

FORMATION • COUNSELING • CHRISTIAN LIVING

Who I Am in Christ

Lesson 2 of Basic Discipleship

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

2 Corinthians 5:17

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he Bible says in 2 Corinthians 5:17 that if anyone is in Christ, they are a new person — the old is gone, and the new is come. We have a whole new identity that is far better than anything you can imagine! But sometimes, we don't know what is true about us. There is that satanic, annoying, pesky voice that loves to whisper in your ear.

"You snapped at the kids again." "Look what you did! You'll never be able to stop your anger!" "You didn't get your project finished...again!" "You are such a loser." "God just puts up with you." "You are really out of shape." "You aren't good enough." And on and on. I just want to yell, "Stop!" every time I hear it creeping in. That voice is what stops us from growing in Christ and enjoying life. It's what causes us to hide away, to settle for mediocrity and "just enough" rather than living with fullness of joy in Jesus.

Be honest, do you have a general anxiety all the time? Or is it anger? Perhaps you have this low-lying bitterness. And you are convinced you deserve this unhappy heart you have?

Where Do the Lies Come From?

Lies will come from the world, the flesh, and the devil.

The World

The world will make you chase after its temporary values—making you believe that this world's riches, pleasure, and prestige are all there is to live for. We must reject that.

1 John 2:15-17 | Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. 17 And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

The Flesh

The flesh is constantly tempting us to let our fear and anger and despair control us. Sometimes we want to escape into worldly pleasure or earthly security. We cannot allow our flesh or selfish thinking to control what we do. You have to cast down wrong thinking.

2 Corinthians 10:5 | Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ (KJV).

The Devil

The flesh is constantly tempting us to let our fear and anger and despair control us. Sometimes we want to escape into worldly pleasure or earthly security. We cannot allow our flesh or selfish thinking to control what we do.

Ephesians 4:26-27 | Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and give no opportunity to the devil.

James 4:7 | Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

If you are a Christian, you are going to be tempted to believe lies about yourself, like “I can’t change” or “This is my lot in life.” As believers we must never settle for lies. You need to commit yourself to God and affirm that you are all that my Savior says you are. In our study, we are going to look at some of the things God says about the new you. You need to replace the lies from the world, the flesh, and the devil with the truth from God’s word.

Replace the Lies with Truth

There is a great battle going on in our hearts as Christians every day. Sometimes the lies we have believed most of our lives keep us enslaved to fear, frustration, despair, and worldly comfort and security. If we keep lying to ourselves, we will keep giving Satan the opportunity to harass us. Consider the primary lies new Christians tend to believe.

Lie: I am forever scarred.

Of course, I’m forgiven by Jesus, but I still have to pay the price in my life for the bad decisions I’ve made. While there may be physical or legal consequences to sin in the temporal realm (like a traffic fine or an injury we got while we were living for self, etc.), we must understand that God washes our soul clean with the blood of Jesus Christ.

Truth: I am perfect in God’s sight.

Your body or your police record may be scared, but you are absolutely perfect in the sight of God. When God sees you, he sees Jesus. The sins you commit after becoming a Christian may grieve the heart of God, but absolutely nothing will separate you from his love.

Hebrews 10:14 | By a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

Romans 5:1 | Therefore, since we have been made right in God’s sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us (NLT).

2 Corinthians 5:21 | For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ (NLT).

Consider that when God sees you, he looks at you through Jesus Christ, so that while you are imperfect on the earth at times, you are positionally perfect and righteous before our holy Father in heaven.

Lie: I am being punished.

Sometimes when we sin, we get the idea that yes, God is gracious, but there are certain things he really can't forgive in this life. We feel angry with ourselves, so God must be angry with us to. "He must be punishing me." What a lie from Satan!

Romans 8:1 | There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Truth: I am God's child and have an Advocate.

When we sin, God no longer can punish us, since Christ has already suffered for our sins on the cross. Sin does grieve God, but nothing you do can separate you from his love. Your sin may hurt your fellowship with God, but it can never remove you from being God's child. When you sin, Christ is pleading with his wounds before the Father in heaven. He is ready, eager, and faithful to forgive you.

1 John 2:1-2 | If anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. 2 He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

Hebrews 7:25 | He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

Remember the story of Abraham when he sinned greatly and gave his wife Sarah away first to Pharaoh and then to Abimelech. Remember God protected Sarah and sent Abraham out with riches, even though he deserved rebuke. You did nothing to earn God's blessing. You are an heir, not because of what you did, but because of what Jesus Christ did on your behalf.

Lie: I am forever stuck.

Don't believe the lie that there are areas of your life that can never change. We tend to believe that we can't change the anxiety that is constantly churning inside. Or there is rage and anger and frustration that won't stop, and it will never stop. We may think we have a habit we can never stop. All lies.

