



EXPLORING
MY IDENTITY
IN CHRIST

A Bible Study

Inspired by Jerry Bridges' Book Who Am I?

by Lisa Horn

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Introduction

As a follower of Christ, realizing our position and identity is the foundation of our relationship with God and the basis of our transformation into the image of Christ. One of the ways we can grow as a believer is to know the truth and renew our minds with biblical truth. The goal of this study is to study and apply biblical truth regarding our identity in Christ that we might find freedom from sin, joy in nearness to God, and change in how we live.

“For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.”

Colossians 1:9-12

I am indebted to Dr. Jerry Bridges for his book, *Who Am I?* His book inspired me to create this study so that I might understand my identity in Christ in a deeper way. If you do this study on your own or lead a group, I encourage you to make the study your own. Do further research on the context of passages and the meaning of words. Take the time to create open-ended questions for discussion. (Hint: Start questions with either *what* or *how*.) Keep before you the focus that the goal of this study is to gain a fuller understanding of what it means that you, as a follower of Christ, are *in Christ* and this truth is the foundation of your identity.

All the Bible passages are in New American Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

Lisa Horn

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Chapter One: I am a Creature

The purpose of these eight lessons is that you might fully understand both theologically and biblically who you are in Christ. We start with a basic idea, the foundation of our faith. God created us. We will look at a few aspects of the Creator/Creature relationship beginning in the Old Testament.

Genesis 1:27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created them, male and female He created them.

1. What is the basic truth in this verse about humankind's relationship to God?

2. Note that the verse does not just say, "So God created man...." There is more! What is that next phrase and what do you think it means?

*Image of God: At creation, man and woman were given certain aspects of God's nature. This made them distinct from the rest of God's amazing creation. Practically speaking, like God, humans have intellect, emotion and the capacity for choice. As God's creatures and made in His image, we have a relationship of dependence on Him although our human tendency is to go our own way.

Dependence

3. Read each of the following passages and write out an attitude that reveals human tendency to want independence from God. What aspect of God's nature and character is stated in these verses? What does God give us according to these passages?

Psalms 104: 27 They all wait for You to give them their food in due season.

Attitude of independence from God

Aspect of God's nature or character in the passage

What God has given us

Deuteronomy 8:17-18 Otherwise, you may say in your heart, 'My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.' But you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth...

Attitude of independence from God

Aspect of God's nature or character in the passage

What God has given us

Acts 17:25 is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things;

Attitude of independence from God

Aspect of God's nature or character in the passage

What God has given us

I Corinthians 4:7 For who regards you as superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?

Attitude of independence from God

Aspect of God's nature or character in the passage

What God has given us

4. How do the following verses demonstrate an attitude of dependence on God?

Psalms 23:1 The Lord is my Shepherd I shall not want

Matthew 6:30-32 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

Philippians 4:19 And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

The fragile nature of life

5. Think of a day or a time when something happened that completely shook your world. How did you react? What were your thoughts of God at that time?

A reminder: Proverbs 27:1 Do not boast about tomorrow, For you do not know what a day may bring forth.

Although God's presence and power are available to us, we are still vulnerable to the realities of life in the world as well as spiritual forces of darkness.

The Vulnerability of Our Souls

6. What are the ways that Satan and his servants attempt to deceive believers?

2 Corinthians 11:13-25 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness...

7. How are the “men” described in these verses in 2 Timothy? How are the “women” described?

2 Timothy 3:5-6 holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these. For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses,

Paul, the author of 2 Timothy uses gendered references here, but men and women are all vulnerable to ungodly and deceptive people.

8. What part of a person is vulnerable according to this verse in 2 Corinthians?

2 Corinthians 11:3 But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.

9. What common word in these three passages affects our spiritual vulnerability? In the 2 Peter and I John passages, list the specific areas of life where we are susceptible to sin:

2 Peter 2:9 - 10 then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment or the day of judgment, and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority. Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties.

I John 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

We have looked at the reality of our existence and our vulnerability both living on the earth and in the spiritual realm. Some people might say, “So what? God created us but He really does not care how we live.” The Bible teaches that we are accountable to our Creator.

