

# Identity

## Presence based vs Performance based

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Our culture is very interested in the journey of discovering individual identity. Personality tests, dream assessments, even BuzzFeed quizzes are available everywhere you look. It seems like everyone is searching for something to tell them who they are, where they belong and how they relate to the world.

The Bible says that all men and women are created in God's image. Humankind was created to reflect some of God's attributes. You can look for your identity anywhere, but followers of Jesus are called to find their identity in Him.

While our world encourages you to look within yourself for your identity, your natural tendency is to search for your identity in external things.

One of the first places that you can be tempted to look to is your career. Spending your time and energy pursuing your career can cause you to feel like it is a defining characteristic of who you are. After all, a job that you are dedicated to is likely to take up most of your time and attention.

### The **World** System:

**Self-worth = Performance** (*what you do*) + **others' opinions** (*what they think or say about you*)

### **God's** System:

**Self-worth = God's truth about you**

# How God Sees Us (*as His children*)

## You Are **Loved**

**John 3:16 NIV:** “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

**1 John 3:1: NIV** “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.”

## You Are **Chosen**

**1 Peter 2:9 NIV:** “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.”

## You Are **Forgiven**

**2 Corinthians 5:21 NIV:** “God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.”

## You Are **Redeemed**

**Isaiah 43 NIV (read entire chapter)**

“But now, this is what the Lord says—

*he who created you, Jacob,*

*he who formed you, Israel:*

**Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;**

**I have summoned you by name; you are mine.**

**Do not be afraid, for I am with you”**

## You Are **Adopted**

**Romans 8:14–17 NIV:**

**14** “For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. **15** The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” **16** The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. **17** Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.”

*Two different spirits; two different mindsets, that we can have in our approach to God:*

We can approach Him as **slaves in bondage**, or we can approach Him as **adopted children**...

**Acts 17:28 NIV:** “For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’”

# Performance Based

This takes us back to the fall; toil / working the land.

Prior to, Adam walked and talked with God; his work was from a place of relationship and joyful stewardship. After the fall, it was to try to gain something back.

**Jesus came to redeem us from the curse.**

**Galatians 3:13:** “But Christ has rescued us from the curse pronounced by the law. When he was hung on the cross, he took upon himself the curse for our wrongdoing. For it is written in the Scriptures, “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.”

**2 Corinthians 2-3:** “Not by the law but by the Spirit.”

**Old Covenant vs New Covenant**

## STRIVING VS ABIDING

Sin based consensus rather than forgiving based.

**Performance based ‘identity’** is based on our **DOING**, *not on our BEING*.  
And when our DOING fails, falls short... and it will.... So goes our “*identity*”...

### What will you do?

When I am no longer a business owner, no longer needed as a mother (of small children dependent); No longer the ball mom, no longer needed in certain capacities to the same degree... we can lose ourselves if we have tied our Identity up in those; if we have, in fact, made them idols.

# Obstacles to Believing *in* Your Identity

Even if you know all these things about where a follower of Christ finds their identity, there can often be obstacles standing in the way of believing who you are in Christ. Other sources of identity often stand in the way, such as career, appearance or money. But there are other things that can distract you as well.

- Past Sin
- Outside Messages or Experiences
- False Beliefs

**Book reference:** 4 False Beliefs – “Search for Significance” by Robert McGee

The Performance Trap: Justification  
The Blame Game: Propitiation  
The Approval Addict: Reconciliation  
The Shame Game: Regeneration

## The Performance Trap: **Justification**

**False Belief:** I must meet certain standards to feel good about myself. (Fear of failure)

**God's Truth:** Because of justification, I am completely forgiven by and pleasing to God. I no longer have to fear failure.

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. Romans 5:1-5

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, Romans 8:1

## The Blame Game: **Propitiation**

**False Belief:** Those who fail, including myself, are unworthy of love and deserve to be punished. (Guilt)

**God's Truth:** Because of propitiation, I am deeply loved by God. I no longer have to fear punishment or punish others.

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! Romans 5: 6-9

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

## The Approval Addict: **Reconciliation**

**False Belief:** I must have the approval of certain others to feel good about myself. (Fear of rejection)

**God's Truth:** Because of reconciliation, I am totally accepted by God. I no longer have to fear rejection.

Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation. Romans 5:9-11

## The Shame Game: **Regeneration**

**False Belief:** I am what I am. I cannot change. I am hopeless. (Shame)

**God's Truth:** Because of regeneration, I have been made brand-new, complete in Christ. I no longer need to experience the pain of shame.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 2 Corinthians 5:17

In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!" Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit." John 3: 3-6

He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. Titus 3:5

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you. 1 Peter 1: 3-4

# My *Identity* in Christ

Because of Christ's redemption,  
I am a new creation of infinite worth.

I am deeply loved,

I am completely forgiven,

I am fully pleasing,

I am totally accepted by God.

I am absolutely complete in Christ.

When my performance reflects my new identity in Christ,  
that reflection is dynamically unique.

There has never been another person like me

in the history of mankind,

nor will there ever be.

God has made me an original,

one of a kind, really somebody!

— Search for Significance by Robert McGee

## SEE STATEMENTS BELOW

Check the one in each pair that indicates a self-worth based on God's acceptance.

1. I am recognized as one of the best in my field.

2. I am recognized as a child of God.

1. My boss at work really appreciates me.

2. My Lord totally accepts me.

1. I am successful in most projects I start.

2. I am deeply loved by God.

1. Everyone at work has noticed the change in me.

2. I am completely forgiven by the Father.

## SCRIPTURES TO REFLECT

“But now, this is what the Lord says — *he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you*, Israel: **Do not fear**, for I have redeemed you; **I have summoned you by name**; you are **mine**. **Do not be afraid**, for I am with you”

John 43 NIV (read entire chapter)

“For **in Him** we *live and move and have our being*. As some of your own poets have said, ‘**We are his offspring**.’

Acts 17:28 NIV

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Romans 8: 14-17 NIV

## REFLECTION PROMPTS

- What do you hear in your heart when you read these scriptures?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What changes need to take place in order to come into alignment scripture?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- In what ways can you apply the revelation you are receiving to your everyday life?

