

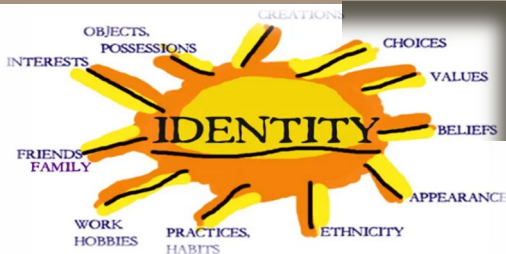
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We live in what seems to be an on-demand nation. Rather than activate the core values of the constitution to acquire life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness through individual conviction and character, *American politics has wandered into an on-demand versus a debate-based mechanism for defining identity.* Executive orders, cancel culture, activist threatening violence, politicians demonizing people instead of demonstrating value for vetting ideas all reflect the decay, if not death of any coherent, consistent national identity. Today . . .

**A LIVING WORD FELLOWSHIP NEWSLETTER**

Worship with us Sunday 10:30-11:30 at 3102 Baucom Rd. Charlotte, NC 28269



# We Need identity October 2021

## The Christian's Magic Lamp

*"Ask anything in my name and I will do it!"*

**Identity**  
 • *The distinguishing character or personality of an individual.*

Jesus compelled his followers to identify as children of his Father. He wanted believers to identify as a child of the Father by "ASKING."

Requesting, imploring God to honor his word, fulfill his promises, to do His work conveys the core meaning of "ASK." *Jesus wants believers to ask for what God wants not what the petitioner wants for him or herself.*

Jesus wants the church to identify with what God wants and make specific requests. Asking identifies not with objects but with relationship.

**What comes to mind** when we hear the story of Aladdin's magic lamp? "Three wishes!" "Your wish is my command, Oh master." Benevolent genie grants Aladdin three wishes. As a kid, what were your wishes? How about now, what wishes would come to mind? Remember when you figured out to ask for a million more wishes? Imagine access to a benevolent supernatural being! How would this impact your identity?

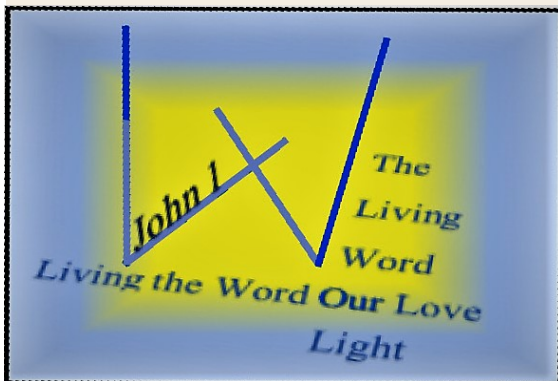
**As Jesus prepared** his disciples for his departure, he faced a significant task. How to shift the disciple's identity from disciple to apostle? John's gospel devotes several chapters to Jesus preparing the disciples for their identity upgrade. One verse stands out, *"If you ask anything in my name, I will do it"* (14:14). Is this Jesus' version of the Christian's Magic Lamp? Spoiler alert, no, not quite.

**Tenney (1994) exhorts**, "The phrase 'in my name,'... is not a magical charm like Aladdin's lamp." So, if not granting wishes like Aladdin's genie, then what does *"ask anything in my name, I will do it"* mean? Clearly Jesus promises to answer specific requests because the word translated "ask" refers to specific requests. Jesus states a certain promise to answer specific requests. Jesus means "ask" and receive a "yes" response every time, not a no, not a maybe. What gives?

**First, Jesus' command to "Ask" with certainty** serves to endorse his disciples as his agents. *"And in that day you will ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it to you"* (Jn16:23). Jesus wants his agents to direct their requests to the Father. Asking the Father directly conveys to them that they stand in relation to Jesus as he stood in relation to his Father. Asking confirms their apostolic identity.

**Second, Jesus clarifies the terms for certainty**, *"if you ask anything in my name, I will do it."* Agents represent the will of the benefactor. The benefactor accomplishes his work by proxy through his agent. His agent executes the work of the benefactor. When the agent wants what the benefactor wants, the agent's request receives a positive response! Requests for self-consumption instead of wisdom receive nothing from God (James 4:3).

