

Follow Jesus.

We **journey** on a life-long adventure of spiritual transformation.

The spiritual journey of a Christian has an “already, not yet” tension. For example, as believers, our sins are already forgiven (Acts 13.38-39), but we are not yet without sin (Romans 7.19-23). To use the fancy theological terms again, we are “justified,” but not yet “glorified.” In the mean time, we are being transformed (“sanctified”). Spiritual transformation is hindered by continuing struggles with doubt and sin, which often originate from a lack of understanding and living according to who we have already become in Christ. As Forrest Gump said, “stupid is as stupid does.” If I think I am stupid, I will act stupid. This is not pop psychology. Even if it is, psychology stole the idea from God. Paul used the language of identity (“en Christos”) 126 times in his letters. Evidently, he felt it was important for new followers (and old followers) of Jesus to understand and live according to who they are “in Christ.”

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”

2 Corinthians 5.17

IDENTITY IN CHRIST = who I have already become in Christ.

- 1) Our identity is shaped by many influences in life which are not necessarily of God. Consider and discuss how the following may have negatively influenced your identity.

Family:

Friends:

Culture:

Ethnicity & gender:

Past life experiences:

- 2) How does the evil one use these negative influences on our identity in his lies?

- 3) Read Ephesians chapters 1-2. List all truths describing our new identity in Christ and consider how each truth can bring freedom from the old ways in which our identity and behavior were shaped by ungodly influences and experiences.

- 4) In addition to a new identity, we are also given the Spirit of God at the outset of our spiritual journey. Why is this critical? What is the role of the Spirit?

Pray and (homework) meditate on your identity in Christ (from the list above and on the next page), especially those truths that directly relate to your own areas of weakness. Write down one specific truth to focus on over the next week and put it in a prominent place for reminder.

WHO I AM IN CHRIST

I Am accepted in Christ.

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| John 1.12 | I am God's child. |
| John 15.15 | I am Christ's friend. |
| Romans 5.1 | I have been Justified. |
| 1 Corinthians 6.17 | I am united with the Lord, and I am one spirit with Him. |
| 1 Corinthians 6.19-20 | I have been bought with a price. I belong to God. |
| 1 Corinthians 12.27 | I am a member of Christ's body. |
| Ephesians 1.1 | I am a saint |
| Ephesians 1.5 | I have been adopted as God's child. |
| Ephesians 2.18 | I have direct access to God through the Holy Spirit |
| Colossians 1.14 | I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins. |
| Colossians 2.10 | I am complete in Christ |

I Am secure in Christ.

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| Romans 8.1-2 | I am free forever from condemnation. |
| Romans 8.28 | I am assured that all things work together for good. |
| Romans 8.31-34 | I am free from any condemning charges against me. |
| Romans 8.35-39 | I cannot be separated from the love of God. |
| 2 Corinthians 1.21-22 | I have been established, anointed, and sealed by God. |
| Colossians 3.3 | I am hidden with Christ in God. |
| Philippians 1.6 | I am confident that the good work God has begun in me will be perfected. |
| Philippians 3.20 | I am a citizen of heaven. |
| 2 Timothy 1.7 | I have not been given a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind. |
| Hebrews 4.16 | I can find grace and mercy in time of need. |
| 1 John 5.18 | I am born of God, and the evil one cannot touch me. |

I am significant in Christ.

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| Matthew 5.13-14 | I am the salt and light of the earth. |
| John 15.1,5 | I am a branch of the true vine, a channel of His life. |
| John 15.16 | I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit |
| Acts 1.8 | I am a personal witness of Christ's. |
| 1 Corinthians 3.16 | I am God's temple. |
| 2 Corinthians 5.17-21 | I am a minister of reconciliation for God. |
| 2 Corinthians 6.1 | I am God's co-worker (1 Cor. 3.9). |
| Ephesians 2.6 | I am seated with Christ in the heavenly realm. |
| Ephesians 2.10 | I am God's workmanship. |
| Ephesians 3.12 | I may approach God with freedom and confidence. |
| Philippians 4.13 | I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. |

Adapted from "Living Free In Christ" by Dr. Neil Anderson, ©1993, Regal Books.