

AN ETERNAL IDENTITY

**1 Corinthians 12:13; 2 Corinthians
5:17; Romans 8:16**

Who We Really Are in Christ

By

**Ric Webb
Pastor-Teacher**

**Heart's Journey Ministries
9621 Tall Timber Blvd.
Little Rock, AR 72204**

**Website www.hjcommunity.org
Phone 501.455.0296**

Opening.

The theme of this particular Journey into the heart of God is ‘identity,’ your eternal identity. It’s not a matter of how *you* see you, how your friends see you, how your children see you or the world sees you, it’s about how God sees you. *In His Son*. And what that means to the life you were meant to live. We both know there is often an enormous disparity between the Life we’re meant to live, full of beauty, intimacy, and adventure with God, and the life we find ourselves living. How do we get from where we are to where we need to be?

We start by asking how men and women go from being “**in Adam**,” the place of spiritual darkness and death {1 Cor. 15:22}, to being “**in Christ**,” the place of spiritual Light and Life. It’s a simple matter of faith, like everything else in the Christian Life: just how much of God’s Word are you willing to believe, how much of your Father’s heart do you intend to trust? Paul said in 1 Corinthians 12:13, “**For by one Spirit we were all baptized** [with not a single one of us excluded] **into one Body** [His Body, with which we were identified forever at the very second of salvation; the ‘we’ is you and I as the born-again in the Age of Grace; the ‘one Spirit’ is the Holy Spirit], **whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit** [which speaks of the Spirit’s eternal indwelling].”

The English “**baptized**” is a transliteration of the Greek verb *baptizo*, the essential meaning of which is- to *identify*, that is, to *identify with a purpose*. This word was used by poets, dramatists, and historians in ancient Greece to connote the identification of one object with another so that the nature of the first object is altered, the essence of it is changed. *Baptizo* is used in Classical Greek of a blacksmith who immerses a piece of hot iron in water, tempering it. Also, of Greek soldiers placing the points of their swords, and barbarians the points of their spears, in a vat of blood. E.g., Xenophon in the 4th cent. BC tells of Spartan soldiers dipping their spears into pig’s blood before going into battle. By identifying the spears with blood, the nature of the spear was transformed from a hunting tool to an instrument of warfare. Euripides used *baptizo* in the 5th cent. BC to describe a sinking ship, identified forever with the waters of the Aegean. The use of *baptizo* in the examples I’ve given you resolves itself to this definition: *the introduction of a person or thing into a new environment, into union with something else, so as to eternally alter its relationship to its former environment*.

Realize within the context of this verse that at salvation a profound change has taken place within us. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:17, “**if any man is in Christ, {he is} a new creature.**” “**If**” here is a 1st class condition in the Greek, meaning literally- *since* or *when*. “**When any man is in Christ, he is a new creature.**” The moment we trusted the Son of God with our souls and with their destiny, the Holy Spirit ripped us out of Adam and evil and plunged us into Christ. Paul said, “**For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive,**” 1 Corinthians 15:22; and John tells us in 1 John 5:19, “**that the whole world lies in {the power of} the evil one,**” “**under the sway**” of a wicked ruler {NKJ}. When the Spirit of Christ baptized us into Him, identified us eternally with our Sovereign King, we became “**new.**” Totally new, in fact. In Greek there are two words for ‘new:’ *neos*, which means ‘new in relation to time;’ and *kainos*, which means ‘new in relation to character.’ I.e., nothing like it has ever existed, nothing like it has ever been before it. Thus, *kainos* refers to a *new form, unprecedented*. Paul uses it for something impressive in the spiritual realm,

something better than the old and superior to it.

New Creations.

The noun *ktisis* means- *creation*, something created out of nothing: we are a new species of spiritual being which has never before existed. And there is strength and glory, power and wisdom, provision and protection **“in Christ,”** just waiting to be unleashed. In the twinkling of an eye the HS gave us a new position {out of Adam and into Christ}, a new power {a divine dynamic}, a new purpose {service in the court of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords}, and a new destiny {to wage war against our enemies in time, and to rest in the presence of His glory forever}. **“The old things passed away** [aorist tense verb, meaning- ‘right then, at the very moment we believed, the old things passed away’]; **behold, new things have come.”** Those **“new things”** are all the assets and equipment necessary to become a hero of faith, everything we need to conquer and overcome. This v. tells us that all of the resources we need to execute the purpose of God for our lives came into existence the very second we believed in Jesus Christ. Just as our heavenly Father designed it in eternity past. And they will continue to exist for all eternity. They are irrevocable and indestructible!

An Eternal Identity— The Crucial Component.

