



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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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?