

Finding Our Identity in Christ Part One

2 Corinthians 5:17 NKJV

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

- *Apostle Paul clearly stated that anyone who is “in Christ,” which means he or she has repented and put their faith in Christ, is a new creation. In other words they are born again.*
- *Once a person becomes a new creation, this verse states that two very important things have immediately taken place which we need to recognize, acknowledge, and embrace.*
- *“old things have passed away” — The first thing that has taken place is that we are no longer to be defined, controlled, or oppressed by our past failures or successes.*
- *“behold, all things have become new” — The second thing that has taken place is that not only have we become a new creation in Christ, but we have a new identity, a new purpose, and a new destiny.*
- *As Christians we need to take hold of our new identity in Christ and allow it to change our lives.*
- *Much of the writing in the New Testament points to the fact that we, as believers in Jesus, have a new identity in Christ—in our reborn spirit.*
- *The New Testament writers also encouraged and exhorted believers to embrace the reality of their new identity in Christ and to walk in that new identity.*

⁴⁴ You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.

- *The devil is a liar and the only power he has over a Christian is when we believe his lies.*
- *The serpent lied to Adam and Eve and they chose to believe the lie and act upon the lie. If they had rejected the lie and chosen to believe God’s Word the serpent would have had no power or authority over them.*
- *The serpent was totally powerless over Adam and Eve until they chose to believe his lies.*

- *We overcome the attacks of the enemy by the truth of God's Word. As we know God's Word, believe God's Word, speak God's Word, apply God's Word, and obey God's Word the devil is powerless to cause us to stumble or fall.*
- *Jesus overcame the three temptations of the devil in the wilderness by the Word of God. He exposed each of the lies of the devil and overcame them with the truth of God's Word.*

2 Corinthians 10:4-6 NKJV

⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,

⁵ casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

⁶ and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

- *We need to pull down the strongholds of every wrong belief, false reasoning, and lie that opposes the truth of God and that distorts our ability to correctly understand God's Word.*
- *When a believer feels that God has forsaken them or that their life has no value they are believing lies that are trying to strip them of the truth of their true identity and value that they have in Jesus Christ. This causes them to believe the self-destructive lie that their life has no value or purpose.*

“bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.”

- *The Greek word “captive” is a military term meaning “to take captive in war; to gain complete control by force.”*
- *Sometimes in life we may feel overwhelmed. Our thoughts are out of control and we feel like we are being swept into utter confusion. It feels like we are in the middle of a battle and we are—this is called spiritual warfare.*
- *When confusion reigns in our minds, we are unable to properly evaluate our situation. In such times, we need to reach out to the body of Christ—to brothers and sisters who are strong in Christ and with whom we have meaningful relationships.*
- *Through Christian fellowship we can both minister and receive ministry.*
- *When the Word of God says, “bring every thought into captivity,” it reinforces the idea that this will not be easy and it will require force, effort, and time. If we have lies deeply entrenched within us it will be a battle to be free. This is war!*

“bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ”

- *When our thought life has spiraled out of control, we need Christian fellowship, to meditate on God’s Word, and prayer—our own prayers and the prayers of others.*
- *Don’t rely solely on the prayers of others. God wants to hear from you about you!*
- *We need to identify the lies which have led to fear and confusion, and which have opened the door for every work of the flesh—all of which produce spiritual confusion.*
- *Rehashing our problem with others is not spiritual warfare — that is just complaining. Through fellowship we can identify the source of the lies and turn to God’s Word and prayer to systematically root out the lies. We replace the lies with the truth of God’s Word until “every thought has been brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”*
- *Bringing every thought captive to the obedience of Christ is the height of spiritual warfare and the place where the enemy is powerless to bring us down.*

“being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.”

- *When we bring our thoughts fully into obedience to Christ, then everything in our lives that has been opposing and tormenting us will be vanquished.*
- *Slowly and methodically over time, we begin to recognize the lies we have believed. Then as we read, study, and meditate on God’s Word the truth will become engrained in us.*
- *One of the reasons it takes time to “bring every thought captive” is because we don’t always recognize what we are believing are lies.*
- *The second reason it takes time to “bring every thought captive” is that it is often a process to be able to fully embrace God’s truths.*

Galatians 5:1 NKJV

¹ Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.

- *The Galatian church was in danger of falling into the bondage of legalism. Paul warned them to stand strong in the truth of the grace of God in Christ Jesus and to stand against the lies that were threatening to entrap them.*
- *We need to read, study, and understand God’s Word so we can know who*

Christ is, who we are in Christ, and the new identity we received at the moment we were born again.

1 Corinthians 15:45-47 ASV

⁴⁵ So also it is written, The first man Adam became a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

⁴⁶ Howbeit that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; then that which is spiritual.

⁴⁷ The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is of heaven.

