living from your false beliefs, they will continue producing toxic fleshly behaviors that will be deadly, harming both yourself and your relationships.

Summary

I hope you now have a better understanding of what your false beliefs are, how they formed your old identity, the fleshly behaviors that flow from your false beliefs, and

the negative impact your fleshly behaviors have on yourself, your marriage, your kids, and your workplace. Let me illustrate what we have learned up until now.



I hope this diagram helps you understand why God needed to do something to our old identity in order for us to no longer live from the fleshly behaviors that flow from our old identity. Let's see what He did in the next chapter to deal with our old identity and give us a new one.

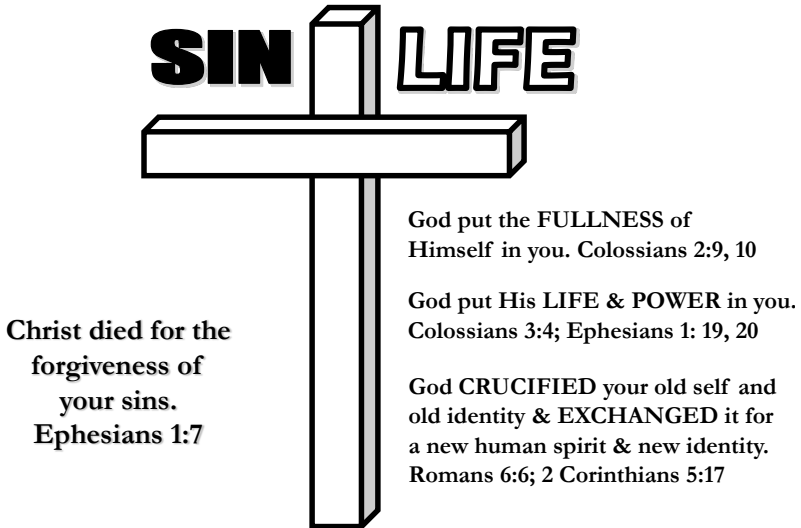
CHAPTER THREE

What God Did At Salvation To Give You A New Identity

The Two Sides of The Cross

I believe the easiest way to illustrate all of what God did in you at salvation is through the diagram below which I call “The Two Sides of The Cross.”

The TWO Sides of The Cross



The SIN Side of The Cross

I call the SIN side of the cross the good news of the gospel. It is through Jesus Christ's suffering and dying on a criminal's cross that God was able to forgive us of all our past, present, and future sins. By believing in Christ as your

personal Savior, you are saved from your sins resulting in your having eternal life and spending eternity with God.

*“...**Believe** in the Lord Jesus, and you will be **saved**....”*

Acts 16:31

The LIFE Side of The Cross

However, there is another side of the cross I call the LIFE side. Now that you have believed in Jesus as your Savior, you need the LIFE side of the cross to live the Christian life. Three key things happened at the point of salvation beyond being saved.

1. God put the FULLNESS of Himself back into man.

At the moment of salvation, you not only received Jesus as your Savior, but you also received the complete Godhead (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). We see this in Colossians 2:9, 10:

*“For **in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.**”*

These verses are telling us that the fullness of the Godhead is in Christ and that Christ is now in you with the result that you have the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit living in you. You no longer have a God Who is separated from you. You now have the complete Godhead IN you!

2. You now have the fullness of God’s LIFE and POWER in you.

In addition to receiving the fullness of God, you also received all of His Life and Power.

a. Christ's LIFE

*"... I am the way, the truth, and **THE LIFE**." John 14:6*

*"God has given us eternal life, and this **life is in His Son**.
He who has the **Son has THE LIFE**."*

1 John 5:12a

We see at salvation that God gave us THE Life that is in Christ. What are some examples of THE Life that we now possess?