10. What do the following verses teach about human accountability to God?

Genesis 4:8-13 *And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him. Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?” And he said, “I do not know. Am I my brother’s keeper?” He said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood is crying to Me from the ground. Now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. When you cultivate the ground, it will no longer yield its strength to you; you will be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth.” Cain said to the LORD, “My punishment is too great to bear!*

Deuteronomy 28:15 *But it shall come about, if you do not obey the LORD your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes with which I charge you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you.*

Romans 14:12 *So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God.*

Hebrews 13:17a *Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account.*

As we study more about our identity in Christ, we will learn more about God's great love and acceptance of His creatures regardless of where they have been or what they have done. This chapter provides a foundation for our understanding of who we are in Christ. Before we can understand Christ's place in our lives, we have to understand how we came to be and how we relate to God. In Jerry Bridges' book, he writes that an application to these truths should be growing in humility and gratitude.

Application to My Life

Write out a declaration of humility before God based on this study .

Write a prayer of gratitude to God for all He has done for you.

Chapter Two: I am In Adam and In Christ

The apostle Paul used the phrase “in Christ” more than 160 times in the New Testament. What does it mean? Jerry Bridges writes, “Is it a question of location, like being in a house? Is it something like belonging to a club? No, it means being united TO Christ.” (page 18)

In this chapter we will investigate our relationship to Adam, to Christ, and what our union with Christ means concerning our identity.

The two “men” Representation

1 Corinthians 15: 22, “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.”

“What Paul is getting at in these two verses is that in God’s way of dealing with humanity there are only two men, Adam and Christ. All the rest of us are represented before God by one or the other of these two men.” (Bridges,18)

Genesis 2: 16-17 The Lord God Commanded the man, saying, “From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.”

1. What exactly was the directive God gave Adam and Eve concerning the tree in the middle of the garden?

2. What do you think was the purpose of this command? Why would it matter?

In the letter to the Romans, Paul explains how sin entered the world through the disobedience of Adam as recorded in Genesis chapter 3.

Romans 5:12, 18, 19 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned - So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so, through the obedience of the One, the many will be made righteous.

3. What are the consequences of the entrance of sin in the world through the one man?

4. What is the contrast in these verses?

5. How is “the One” described differently than the first man?

6. How do these two passages describe the state of all humanity?

Psalm 51:5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

7. What are some of the contrasts being in Adam and then being in Christ?

Romans 4:15-17 But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one [Adam] the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. The gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from many transgressions resulting in justification. For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

In Adam

In Christ

8. How is Christ described in these four passages?

Acts 3:14 But you disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted to you.

2 Corinthians 5:21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Hebrews 7:26 For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens;

Peter 2: 22 Who committed not in, nor was any deceit found in His mouth

The Concept of Substitution

How is it that the death of a Christ can pave the way for human beings to be free from the consequences of being united with Adam? Imagine that you're body was ravaged with cancer. You have the sentence of death upon you. You really have no hope. Suddenly by some miracle, another person is able to take all your cancer upon him or herself. What would happen to that person? He or she would die. What would happen to you? You would live. Christ did this for us.

What it Means to be IN CHRIST

9. What does God give to us who are in Christ?

Romans 8:1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

I Corinthians 1: 30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption.

Jerry Bridges wrote about our living union with Christ. Being “in Christ” is not just a point in the history of our lives that affects our eternity. “Having exercised faith to believe in Christ, we must also exercise faith to draw upon the life and nourishment that comes to us from Christ through our living union with Him.”
(26)

10. The word “abide” means “to be fixed in a state; to remain stable; to conform to.” How do these words picture a life lived in Christ?

John 15:4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.

11. What phrases in these verses display the intimate union we have with Christ?

John 17: 23-24 I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me. Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

In John chapter 15, we read record of Christ's words to His disciples using the image of a vine to explain the close relationship we can have with Christ.

John 15:1-7 I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

12. What 2-word phrase appears 6 times? What might be the significance of such repetition?

13. How does Jesus describe Himself in this passage?

14. What things are supposed to happen as a result of our union with Christ?

Application to My Life:

How can you experience more of an abiding relationship with Christ on a daily and even moment-by-moment basis?

