

THE CHRISTIAN: CALLED TO A TRUE IDENTITY IN CHRIST

INTRODUCTION

***“The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world.
On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.
We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against
the knowledge of God,
and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”
2 Cor. 10:4,5***

As you begin these lessons, you are embarking on a pilgrimage that will take you into a deeper understanding of how your sinful emotional survival system operates. Through the truths taught in *The Controllers* studies, you learned to identify your sinful strategies: motives, goals, attitudes and behaviors. The understanding of these is the initial stage of being able to identify your idols and false identities.

This series will uncover deeper areas of your control by helping you to identify the idols that nurture and sustain you emotionally, and which ultimately feed your self-worship. From your sinful motives, controlling behaviors and idols, you established false identities. These often are formed in childhood, and you may be unaware that such construction has taken place. The following studies are designed to create an awareness of the idols and identities that are the **core** of your sinful emotional survival system and the core of your being, when you are “walking in the flesh.”

Once God helps you recognize your personal idols and identities, then He is ready to help you dismantle them. Usually brokenness is the result of your sinful survival system being exposed and then acknowledged. Realize that it is painful to see the web of idolatry you have spent a lifetime weaving. But it is also the gateway to setting you on a path of demolishing the strongholds, which have imprisoned you more than you realize.

Hopefully, at this point you are willing to *participate with God* in the dismantling process and that is where your adventure in faith begins! The lessons in *The Christian: Called to Brokenness* may be encouraging as you go through the process of relinquishing your idols and identities. You definitely will feel overwhelmed as you embark on this journey! Once God has revealed this ugliness, you may try to run from it, but expect to be pursued: He reveals these things to those He is preparing to take down the road of dismantling. Remember Christ is the author and perfecter of your faith! (Heb. 12:2)

***“...being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you
will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”***

Phil. 1:6

There is no formula or timetable for the stripping process. God works on an individual basis. He does so because He doesn't want you to be dependent upon structure, but instead is forcing you to rely upon Him to take you through relinquishment to freedom. Formulas and timetables would give you some form of control, and since His goal is to strip you of control, He doesn't give them to you. He wants you to relinquish your spiritual growth to His capable hands!

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The feelings that accompany the stripping of your idols and false identities has been described by those who have gone before you as a “dead man’s float”, “flat-lining”, “in limbo” and “dangling”. Perhaps you will come up with a new description! It is important to put off your former identities before you put on your true identity in Christ.

Renewing your mind is a crucial component in the renouncing process. As soon as you **catch** yourself seeking an idol to stimulate, reward, build your ego, excuse your disobedience to God, etc., **confess** that to the Lord. Then **claim** the Holy Spirit’s power to overcome your thinking and **force** your mind to say, “I don’t need _____, but I do need You, Lord.” Or, “I don’t need to retreat into my (false identity) but instead I want You to live through me in this situation.” Or, “Even if I fail and look foolish because I am not relying on my former identity for success, You will see me through that difficulty.” Of course, you will **repeat** this outline many times in a day as you surrender control to Jesus. (See *Renewing Your Mind*, CTO.)

***“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world,
but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”***

Rom. 12:2

Don’t worry about *who you will become*. You aren’t supposed to create another identity to replace the forsaken ones. But rather you are to take the focus off yourself and turn it to God and others. Just commit to obeying God each day, and you will find that you are increasingly becoming a vessel that manifests the life of Christ in the positions, roles and circumstances in which you are placed. That’s how you *experience* your true identity.

***“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live,
but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body,
I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”***

Gal. 2:20

***“Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this:
He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn...”***

Ps. 37:5,6a

Perfection cannot be your goal. It is unattainable. You need a Savior daily because you will continue to deal with idols, identities and their ramifications the rest of your life. However, reliance upon your sinful survival plan should not *characterize* your life.

Satan will continue to tempt you to return to your emotional survival system until the day you depart Planet Earth, but you will have a growing awareness of his schemes, along with the weapons to extinguish his fiery arrows. (Eph. 6:10-18) The old sinful strategies will lose their appeal compared to the freedom and joy in living out your true identity in Christ!

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“I run in the path of your commands, for you have set my heart free.”

Ps. 119:32

The prophet Ezekiel discusses idolatry frequently in his book and the following are principles from chapter 14. The Lord in this passage is speaking to Ezekiel about the elders of Israel, saying they have set up idols in their hearts. God links idols with wicked stumbling blocks of iniquity. The Lord declares that He is “estranged” from or has been deserted by His people because of their idols. God issues His remedy, “Repent!” and renounce abominations or detestable practices.

“...Repent and turn away from your idols, and turn your faces away from all your abominations.”

Eze. 14:6 NASB

If you read through Ezekiel, you will see from God’s perspective that idolatry is punishable by death. Yet, we can praise God that the punishment we as believers deserve for our idolatry was inflicted on Christ. As we begin to come to grips with the depth of our idolatry, we should have a far greater understanding and gratitude for Christ who suffered the punishment that we deserved. And we praise Him that we no longer need to live under the dominion of idolatry because of Christ’s righteousness imputed to us and His resurrection power now resides within us! (2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 8:9-11)

*“He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree,
so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness;
by his wounds you have been healed.”*

1 Pet. 2:24