One of the crucial components in the healing of your heart and the strengthening of your soul is ‘identification.’ Stay with me here. Do not miss this. **Who are you in Christ?** That may be the most foundational and fundamental question of your Christian Life: **who am I?** Because knowing your identity in Christ is absolutely essential to life and victory in the Conflict of Christ! I want to look at this along three lines: security, acceptance, and significance.

- I. ‘I am *Secure:*’ free forever from condemnation {Rom. 8:1-2}. I cannot be separated from the love of God; and I have been established, anointed and sealed by the Holy Spirit— Romans 8:35-39; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22. I am **“hidden with Christ in God,”** can find mercy and grace **“in time of need,”** and am born of Him and thus cannot be touched by the evil one— Colossians 3:3; Hebrews 4:16; 1 John 5:18.
- II. ‘I am *Accepted:*’ a child of God, the friend of Christ, and one spirit with Him— John 1:12; 15:15; 1 Corinthians 6:17. The Father has declared me righteous in His sight, adopted me into His Family, given me direct access to Himself through the Person of Jesus Christ, redeemed my soul and forgiven my sins, and made me complete in His Son— Romans 5:1; Ephesians 2:18; Colossians 1:14 and 2:10.
- III. ‘I am *Significant:*’ the salt and light of the Earth {Mat. 5:13-14}; a branch of the True Vine, a channel of His Life {Jn. 15:1-5}; a personal witness of Jesus Christ {Acts 1:8} entrusted with the **“ministry of reconciliation”** {2 Cor. 5:18}. I am God’s **“workmanship, created ...for good works;”** I can approach Him with freedom and confidence, and **“do all things through”** Him **“who strengthens me,”** through the One who keeps on pouring His power into me— Eph. 2:10; 3:12; and Phi. 4:13.

Here is where the battle for your identity rages, in the hearts of men and women. The enemy will come against this with everything he has in his arsenal. *That* I can promise you.

Satan's lie is that you are a worthless sinner, a despicable deviant because you sometimes sin. The Truth is that you are a saint {one vindicated, acquitted, declared absolutely righteous in the sight of God} who can choose to sin.

Satan's system tells us we get our 'identity' either from what *we've* done or what *others* have done to us: "Your life will never amount to anything. How could God use a loser like you? You have nothing to offer this world: no beauty, no strength, no glory, no grace... nothing. You are shameful, selfish, and sick." God's Word tells us we get our 'identity,' our eternal identity, from what God has done for us. Romans 5:8 says, that "**God demonstrates** [the sense is of 'bringing something to light:' He '*keeps on* exhibiting,' He '*keeps on* giving proof of'] **His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.**" While you were at your lowest, your worst, your farthest from Him, He gave His Son for you.

Satan say's the truest things about you are what other people say {those, along with the evil message they carry, are often the most difficult arrows to dislodge}. The truest truths about your life, the final facts that destroy satanic speculation, are what God says about you.

The world {which exists in an atmosphere of evil within a realm of relativity} tries to say that behavior tells us what to believe about ourselves. The Truth is that our belief about ourselves, the willingness to see who we really are in Christ... and to live out of that place, determines our behavior.

Where Do We Go From Here?

That's the crucial question. There are a couple of things we need to consider and remember.

Sin Does Not Define Us.

Sin does not define me; and sin does not define you. Your story does not begin with sin {thank God}, nor does it end there. No, the Story begins in Genesis 1:27 with something powerful, something glorious— "**the image of God.**" Sin is something we choose to do; it is not who we are— Romans 7:17-21. The "**sin which dwells in me**" {vv. 17 and 20}, the flesh as a participant in evil, is not who God created me to be. And it is not who He recreated me to be in Christ. *Sin does not define who you are as a child of God* {get that down}. Its power to dominate us has been crushed at the Cross— Romans 6. In Christ there is sufficient power, abundant power, glorious power through His resurrection to "**walk in newness of life,**" 6:4. Take your place on the Field in that position and live out of it! Live in freedom and in grace.

Transformation Within, Not Reformation Without.

What we need, above all else, is a true transformation within, not reformation without:

an *irreversible* change in the hearts of men and women. God wants to finish our ‘evolution of initiation’ into maturity. He wants to set our masculinity, or our femininity, free from the chains which have kept it bound for so long. For only then, in the courage and valor of sacrifice, can the world see the glory of God within us.

Not a Book of Exceptions.

The Bible is not a Book of exceptions. I mean, honestly, what good would that be? It is a Book of examples, not exceptions.