What are some things you could do to experience a closer union with Christ?

An attitude to adjust?

A new habit to cultivate?

A consistent prayer to pray?

Chapter Three: I am Justified

As members of the human race in Adam, we are born with a sin-laden debt. Debts must be paid.

Justification

Romans 3:9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin.

1. What is the main idea of this verse?

2. What do you think it means to be “under sin”?

Romans 3: 10-19 is a key passage in the New Testament regarding our justification. Paul the author of the letter to the Romans actually quotes two Old Testament passages in the Romans 3 passage. Remember he was a highly educated Jew and knew the Old Testament very well. After his conversion, he clearly could see the foreshadowing of Christ throughout the Old Testament.

3. What are the key ideas in each of these 3 passages?

Psalms 14:1-3 The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; There is no one who does good. The Lord has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. They have turned aside together they have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.

Psalms 53:1-3 The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God,” they are corrupt and have committed abominable injustice; there is no one who does good. God has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men to see if there is anyone who understands, who seeks after God. Every one of them has turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.

³
Romans 3:10 as it is written, “THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;.....”

3:19 Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God;

Why it is Impossible to Justify Our Sin Debt Ourselves

4. Explain why these passages state clearly that God does not “grade on the curve”. That is, we cannot be a “pretty good person” or “not too much of a sinner”. (Paul quotes the Deuteronomy passage in his letter to the Galatians.)

Galatians 3:10 For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the Law to perform them.”

Deuteronomy 27:26 Cursed is he who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them. And all the people shall say, "Amen".

Consider: If God “graded on the curve,” how would we ever know if we have behaved good enough to overcome our sin debt?

Christ's Qualifications to Pay the Debt

In this passage, Jesus dialogues at length to those who knew the Jewish law. He shares with them many details about His nature.

John 8:48-59 The Jews answered and said to Him, "Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?" Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. But I do not seek My glory; there is One who seeks and judges. Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death." The Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets also; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste of death.' Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; whom do You make Yourself out to be?" Jesus answered, "If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, 'He is our God'; and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I will be a liar like you, but I do know Him and keep His word. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad." So the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am." Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple

5. What is the significance of Jesus saying, “before Abraham, I AM”?

6. What happened when He made this statement about who He was? What do you think this means?

Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

7. What do we know about Christ's nature?

8. How does Christ's divine nature qualify Him to pay the penalty for sin? What happened when He made this statement about who He was? What do you think this means?

Justification Through Christ

Justification is closely related to the biblical concept of atonement. God used the Old Testament sacrificial system to set the stage for the atonement that Christ would provide for the sin of the world. The center of the system of atonement as described in the Law was the shedding of blood (Leviticus 17:11.) Atonement means to cover, and the blood of the sacrifice covered the sin of the people.

Hebrews 10:1-10 For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the form of those things itself, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually every year, make those who approach perfect. Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins? But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says,

*“You have not desired sacrifice and offering,
But You have prepared a body for Me;
You have not taken pleasure in whole burnt offerings and offerings for sin.
Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come
(It is written of Me in the scroll of the book)
To do Your will, O God.”*

After saying above, “Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and offerings for sin You have not desired, nor have You taken pleasure in them” (which are offered according to the Law), then He said, “Behold, I have come to do Your will.” He takes away the first in order to establish the second. By this will, we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all time.

9. What do we learn about the Law and Old Testament sacrificial system from this passage?

10. The author quotes from Psalm 40. How do these verses relate to Christ?

11. What did Christ accomplish through His death on the cross?

1 Corinthians 15: 3-4 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

12. What statement in these verses ties Christ's death to the Old Testament?

Acts 13: 38-39 Therefore let it be known to you; brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed from through the Law of Moses.

13. What is being stated about Christ as related to the Law of Moses?

Christ's blood atoned for the sin of the world once for all time. God's love for people as demonstrated through Christ demonstrates unimaginable love.

John 10: 17-18 (words of Jesus) "For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father."

