

## Chapter 5 Who Am I?



**Humans go to great lengths to try to obtain identity.** We wear certain kinds of clothes, we drive certain automobiles, we comb our hair a certain way, we hang out with certain friends, we have certain hobbies, and the list goes on. Some attempt to make a lot of money and others take poverty vows. Others join various religions or just inherit their family traditions. We go to the “other gods” to obtain an identity.

**People allow other people** and circumstances to define their self-identity. If you study the psychology of a slave you will discover that they achieve their identity by how they perform and by how others’ judge their performance. They are stripped of all inherent dignity and identity. They can only have self-esteem that is based upon what others’ think of them, or in how they impress others’ with their performance.

In John 8:34, Jesus told the religious Jews that they were slaves to sin. Did He see them sinning? Probably He did not. However, Jesus knew just by their actions that they had no self-esteem and no identity other than what others thought about them. This is truly slavery because you can never please people. In fact, the people you are trying to please or impress are often the ones that will control and manipulate you by your need to be accepted.

**Scientists have discovered some amazing things about behavior.** Our brain waves can be trained to act a certain way. It does not matter if circumstances change, we will still react the same way. We form habits by doing the same thing for approximately twenty-one days. Habits eventually form our character. So we find ourselves becoming someone we do not mean to become by default. We do not even know how we got to be that way.

**A baby elephant** is trained by tying a small rope to a small stake, which is tied to the elephant’s leg. As a baby it cannot get loose, so it walks in a circle. When the baby grows up, it could easily pull the stake out of the ground, but it does not. It feels the gentle tug of the rope and its brain tells it that it is still a captive.

**In an experiment, fish were put into a fish tank** with their favorite prey, some smaller fish. However, the smaller fish were put into a plastic bag that the larger fish could not penetrate. Finally, the larger fish gave up. Then things changed. The smaller fish were let out of the bag and became prey, once more swimming among the large fish. The large fish starved to death, being convinced that they could not eat the smaller ones.

**Humans are the same way.** Our brain waves tell us that we are slaves, losers, and under the power of Satan and circumstances. We feel tossed around by life, beaten up by sin, and living with a sin trained mind. If we have been serving “other gods” they have left us with fear and uncertainty.

**Suddenly, Jesus gives us the new birth;** we are born again and become new creations in Christ. We meet God and we feel, “Now we have purpose, now we know who we are.” But wait a minute. It is not usually that easy. We have formed brain waves and habits that are not so easily changed. It is true that we have a new nature, but in our brain we still have old “computers” that need to be reprogrammed.

**We are so trained to be defeated,** that Satan can keep us defeated. Then God comes along and tells us He wants us free! He wants us to know who we are! He wants us to know the truth! John 8:31-32 says, “Then Jesus said to the Jews who believed on Him, ‘If you continue in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’”

**Remember that the Truth is not something learned, it is Jesus.** “Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me’” (John 14:6).

**I see most Christians still laboring to find their identity by the wrong means.** I struggled with this for years. I had always been a performance-oriented person, meaning I obtained my identity by how well I performed and by what other people thought about how I performed.

**Finally, one day in the early 1990’s, God spoke to me.** First He asked me if I was tired. Of course I was. Then He showed me something that changed my life. He reminded me that in John Chapter 13 He had washed the disciples’ feet, and that foot washing in those days was as cleaning toilets is today.

As an analogy, He told me that if the President of the United States came to my house and cleaned my toilet, that CNN News would probably

cover it, not because cleaning toilets was so great or I was so popular, but because it was the President doing it.

**Jesus told me that He had made foot washing** a respectable event since He had done it. Now it was now a good thing to do. He brought dignity to the act simply because He is God.

Then He gave me the analogy that God, through the Holy Spirit, was living inside of me joined to my spirit. Everywhere I went I brought dignity to that place (just as Jesus brought dignity to washing feet) because God was coming to that place in me. He reminded me that what others thought of me would not give me my identity nor my dignity.