Christ as THE LIFE means that you contain ALL of Christ's:

Unconditional love	Victory	Worth
Acceptance	Faith	Freedom
Patience	Strength	Peace
Power	Forgiveness	Understanding
Security	Fearlessness	Wisdom
Discernment	Adequacy	Humility
Boldness	Rest	Christ-confidence
Righteousness	Selflessness	Compassion
Courage	Hope	Gentleness
Joy	Control	Faithfulness

Since you contain the life of Christ, this means that you have available to you at any time all the Christ-life characteristics listed above.

b. God's POWER

In addition to Christ's life, you received all of God's supernatural power at the point of salvation according to Acts 1:8:

*“you will receive **power** when the Holy Spirit
has come upon you...”*

Since you contain all of the Godhead, then all of God’s power resides in you. God knew that without His power in His children, they would not experience transformation. Therefore, He put the fullness of His power in us to transform our lives.

3. God crucified your OLD SELF (Old Identity) and exchanged it for a New Self (New Identity)

a. God CRUCIFIED your Old Identity

Let me begin this section with this truth:

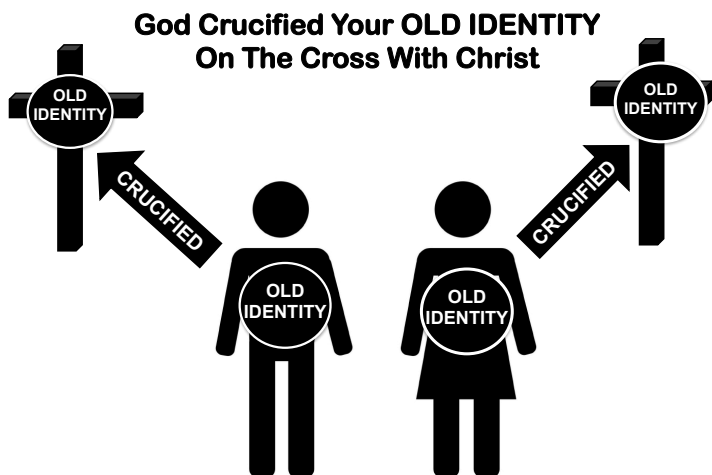
***Because of your spiritual condition before salvation,
you had NO choice but to BELIEVE the false beliefs
of your old identity and to LIVE FROM the fleshly
behaviors of your old identity.***

Remember that your positive and negative false beliefs about yourself prior to salvation made up your “old identity.” Since God did not want you to continue living from your old identity, He had to deal with it. Therefore, we see in Romans 6:6 that God crucified your old self including your old identity.

***“... knowing this, that our **old self (old identity)** was
crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done
away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.”***

Romans 6:6

Let me illustrate this truth in the following diagram:



You may be asking, "How can my old self and old identity be crucified with Christ since the crucifixion of Jesus took place over 2000 years ago?" The answer is that in the eternal realm with God there is no time. Everything is present with God so that regardless of when you were saved, God sees your old self and old identity being crucified with Christ on the cross.

This is truly beyond man's comprehension. Like the rest of scripture, this is a place where we must believe it by faith. Now that we know that God crucified your old identity, think about this question:

If your false beliefs are part of your old identity that was CRUCIFIED at the cross, then do you NEED to continue believing your false beliefs any longer?

I hope that your response is "no."

b. God EXCHANGED your Old Identity for a NEW One

Look at 2 Corinthians 5:17:

*“Therefore if any man is **in Christ**, he is a **new creation**; the **old things** passed away; behold, **new things** have come.”*

Let’s first look at the part of the verse that says, “the old things passed away.” The phrase “old things” refers to our old identity being crucified (passing away) with Christ on the cross. However, God didn’t just crucify the old identity – He exchanged it for a new identity. That is what Paul means when he says, “new things have come.”

Therefore, you no longer have an old identity with your false beliefs. Rather, now that you are “in Christ,” you are a new creation which means you have a new identity.

Ezekiel 36:26, 27 is another passage that describes the exchange of our old identity for a new one:

*“... I will ... put a **new spirit (new identity)** within you,
and I will remove the **heart of stone (old identity)**
from your flesh....”*

The next diagram illustrates how God EXCHANGED your old self and old identity for a new identity.