How Christ's Voluntary Act (John 10:17-18) Becomes our Reality.

Galatians 2: 15-1 We are Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles; nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.

14. What is the contrast in these verses? (Note the word “but”)

15. How is “faith in Christ” actually defined in these verses?

16. What does it mean to believe in Christ?

17. In Romans 5: 1, Paul writes, “Since we have been justified by faith” indicating something that has happened. But how should this statement of fact have any relationship on our daily lives?

“As far as the Law is concerned I may consider that I died on the cross with Christ. And my present life is not that of the old “I”, but the living Christ within me. The bodily life I now live, I live believing in the Son of God, who loved me and sacrificed himself for me “ (Galatians 2: 20 Phillips translation)

“We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin.” (Romans 6: 6 NLT)

18. How does Paul describe his relationship with Christ in these verses?

19. How does he describe his relationship with his body and also with sin?

Application to My Life:

What are practical ways you can “tell the gospel to yourself” every day?

What is one area of your life where you would like to see your intimate union with Christ manifested in your relationships with others?

God has declared through Christ that your debt of sin is paid in full. You are justified because of your faith in Christ’s death and resurrection. Rewrite that truth in a personal way.

Chapter four: I am Adopted

God is all about relationships, within the Trinity and with people. In the Bible, words and images connected to family relationships describe our bond with God.

Heir

Adoption is a legal term with great meaning in the spiritual realm. Adoption was not just a couple adopting a child but adoption involved a person, even a mature young man, entering a completely new life and receiving the family inheritance. Jerry Bridges explains as well that inheritance does not always mean as much today because of the relative economic wealth of our culture. In this day and age, people live longer and often there is no inheritance for their progeny.

Romans 8: 15-17 For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.

1. What is the difference in life style for a slave versus a son in a household?

2. An inheritance implies something hoped for in the future. What can we enjoy NOW as adopted children of God?

3. What words does the apostle Paul use here referring to God?

We are not only adopted, we have an inheritance.

God the Father

New Testament theology reveals God as Father. God is also described as Father in the Old Testament.

4. How is God the Father described in these Old Testament passages?

Deuteronomy 32: 6 “Do you thus repay the LORD, O foolish and unwise people? Is not He your Father who has bought you? He has made you and established you.

Isaiah 64:8 But now, O LORD, You are our Father, We are the clay, and You our potter; And all of us are the work of Your hand.

Psalms 89:26 “He will cry to Me, ‘You are my Father, My God, and the rock of my salvation.’”

5. How is God the Father described in these New Testament passages?

Matthew 6:9 Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

Matthew 7: 11 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!

Luke 18:7 Now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them?

Apparently nowhere in ancient Hebrew literature was God referred to as *Abba*. Jews in Jesus' day and throughout the centuries before Christ related to God in a more formal way. *Abba* (in the common language of the first century) was a term of endearment that children called their fathers. Even Jesus referred to God as *Abba*. ***Mark 14: 36: "And He was saying, 'Abba! Father! All things are possible for You; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will but what You will.*** (This was when Jesus struggled over the future, knowing what was before Him on the Cross.)

Access to God

Adoption also affirms a certain access to God. In the book of Hebrews, the author contrasts access to God before and after Christ's life, death and resurrection.

6. Looking at Hebrews chapter 9, under the Old (first) Covenant how did the people of Israel meet with God?

Hebrew 9:1-3, 6-7 Now even the first covenant had regulations of divine worship and the earthly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle prepared, the outer one.....this is called the holy place. Behind the second veil there was a tabernacle which is called the Holy of Holies...Now when these things have been so prepared, the priests are continually entering the outer tabernacle performing the divine worship, but into the second only the high priest enters once a year, not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance.

Leviticus 16:34 Now you shall have this as a permanent statute, to make atonement for the sons of Israel for all their sins once every year.” And just as the LORD had commanded Moses, so he did.

Hebrews 9: 11-14 But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

7. What truths do we learn about Christ from this passage?

8. What exactly did Christ do in order to enable us to have direct access to God?

9. What things are now available to us because we are IN CHRIST?

Romans 8:39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:1 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

Ephesians 3: 12 in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him.

