

discipleship essentials

Essentials for Christian Living
Leader's Guide

OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

LESSON 1: OUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST

INTRODUCTION

This lesson is part of a Discipleship Essentials module entitled *Our Relationship with God*. This series of lessons examines the relationship we have with God. It begins by understanding our identity in Christ which is a result of our becoming a child of God. This series of lessons looks at the attributes of God, how we learn about God and know Him better, and how we develop this personal relationship. Understanding ourselves in God's eyes, and having a clearer picture of who God is, will help us live the life that God designed for us.

INTENDED AUDIENCE

The intended audience for these lessons is new Christians, those who would like a refresher on the basics of Christianity, as well as those preparing to teach these Christian practices and beliefs. Also, those with an interest in Christian thought will find value in these lessons as they pertain to daily living and choices.

The Leader's Guide is intended to help you as a leader in your preparation. These lesson outlines may be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials found online at www.discipleshipessentials.org.

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OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

LESSON 1: OUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST

PURPOSE

The purpose of this lesson is to explain the Biblical foundation for the Christian's identity in Christ, and the benefits of clearly understanding that identity.

LEADER'S NOTE

Our identity in Christ is one of the most precious things that a believer can possess! God has called us, rescued us, and made us new! And yet many Christians continue to live as if nothing at all has changed in their lives, and that they must combat the sin in their lives on their own. This only leads to discouragement and shame. This understanding of all God offers us can be almost as wonderful as the Gospel itself! Spend time with your participants helping them clearly see their new identity in the Lord, how it will change their life to see themselves as precious in God's eyes, and how they can grow spiritually in His strength. Encourage the participants to memorize [Galatians 2:20](#) before the next time you meet as a group.

INTRODUCTION

Select two or three of the following questions to ask the group.

- ❖ What are some of the labels you use to define your identity? (mother, son, student, employee, abilities, hobbies, talents, etc.)
- ❖ How would you describe the identity of Jesus Christ?
- ❖ Where do our ideas of identity come from? Do they come from what we say about ourselves or what others say about us?
- ❖ What things have you done in the past to take on an identity you wanted to have. (In other words, what have you done to try and impress other people, or to make yourself something you are not?)



STUDY

Instruct the group on the following points.

TEACH

- ❖ **We Have a New Identity in Christ:** Our identity defines who we are. Each of us has a need to belong and have a sense of identity. When we belong to God through faith in Jesus Christ we receive a new identity as a child of God.

- Read the following passage as a group: 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

ASK PARTICIPANTS:

- What does it mean that we are a new creation? If our physical self does not change, what does? What has gone, and what has come?

TEACH

- ❖ Look at the following verses and decide what they say about our identity in Christ, or new self, and what they say about our old nature or identity. *Read these verses as a group and discover the answers together. You may wish to use a chart like the one below on paper, a chalk board, a computer projector or other media available to you.*

Verses	Old Self/Former Identity	New Self/Identity in Christ
2 Corinthians 5:17-21		
Galatians 2:20		
Romans 8:29-39		
Philippians 3:8-10		
Romans 6:11		
Colossians 1:13		
Romans 5:3-5		

- ❖ **We Live Our New Identity by Faith in Christ.** Our new life is lived by faith, not by "keeping the law" (Romans 10:17; Romans 6:1-18; Colossians 1:21-22; Galatians 5:22-23). There are four steps to applying the new identity to our life:

- **Know the truths of your identification with Christ. Because we are in Christ:**
 - We are transformed from darkness to light.
 - We are changed by Christ's death and resurrection.



- We now belong completely to Christ, we are in God's Family.
 - We have been crucified with Christ.
 - We are dead to sin and alive to God.
 - We have received Christ's righteousness.
 - The Holy Spirit of Christ lives in us.
 - We have new hope for our lives.
 - We are completely loved and accepted by Christ.
 - We have victory.
- **Believe what God's Word says about oneself and act on this truth.**
- We make the choice to believe what God says about us – not what the world says about us. It is a daily battle with our own thoughts.
- **Offer oneself to the Lord.**
- Choose to make God our Master, and make His priorities our priorities.
- **Obey Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.**
- We are not required to obey in our own strength. We are given a new heart. We have access to the power of the Holy Spirit!
- ❖ **Because we are in Christ:**
- We are part of the body of Christ (the Church) which is made up of all believers (1 Corinthians 12:13).
 - We are completely accepted by God because we belong to Christ (Romans 8:1; Galatians 2:20).
 - We can live in victory (John 16:33; 1 Corinthians 15:54-57; 1 John 4:4).
- ❖ **Because we have been resurrected to new life, we can live in victory over temptation.** We no longer have to wage war against these things in our own strength. We have the power of God, and He has delivered us from darkness (Colossians 1:13). We no longer have to sin. Because we now belong to God, our new Master, we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us (Romans 8:37). We can have victory over three sources of temptation:
- The world.
 - The flesh.
 - The Devil.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ❖ What two things about your new identity in Christ mean the most to you? Why?
- ❖ What does “dead to sin and alive to God” mean to you?
- ❖ If we have victory in Christ, why do we experience defeat sometimes? How can the truth of our victory change our experience and our discouragement?
- ❖ Why is it sometimes difficult to believe what God's Word says about you? What other voices is the Bible competing with in your life?

PRAYER

Pray that participants will begin to see themselves as the Word of God describes them, as a new creation and a child of God. Pray that this truth will change how they live. Pray that they would dwell in light and not darkness, and understand that God's power is available for them to be victorious over temptation. Thank God that He has rescued us, and now calls us His Children and loves us.