Now that you no longer have an old identity, let me end this section with this truth:

Now that God CRUCIFIED your old identity and EXCHANGED it for a new one, you NO LONGER have to believe the false beliefs you have about yourself.

CHAPTER FOUR

Who You Are In Your New Identity

Now That You Have A NEW Identity, You Are A PARTAKER of The Divine Nature

*“For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become **partakers of the divine nature**....” 2 Peter 1:4*

God made you a partaker of His divine nature the moment you were saved. **“Partaker”** in the New Testament Greek means “one who shares.” Therefore, as a result of your union with God in your human spirit, you share part of God’s divine nature.

Another way of saying this is that there are some “godly characteristics” that God is sharing with you. This does not mean that you are becoming deity. It means that there is a part of God’s divine nature that He is sharing with you or is imparting to you.

Partaker of God’s divine nature means that you SHARE with God some of His GODLY characteristics that He imparts to you as part of your new identity.

Characteristics of Your True Identity In Christ

We are now going to be looking at some of the godly characteristics that make up your true identity in Christ. I don’t know what your reaction will be as you read through the following list. My first response was: “This is too good

to be true!" If you feel the same way, realize that everything listed below is the truth of who you REALLY are in Christ.

I would like for you to read through this list slowly and let the truth of your true identity sink in. When you read through this list, remember the phrase "in Christ" refers to who you are in your true identity. For example, you might read each characteristic like this: "In my true identity in Christ, I am victorious."

Ephesians 4:24	In Christ, I am righteous and holy.
Romans 8:35, 38, 39	In Christ, I am unconditionally loved.
Romans 15:7	In Christ, I am accepted and acceptable.
Colossians 3:12	In Christ, I am chosen of God, holy, and dearly loved.
Colossians 3:13	In Christ, I am a forgiving person.
1 Corinthians 15:57	In Christ, I am victorious.
Romans 8:37	In Christ, I am more than a conqueror.
Psalms 71:5	In Christ, I am confident.
Psalms 56:4	In Christ, I am fearless.
2 Corinthians 9:8	In Christ, I am sufficient.
Psalms 139:14	In Christ, I am worthy.
2 Corinthians 3:5	In Christ, I am adequate.
Ephesians 6:10	In Christ, I am strong.
Colossians 2:10	In Christ, I am complete in Him.
Galatians 5:1	In Christ, I am free.
Colossians 3:12	In Christ, I am compassionate, humble, kind, patient.
Psalms 139:5	In Christ, I am secure.
Ephesians 1:1	In Christ, I am a saint. (See also 1 Cor. 1:2; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:2)
John 15:13	In Christ, I am sacrificial.
Philippians 2:3	In Christ, I am others'-focused.

Galatians 5:22, 23	In Christ, I am joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle.
Romans 8:17	In Christ, I am a joint-heir with Christ.
John 1:12	In Christ, I am a child of God.
John 15:15	In Christ, I am Christ's friend.
Hebrews 3:14	In Christ, I am a partaker of Christ.
1 Peter 2:9, 10	In Christ, I am a chosen race, a royal priesthood.

Characteristics of Your True Identity

Let's look at a few of these characteristics in greater detail.

In Christ, You Are RIGHTEOUS

*“... for with the heart a **person believes, resulting in righteousness....**” Romans 8:10*

As part of your new identity, God made you righteous. This is a difficult truth to understand for most people because based on their sinful behavior, they believe otherwise. So, before I talk further about your righteousness in Christ, let me talk about a very key truth.

***As a Christian, your SINFUL, FLESHLY BEHAVIOR
does NOT determine your identity in Christ.
What GOD SAYS about you determines your
new identity.***

At this point, you may be thinking: “Even though God’s truth says that I am righteous, accepted, forgiving, etc., my sinful attitudes and/or sinful behaviors are telling me just

the opposite.” Which is true: What my behavior tells me is true of me, or what God is telling me is true of me?

Even though your behavior may not always line up with what God says is true about you, does it change the truth of your identity in Christ? The answer is NO! As believers, God has given you a new identity that is separate and apart from your sinful behavior.

