



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.

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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.