- *“The first man Adam became a living soul” — Before a person is born again their identity is with the first Adam. The first Adam was a living soul who lived in a body. He was not yet a spiritual being, because he had not partaken of the Tree of Life, which is Jesus Christ.*
- *“The last Adam became a life-giving spirit” — Once we have received Jesus and are born again our identity has changed. Our identity is no longer linked to the first Adam. We are now linked to the last Adam, who is Christ, and we have become a spiritual being.*
- *is born again they are a soul that lives in a body. After a person is born again they are now a spirit, that has a soul, that lives in a body.*
- *A huge part of growing and maturing in Christ is understanding that as believers in Jesus we are now spiritual beings. We must now begin to think, speak, and live like the spiritual beings we are in Christ.*

Romans 8:5-6 NKJV

⁵ For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

⁶ For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

- *Christ in our reborn spirit is the life-giving spirit that gives us life and empowers our souls to be transformed into the image of Jesus as we yield to the spirit’s leading.*
- *Since we are a new creation in Christ we no longer need to think, speak, or live the way we lived before we received Jesus.*

Romans 8:12 NKJV

¹² Therefore, brethren, we are debtors-not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.

- *The flesh no longer has a legal right to control us. We are now free to live for Christ. We are no longer indebted to please the flesh.*

Romans 13:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

- *The Greek word for “put on” is ἐνδύω endyō and it means “to dress, clothe.”*
- *We are to put on the Lord Jesus Christ and be clothed with the Lord Jesus Christ.*
- *This is not referring to justification but sanctification—living out what is already in us through the new birth.*
- *“But put on the Lord Jesus Christ” — “to put on” is in the imperative which can be understood as either a command or an instruction. This means that we have to choose to put on the Lord Jesus Christ.*
- *“make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts” — The Greek word “to make provision” means to “make room for, to make forethought, to provide for.” We are not to allow fleshly impulses to continue to operate in our lives.*
- *This would be like a drug addict declaring he wants to be free from his addiction, but instead of throwing away his drugs and drug paraphernalia, he simply puts them away in the cupboard just in case he changes his mind or has an uncontrolled urge. This indicates a lack of commitment.*

Ephesians 4:21–24 (NKJV)

²¹if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus:

²²that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,

²³and be renewed in the spirit of your mind,

²⁴and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

²²that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,

- *We are not to wear the “old man” which is our former way of living and thinking which is dominated by selfishness and lusts. We are to take off “the old man” the same way a person would choose to remove an overcoat.*

“the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts”

- *If we continue to “wear” the old man then it will result in us becoming more corrupt and deceived by selfishness and lusts.*

²³and be renewed in the spirit of your mind,

- *The way we “put off” the old man is by renewing our minds.*
- *When it says “renew the spirit of our minds” it is speaking about replacing wrong and corrupt attitudes with godly attitudes which reflect the truths of God’s Word and bring forth the fruit of the Spirit in our lives.*
- *We need to renew the attitude of our minds and the way we evaluate life so it conforms to what the Bible teaches. Then our old ways of thinking and living will be replaced with the truth of our new identity in Christ.*
- *We need to consciously and consistently be aware of what we are thinking. We need to choose to direct our thoughts towards Christ and His teachings.*
- *The difference between a spiritually minded Christian and a carnally minded Christian is that a carnally minded Christian just thinks. A spiritually minded Christian thinks about what he is thinking. He makes course corrections in his thought patterns when necessary, so his thoughts conform to the truths found in God’s Word.*

²⁴and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

- *We are to clothe ourselves with the new man who is Jesus Christ and when we do, our thoughts, words, and actions will conform to the true righteousness and holiness that is found in our reborn spirit.*
- *We can see this principle in Ephesians 4:21-24.*
- *If we want to be clothed with the new man we must first take off the old man with its lusts and corruption.*
- *We can’t put on new clothes until we’ve removed our old clothes.*
- *Many Christians become very frustrated because they are not able to walk victoriously in Christ. One of the reasons is that they haven’t first removed the old man. They are trying to serve God while continuing to engage in ways of thinking and living that are contrary to Christ.*

Deuteronomy 22:11 NKJV

¹¹ “You shall not wear a garment of different sorts, such as wool and linen mixed together.”

- *What is the purpose of this seemingly obscure commandment?*

- *The principle is that you are to wear a garment made of only one type of fabric, and not wear a garment that is a mixture of two or more fabrics.*
- *We can't put on the "new man" while still wearing the "old man." We are not to mix our new identity in Christ with our old ways of thinking and living because it will produce spiritual confusion.*
- *We take off our "old man" so we can put on the "new man." Otherwise, we will continue to live defeated lives and think that the gospel message is powerless to help, when in reality, we are relating to it incorrectly.*
- *In the natural what a person wears does not necessarily reflect their true identity, but what they wear may affect how they perceive themselves and how others perceive them.*
- *A soldier wearing a military uniform does not make him more of a soldier, but it may affect how he carries himself and how others perceive him.*
- *If a Christian does not take off "the old man" which reflects one's former conduct and ways of thinking before he or she received Christ, then their true identity is hidden not only from those in the world, but even from themselves.*
- *People tend to define themselves by what they do. For example, a person who paints for a living may say "I am a painter" versus "I am a person who paints."*
- *We often mistakenly evaluate ourselves by what we do and not by who we are.*
- *God wants us to identify ourselves by who we are in the spirit—"I am a Christian—a Jesus follower."*
- *Through Christ's sacrifice I have become righteous with Jesus Christ's righteousness.*

Acts 11:26 NKJV

²⁶ And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.