Before salvation, what you believed and how you behaved was your identity. However, now that your new identity is part of God’s divine nature in you, your fleshly, sinful behavior no longer determines who you really are.

Consider this illustration. When I was born into the Loveless family, I became a Loveless. It doesn’t make any difference if I am a good Loveless or a bad Loveless; my behavior doesn’t change my identity as a Loveless. In the same way, your identity in Christ remains unchanged by your behavior.

Now that you know this truth, let’s continue talking about your righteousness in Christ by looking at more verses that confirm this characteristic of your identity.

*“For just as through the disobedience of the one man (Adam) the many were made sinners, so also through the **obedience of the One man (Jesus)** the **many will be made righteous.**”*

Romans 5:19

*“... and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the **righteousness** which comes **from God** on the **basis of faith.**”* *Philippians 3:9*

Have you believed the lie that in order for you to be righteous, you have to perform for God? Have you thought that it was up to you to do (or not do) something to attain God's righteousness? These three verses (and many others) tell us that we became righteous the moment that we were saved! In other words, righteousness is not something that you earn. It is something that you receive at salvation because God gave you a new righteous identity.

Your RIGHTEOUSNESS in Christ has nothing to do with what you do or don't do. It is the result of what God did IN you at salvation.

It is also important to know that since you are now righteous in Christ, there is **no** more condemnation from God. He will never condemn you again for your sins. Furthermore, you no longer have to condemn yourself. Paul confirms this in Romans 8:1:

"Therefore, there is now **no condemnation** for those who are in Christ Jesus."

***Now that you are RIGHTEOUS in Christ,
God NO longer condemns you, and
you NO longer have to condemn yourself.***

Now that we know that we are righteous and our sinful, fleshly behavior does not determine our identity, let me give you some examples of what this looks like.

Example #1: Let's say you are critical towards your boss. Even though you may choose to live from your fleshly behavior of being critical, it does not change the truth that in your new identity in Christ you are righteous.

Example #2: Your sinful behavior may lead you to verbally reject your spouse. This does not change the truth that even though you are exhibiting this fleshly behavior of rejection, you are still righteous in your identity in Christ.

Note: However, it is crucial to point out that God does not condone sinful, fleshly, and unrighteous behavior. Whenever you sin, there must be a confession and repentance of that sin. The point is that your righteousness in Christ is not determined by your fleshly behavior. Here is a key truth to remember.

As your belief that you are righteous GROWS, you will find your behavior becoming LESS sinful and MORE righteous.

In Christ, You Are Totally ACCEPTED and Are ACCEPTABLE

*"Accept one another, then, just as **Christ accepted you....**"*
Romans 15:7

The reason why a holy God can totally accept us is because He has made us acceptable. You may feel or experience rejection coming from others, but that does not change the truth that you are accepted by God unconditionally! This means that there is no sinful behavior too great to cause God to reject you. (God does

not condone sinful behavior, but He does not reject you because of it.)

As a result, you no longer have to earn (or perform for) God's acceptance or the acceptance of others. You can receive God's acceptance and be free from being affected by the rejection by others. Believing that you are accepted in Christ will give you the freedom to accept others unconditionally.

In Christ, You Are UNCONDITIONALLY LOVED

*"See how **great a love the** Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God." 1 John 3:1*

You no longer have to believe that you are unlovable because God immeasurably, eternally, and unconditionally loves you. It is His essence to do so! He has no greater desire than to love you because of Who He is.

God's love does not depend on who you are or on what you have or have not done. It is based solely upon Who He is. Since God is love, and He is in you, then you possess all of God's love. You not only can receive God's unconditional love, but you can also allow God's love to flow through you to others.

In Christ, You Are Totally ADEQUATE

*"Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our **adequacy** is from God." 2 Corinthians 3:5*

Many believers feel or believe they are unworthy and/or inadequate. We look at ourselves, and we don't measure up to the world's standards of adequacy or

worthiness. We may seek our adequacy and worth in relationships, our job, or in things. However, these will never bring us the adequacy or worthiness that we can only find in Christ.