Hebrews 4: 16 Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Application to My Life:

How should our adoption as “sons of God” affect our personal relationship to God?

How could the truth of you being adopted as a “son” of God affect your prayer life?

Pray this prayer out loud to God your Heavenly Father who has adopted you into His family because of Christ.

Abba, I embrace the fact that I AM your child. I have Spiritual DNA and this automatically makes me Your child. , I will live my life knowing that I was first Your child before I was ever a child of my parents. I AM grateful that You created me and knew me before the foundation of the world. Adoption through Christ has been Your plan for me in the mystery of time and eternity. I AM in the image that You had in your mind before I arrived in history on this planet. This is all too marvelous for me to fully comprehend. I also know that because I AM your child, I AM entitled to Your divine inheritance because I AM Your heir, just as I AM my parents' heir. Father, help me stay close to You like a child with her father or mother. Through Jesus Christ's precious, pure and holy name, I praise You and thank You. Amen.

Chapter five: I am a New Creation

Becoming a new creation in Christ is the work of the third Person of the Triune God, The Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit at Work in People Before Christ

1. What do we learn about the Spirit in the lives of Joseph, Joshua and Daniel?

Genesis 41:38 Then Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can we find a man like this, in whom is a divine spirit?”

Numbers 27:18 So the LORD said to Moses, “Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him;

Daniel 4:8 But finally Daniel came in before me, whose name is Belteshazzar according to the name of my god, and in whom is a spirit of the holy gods; and I related the dream to him, saying,

2. How is the Spirit described in the people mentioned in these verses?

Numbers 24: 2 And Balaam lifted up his eyes and saw Israel camping tribe by tribe; and the Spirit of God came upon him.

Judges 3: 10 The Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he judged Israel. When he went out to war, the LORD gave Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand, so that he prevailed over Cushan-rishat haim.

The implication seems to be that the Spirit was not present in people; the Spirit's presence in a person was temporary. After Jesus' death and resurrection, we as believers have a different experience. God has given us a great gift of His presence.

Jesus' Teaching on the Spirit

In each of these two passages from the gospel of John, answer the following questions about the Spirit.

John 15:26 When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me

John 16: 7-8 But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. And He, when He comes will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.

John 16: 13 But when He, the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and he will disclose to you what is to come.

3. How does Jesus refer to the Spirit?

4. What is the Spirit's connection to the Father? What is the Spirit role concerning Jesus?

5. What will the Spirit do in relation to the world?

6. What will the Spirit do for believers in terms of guidance?

The book of Acts is often referred to as “the acts of the Holy Spirit.” He enters as the main character in the story.

Pentecost

In Acts 1, Luke wrote that Jesus “being led by the Holy Spirit” told the apostles to go to the upper room and wait. On the day of the Jewish festival of Pentecost, life as the apostles knew it changed.

7. What happened at Pentecost and whom did it affect?

Acts 2: 1-4 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and rested on each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.

The apostle Peter then explained to everyone what had happened and how this was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy (Acts 4:14-24). Peter refers to two Old Testament passages:

Joel 2:28-29 “It will come about after this: That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions. “Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

Ezekiel 36: 26-27 Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

8. What will be the effect of the pouring out of God's Spirit?

9. Who will receive God's Spirit?

10. What does Jesus command, i.e. give direct instruction?

11. What new things will God give?

12. What will be the effect on people of "My Spirit within you?"

The Holy Spirit came and has a vital role in believers being new creations in Christ.

New Creation

13. What is the main idea/theme in these three passages?

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

Romans 6:4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

Galatians 6:15 But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. 15 For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. 16 And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

We are a new creation because of God's Spirit dwelling in us. Because we still live in our body of flesh, a spiritual battle takes place as we live our lives. Jerry Bridges used the illustration of a prisoner of war escaping the POW camp but still being in enemy territory (59).

Romans 8: 9-11 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

14. How is the body or flesh described in this passage?

15. What words describe a person who has the Spirit of God (also referred to as Spirit of Christ)?

In Galatians 5: 16, 17 Paul implies that the desires of the flesh continue to influence each of us and we will often follow the flesh and not the Spirit. Even though this is true, we must remember that there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1).

