

## Who You Are in Christ

*Presented by Julie Busteed*

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### Day One

Do you know you are a child of the King? Do you live in that reality? Years ago, I remember my Aunt Fran sending me a paper gold crown in the mail with a note that said, “You are a princess. You are a child of the King.”

At the time, I laughed and shook my head and said that’s Aunt Franny for you—sending and doing these crazy things. But as I reflect on it—and she did get her point across because I remember it all these years later—it was a great reminder of my true identity. Because I know Christ and am his, he is my King. That makes me royalty.

We have so many titles for ourselves. We have our job titles and roles. We are also wives, mothers, daughters, sisters, and friends. We also identify ourselves by where we live or where we were born. There’s so much talk about which generation we belong to—a Boomer, Gen X, Millennial, Gen Z, Alpha. Maybe you identify yourself by how many followers or likes you have on social media. There are so many ways to identify ourselves. But what is your true identity?

What you think about yourself—what you say to yourself—has an incredible impact on how you behave and live out your life.

If you are a Christ follower, the most important thing is to find out what God’s Word has to say. We’ll talk about five ways God sees us, and in turn how we should rightly view ourselves.

Starting at the beginning in Genesis we learn we are made in his image.

*Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them (Genesis 1:26-27).*

When you stop and meditate on this truth, it’s astounding. The creator of this world created us in his own image. He gifted us with unique talents, skills, emotions, and minds. Psalm 139 says we are *fearfully and wonderfully made*.

Our self-value or worth is not in what we think about ourselves, our bodies, or our lives. We have value because we are fearfully and wonderfully made in the image of God.

### Day Two

How do you introduce yourself? What’s the first thing you tell others about yourself when meeting someone new?

The Apostle John writes:

*See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him (1 John 3:1).*

I'm in awe that the Father has lavished his great love on me. God almighty is extravagantly generous with his great love toward his children. It is his heart.

To know your identity is a child of God and that he loves you, should give you such peace and rest and confidence and security.

But, what if you're not "feeling" loved right now. How do you continue to rest and walk in God's love? Let's look at how the Bible defines love. The Apostle John continues:

*This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us (1 John 3:16).*

And Paul in Romans tells us:

*But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).*

Not only does God lavish his love on us, but he's the one who sent his son to die for us to save us and to reconcile us to himself. We don't have to earn his love. It is a free gift.

If you're in a hard place right now—uncertain about the future of your job, in a difficult season in a relationship, or struggling with your health—it can be difficult to feel like God is with you and loves you. But you especially need to preach this truth to yourself during these times. Keep reminding yourself he does love you. Your feelings are not always to be relied on! When you consistently read God's word, meditate on it in your heart and mind, study, and even memorize it, you will be able to recall his truth when you are in a difficult place.

My prayer for us echoes Paul's prayer for the Ephesians:

*I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:17-19).*

### Day Three

Have you ever wanted to be chosen for something and not been picked? There are many opportunities in our life when we can be chosen. For example, as a child you get picked to be on a sports team based on your size and skill. When you are interviewing for a job or a promotion, you are being evaluated and chosen by the degrees you have and your work history and performance.

The Apostle Peter tells us:

*You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light (1 Peter 2:9).*

We are chosen by God. Have you ever tried to really wrap your head around that truth? It's not based on anything we have done. In fact, he chose us *before the creation of the world* (Ephesians 1:4). We are his *treasured possession* (Deuteronomy 7:6).

God accepts us, chooses us, loves us as we are right now. You don't have to put your resume together with a great cover letter and references and prepare for an interview. His choosing you is not based on your past successes or failures. It's all because of Christ's saving grace and sacrifice on the cross.

Since we are chosen, how then does this affect our daily lives? The Apostle Paul told the Colossians:

*Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience (Colossians 3:12).*

Because we are chosen by God, we are to act with compassion toward everyone, even those who annoy us. We are to be kind to people, even those who are unkind to us.

We are to act with humility and to quote C.S. Lewis, "Humility is not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less." And we also need to be gentle and patient with one another. Be gentle with your words to coworkers. Be patient with loved ones.

Practicing these things—also known as the fruit of the Spirit—will not only honor God, but it also will cause others to notice the difference in your life. God has chosen you. He is calling you into a relationship with himself.

## Day Four

How do you define yourself? Is it by your family, the church you attend, or your job? What does it mean to be identified as a Christ-follower?

We have looked at how we are made in God's image and how that defines us. We are also loved by God so deeply we can hardly grasp how wide and long and high and deep it is. And we are also chosen by him for his good purposes.

We are also made for community—to be in community. And this community defines us. We were not created to live isolated lives. The first and best example is our Triune God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They are eternal and distinct, and yet they are one. Yes, not an easy concept for our minds to wrap around. But we see beginning in Genesis the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are at the creation of the world. They are in community with one another.

We were not created to go it alone. A 2024 Harvard survey found 21% of adults in the U.S. feel lonely. They feel disconnected from friends and family. The data suggests it may be due to anxiety, depression and a lack of meaning and purpose.<sup>1</sup>

Because we are made in God's image and he is One God in three persons, we are made to be not only in relationship with God but with each other. We need each other for encouragement, to love and care for one another, to be accountable to each other, to worship and praise God together. And in essence, learn about who we are—our identity.

Paul also describes the body of Christ like our own body:

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<sup>1</sup> Batanova, M., Weissbourd, R., & McIntyre, J. (2024). (rep.). *Loneliness in America: Just the Tip of the Iceberg?* (Ser. Making Caring Common, pp. 1–14). Cambridge, MA: The President and Fellows of Harvard College.

*For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others (Romans 12:4-5).*

We all belong to each other. When you don't show up for church or Bible study it doesn't just affect you. Your presence is missed whether you realize it or not. Showing up is huge! Let's remember each of us are a vital part of the body of Christ—it's part of who we are—for our own good and for his glory.

## Day Five

We have been talking about our identity. How we identify ourselves, how we think about ourselves. Here's a definition of identity: it is the set of qualities, beliefs, personality traits, appearance, or expressions that characterize a person.

Unfortunately, finding your identity is never as easy as looking up the definition. There are so many factors that come into play. For example, culture will tell you how to deal with an identity crisis: they advise you to ground yourself in your core values, be aware of your emotions, create a mental fitness plan, enlist the help of a coach, and stay optimistic about the future.

While these may "sound" good, they are really all dependent on you. They rely on your own strength and might, and that is daunting. But if your foundation is the Word of God, you have a trustworthy and reliable source that is relevant to your life today.

If you are in Christ, a Christ-follower, then you have *the mind of Christ* (1 Corinthians 2:16).

Back to the dictionary. Webster defines the mind as the part of a person that feels, perceives, thinks, wills, and reasons. Since we have the mind of Christ, we have the Holy Spirit. The Spirit who knows the thoughts of God, teaches us, guides us, helps us to obey, brings joy and freedom, produces fruit in us, transforms us, and the list goes on. In every area of our life, we can have the mind of Christ and understand spiritual things.

What would happen if you made it your goal to constantly pursue the mind of Christ? What would happen if that became your identity?

As we continue on this journey of realizing our true identity in Christ, we will be changed to be more and more like him. I pray as Paul does for the Ephesians:

*I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe (Ephesians 1:18-19).*