



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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June 2013

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.

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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.