When we see the stories of the great heroes of faith stretching all the way back to the beginning of Time, of Enoch and Noah and how they **“walked with God”** {Gen. 5:24 and 6:9}, of Abraham and how he **“was called the friend of God”** {Jms. 2:23}, of the Lord speaking **“to Moses face to face”** like one speaks to an *intimate ally* {Ex. 33:11}, of how He directed David time and time again in the defeat of His enemies, and never the same way twice {two examples: 2 Sam. 5:17-20, 22-25; 1 Chron. 14:8-11, 14-16}, of the Spirit’s warning Paul of the danger to come if he continued toward Jerusalem {Acts 20:22-23; 21:4 and 11}, we can know that God will do the same for *each* and *every* one of us. He will lead in His light and in His love those who choose life over death {Jn. 10:10; Rom. 6:16}. As the Psalmist wrote, **“Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path,”** 119:105: “I don’t have to stumble in darkness any longer.” And that’s exactly what God’s saying to us, “It’s time for you to come on out of the shadows. It’s time for you to choose.” Moses said, **“I call Heaven and Earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose Life in order that you may live...,”** Deuteronomy 30:19. This is about moving out of the field of formula and into the realm of relationship.

No Formulas for the Father.

There are no formulas with the Father. Period. Outside of cursing the evil that opposes His will, and blessing those of His own who don’t, there are no all-the-time-every-time formulas for the man or woman who follows Him. God is a Person, not a principle; He is Deity, not doctrine. And thus He operates in the glory of grace, not like a system {even a theological one}, but with all the originality of a perfect Person *truly* free and *utterly* alive.

“The realm of God is *dangerous*,” writes Anthony Bloom, “you must enter *into* it and not just seek information *about* it.” {Italics Mine.} That’s the problem with principles and our obsession over them: they remove the intimacy of an ongoing conversation with the Lord Jesus Christ, that element of allegiance to our Commander and King. Find the principle, apply it; find the point, use it ...what do you need the Holy Spirit for? Oswald Chambers has a warning along these lines; he say’s, “Never make a principle out of your experience; let God be as original with other people as He is with you.” Originality and creativity are necessary components to personhood, and to the full flowering of feminine beauty and masculine strength. Realize that the Adventure begins and the strength of God is released when we no longer rely on formulas, on tips and techniques for a ‘quick-fix’ apart from the Spirit of God.

Our heavenly Father is incredibly creative, and He wants His sons and daughters to live that way as well.

Suburban Spirituality?

The Spiritual Life *cannot* be made suburban. Said Howard Macey, “It is always frontier. And we who live in it must accept and even rejoice that it remains untamed.” It shouldn’t surprise us that the impostor within, what the apostle Paul calls “**the old man, the old self**” {Col. 3:9}, hates mystery. Which is somewhat of a problem, isn’t it? Because mystery is essential to adventure. And what’s more, mystery is at the heart of the Universe, and of the God who created it. The most important aspects of our world: our relationship with Christ and with the people in our lives, our calling and its glory, the battles we fight and the enemies we face, every one of them is fraught with mystery. Contrary to Christian opinion, that is *not* a bad thing; it is a rich part of reality and essential to our soul’s thirst for adventure.

God Still Speaks.

God does speak: and Spirit to spirit is how He does it. In Romans 8:16 Paul says, that “**the Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ...**” v. 17a. While the voice of God within is still as the night and calm as a whisper, our circumstances often speak much, much louder— cf. 1 Kings 19:1-12. And when we ask the right questions in the midst of those circumstances we can learn the right lessons. We know this for a fact, that: [1] **Nothing happens by accident**; and [2] **There is a lesson to learn in every situation**. Let me give you three points of discretion and discernment in this respect.

- I. We have to believe that God will speak, that this is the kind of relationship He wants with us, to be able to speak the words we need directly into our lives.
- II. We must be open to any answer He gives. To predetermine what we want, to demand that this turn out this way or that turn out that way, is to deny the fact that His heart toward us is good and righteous and just, and that His plan is perfect, regardless of how we feel about it. It is we as warriors in the Family of Faith refusing to have “**eyes to see, ...ears to hear,**” and “**a heart to know,**” Deuteronomy 29:4.
- III. The Holy Spirit speaks with authority. There is weight and power there. That’s what distinguishes His voice from all the others trying to drown Him out. **His is a voice of absolutism:** absolute love, absolute grace, absolute compassion and absolute Truth. His voice never hesitates; it is unmistakable and unequivocal. And once He begins to speak His words of strength into your soul, His words of grace into your heart, you will never be the same. As one Christian author’s partner and mentor said to him before his heavenly homecoming in 1998, so I now say to you, “Let people feel the weight of who you are, and let them deal with it.”

Finale.

Walk With God.

As a last word of wise counsel, *walk with God...* in communion with Him every moment. Do not let that desire slip from your heart. Walk through the grand Story of your life in conversational intimacy with the Son of God. And learn how to ask the right questions. **The right question at the right time is worth a thousand wrong ones in its place.**