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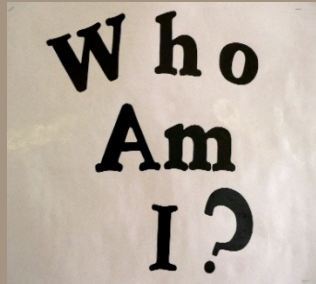


# COUNSELING CORNER

## Identity Crisis in Christ

Psychologists believe identity, our core sense of self, develops through conflicts between actualizing our interests and accommodating others. Emotional neglect in family of origin deprives identity development by default. Neglect leaves conflict between identifying with freedom for self and love for others unresolved.

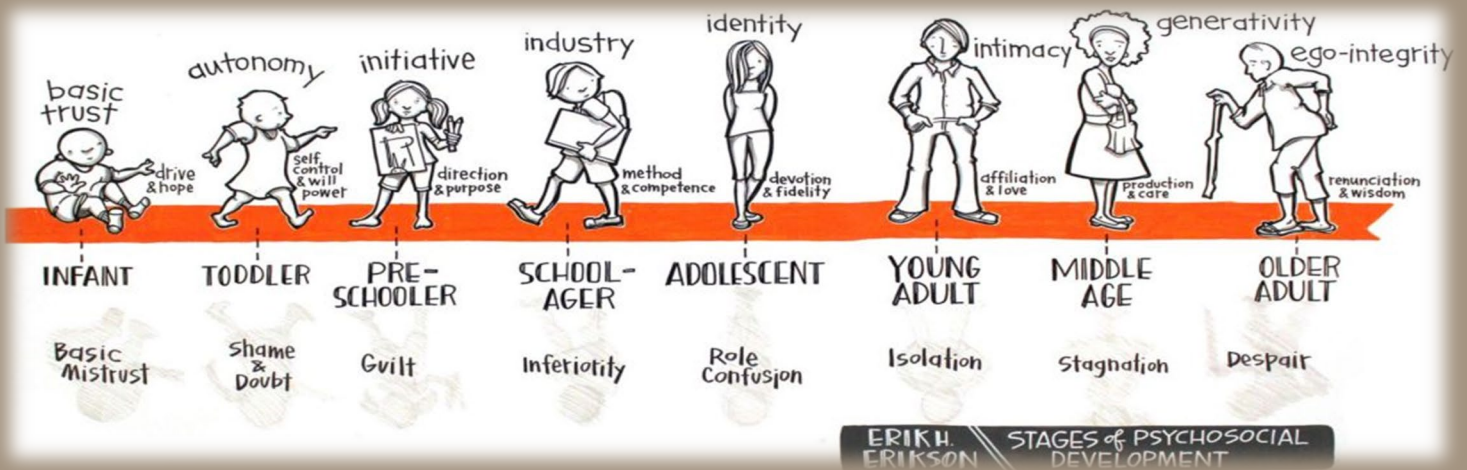
Persons who struggle with identifying needs, believing in the message of their own feelings when in conflict with others, and holding on to a positive self view when life turns negative likely know what an identity crisis feels like.



Are you having an identity crisis? Have life changes altered your normal? Do beliefs held in the past seem relevant for what life presents today? Does the present feel much different from the past? Does your past self wonder what happened to the present you?

### Symptoms of an Identity Crisis

1. Questioning self, career, relationships.
2. Irretractable internal conflict questioning self & social role.
3. Life-altering event triggering doubts about future coping.
4. Questioning values, beliefs, spirituality, vocation.
5. Searching for more meaning, purpose, or passion in life.



Jesus endorses his followers basic trust in their Heavenly Father by telling them to ASK! Identity repair takes some work. Consider:

1. **I**dentify the qualities define you.
2. **D**efine what in life matters to you.
3. **E**xamine "Core-values Questions & lists" <https://soulsalt.com/list-of-values-and-beliefs/>
4. **N**urture the self by noticing your body's sensory responses—where do you feel IT—because "IT" is the true self's voice.
5. **T**ranslate sensory signals into messages, "What would that part of the body say?"
6. **I**nquire from others when you need help.
7. **T**rust your gut. Trust your gut. Trust your gut.
8. **Y**oke yourself to faithful friends

Have a dialogue with your inner child. Really! It's a fascinating activity.

