

Identity in Christ (2)

How many times have we wished that we could be someone else, or at least be different than we are right now? Why do so many of us dislike who we are and have difficulty with our sense of self-worth? The answer is in a lack of understanding concerning our true identity in Christ. Satan, the great deceiver, has caused us to think wrongly about ourselves. His accusations have influenced the way we see ourselves.

While Satan can do nothing to damage our position and identity in Christ, he can deceive us into believing lies such as: "We are not acceptable to God" or "We will never amount to anything." Satan will try to convince us that we are unworthy and unacceptable people who will never amount to anything in God's eyes. THIS IS A LIE! Believing Satan's lies will lock us into defeated, fruitless lives as we will behave in ways that are consistent with how we view ourselves. For example: If we think we are no-good bums, we will probably live like no-good bums. In contrast, if we see ourselves as children of God who are spiritually alive in Christ, we will begin to live in victory and freedom as He lived and do good as He did good to all He encountered.

For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so that we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. (Ephesians 2:10 NLT)

God has made us in the image of Himself. ***Then God said, "Let us make people in our image, to be like ourselves." So God created people in his own image; God patterned them after himself; male and female he created them.*** (Genesis 1:24,27). When we invite God to come into our lives to transform us, we move into the destiny for which we were created – sons and daughters of God. As children often reflect the features and mannerisms of their parents, so our lives reflect the character of our Heavenly Father and our actions demonstrate His goodness. That's who we are created to be. That is what God is calling out to us every day and inviting us to live in. That's what God is pouring His power into us to bring into effect.

That may include schooling, training, an apprenticeship, hard work at entry level trade jobs, a job smiling and serving someone in a fast food store, pouring coffee in a drop-in centre, or even prayer ministry in a church. There are a host of assignments God can give each of us as expressions of His desire to do good in our community and bless our world. God created every single one of us to do good. If we are sitting on the sidelines of life, then God is calling to us to enter into the full and meaningful life He is making available to us. A disabling condition does not cancel out God's plan. Our own repeated failures cannot keep us from God's

desire to fulfill His plans in us. We live today with unlimited potential to serve God and our community.

The devil knows that if he can keep us from understanding these truths about who we are in Christ, he can keep us from experiencing the maturity and freedom which God wants us to have. The foundation for a fruitful life is not based on what we do or what we possess but on who we are in Christ. We are saints, holy people. ***God made you holy by means of Christ Jesus.*** (1 Corinthians 1:2) Too often we think of ourselves as sinners and, if we do, guess what, we'll live like sinners. We need to think of ourselves as we really are. We are saints who sometimes sin.

We may have a hard time believing that God could love us and forgive us and accept us. Maybe we feel that we have done such horrible things or hurt people so badly that there is no way God would want to associate with us. The Bible tells us that ***"He does not deal with us as we deserve. For His unfailing love toward those who fear Him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth...The Lord is like a father to his children, tender and compassionate...for He understands how weak we are"*** (Ps. 103:10-14). God also promises that ***"no matter how deep the stain of our sins, He can remove it. He can make us as clean as freshly fallen snow. Even if we are stained as red as crimson, He can make us as white as wool"*** (Isaiah 1:18).

Often loneliness and isolation go along with the guilt and shame we feel about who we are or what we have done. During those times, we need to remember that God loves us just the way we are. His love and acceptance are unconditional. He loves us even when we are weak and off track. God doesn't love us because we are loveable but because it is His nature to love us. Yes, God wants us to do good but He has made provision for our failure.

And I am sure that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on that day when Christ Jesus comes back again. I can do everything with the help of Christ who gives me the strength I need. (Philippians 1:6, 4:13 NLT)

God's love is constant in spite of what we do. Next to a knowledge of God, a knowledge of who we are as His children is by far the most important truth we can possess. It is the beginning of victorious Christian living.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. What thoughts or actions would I need to change in order to live in this amazing potential God has created within me?