



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 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:

19. 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.

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

21. 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;

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

23. 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.

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

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

26. 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,

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

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

29. 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

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

31. 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?

32. 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?