1. Divide a sheet of paper into two columns.
2. Label left column Adult, right, Child.
3. Begin a conversation with your child, "How are you doing?" "What are you feeling?" Or, whatever feels right to you.
4. Use a pen to write the question in the left column using your dominant hand. Use a pencil or crayon to write the child's answers in the right column using your non-dominant hand.
5. Allow answers to surface. Write the answers that surface.
6. Continue to dialogue and nurture.



# Patience Works! Identify with it.

**Patience works** presents us with a semantic illusion and paradoxical statement. Like visual portrait illusion that shows two different faces depending on perspective, “patience works” conveys two different meanings. First, if “works” refers to something produced, then patience works means the product of patience. Second, if “works” refers to the action of patience, then “patience works” means the actions of patience that produce the fruits of patience.



## Reverse Course

(Sin)	Latin	Virtue	Latin
Pride	Superbia	Humility	Humilitas
Envy	Invidia	Kindness	Benevolentia
Gluttony	Gula	Temperance	Temperantia
Lust	Luxuria	Chastity	Castitas
Wrath	Ira	Patience	Patientia
Greed	Avaritia	Charity	Caritas
Sloth	Acedia	Diligence	Industri

**Either way**, whether noun or verb, the idea that patience works seems contradictory. What works does waiting produce? How is waiting a work? In the biblical world patience sometimes involves waiting for something to happen. At other times, when in the context of suffering, patience involves enduring something that is happening. Through James’ epistle God informs the church that he wants it to identify with the latter.

**Patience works** to produce fruits of the spirit while bearing up under afflictions that trigger impulses to strive against people. Patience works by activating the wisdom of pure religion in place of reactive striving against people. James identifies patience with the Lord Jesus Christ.

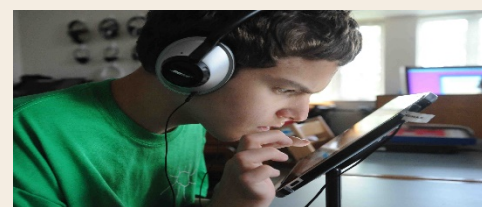
**He refers to Jesus** as the “**perfect law of liberty**” (1:25). Look into the mirror of the perfect law of liberty and observe the blemish of reactivity. Remember to replace the blemish with righteousness when you walk away from the mirror. James says, “**Do not be a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work**” (1:25).

**In other words, identifying with patience means identifying with Jesus Christ.**

Identifying with Jesus Christ means looking within when afflicted. Notice the difference. The evil impulse wants to discharge frustration. Jesus set aside his right to rebuke affliction and submitted his will to want what the Father wanted. James calls this pure religion. Faith produces right works. Ritual works keep faith buried.

**Having an identity crisis in Christ** means repairing how we work through affliction to manifest the wisdom of Jesus Christ in place of striving impulse folly. Patience frees us from suffering. James describes Jesus in affliction as the perfect law of liberty.

**Jesus manifested** exemplary obedience because Jesus wanted the wisdom of God more than anything else. Jesus identified with the Father’s will as expressed through afflictions (He5:8). Jesus identified with patience and this gave him freedom from the flesh and tranquility of soul to rest (Ma11:29). Jesus shared his peace, his rest, through the righteous work of patience.



*A study showed that users of faster Internet exhibited less patience than their counterparts connected at slower speeds. This study demonstrated a link between the human expectation of speed and human patience. Studies of patience have led many to conclude: The rapid pace of technology is rewiring humans to be less and less patient.*

<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patience>



**Let shine the liberty of Patience!**

**Identifying with patience** offers a profound implication for healing psychological pain and easing psychological burdens. Affliction in faith repairs the wounds of automatic, learned reactions with patience works. Jesus endured affliction by submitting his preferences to the Father’s preferences. Jesus endured to the point of death and not one word nor one impulse to strive for his own life or discharge disfavor onto the ones afflicting him.

**To the degree he suffered**, Jesus through endurance replied in peace with wisdom. Jesus experienced liberty and soul rest because he through patience replaced his preferences (demands) with those of his Father. Jesus asked for his Father’s will to be done through him and he did it!! Because of Jesus’ wisdom and identity with patience the angels announce his birth with the blessing: “**On earth peace, good will toward man**” Jesus was the peace and good will (fruits) because Jesus made patience work!