Here's the good news: Believing and living from your adequacy in Christ relieves you of the pressure of trying to find your adequacy/worth in someone or something else.

In Christ, You Are VICTORIOUS and Are More Than A CONQUEROR

*"... but thanks be to God, Who gives us the **victory** through ... Christ." 1 Corinthians 15:57*

*"But in all these things we overwhelmingly **conquer** through Him who loved us." Romans 8:37*

You may see yourself as a failure, but in Christ you are victorious and a conqueror. There is no problem, conflict, or adversity that Christ cannot conquer through you. On the other hand, you may see yourself as a "self-sufficient" victor or conqueror in life apart from Christ.

Since the truth is that apart from God you can do **nothing** (John 15:5), God loves you enough that He will bring impossible circumstances (or relationships) into your life to reveal to you your inability to overcome that situation.

Recognizing your weakness and inability to resolve a situation will turn you to dependence upon God and will allow Him to be victorious through you. Therefore, start living from the victory in Christ in your true identity.

Summary

I hope this chapter has given you a sense of your true identity in Christ. I would encourage you to go back over the list of the characteristics of your true identity. In the next chapter, we will look at the application of your identity to areas of your life.

CHAPTER FIVE

Application of Your New Identity In Your Life

What Does It Look Like To Live From The Truth of Your New Identity?

Let's look at the results of living from your true identity:

- Living from Christ's **strength** — means that you no longer have to live from your own limited, human strength.
- Living from Christ's **confidence** — means that you no longer rely on your self-confidence.
- Living from Christ's **security** — means that your security does not depend on what the world offers as security.
- Living from Christ's **victory** — means that you live from victory instead of striving for victory.
- Living from Christ's **unconditional love** — means that you no longer have to try to get your need for unconditional love met from others.
- Living from Christ's **acceptance** — means that you can no longer be affected by rejection.
- Living from Christ's **forgiveness** — means that you have no excuse for not forgiving someone.
- Living from Christ's **adequacy** — means that you no longer have to believe or feel you are inadequate.

Application of Your True Identity To Life

1. Application Personally

Let's assume that you have an ongoing sin problem that leaves you feeling or believing you are defeated.

Living from our true identity: The truth is that you are victorious in Christ (1 Corinthians 15:57). Because of this, you no longer have to feel defeated since you have the victory in Christ. Concerning a defeating sin problem, you can choose to walk by faith in the victory that we have in Christ, or you can choose to give up. Giving up means that ongoing feelings of defeat will continue.

2. Application To Your Marriage

a. Unconditional Love

You and your spouse both desire unconditional love. The problem is that all man can produce is “conditional” love.

Living from your true identity: The truth is that in your true identity you are unconditionally loved in Christ and you are an unconditional lover. Therefore, as a spouse, you no longer have to try to get your need for unconditional love met by your spouse. Since that need is met in Christ, you can ask Christ to unconditionally love your spouse through you.

Question: How do you think it might affect your marriage if you were loving your spouse with Christ’s unconditional love?

b. Forgiveness

Let’s assume your spouse has offended you and you choose not to forgive him/her.

Living from your true identity: The truth is that you have NO excuse for not forgiving your spouse because you are a

forgiving person in Christ (Colossians 3:13). Remember that Christ forgave you of all of your sins (offenses).

Question: How might it transform your marriage if you were the first one to repent or forgive when an offense is committed against you?

3. Application To Your Job

Stress will always be a part of your job whether your workplace is an office or your home. What is the result if you take ownership of your job stress? Inner turmoil and loss of peace.

Living from your true identity: In Christ, you are a peaceful person. Therefore, as you walk in your true identity you will not take ownership of your stress and will, instead, be able to walk in Christ's peace.

Question: What do you think would change about your attitude toward your workplace if you were no longer taking ownership of the stress and walked in Christ's peace?