**God provided my identity** and I had the privilege of bringing dignity with me everywhere I went. He turned my thinking upside down. I knew that I was a vessel containing God and I no longer needed an outside source telling me who I was. This is freedom!

**Most believers never realize victory in their lives** because they are always trying to achieve some goal with God. The way of victory is to realize the victory and the finished work of the Cross. We *already have* victory, we are *already* righteous, we *already* are victorious, but we just don't know it yet.

**The problem is that people do not know** who God has made them to be through the new birth. They do not have their true identity. More than that, they cannot imagine that God has made them righteous by grace and faith and that they had nothing to do with it. Christianity is not performance oriented. It is what God made you in Christ, by faith, by grace; it was a free gift.

**The solution for understanding our identity is we need to get a renewed mind.** When we meet God, we receive a new spirit. We are instantly made righteous with God. When our bodies die, we instantly go to be with the Lord in Heaven. But in the meantime we have our souls which have not been made whole as yet. Our souls are made up of our will (volition), mind and emotions. Our souls take a lifetime to get transformed!

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will” (Romans 12:1,2).

**The Word of God is the only thing** that can renew our mind to the Truth! Study and meditate on these truths, confess the Scriptures, determine to believe them no matter what your senses tell you, until they renew your mind.

**Always remember, however, that the Word of God** is never a thing or a concept; the Word of God is a person, Jesus. (John 1:1,2 & 14).

**We are supposed to obtain our true identity from God through His Word.** I urge you to study the story in Numbers Chapters 13 and 14 about the Israelites and the twelve spies in the Promised Land (It is also covered in this book in Chapter 14). God had promised them the Promised Land. Only two of the twelve spies, Joshua and Caleb, had enough faith in God's Word to see themselves as victorious over their enemies. The other ten said, "There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight." (Numbers 13:33).

**Satan sows seeds to produce a wrong self-image in us.** In Matthew 13:1-23 Jesus told His disciples a parable about the Word of God being planted in their hearts as a seed. He explained how it worked and how Satan tried to keep it from working. Then He explained that not only would Satan try to steal the Word out of their hearts, but that he (Satan) also was a seed sower.

"Another parable He put forth to them, saying: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way'" (Matthew 13:24,25).

**Following are some facts in the Word that you should meditate on.** These facts are good seed, which will bear good fruit in your life.

**You were hopelessly lost.** That means that someone else had to search for you. Ephesians 2:12 (a & b) says, "that at that time you were without Christ, ...having no hope and without God in the world."

**You were dead in your sins.** There is no way out for a dead man, except to receive life. Ephesians 2:1 says, "And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins."

**The blood Jesus shed on the Cross removed your sins. He took your place.** Colossians 1:14 says, "in whom we have redemption through His blood, the remission of sins." Ephesians 1:7 says, "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." The word, "forgiveness," actually means to separate

or cut away. Our sins have been taken away from us and put on to Jesus, our sacrificial Lamb.

**You were already “In Christ” when the following events took place.**

**You were crucified with Christ.** “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).

**You died with Christ.** “For if we have been joined together in the likeness of His death, we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection” (Romans 6:5).

**You were buried with Christ.** “We were buried therefore with Him through Baptism into death” (Romans 6:4). “Having been buried with him in baptism” (Colossians 2:12).

**You were made alive with Christ.** “And you being dead through your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, you did He make alive together with Him” (Colossians 2:13). “Even when we were dead through our trespasses [God] made us alive together with Christ” (Ephesians 2:5).

**You were raised with Christ. You are seated with Christ.** “[He God] made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:5,6).

That is our legal standing with God today and the foundation of our legal rights. As far as the spiritual world is concerned, your position is with Christ in the heavenlies. You are in a seat of authority. Satan and your mind will tell you that you are not seated with Christ in the heavenlies, but that is a lie! You need to know that God seated you with Him while you were yet a sinner!