We believe the lie that we have to put up with sin and get cozy with it. We think, "I have so many sin habits that I can never break. I guess I have to settle down with these sins and live with them." What a lie!

Truth: I am predestined to be holy.

Romans 8:29 | Those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son.

The truth is, as God's child, you are predestined to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. Anger and anxiety, despair and worldliness will disappear from your life as you apply God's word each day and surround yourself with God's forever family.

God has made me a saint. When I trusted Christ as Savior, in God's eyes, I became as holy as Christ is holy. I am now indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and he is working that holiness into my life by the Spirit applying his word, the Bible, to my life. Sin will no longer dominate my life. I am dead to sin and alive to God.

Lie: I am what I have.

When we buy into this lie, we accept the message of extreme consumerism. We think accumulation and pursuing the cutting-edge will leave us feeling more secure. But as we realize that whatever we get either breaks down or becomes obsolete quickly, we feel more insecure than we did before we got that thing.

Truth: I am blessed with every spiritual blessing.

Ephesians 1:3-4 | Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world.

In Christ, I am blessed with every spiritual blessing. We are rich in Christ. The things we buy make great tools but terrible masters. While something I buy cannot secure my identity, my identity in who God says I am is secure. Who God says I am is the truest thing about me and the greatest gift I have.

Lie: I am enslaved to sin.

We believe the lie that we have to put up with sin and get cozy with it. We think, "I have so many sin habits that I can never break. I guess I have to settle down with these sins and live with them." What a lie!

Truth: I am dead to sin and alive to God.

Romans 6:14, 18 | Sin will have no dominion over you. 18 and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.

God has made me a saint. When I trusted Christ as Savior, in God's eyes, I became as holy as Christ is holy. I am now indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and he is working that holiness into my life by the Spirit applying his word, the Bible, to my life. Sin will no longer dominate my life. I am dead to sin and alive to God.

Lie: I can't help it; people make me sin.

We believe the lie that if people around us would change, then we could change. Perhaps you have a spouse that provokes you. Your kids can be difficult. Your boss is unfair. This is the blame game. It keeps you in shackles with lies. If you are constantly self-focused about how hurt you are or how much pain a person makes you feel, you will stay enslaved to frustration and fear. Break out of these lies.

Truth: I am an overcomer.

Instead of blaming others, we need to take personal responsibility for sin because we are overcomers.

1 John 4:4 | Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

1 Corinthians 10:13 | No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he

will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

There is no temptation, but such as is common to man, and there is always a way of escape from every sin. The devil doesn't have any authority over me unless I give it to him. Anytime I choose to sin, I also choose to let the evil one harass me.

Lie: I am what I do.

Whether it's a job, my role as a spouse, my position at work or church, we're really good at defining ourselves by what we do. In a world where we either retire, age out of the ability to do our job or lose that role in an unexpected way, this is tremendously dangerous. Sometimes people see themselves mainly as a spouse, and their marriage dissolves through death or divorce, and they become lost. Or some people see themselves mainly as a parent, and one day the kids move away, and they are lost. We may introduce ourselves by what we do, or by our role in life, but our true identity cannot be summed up in what we do, but in who we are in Christ.

Truth: I am a new creation in Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:17 | If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Marriage is only while we are on earth. There is no marriage in heaven. My jobs and occupations are temporary. But what is eternal is that I am God's new creation, his masterpiece. All that I am, I am in Christ, and my status in Jesus cannot be hindered by job loss, death or abandonment of a spouse, or children growing up. I am who I am because of Jesus Christ. He's made me a new creation.

Lie: I am what other people say or think of me.

Due to social media and modern technology, it's never been easier to know what others think of you. We buy into the lie that popularity, approval from others, and their acceptance define us. The sad reality is that when we buy into this lie, we live for the approval of others and die from their rejection.

Truth: I am who God says I am.

God sees me in Christ, and I am perfect in his sight. God's seal of ownership (his Holy Spirit) has been imprinted on my soul, and I am owned and loved by God. He gets to define who I am. I don't get to do that anymore.

Proverbs 3:5-6 | Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; 6 In all your ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct your paths (NKJV).

Lie: God just puts up with me.

Sometimes we think, "God is just putting up with me because of Jesus." No, this is another lie.

Truth: God rejoices over me with singing.

God is not just tolerating me. He is captivated by who I now am in Christ.

Song of Solomon 4:9 | You have captivated my heart, my sister, my bride; you have captivated my heart with one glance of your eyes.

God's heart "beats faster" with one glance to him through earnest prayer. Precious saint, God is overcome with the intoxication of joy at how beautiful you are to him.

