

Understanding Our Spiritual Identity in Christ

- A. One of the most glorious parts of our spiritual identity is that we are a new creation in Christ. This is true of us because we received the gift of Jesus' righteousness which is based on His finished work on the cross.

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 18 Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ...19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them...21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Cor. 5:17-21)

- B. We must walk in confidence with God instead of in condemnation (because of our past failures).

1 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. (Rom. 8:1)

- C. We present ourselves before God by defining ourselves as having received the righteousness of God. Many present themselves to God according to their most recent struggle. We acknowledge our struggles but do not define ourselves by them

13 Present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. (Romans 6:13)

II. SPIRITUAL IMMATURITY IS NOT REBELLION

- A. Rebellion and immaturity may outwardly look the same but the heart is very different. God sees the heart. It is wrong to live in condemnation if in fact we are spiritually immature instead of rebellious. Both sheep (clean animal) and pigs (unclean animal) can become stuck in mud.
- B. We all struggle in our weakness. That does not mean we are a hopeless hypocrite. The fact that our love is weak does not mean it is false love. A hypocrite is somebody who says one thing, but does not pursue it. A true lover of God does not attain everything that we sincerely pursue.
- C. Are you a slave of sin who struggles to love God or are you a lover of God who struggles with sin? We define ourselves as a genuine lover of God who struggles. Our heart becomes locked when we define ourselves by our struggle.

III. WHAT IS SINCERE REPENTANCE?

- A. We must **honestly admit our sin**: instead of rationalizing it.
- B. We must **take responsibility for our sin**: instead of blaming it on others (Gen. 3:12).
- C. We must **take sin serious**: instead of being causal about it and not dealing with it seriously.

IV. THREE DIFFERENT RESPONSES TO SIN IN THE CHURCH TODAY

- A. *Sin is not important* – this leads to compromise. This error thinks that God just overlooks sin without disciplining us if we continue in it. God’s correction is not the same as His direction.
¹² Whom the LORD loves He corrects, as a father the son in whom He delights. (Prov. 3:12)
- B. *Sin is the most important* reality about us – this is an expression of legalism. This error says claims that sin defines us more than God’s grace.
- C. Sin is serious but *if repented of is forgiven and forgotten* – this is an expression of grace. This is the truth of God’s Word and is based on the finished work of Jesus on the cross.

V. THE CALL TO INTIMACY

- A. God has called His church to the highest privilege of enjoying intimacy with the Godhead. If we do not experience intimacy with Jesus then our lives become weak in the Spirit.
¹⁰ For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. 11...No one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. (1 Cor. 2:10-12)
- B. Immediately before Jesus went into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan for forty days.
¹⁷ Suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Mt. 3:17)
- C. Immediately before Jesus went to the cross to die for us
⁵ Suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!" (Mt. 17:5)
- D. The foundation of intimacy with God is in experiencing the reality that we are God’s beloved and that He is well pleased with us. God wants to strengthen our spiritual intimacy in the way that He renewed it with Jesus.
- E. One of the most powerful truths in Scripture is that Jesus loves us like the Father loves Him.
⁹ As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; Abide in My love. (John 15:9)
- F. The core identity of God’s people is found in these two truths.
1. “My beloved Son” – being the “beloved of God”
 2. “In whom I am well pleased” – being authentic lovers of God that are pleasing to Him