**You are a new creation.** “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

**You might ask, how can this be?** Good question. God put us in Christ. “But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God--and righteousness and sanctification and redemption” (1 Corinthians 1:30). Being in Christ is like you were in your father and mother as a sperm and an egg. You inherited their history in your genealogy. Just imagine that you are a marker inside of a book. When the

book is moved, the marker goes with it. When the book is put on the shelf, the marker goes on the shelf. If the book is burned, the marker is burned. If by some miracle the book is restored and put back on the shelf, so is the marker.

**Your history, and who you in Christ** is the result of the Blood Covenant with God through Jesus' death on the Cross and His resurrection.

**You are righteous.** Righteous means to have a right standing with God. A son (or daughter) is righteous with his father by birth. He is in the family and he has a right standing that the neighbor does not have. We are righteous by our new birth, not by anything we have done. "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21). We are righteous because God put His life in us, not because of the way we act or live.

**Satan's dominion over you is broken.** Satan had dominion of your old nature, but your new nature is Christ's own Spirit that has already defeated Satan. Romans 6:8-10 says, "But if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that when Christ was raised from the dead, He dies no more; **death no longer has dominion** over Him. For in that He died, He died to sin once; but in that He lives, He lives to God." If the spirit world has had you living in fear, God will set you free right now!

**Why do I not feel the way these Scriptures say?** I am very glad you asked. That is an important question. It took years for you to get the world's and the "other god's" view of yourself. You were trained with a guilt, sin, fear and curse consciousness, and it will take some time to get your mind renewed to the truth. From Satan's point of view, he is trying to steal the seed of the Word out of your heart. If he puts enough pressure on you with circumstances and guilt, you may stop believing.

**From God's point of view, He is testing you.** He wants to develop character in you. Not the kind of test that teachers give, pass or fail, but testing as it is used in refining gold. The word test means to put into a fire and burn off the impurities. God is interested in seeing your faithfulness in adversity; He wants to know if you will believe His Word even if things look just the opposite. As you act on the Word you received, the manifestation will begin to come.

**Faith is very valuable to God.** Faith is simply knowing, believing and relying on God's Word to the extent that you will confess it from your mouth and do what it says no matter what is going on in your

life. “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). “And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him” (Hebrews 11:6). “We live by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7).

**Faith in God’s Word is what pleases God.** “When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. ‘Lord,’ he said, ‘my servant lies at home paralysed and in terrible suffering.’ Jesus said to him, ‘I will go and heal him.’ The centurion replied, ‘Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and that one, ‘Come,’ and he comes. I say to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.’ When Jesus heard this, he was astonished and said to those following him, ‘I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith’” (Matthew 8:5-10).

**The proof of whether or not you believe** is NOT how you feel. The proof is what will come out of your mouth from the abundance of your heart. Luke 6:45 says, “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth the good. And an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth the evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his **mouth speaks.**”

**The only way to overcome and be healed** from sin, fear, guilt, addictions, feeling unworthy, feeling like a failure, etc., is to accept these facts. When we know for sure that God loves us and that we belong to Him, that He has made us a new creation and old things have passed away, that our new identity is in Christ, and that we have been purchased from slavery and been given the choice to accept the absolute Lordship, authority and care of God, then we begin the process of overcoming all the bad things in our life.

**Gospel means good news.** The Good news is that we were hopelessly lost without any power to help ourselves, and Jesus came and transformed us into something special. This is the Gospel. This is powerful! “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile” (Romans 1:16).

**Religious tradition that preaches bad news is death!** “He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant-- not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life” (2 Corinthians 3:6).

**I can remember in the early 1980's**, after various religious people and even those in some churches chewed us up and spit us out, Dr. Paul Walker of Mt. Paran Church of God in Atlanta, Georgia, used to build us up every Sunday morning. He talked about the grace of God, the love of God, and he preached Good News. He would always end with the exhortation:

**“What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31).**

We are special people because God created us and because He gave us the new birth so that He could live in us again. Just the fact that we are containers for God makes us special. “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us” (2 Corinthians 4:7).