4. Application To Parenting

As you well know, your children can try your patience with the result that it can create frustration and anger.

Living from your true identity: In spite of your children's fleshly behaviors, you can still unconditionally love them when you are living from your true identity as an unconditional lover.

Parenting tip: You can discipline your child's sinful behavior without attacking his/her ~~their~~ identity. For

example: When your child is acting up, you can say, "Your behavior is bad," instead of attacking his/her identity by saying, "You are bad."

I hope these examples have given you an idea of what it looks like practically to live out of your true identity in Christ. We are going to end by using an Old Testament story to bring together all the truths that we have discussed.

CHAPTER SIX

The Story of Mephibosheth and Our Identity

In this last chapter, I want to make an analogy about our true identity using an Old Testament passage about a man named Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth was the grandson of King Saul and was the son of Jonathan. After King Saul and Jonathan were killed in battle, Jonathan's nurse took Mephibosheth and fled. However, the nurse, in a hurry to flee, dropped Mephibosheth and he became lame in both feet. (2 Samuel 4:4)

Years later when Mephibosheth is an adult, the story picks up in 2 Samuel 9:1. So let's begin our story there.

One day David asked, "Is anyone in Saul's family still alive—anyone to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?"

He summoned a man named Ziba, who had been one of Saul's servants. "Are you Ziba?" the king asked. "Yes sir, I am," Ziba replied.

The king then asked him, "Is anyone still alive from Saul's family? If so, I want to show God's kindness to them." Ziba replied, "Yes, one of Jonathan's sons is still alive. He is crippled in both feet."

"Where is he?" the king asked. "In Lo-debar," Ziba told him, "at the home of Makir son of Ammiel."

So David sent for him and brought him from Makir's home. His name was Mephibosheth; he was Jonathan's son and Saul's grandson. When he came to David, he bowed low to the ground in deep respect. David said, "Greetings,

Mephibosheth.” Mephibosheth replied, “I am your servant.”

“Don’t be afraid!” David said. “I intend to show kindness to you because of my promise to your father, Jonathan. I will give you all the property that once belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will eat here with me at the king’s table!”

Mephibosheth bowed respectfully and exclaimed, “Who is your servant, that you should show such kindness to a dead dog like me?”

Then the king summoned Saul’s servant Ziba and said, “I have given your master’s grandson everything that belonged to Saul and his family.

“You and your sons and servants are to farm the land for him to produce food for your master’s household. Mephibosheth, your master’s grandson, will eat here at my table.”

Ziba replied, “Yes, my lord the king; I am your servant, and I will do all that you have commanded.” And from that time on, Mephibosheth ate regularly at David’s table, like one of the king’s own sons.

Now that you have read the story, I would like to start by comparing Mephibosheth to you and me. Mephibosheth was the grandson of royalty because his grandfather was King Saul. I compare this to you and me in our true identity of being royal priests according 1 Peter 2:9:

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession....”

As Mephibosheth had an inheritance because he was the king’s grandson, we too have an inheritance of a new

identity as the children of the King of Kings that we received at salvation. However, instead of claiming his inheritance, Mephibosheth ended up living in a desolate, secluded place in the desert called Lo-debar.

The analogy for us is that even though we have an inheritance of a new identity, we can continue to live out of our “Lo-debar” of false beliefs about ourselves and the fleshly behaviors that flow from those false beliefs.

It also says that Mephibosheth was physically crippled; whereas, we are “spiritually” crippled if we don't know our true identity and continue to choose to live out of our false beliefs.

King David sent for Mephibosheth to give him his inheritance. In the same way, God is calling us to Himself to reveal our true identity. When Mephibosheth came, David gave him his inheritance and told him that he would eat at the king's table. In the same way, when we come to God and receive our inheritance of our true identity, then we can eat at the King's table which represents partaking and living from our true identity.

However, when Mephibosheth came to David, instead of thanking him and receiving his inheritance, he said this:

“Who is your servant, that you should show such kindness to a dead dog like me?”

