

Identity in Christ vs. Identity in Crisis

Romans 6:3-4: “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

Colossians 3:1 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. 3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is your[a] life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Colossians 3:1-17

1. **Seek the Things of Christ** — vv. 1–4
Set your affection on things above because your life is now hidden with Christ in God.
2. **Put to Death the Old Life** — vv. 5–9
Mortify sinful desires, attitudes, and behaviors that belong to the old nature.
3. **Put On the New Life** — vv. 10–14
Put on compassion, kindness, humility, patience, forgiveness, and above all, love.
4. **Let Christ Rule and His Word Dwell in You** — vv. 15–16
Let the peace of God rule your heart and the Word of Christ richly shape your life.
5. **Do Everything in the Name of Christ** — v. 17
Let every word and action reflect Jesus and bring thanksgiving to God.

LOOK UP — PUT OFF — PUT ON — LET IN — LIVE OUT

- **Look Up** — Seek what is above (vv. 1–4)
- **Put Off** — Get rid of the old sinful life (vv. 5–9)
- **Put On** — Clothe yourself with Christlike character (vv. 10–14)
- **Let In** — Let Christ's peace and Word fill you (vv. 15–16)
- **Live Out** — Do everything in Jesus' name (v. 17)

These verses speak of our *spiritual* transformation as much as all the other passages about the baptism of the Spirit. We're so thoroughly identified with Christ the moment we believe that *His* crucifixion becomes *our* new spiritual reality. God saw fit to allow us to be transformed *spiritually* as Christ was transformed *literally* after His resurrection. The moment we believed we were identified with Christ in that our souls were united *with Christ in His work on the cross*. Col. 2:12 tells us that "*ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.*"

Paul's saying that *since* we're spiritually identified with His death, then we'd naturally also be spiritually identified with His resurrection as well "*like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father.*" Thus, we died spiritually "*in the likeness of His death*" and we're risen spiritually "*in the likeness of His resurrection,*" which means that His death became our death. His burial became our burial. His resurrection became our resurrection. The newness of His life after His resurrection became our "*newness of life.*"

As a result of our spiritual death, burial, and resurrection *with Christ* through the one baptism of the Spirit, we are now and forever victorious over sin and death as much as Christ Himself is forever victorious. God loved us so much as to make us so intimately identified with His Son that when we place our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, we spiritually die *with Him*.

Our *old man*, which is our old selves, is crucified *with Him* on that cross. Then, we are spiritually buried *with Him*. Our old man and all our sins, including our bondage to sin, are buried *with Him*. **Praise the Lord forever, the old man is dead, dead, dead!**

And finally, we are spiritually risen from the grave *with Him*, "*like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father.*" Our resurrection with Christ nullified the sting of death and the power of sin over us. We are made victorious *with Him* in our spiritual resurrection freed from the bondage of sin and death just as Christ Himself was freed after He rose again, and we are now living *His* resurrected life, an eternal *newness of life*.

Understanding Where Our Identity Begins

An **identity crisis** occurs when we lose sight of who God is and, as a result, become confused about who we are. Our identity must begin with **God**.

Before we can truly understand who we are, we must know **who God is**. He is:

- **Holy**
- **Loving**
- **Just**
- **Faithful**
- **Merciful**
- **Sovereign**
- **True**

When our understanding of God becomes distorted, our understanding of ourselves can become distorted as well. We may begin defining ourselves by our **past, failures, feelings, weaknesses, circumstances, or the opinions of others**.

When Moses asked God His name, God answered, “I AM THAT I AM” (Exodus 3:14), revealing that He is self-existent, eternal, unchanging, and dependent on no one. Before Moses could fully understand his own identity and calling, he needed to understand who God is—because Moses’ confidence would not come from his own ability, but from the presence and power of the great I AM.

Paul also declared, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:13, KJV). His confidence was not in himself, but in Christ—his identity, strength, and ability were rooted in the One who empowered him.

Identity in Christ begins with this foundational truth:

God is who He says He is, and because we belong to Him, we are who He says we are.

Who Am I in Christ?

