



Understanding Your Identity in Christ

Van Moody

“You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

1 Peter 2:9-10

Individuals in our society are quite interested in discovering individual identity. From personality tests to self-help books, the goal of finding identity appears to be a pressing one with everyone looking for guidance in uncovering who they are and how they can relate to the world around them.

The world encourages us to look inside to find our identity, though our inclination is to seek our identity externally in our jobs, status, looks, grades, finances, reputation, etc. which are all subject to change. The Bible offers a different perspective. In fact, the Bible tells us we are created in God's image which means we possess attributes of God and can only find our true identity in Him. God does not change, and when we find our identity in Him, we will never be disappointed because He is always faithful and trustworthy.

In order to successfully understand our true identity in Christ we have to grasp the truth of who He is, but even more importantly, we have realize God's view of us in Christ.

God's View of Me: In Christ

I AM COMPLETELY ACCEPTED!

In 1 Peter 2:9 (LB) we read, “You have been CHOSEN by God himself!” We all want to be accepted, to be part of something bigger than ourselves. In Christ, we are completely accepted. Paul, in Ephesians 3:19, explains it like this, “And to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.” It’s incredible, isn’t it? God chose us and placed us in His family where we experience His amazing love, all the fullness of God, and are completely accepted!

Romans 8:15-17, tells us, “The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.” As believers, we have been adopted into God’s family, sons and daughters of God, with all the

privileges implied. God has chosen us but not because of anything we did; He chose us because He loves us as a result of His grace and mercy. He chose us because of who He is and completely accepts us as a result of the salvation He provided through Christ.

In Ephesians 1:4, Paul says, “He chose us in him before the creation of the world, to be holy and blameless in his sight by his love.” It is incredible to think He chose each of us to be believers before everything! As a result of our salvation in Christ, we are holy and blameless. He chose us because He has a purpose for our lives. His choice demonstrates His character and His acceptance comes so that we may know Him.

Still wondering how this all came to be? Titus 3:7 (CEV) tells us, “Jesus treated us much better than we deserve. He made us acceptable to God and gave us the hope of eternal life.” The answer, we are chosen and completely accepted because Jesus made us acceptable with His sacrifice on the cross, saving us from sin, death, our sinful nature, and Satan. As a result of our salvation, we are reconciled to Him, completely accepted and equipped to the work He has for us to do here on earth.

I AM COMPLETELY ACCEPTED!

Peter reminds us in 1 Peter 2:9 (NIV), “You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.” As His chosen people we are extremely special to God, valuable in His sight! Unlike those who have rejected Christ, we are living examples of those who have placed our faith and trust in and as such we are of great value to Him.

God wants us to surrender to Him, to understand our worth and value to Him. When we understand our value, we can honestly assess who we are and recognize who created us. When we know our value we can declare we are “fearfully and wonderfully made,” and we matter to God. We can recognize God has bestowed the right gifts on us, we are unique, and we can carry out the plan God has for us. We can see our true identity!

The problem is most of us spend a lot of time trying to be like someone else or achieve the things others have, but God made each of unique, unlike anyone else on earth! In Isaiah 43:5 (TEV), “God says: “You are precious to me.”

In Deuteronomy 7:6 (NIV) God's Word proclaims, "You are a people holy to the Lord your God...his treasured possession." We were created exactly the way God planned and we are valuable to Him, fully equipped to accomplish His purpose for us.

We are valuable because God is our Father. In Luke 12:24, Luke explains, "Look at the birds... God feeds them and you are far more valuable to Him than any birds!" Our value is also grounded in the truth that Jesus gave His life for us as 1 Corinthians 7:23 reminds us, "You have been bought and paid for by Christ, so you belong to him..." We were created with great worth – God loves us and His intentions for us are for our good and His glory. We are valuable because of the price He paid to make us worthy. In truth, we are not valuable because of what we did or how others see us, but because of how God sees us and what Christ did for us – and as a result we have infinite value.

I AM ETERNALLY LOVED!

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.” These verses, John 3:16-17, are very familiar to many and showcases how God sees us – as eternally loved! In Christ we are loved, and lovingly and intricately designed by God.

In 1 John 3:1, John tells us, “See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know Him.” We are loved, our true identity is that of a child of God. As His children, we are complete in His love and the recipients of so much more than the world could ever offer us!

Because God is love, we can be assured, “God’s love is eternal and His faithfulness lasts forever” (Psalm 100:5). We also know God’s love is everlasting because He declares it Himself, “I have loved you, my people, with an everlasting love. With unfailing love I have drawn you to myself” (Jeremiah

31:3). God's love is unconditional, faithful, enduring, true, and eternal.