The apostle Paul used the phrase “put on” frequently in his epistles. The word means, “to sink into, to cloth, to be arrayed in, to enter.”

(<http://www.studylight.org/isb/view.cgi?number=1746>).

Consider that definition as you look at these verses.

Romans 13: 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.

Ephesians 4: 24 and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

Colossians 3: 10 and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him.

16. What are we to put on?

17. What are some characteristics of the new self?

18. How does Paul indicate that putting on the new self is not optional for those who are in Christ?

Application to My Life

What does your old self look like? What does your new self look like? Think of specific examples in your life.

What attitudes and actions in your life don't really reflect that you are a new creation?

What actions and attitudes in your life reflect that you are truly a new creature in Christ?

Chapter Six: I am a Saint

Who is a Saint?

What comes to your mind when you hear the word “saint?” The word “saint” in the New Testament means “holy or set apart.” The words “sanctified” and “saint” both come from the same Greek word.

1 Corinthians 1:2 To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours:

1. What is the qualification for sainthood?

We might think of saints as exceptionally godly people. In the Bible, we gain a fuller understanding of the concept. Our sanctification is based not on our behavior but on Christ’s life, death and resurrection. Because we are in Christ, we have been set apart.

1 Corinthians 1: 29-30 so that no man may boast before God. But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

2. Why can no person boast about his or her sanctification?

3. What do we now possess because of Christ?

Christ's Own Possession

Being in Christ, we possess great gifts from God. Our culture tells us that we are independent persons, responsible only to ourselves. The Bible teaches a counter cultural message. Jerry Bridges makes the point that both Paul and Peter, major New Testament writers, state this same truth that Christ owns us.

Titus 2: 14 who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.

I Peter 2: 9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

4. What authority does Christ have to call those who are in Him, "His own possession?"

5. What are the three action verbs attributed to Christ in the Titus passage?

A secular definition of "redeem" is: to recover ownership by paying a price.

6. How does this definition relate to the idea that those in Christ are now His possession? How do you feel about Christ owning you?

7. How does the I Peter 2 passage above describe our new identity?

8. How do these concepts demonstrate how much God loves us?

The Work of the Holy Spirit in Our Sanctification

We often speak of a person “being a saint,” meaning he or she is a person who has been or is a very good person. In 2 Thessalonians 2: 13, Paul wrote that we are saved by being set apart by the Holy Spirit. Peter wrote as well that the Holy Spirit has a role in this event of sanctification (1 Peter 1: 1, 2). Another New Testament term associated with the Holy Spirit is *sealed*.

2 Corinthians 1:21-22 Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, “who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.

Ephesians 4: 30 Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Ephesians 1: 13 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,

9. What do you think of when you think about something being sealed?

10. Looking at the above verses, what are some of the things involved in being sealed with the Holy Spirit?

11. How does this sealing affect our salvation in Christ?

“The definitive point-in-time sanctification that makes us ‘saints’ is solely the work of the Holy Spirit. We contribute nothing to His divine almighty action. In this sanctification we are all equally sanctified.” (71)

Progressive Sanctification

Theologians use this term to describe the process of spiritual growth for the believer. Another way to explain this change that takes place in a believer is spiritual formation. The English word *metamorphosis* comes from the Greek word *metamorphous* meaning *change*. Paul uses variations of this word four times in his epistles in reference to our lives.

Romans 12: 1,2 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what is the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

2 Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

Romans 8:29 For those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren.

Galatians 4:19 My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you

12. How does transformation happen to someone who is in Christ?

13. What words in these passages seem to indicate that spiritual transformation into the image of Christ is a natural progression for someone who is in Christ?

14. Why might Paul consider the process of helping someone grow in Christ like labor (giving birth)?

Application to My Life

As a saint (a believer, one who is in Christ), what motivates you to live in a way that would please God?

What is the difference between being created in the image of God and becoming conformed into the image of Christ?

What in your life would you like to see become more conformed to the image of Christ?