Zephaniah 3:17 | The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.

This is not a man-centered statement, because it is the work of his beloved Son that makes God rejoice over you. God has great joy in communing with you and delights in your love to him. It is better than wine or perfume. . God does not just tolerate you. He welcomes you. He loves you. He longs to lavish his mercy and grace and kindness on you. When I see my children, especially when they are so little and vulnerable my heart just leaps for joy. I walk into the door of my home, and my kids run to me and shout Daddy! They know I delight in them. I deeply delight and rejoice in them. In that way, God rejoices in you.

Lie: I have to live with toxic emotions.

Some of God's people are so nearsighted they put up with the toxic emotions like fear and anger and despair. They try to numb the pain with self-medicating, lust, or social media. They say, "I am emotionally broken and paralyzed." Another lie.

Truth: I am promised fullness of joy.

Psalms 16:11 | In your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

1 Peter 1:8 | Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory.

You are promised the fullness of joy that comes from the Holy Spirit. You need to get your focus off of self and circumstances and on to Christ.

Remind Yourself who You Are

Each day we must counsel ourselves and preach the truth to ourselves. Whenever you feel angry or anxious or despairing, you need to remember who you are.

Use a Book of the Bible

You can do this in any book of the Bible, but Ephesians chapters 1-3 are especially helpful.

What I Am in Christ

1:1, I am a saint.

1:3, I am blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

1:4-5, I am chosen and predestined for adoption to sonship by the heavenly Father

1:6, I am accepted by God and a recipient of his grace.

1:7, I am redeemed and forgiven in Christ.

1:11, I have a wonderful inheritance of spiritual riches in Christ.

1:13-14, I am indwelt and sealed by the Holy Spirit who guarantees my inclusion into the family of God.

1:15-18, I have access to spiritual wisdom and insight in Christ by the Holy Spirit.

1:19-21, I participate in the resurrection and ascension of Christ because of the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

1:22-23, As a member of the Body of Christ I am united to the Lord and represent him on earth.

2:5-6, I have been raised to new life in Christ and seated with him in heavenly places

2:8-9, I have been saved by grace through faith in Christ.

2:10, I am God's workmanship — a masterpiece and a new creation in Christ.

2:13, I have been brought near to God by the blood of Christ.

2:16, I am reconciled to God through the cross of Jesus Christ.

2:18, I have access to God by the Holy Spirit.

2:19, I am a part of God's family.

3:6, I am an heir of God.

3:6, I am a member of the Body of Christ.

3:6, I am a partaker in the promises of God in Christ.

3:10, I am a mirror that displays the glory of God to the natural and supernatural worlds.

3:20, God's supernatural power is at work in me.

3:21, My life displays the glory of God.

What I No Longer Am

While all these things are listed that we are in Christ, there are many things listed that we are not. When we were born again, we became a new creation (2 Cor 5:17), and now we will never ever be what we once were. The old is gone and the new has come. Look at what just the book of Ephesians says I am not.

2:1, I am no longer dead in my sins and trespasses.

2:2, I am no longer enslaved to the rebellious ideas of the world.

2:2, I am no longer a slave to Satan, the prince of the air, and what is popular or important in the world.

2:3, I am no longer a slave to my own fleshly desires. I can say no through the power of Christ.

2:3, I am no longer by nature a child of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

2:12, I am no longer separated from Christ.

2:12, I am no longer without hope or without God in the world.

2:14, I am no longer divided or hostile toward any ethnicity. For all in God's forever family, the walls of hostility have been torn down, and we have been united by Christ's love.

2:15, I am no longer under the law. No more "hoop jumping" for me. I am already pleasing in God's sight because of Christ. My obedience is not out of the burden of law, but the freedom of

love.

2:18, I am no longer a stranger and foreigner, but I am a fellow citizen with the saints and a member of God's forever family.

Preach to and Counsel Yourself

Instead of listening to your heart, as Disney movies always say, you need to deny yourself and your own thoughts, and instead counsel yourself with Scripture throughout the day.

Psalm 42:5 | Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.

Notice how the Psalmist was "feeling" a certain way. Cast down. Abandoned. In turmoil. But instead of accepting that identity as a depressed person or an anxious person or even an angry person, the believer in this Psalm counsels himself to hope in God. Trust him. Praise him. Rejoice in him. That's what has to happen continually throughout each day. You have to do as Paul says and put off the old life and put on the new.

Ephesians 4:22-24 | Put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, 23 and ...be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and ...put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Conclusion

We are whoever God says we are in the Scriptures. We can't just believe what our hearts tell us since they are "corrupt through the deceitful desires" of the ghost of our old nature. We are no longer what we once were. We will never ever be that person again. We are a new creation in Christ.