In Ephesians 3:17, Paul explains, "...And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God." God wants to us to revel in His deep, abiding eternal love. When we allow the truth of God's love to breakthrough, only then can we experience His everlasting love fully, and in doing so we can grasp a deeper understanding of our identity in Him. We are eternally loved – from eternity past to eternity future – without beginning or end.

I AM TOTALLY FORGIVEN!

Romans 8:1 proclaims, “There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” Once we have accepted God’s indescribable gift of salvation in Christ, we are fully and totally forgiven. Prior to our salvation, we did not know the measure of God’s mercy, but as believers we have received His mercy (1 Peter 2:10). Jesus paid the ultimate price, satisfying God’s demand for justice and taking God’s wrath for us, so all our sins could be forgiven and we could be reconciled to Him when we accept Jesus as Savior and Lord.

How do we accept Christ as our Lord and Savior and be totally forgiven? John tells us in 1 John 1:9, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” In Acts 16:31, Luke quotes Paul and Silas, who explain, “...Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.” It is an incredible gift which comes with the promise of Psalm 103:11-12, “For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.”

God desires a restored relationship with us, but sin blocks the way. Even so, it is God's nature to forgive as He testifies in Isaiah 43:25, "I am the God who forgives your sins, and I do this because of who I am. I will not hold your sins against you." Jesus paid for our sins, and it is by His blood and the grace of God we are totally forgiven and set free (Ephesians 1:7).

What does totally forgiven really mean? For us to be children of God (the perfect Father) we have to be free from sin, in other words perfect in doing right or doing no wrong. It is something we simply cannot attain through our own efforts. Jesus, who was perfect and without sin, died on the cross so we could be totally forgiven. As a result, our sins are no longer counted against us, and we are completely forgiven and in God's eyes without sin. It doesn't mean we won't ever sin, but Christ paid for all our sins with His sacrificial death and when we accept Him we are considered children of God (our true identity in Him).

I AM FULLY CAPABLE!

In 1 Peter 2:9, we read, “You are royal priests...chosen to tell about the wonderful acts of God, who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” Peter is telling us we are fully equipped and capable of doing all God has for us to do! How is it possible? We are chosen, certainly, but Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 3:5b-6, “The capacity we have comes from God; it is he who made us capable of serving the new covenant...” God Himself makes us fully capable of carrying out His will in our lives.

We were created with a purpose. Even before God created us and brought us into the world, He had a plan for our lives. Paul explains in Ephesians 2:10, “We are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” When we come to know Him personally, we are capable of not only growing in our faith and understanding our true identity, but also carrying out the work He has for us to do!

How can we do it? We are fully capable because Christ lives in us! Paul testifies to this truth in Philippians 4:13 when He says, “I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength.” God has gifted each of us with special

abilities which we can use to do His work among other believers as well as among those in our community who don't yet know Him. We discover our gifts by identifying our passions, the needs we see, the opportunities God provides, where our skills are! Peter then tells us we are fully capable and should "use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms" (1 Peter 4:10).

Our capability and our power to perform comes from God through the Holy Spirit. The Old Testament testifies that our ability and power comes from God as 1 Chronicles 29:11-12 tells us, "Yours, LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all."

Our power as believers, that is our ability to do worthwhile things, comes from the Holy Spirit. Jesus told us so in Acts 1:8, when he said, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." In Him, we have that same power through the Holy Spirit and because of it we are fully capable!

Seeing Ourselves as God Sees Us...

Understanding our true identity in Christ comes by seeing ourselves as God sees us. We now realize God chose us. We know that in Christ He has fully accepted us. We understand our value in His eyes because of Christ. We grasp the incredible truth that we are eternally loved. We recognize we are total forgiven in light of Christ's ultimate sacrifice. We can even comprehend we are fully capable to carry out His work because we are empowered by His Spirit.

Our true identity in Christ is reason to rejoice! How, then, should our true identity affect how we act? We find our answers in God's Word:

- "Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God" (Romans 15:7).
- "Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor" (1 Peter 2:17).
- "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience" (Colossians 3:12).

- “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you” (Ephesians 4:32).

- “So we say with confidence, ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me’” (Hebrews 13:6).

Our identity is in Christ and the more we grow in our relationship with Him, the more we can understand our true identity. How does knowing God’s view of you as accepted, valuable, loved, forgiven, and capable change your perspective? Our identity in Christ should change how we live, how we interact with those around us, and how we pursue our relationship with Him. As we live as those who perceive our true identity, may we begin to look more like Him and less like the world!