# The Christian's Magic Lamp (continued)

**Third, Jesus wants disciples to certify their identity** in Christ by asking for what Jesus wants. Ask the Father for any good thing—for what the Father deems good. Like a child asking for good things from a parent, if a child asks for a fish a parent gives the child a fish—not a snake. **Ask my Father for anything emphasizes not the thing but the nature of the relationship.** While God hears all requests (Mt7:8-11; Lk11:9-13), and knows every need before it's requested (Mt6:7-13), Jesus promises to answer each request that in truth wants what God wants (Jn4:10).

**Fourth, Jesus links asking in certainty** to identifying with exemplary obedience. Asking **"anything in my name"** therefore *encompasses relationship integrity*. Jesus identified with exemplary obedience and anticipates the same of his disciples, **"If my words abide in you"** (Jn15:7). Jesus expects his disciples to identify with such exemplary obedience that when they ask, the father hears the request in concert with Jesus' Spirit that abides within them.

**Scholars believe that the certainty of "Ask!"** pertains to asking for the Holy Spirit. Jesus expected the disciples to shift attention from obsessing on his return to praying for his Holy Spirit—a perfect example of disciples not presuming to receive the Spirit just because Jesus said that he would send it. By acting in faith and obedience they certified their identity in Christ **by asking for what God already promised upon Jesus' completed work.** We ought by no means presume upon faith and obedience alone. We must be asking for the fruit of the Spirit to complete our identity in Christ.

**Christians bear something much greater than a magic lamp.** Christians bear an identity in Christ that in effect makes the Christian the genie. Jesus used the word "ask" to endorse the believer's special relationship with the Father. Christians ask as agents of Jesus Christ and therefore ask for what the Father wants. Asking identifies the Christian in Christ by obsessing not on getting some object (When will your kingdom come?) but on asking for the kingdom to come through the Christian's exemplary obedience. "Ask" confirms that the Father gives the same spirit of fruit bearing, the same obedience to the Christian as requested by and given to Jesus.

**Recall the phrase, "What would Jesus do?"** Perhaps we need an addendum, "What would Jesus request?" We must ask for what God wants to complete our identity in Christ. We must ask for God to let us bear the fruit of His Holy Spirit as we practice the exemplary obedience modeled to us by Jesus Christ. What intimacy! Jesus offers an incomparable identity! Jesus endorses the Christian to act in obedience and ask for same fruit produced in Jesus Christ.



## Advantages of a Small

Family Feel  
Quick Integration  
Simpler Systems  
Interactive Study  
Mutual Shepherding  
Adapts to Change

We share our current events.  
We segue into prayer & praise memos.  
We pray before our study of the word.  
We interact with the message:  
    Raise questions  
    Make observations  
    Give insights  
We invariably draw our hearts and minds together around the word.  
We may get through the outline or pick up next week where we left off.  
But we always leave with a takeaway relevant for activating our faith during the week.

40 % of churches in  
America have  
0 to 49 in attendance.

[awshucksfarms.com](http://awshucksfarms.com)

Opens at 11 am

- ✓ Come as early as you like to take in all activities included in the weekend rate (Adults \$11 Kids 3 & up \$9).
- ✓ Diner on site, fishing, etc.
- ✓ Meet at diner for late lunch @ 2:30 & then walk the maze.
- ✓ 3718 Plyler Mill Rd.  
Monroe, NC 28112  
704-709-7000

## What's Coming Up at Living Word Fellowship?

- 10/4 Launch of New Newsletter and Format
- 10/10 Lyle Austin Ministering the Word: "Ask!"
- 10/16 A-Mazing Maze at Awshucks Farms
- 10/17 John Liebner Ministering the Word  
"Patience Works: The Discipline of Faith."
- 10/22 Michael W. Smith: Worship Forever
- 10/24 John Liebner Ministering the Word:  
& 31 "Patience Works: The Delight of Faith."

PRAYER AND PRAISE INCLUDE: Prayer for healing of nerve pain; easing of breathing difficulty; energy, enthusiasm, tranquility in work role; elderly mother's heart & lung problems; niece battling cancer; toddler fever; police officers laboring under increasingly authoritarian conditions. Praise for serendipitous and enriching change in plans for a memorial anniversary.

Join us Sunday 10:30-11:30  
3102 Baucom Rd.  
Charlotte, NC 28269