- *It is interesting to note that only after Paul and Barnabas spent an entire year instructing the believers that they began to be called Christians. "Christian" wasn't a name they gave themselves. It was given by others, because their identity as Christians had been fully cemented into place through their continual instruction in the Word of God.*
- *It is our relationship with Jesus Christ that gives us true and eternal value and*

purpose.

- *We may not always know the exact purpose our Father has for our lives. However, it is important that we know He does have a purpose for our lives and that as we grow in our relationship with God He will equip and lead us into that purpose.*
- *We can easily become discouraged and even overwhelmed by our mistakes and failures if we fail to recognize our true identity in Christ and that God is our Father.*
- *If we are able to take hold of our true identity in Christ we will be able to trust God even with our failures. As we confess our failures and sins, we can trust Him and believe He will bring redemption to every area of our lives.*

Romans 8:28 NKJV

²⁸ **And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.**

- *The world and the devil lie to Christians about our true identity and cause us to believe that our identities are wrapped up in our successes or failures.*
- *If we define ourselves by our successes it produces pride and independence from God.*
- *If we define ourselves by our failures it produces shame, hopelessness, and a general sense of worthlessness that cause us to shrink away from God.*
- *Both scenarios cause us to withdraw from God. The first is due to a false sense of independence and the second a false sense of shame.*

Galatians 2:19-20 NKJV

¹⁹ **For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God.**

²⁰ **I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.**

- *Galatians 2:20 offers the secret to living a victorious life free from offenses.*
- *“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live,” One cannot offend or stumble a dead man! When we are offended or upset it is a sure sign that we are identifying with our “old man.”*
- *“but Christ lives in me” — When we identify with Jesus then we will recognize that God is calling us to co-operate with the Holy Spirit to have the life of Jesus Christ in our reborn spirit manifest through us.*

Philippians 1:21 NKJV

²¹ For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

- *If we fully apply this Scripture to our lives, it will release a freedom and joy no earthly trial can steal. It will reveal a person who fully embraces their identity in Jesus Christ and the purposes that the Father has for that person through His Son.*
- *One of the main themes of Colossians, Chapter 3, is about removing the old man and putting on the new man.*

Colossians 3:1-4 NKJV

¹ If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.

² Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

³ For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

⁴ When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

- *The chapter begins with the premise that “if you were raised with Christ” then we should have an eternal and heavenly perspective and “Set our mind on things above, not on things on the earth.”*
- *One of the most important steps in taking off the old man and putting on the new man is to remember that Heaven and eternity with Jesus Christ is our final destination. The sorrows and trials of this life are but for a brief moment compared to the eternal glory we will experience with Jesus.*

Romans 8:18 NKJV

¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Colossians 3:5-7 NKJV

⁵ Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

⁶ Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience,

⁷ in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.

- *We can't reform the flesh or its evil passions. We need to count ourselves dead to those things.*
- *Covetousness is rooted in a false identity. It occurs when someone seeks material success to give one a sense of value and purpose. Material success becomes the idol the person worships.*

Colossians 3:8-9 NKJV

⁸ But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth.

⁹ Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds,

- *If we are experiencing or struggling with any of these and other such behaviors and impulses, it is because we are wearing the old man. The solution is not to try to reform the old man but to take off the old man.*

Colossians 3:10 NKJV

¹⁰ and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,

- *We put on the new man by being renewed in the knowledge that transforms us into the image of Jesus.*

Colossians 3:12-13 NKJV

¹² Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;

¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.

- *This is what it looks like when we are wearing the new man—tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering. We bear with one another's weaknesses and are easily able to forgive those who have wronged or hurt us.*

Colossians 3:14-15 NKJV

¹⁴ But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.

¹⁵ And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

- *Putting on the new man means to be clothed in love which produces a peace that will lead and protect us on our journey through life.*

Colossians 3:16-17 NKJV

¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

¹⁷ And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

- *When we have put on the new man the word of Christ dwells richly in us and we have a melody of praise, worship, and thanksgiving that fills our hearts. These attitudes indicate we have put on the new man and enable us to continue to wear the new man.*

Mark 10:46-52 NKJV

⁴⁶ Now they came to Jericho. As He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road begging.

⁴⁷ And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

⁴⁸ Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

⁴⁹ So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called. Then they called the blind man, saying to him, "Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you."

⁵⁰ And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus.

⁵¹ So Jesus answered and said to him, "What do you want Me to do for you?" The blind man said to Him, "Rabboni, that I may receive my sight."

⁵² Then Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road.

- *When Bartimaeus heard Jesus calling him he threw aside his garments of a blind beggar and he stood up and came to Jesus. He left behind him the disappointments and pains of his previous life to receive his sight and a new future and a new identity in Christ.*
- *Let us lay aside all those things in the past that try to define us and let us fix our eyes on Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.*