Chapter Seven: I am a Servant of Christ

We have learned that in Christ we are actually Christ's possession. Slavery rightly has a negative connotation in our modern culture. Slavery equals injustice, harsh unfair treatment and a force to be battled in our modern world. In biblical times, some slaves were conquests of war or debt. Slavery could also be an occupation, servanthood with rights. Slaves could earn their freedom. The phrase *servant of Christ* is used 10 times in the New Testament. Most of these uses are attributed to the apostle Paul.

Servant

Study the following passages to learn what the Bible teaches about being a servant of Christ.

Romans 1:1 Paul, a bond- servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God,

1 Corinthians 4:1 Let a man regard us in this manner as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

2 Corinthians 11: 22-23 Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. Are they servants of Christ—I speak as if insane—I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments beaten times without number, often in danger of death.

Galatians 1: 10 For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? If I were still striving to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.

Colossians 1:7 just as you learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow bond-servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf.

1 Timothy 4: 4-6 For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude; for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer. In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following.

Titus 1:1 Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness,

James 1: 1 James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad: Greetings.

Philippians 1:1 Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the bishops and deacons.

1. For each passage give the author, recipient, and background information of biblical chapter .

2. What does *servant* mean in each passage?

3. How does each passage relate to our identity in Christ?

4. What is the difference between a servant and a bond-servant?

5. How would seeing yourself as a servant of Christ change the way you think of yourself or even behave?

Jesus' View of Servanthood

In each of the Gospels, we observe that Jesus elevated the concept of being a servant. Think of these words of Jesus in light of the Greco-Roman culture and how this culture viewed slavery. How does Jesus view being a servant?

Matthew 23: 11 But the greatest among you shall be your servant.

Mark 9:35 Sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them, "If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all."

Luke 22:26 But it is not this way with you, but the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant.

John 12: 26 If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.

The words of Jesus were radical then and still are today. How often do we hear Christians or anyone talk about being a servant to others?

Since the Bible was written for our instruction (***Romans 15: 4 For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.***), we can assume that being a servant of Christ is not just for the few but for all.

Calling and Being a Servant of Christ

Christians often use the phrase, “I’ve been called.” What does this mean biblically?

1 Corinthians 1:9 God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Gal. 1:15-16 When God, who had set me apart even from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles

Ephesians 4:1 Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called,

2 Timothy 1:9 who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity,

6. What do each of these passages teach about “being called?”

In Romans 1: 1, Paul wrote: *Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle...* As we have looked at being a servant of Christ, this concept seems to relate to our devotion to Christ, exhibited in our behavior and character. The word *called* is used most often in the passive tense indicating something done to people. Often we hear Christians say God called them into the ministry, as Paul said he was called into the special role of apostle. (Notice that he referred to himself as a servant first.)

Throughout history as recorded in the Bible, God called and set apart certain people for specific purposes or vocations. However, most references to *calling* in the New Testament seem to emphasize our calling to salvation or how we are to live as servants of Christ. God may call us to a vocation or we may choose a vocation as a result of His guidance and how He made us.

You are called to salvation in Christ and to be a devoted servant of Christ. You may be called into ministry as Paul was but likely God has another vocation for you. Jerry Bridges gives three good reasons why it is important to understand that people are called to all kinds of vocations not just vocational ministry (pages 80-81):

*All work, ministry or non-vocational ministry, has dignity because God ordained work in the Garden of Eden.

*If we only consider calling something special for ministry, we create a huge group “second-class citizens in the kingdom of God.”

*God is involved in His providential way guiding and directing each one of his children into vocation. No vocation is better than another.

In everything we are to work wholeheartedly as serving the Lord and consider our “work” a means to spread the gospel of Christ.

Colossians 3: 23 Whatever you do, do your work heartily as for the Lord rather than for men,

Matthew 5:16 Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

7. How can you live out your current vocation as a servant of Christ?

Application to My Life:

How did God call you to faith in Christ ?

How have you seen God's providential guidance in your present vocation whether that be a secular job, a ministry job or volunteer work?

What in your life prevents you from seeing yourself as a servant of Christ?