Instead of living out of his heirship, he calls himself a “dead dog.” I compare this to our not seeing and/or believing who we are in our true identity. Rather, we see ourselves from our false beliefs.

Interestingly enough, David does not respond to Mephibosheth's comment. He simply summoned his servant to give Mephibosheth all that was his. In the same way, whether or not you believe you have a new identity does not change the fact that you do.

The story concludes with Mephibosheth receiving his inheritance and beginning to believe that he is royalty as he assumes his place at the king's table. In the same way, the Lord is telling us (whether we believe it or not) that we are heirs to a new identity and as we begin to believe who we truly are in Christ, then we will partake of the King's table which is our true identity. Therefore, let me finish this story with this question:

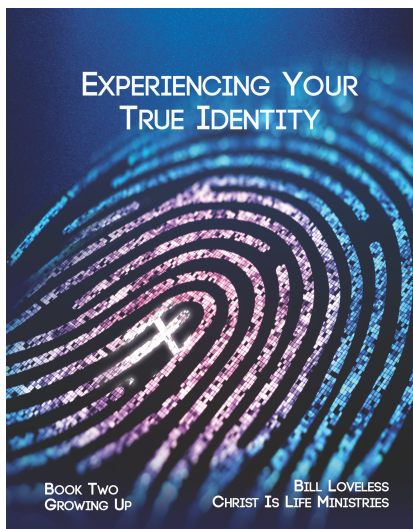
***Will you BELIEVE that you have a true identity
and eat at the King's table or
will you continue to live in the LO-DEBAR
of your false beliefs?***

Summary

In summary, God gave you an inheritance at salvation in the form of a new identity. He is calling you away from your false beliefs and fleshly behaviors to know, believe, and live out of your true identity. As you do, it will radically change every area of your life.

For me, these truths were so life-changing that they took me out of the work world and into ministry because I wanted to share with Christians like you the life-transforming truth of your true identity.

Where Do I Go From Here?



The curriculum *Experiencing Your True Identity* is an in-depth curriculum that will give you a deeper understanding of the truths in this booklet. This is **Book Two** of the four-part series *Growing Up-Growing Out-Growing Deep*. It is designed for connect groups, one-on-one discipleship, and personal use.

You can download it for free from our website listed

on the following page.

I hope you will take advantage of this study and seek the Lord for a deeper understanding of what it means to grow spiritually. I know that as you appropriate these truths, your life will be radically transformed.

Blessings in Christ,

Bill Loveless

P.S. If you have any thoughts concerning what you have read that you would like to share or have any questions about what I have written, please email me at the email address on the following page:

Christ Is Life Ministries

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(5-1-23)

IDENTITY

I don't know if you have been a victim of identity theft but I was for 30 years. However, it was not the kind of identity theft where someone stole my credit card numbers. It is what I call "spiritual" identity theft. I call it spiritual identity theft because for 30 years as a Christian, nobody taught me what it meant in 2 Corinthians 5:17 that I am a new creation with a new spiritual identity:

"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."

However, in 1999, my wife and I attended a conference where we learned that being a new creation meant that we have a new identity in Christ. We could not believe that in all the years that we attended church that we had never heard that our old identity was crucified with Christ on the cross and that at salvation we received a "new" identity.

As we began to learn that we are righteous, unconditionally loved, worthy, accepted in Christ, etc., it radically changed how we saw ourselves as individuals and as spouses. Therefore, if you don't know what it means that you are a new creation, I trust the truths in this booklet will reveal to you who you "really" are in your true identity. We will be answering the following questions:

- Who were you in your old identity?
- What are the consequences of believing lies about yourself?
- What did God do to give you a new identity?
- Who are you in your true identity in Christ?



Bill Loveless is the director of Christ Is Life Ministries (CILM). CILM is a non-profit, non-denominational ministry that focuses on discipleship. We teach Christians that Christ is our only Source for living the Christian life and what it looks like to be transformed into Christ-likeness and be drawn into a deeper intimacy with Him.

For further information and to see the other materials being offered, please go to our website: www.christislifeministries.com

