

TAKING A CLOSER LOOK

What does the Bible say?

Our identity (who God says we are) opens us up to a sense of purpose (why we are here). This in turn propels our actions (what we do) and ultimately creates our destiny (our future reality). To say it another way, our identity is sourced to what God says about us and shapes who we are becoming. In this study we'll look into how living from who God says we are affects the way we view ourselves, our world, and our values.

New Identity in Christ

Take a look at Mark 1.14-17. How did Jesus say becoming His follower would change Simon and Andrew's identity?

Check out Luke 6.40.

- How does who *Jesus* is define who *we* are?

The Old vs. New Self

Read through these three passages and answer the following questions:

Romans 7.16, 17:

- How did Paul see who he was differing from the sin he committed?

Ephesians 4.20-32:

- What means do these verses give in connecting your new identity with your actions?
- What are some of the activities that flowed out of your old identity before Christ?
- What are activities that should flow out of your new identity in Christ?

Take a look at 1 Peter 2.9-12.

- What four ways are used to describe our identity in verse 9?
- What do these teach you about who God says you are?

- For what purpose did God call us “out of darkness”?

THINKING IT THROUGH

What does the Bible mean?

The Apostle Paul

In Acts 26.4-20, Paul tells the story of how he became a follower of Christ. Read through this passage and answer the following questions.

- Where did Paul get his sense of identity from at first? (verses 4-5)
- What actions did this lead him to take? (verses 9-11)
- What event changed him?
- How do you think people “meet Jesus” these days?
- What new identity was he given by Jesus? (verse 16)
- What actions did this lead him to take? (verses 17-20)
- Would Paul have changed if he had not been given a new identity by Jesus?

MAKING IT COUNT

How do I live what I've learned?

All of us have a sense of identity that is based on our past experiences and the people who have influenced us – including family members, teachers, and role models. Unfortunately, often this picture does not match up with who God says we are. Only in Jesus can we become the people God has always wanted us to be. He alone should come to define who we see ourselves as – our identity.

- Who were the people and what were the events that have shaped your idea of who you are?
- How do you think God’s opinion about who you are differs from this? (i.e., 1 John 3.1)
- In what practical ways can you allow Jesus to shape your identity?