

# IDENTITY: A KEY TO A NEW LIFE

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The Christian faith is NOT about saying a prayer so you can go to 'heaven'. The word 'Christian' means 'Christ like'--'to be like Christ.' This means that your old life passes away. You are dead to your old habits; your old thought processes; your old ways of living. Everything becomes NEW! EVERYTHING! BECOMES NEW!

The key to this new life is found in knowing who you are in Christ. Once you enter a covenant relationship with God you become a brand new creature. To live like this new creature, you must find out who it is; how does it think; what does it do, etc.

This information is found in the Word of God, our Bible. Let's begin this journey of discovery by learning who we were before we became a new creature.

What does the old creature look like? Who were we before Christ?

## Ephesians 2:1-3

*And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, <sup>2</sup> in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, <sup>3</sup> among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.*

You were dead, slain by your trespasses and sin. You weren't physically dead--you were spiritually dead. Death is being separated from God--Who IS Life! (God is a Spirit). Verse 2 is how people who are apart from God live. This is what their lives look like. These people live only for themselves. They are disobedient to the Kingdom's laws and God's ways. Before Christ this is the way we lived. After Christ our lives should look different.

## Galatians 5:19-21

*19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, [a] fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, <sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, <sup>21</sup> envy, murders, [b] drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

This is what the 'before Christ life' looks like. You will not live in God's Kingdom and live like this. Morality is a particular system of values and principles of conduct; principles concerning good and bad behavior. Immorality is wrong behavior!

The very first thing that marks the life before Christ is wrong behavior. The Bible tells us what is right behavior and what is wrong behavior. An impurity is something that ruins the uncontaminated nature of something! Your nature has been spoiled in some way by sin.

When water is pure, the only thing in that water is water! Indecency is being unseemly or immodest. This kind of behavior is unlawful in the Kingdom and it will not be tolerated. People who behave this way are still in the rebellious state. They are still following after the rebel spirits that are controlling this present world's system.

Christians FOLLOW Jesus. Christians behave the way Jesus behaved. This is the way people live who have not entered a covenant with God through Jesus' sacrifice at Calvary.

Yet, many sincere Christians struggle with these issues. WHY? They have do not understand WHO they are now. They are in an 'identity crisis'. Something happened in 2 Corinthians 5:17 that they need to know.

## 2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

If you are IN Christ then you are not the same person anymore! You are NEW! The old has passed away! So what does this NEW person look like?

#### **Ephesians 2:4-19 tells us!**

**4** But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, **5** even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), **6** and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, **7** that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. **8** For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, **9** not of works, lest anyone should boast. **10** For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

**11** Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands— **12** that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. **13** But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. **14** For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, **15** having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace, **16** and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. **17** And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. **18** For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

**19** Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.

Because we are SO loved by God, even when we were dead--separated from Him--He came to Earth to save us and bring us back to His family. It's nothing that we have to do nor can we do anything to obtain His grace except believe Him when He tells us 'I love you so much!'

Receive His love and return that love back to Him by our obedience. Believe that we belong to His household now. Our new life looks like this:

#### **Galatians 5:22-6:1-10**

**22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **23** gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. **24** And those *who are* Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. **25** If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. **26** Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you *who are* spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. **2** Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. **3** For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. **4** But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. **5** For each one shall bear his own load.

**6** Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.

**7** Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. **8** For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. **9** And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. **10** Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

The fruit of the Spirit is what our new character looks like. We must see ourselves as a new person. When we stumble through disobedience, we must get up and recognize-'that's not me! I'm not like that anymore!

Example: Pastor Larry is a boot and shoe person. If he walked in wearing a pair of flip flops, I would be shocked. That's just not his style. It's just not him. That's not who he is. In the same way, the old habits, the old thinking processes, the old feelings, they are gone and buried.

Recognize that; change your lifestyle from rebellion to Kingdom. This is the place of no condemnation.

#### **Romans 8:1-2**

*There is* therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus,[a] who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. **2** For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

The law of our new being has set us free! We are well able to obey the Word and the Spirit! When the old pops up--recognize 'that's not me!' I'm a brand new man! You will only come to know who you really are by spending time with Jesus. Times of personal praise and worship. Times of prayer.

Times of reading and studying His Word. Times of being quiet and listening for His Voice. You can live in a place of no struggles. You can live in a place of peace and joy. The path is Grace. The door is Faith. The key is obedience.

*[All Scripture is from the New King James version]*