To walk securely in our **identity in Christ**, we must understand who we are in relationship to God.

In Christ, we are:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Forgiven | • Heirs of God and | • Redeemed |
| • Justified | joint-heirs with | • God’s |
| • Made righteous | Christ | workmanship |
| • Sons and | • Chosen | • Part of a royal |
| daughters of God | • Accepted | priesthood |

We are not trying to **earn** an identity. Through our relationship with Christ, we **receive** our identity. (Think of the parent/child relationship)

Our identity is not determined by what we have done, what we have experienced, how others see us, or how we feel about ourselves. **Our identity is determined by what God says about us.**

IMPORTANT NOTE: Relation vs. Relationship

We are not trying to earn an identity. Through our relationship with Christ, we receive our identity. A child who obeys and a child who disobeys are still children. A child who listens and one who refuses to listen still carry the family name. Their behavior does not change their relationship or identity, but it **does affect their fellowship, consequences, privileges, growth, and how fully they experience the benefits of that relationship**. In the same way, believers do not obey God in order to *become* His children; we obey **because we are His children**. Our identity is received through Christ, but our daily choices determine whether we are walking in agreement with that identity.

Examples:

The Prodigal Son — Luke 15:11–24: He left his father’s house and lived far beneath his position as a son, but he never stopped being a son. When he returned, the father restored him openly to the place of relationship and honor.

Samson — Judges 13–16: Samson was still called and set apart by God, but repeated disobedience caused him to lose strength, freedom, and effectiveness. He lived beneath his calling before God restored him.

David — 2 Samuel 11–12: David was still God’s anointed king, but his sin brought painful consequences and damaged fellowship. His position did not excuse his behavior.

Peter — Luke 22:54–62; John 21:15–17: Peter denied Jesus, but his failure did not cancel his calling. Jesus restored him and told him, “Feed my sheep.”

Recognizing the Enemies of Our Identity

If we are going to stand confidently in our identity in Christ, we must also recognize the voices and influences that attempt to distort it.

1. Self Self can speak through:

- Insecurity
- Pride
- Fear
- Negative thinking
- Doubt
- Old habits

Sometimes the greatest battle is the battle within our own minds.

2. Satan Satan seeks to:

- Accuse
- Deceive
- Tempt
- Distort
- Challenge what God has said

From the beginning, the enemy has attempted to make people question God's Word and doubt their identity.

3. The World The world constantly pressures us to define ourselves by:

- Popularity
- Appearance
- Possessions
- Success
- Status
- Culture
- Acceptance from others

When we allow these things to determine our worth, we can easily lose sight of who God created us to be.

Identity in Christ Brings Stability

When we do not know **who God is** or **who we are in Him**, competing voices can create an **identity crisis**.

But when we are grounded in **God's Word**, we can recognize the false voices, reject the lies, and stand confidently in the truth.

David: An Example of Knowing Who You Are

In **1 Samuel 17**, David provides a powerful picture of someone who understood **who God was, who he was, and who the enemy was**.

While the armies of Israel were afraid of Goliath, David saw the situation differently. David knew that Israel did not belong to itself—it belonged to **the living God**. When he heard Goliath defy the armies of Israel, David asked, **“Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?”** (*1 Samuel 17:26*). David understood that the battle was bigger than himself. He knew **who God was**, and he knew **who he and the Israelites were**: they were the people of the **Living God**.

David also correctly identified **who the enemy was**. He did not allow Goliath's size, strength, threats, or reputation to redefine the situation. David called him an **“uncircumcised Philistine,”** recognizing that Goliath was standing in opposition

to God and God's people. David's confidence was not rooted in his own ability; it was rooted in **who God was**. He declared that the Lord who had delivered him from the lion and the bear would deliver him from this Philistine (*1 Samuel 17:37*).

David's Perspective

David's confidence demonstrates the power of having a clear identity:

He knew who God was.

He knew who he was.

He knew who the enemy was.

David did not have an **identity crisis** because his identity was connected to his relationship with God.

When we know **who God is**, we can know **who we are**. And when we know **who we are**, we can recognize **what is attempting to intimidate, deceive, or defeat us**.