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EXPLORING  
MY IDENTITY  
IN CHRIST

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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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## *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)