

Identity In Christ (1)

How do you see yourself? How would you describe yourself? Most of us tend to identify ourselves primarily by name, by what we look like, by what we do (carpenter, mother, musician), and also by our accomplishments or lack thereof. We take pride in the good things we have accomplished and we feel shame for the negative things that we have done. The shame is often reinforced by parents, teachers, bosses, friends, etc. who do not hesitate to point out our flaws and shortcomings.

Shame has kept many of us in hiding. We don't want people to know the "truth" about ourselves. We believe that admitting our sins and revealing our past actions will cause people to reject us. After all, how could anyone love us if they knew the whole truth about us? Our identity is wrapped up in our mistakes and failures. But God can turn our shameful experiences into meaningful lessons if we will submit to Him. Our challenge is to take our sins and shame to God and allow Him to forgive us and heal our heart.

In the Bible, we read of how the teachers of religious law brought a woman forward that they had caught in the act of adultery. They put her in front of the crowd. *"Teacher," they said to Jesus, "...the Law of Moses says to stone her. What do you say?"...Jesus stooped down and wrote in the dust with His finger. They kept demanding an answer, so He stood up*

I renounce the lie that I am rejected, unloved, dirty or shameful because IN CHRIST I am completely accepted. God says...

John 1: 12; Ephesians 1:5

John 15: 15

Romans 5: 1

1 Corinthians 6: 19, 20

1 Corinthians 12: 27

Ephesians 1: 1, 1 Cor. 6:17

Ephesians 2: 18

Colossians 1: 14

Colossians 2: 10

I am God's child.

I am Christ's friend.

I have been justified. (God sees me just as if I'd never done anything wrong)

I have great value. I have been bought with a price.

I am a member of Christ's Body. I belong to God.

I am a saint, a holy person. I am united with the Lord.

I have direct access to God through the Holy Spirit.

I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins.

I am complete in Christ.

again and said, "All right, stone her. But let those who have never sinned throw the first stones!" ...When the accusers heard this, they slipped away one by one...until only Jesus was left in the middle of the crowd with the woman...Then Jesus stood up again and said to her, "Where are your accusers? Didn't even one of them condemn you? No, Lord, she said. And Jesus said, "neither do I. Go and sin no more" (John 8:3-9).

All of us are well aware of our mistakes and how badly we have messed up our lives. We are ashamed of the things we have done. But our mistakes are not who we are. This is not our identity. When we confess our sins and repent, we receive God's forgiveness and cleansing. He has removed our sins *"as far as the east is from the west" (Psalm 103:12)*. If God has forgiven and forgotten our past mistakes, we need to do the same and begin anew. We need to stop thinking of ourselves as failures but rather as beloved children of God who happen to have a problem with money, kids, relationships, education, alcohol, drugs, or food, etc.

Wholeness and meaning in life are not products of what you have or what you have done. We are already whole people and possess a life of infinite meaning and purpose because of who we are – children of God.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. What is the first thing I think of when describing myself?
2. How have others reinforced my negative self-image?
3. Which of my past deeds do I consider too "bad" to be forgiven?
4. Which of the "Identity" statements do I have most trouble believing? Why?
5. What one thing can I do this week to help me change the way I think about myself?