How does being a servant of Christ encourage and uplift us when we think of our identity in Christ?

Which passage in this study specifically opened your spiritual eyes to your blessed identity in Christ as His servant?

Chapter Eight: I am Not yet Perfect.

“If we are to grow in our realization of who we are in Christ, then we must learn to live with the tension of *not* being in our daily experience what we *are* in Christ.” (Bridges, 88)

Magnifying the Contrast

2 Corinthians 12:11 For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.

Ephesians 3:8 To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ,

1 Timothy 1:15 It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all

2 Corinthians 12:9-10 And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for (power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

Philippians 1: 6 I am confident of this very thing that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ..

1. According to these passages, what does Paul say about himself?

2. What does Paul say about Christ and the grace of God?

3. What can I say about myself?

In Romans Chapter 7, Paul writes about the contrast of what he wants to do and what he often does. As you read this passage, think about how Paul sees himself, his identity in Christ.

Romans 7:14-24 For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin. For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do but I am doing the very thing I hate. But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good. So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good.

For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

4. How does Paul describe himself?

5. How does he specifically describe his behavior?

6. What does Paul say causes this behavior?

7. Describe Paul's attitude about his situation.

8. What thought causes him to exclaim in thanksgiving to God?

Paul describes the believer's desire to do what is good yet his or her struggle with doing evil. He sees this not just as a minor thing but a war. Those who have been in war describe battle as chaotic, confusing, hours of boredom then moments of deadly attack and fear. Sin is a serious issue for believers yet we have the Spirit of Christ dwelling in, giving us the strength and guidance to wage war with sin and have victory. We rest in the fact that even in our failure to do what is right, we remain in Christ, loved by the Father, full of His Spirit.

Identity in Christ Rather Than Performance and Self-esteem

“Your worst days are never so bad that you are beyond the **reach** of God’s grace. And your best days are never so good that you are beyond the **need** of God’s grace.” (Bridges,92)

I Corinthians 1: 26-30 For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh ,not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, so that no many may boast before God. But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who become to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification , and redemption.

9. What are the things Paul contrasts in this passage?

10. What are the things in the world that give us self- worth?

11. What things does God use to nullify the things of the world?

Because we are in Christ Jesus we are now wise, righteous, sanctified and redeemed!

Romans 8:1-6 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit, for those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,

12. Because you are in Christ Jesus, what is now true for you?

13. According to this passage, how would you define “walking in the Spirit?”

Many people live with a sense of condemnation. To condemn means “to express strong disapproval, to censure, to judge or pronounce unfit or to compel or force into a state or activity.” <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/condemnation> Paul clearly states that as those in Christ, we are not condemned in any way. Although not perfect, we are free to grow and to be transformed into Christ’s image as we establish habits and patterns of life that honor Christ.

Living the Life in Christ

Nothing that we do merits our status as being in Christ. Yet we can choose to live a life that is glorifying to God. We can grow in grace and become more like Christ. We can choose to grow not in a passive way but at moments of decision when we can say *yes* to God's will and way.

Directive passages from the New Testament:

Romans 12: 1-2 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Ephesians 4: 22-24 that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

I Peter 2: 11 Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul

2 Peter 1: 5-7 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence in your faith supply moral excellence, knowledge, and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, and in your godliness, brotherly kindness and in your brotherly kindness, love.

Philippians 2: 3-7 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. 5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

14. List what you can do to intentionally develop Christ-like character in your life.

Application to My Life:

What should you tell yourself when you are having a “good” day in light of who you are in Christ?

What should you tell yourself when you are having a “bad” day in light of who you are in Christ?

As we pursue living a life that is pleasing to God, what are some cautions we should keep in mind?

Christians often say, “I am not perfect just forgiven.” How has this truth come alive to you in this study?

Our answer to the question *Who Am I* is to be found in neither our achievements, nor our failures, nor the evaluations of others, but in Christ alone. It is He who, as our representative before God, lived the perfect life we could never live, died the death we deserved to die, and now sits at the right hand of God, interceding for us - and I suspect, cheering us on.” (Bridges, 95)