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Know
Who You Are
in Christ

*“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.
The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”*

2 Corinthians 5:17, ESV

Who Are You?

Now that you have made the decision to follow Jesus, you need to know something important: **Who you are can no longer be tossed around by the waves of life.**

The world likes to place a lot of titles on us as we go through life. Some can be quite good and lift us up: reliable friend, loving parent, strong worker. However, many titles can drag us down: failure, unloved, shameful. The truth is that the titles the world gives us are external, and they can ebb and flow with the tide of circumstances.

You are anchored in something, or rather Someone, deeper. Let's take a look at what God's Word, the Bible, has to say:

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17 above.

“In Christ”

It might be shocking for you to learn that the term “Christian” only appears in the Bible three times. Only three times! Instead, the earliest followers of Jesus actually used a different way to refer to themselves. The phrase “in Christ” appears well over 150 times to reference those who have placed their trust and their lives in the hands of Jesus.

The repetitive nature of this phrase is a reminder of who we truly are when we say “yes” to Jesus. To be *in* Christ means something significant. We don't just *have* Jesus in our lives like we might have a car or a pair of shoes. We don't simply *know* about Jesus, being able to recite facts and knowledge. We are *in* Jesus.

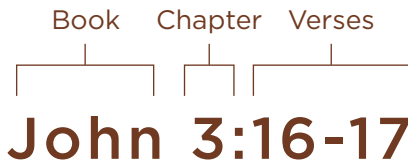
Perhaps the best illustration of what this looks like comes from Jesus Himself.

“I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.” (John 15:5, ESV)

Just like water and nutrients flow through a vine supplying the branches all they need for health and life, we can really only receive what we need for true life when we are connected to Him.

So, while the world may give us a lot of titles, you are now carrying the most significant title in all of the known universe. You are *in* Christ. Because of that you are a new creation. Let’s take a look at how significant that is by looking in God’s Word.

If reading the Bible is new to you don’t be intimidated! In time you will discover how to navigate the various books, chapters, and verses with ease. To get you started, take a look at this diagram. It shows how a Bible reference works.



Looking for a way to access the Bible? If you don’t own a copy, you can read it on your phone for free using the YouVersion Bible app or by visiting biblegateway.org.

You are loved

Read John 3:16-17. (Use the table of contents at the front of your Bible to help you locate various books. The book of John is in the New Testament and one of what we call the “Gospels”, but we’ll cover more of that later.)

Have you ever been in love? No matter if it was romantic love, or love for someone you care for deeply, what are the kinds of things that you do when you’re in love? You give. You sacrifice. You go above and beyond to express how much you value the other person. That is exactly what God did for us when He sent Jesus. He gave something that cost Him dearly, a sacrifice—His only Son.

Think about what that signifies in you. God was willing to give up the very thing that was most precious to Him...for you. That’s how loved you are.

You are forgiven

“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 8:1, ESV)

One of the earliest effects of sin that we see in the Bible is shame. Shame is a heavy load that our souls were never designed to carry. When you are in Christ, the condemnation that comes with sin and shame is no longer a reality. Sure, as a follower of Jesus you will at times feel convicted, but you should not feel condemnation. Picture that weight you feel on your shoulders just falling off. Do you feel that relief?

Condemnation is all about tearing someone down, but conviction is all about healthy growth. God, in His love for you, will use conviction to point out the error of your ways and encourage you to change so that you can grow in spiritual maturity.

You are adopted

Being adopted means moving from one family to another. It's important to first note where we have come from, our first family.

Look up another passage. This time, it's Ephesians 2:1-5. Read it through a few times. It might help to read it aloud too.

Being called a "child of wrath" is not comfortable, but that is our reality before surrendering to Jesus. The reason for this is that God cannot stand sin. His aim is to one day eradicate it. When sin continues to live in us, His wrath is aimed in our direction.

Now, here's the good news. When we do surrender to Him, we are adopted into God's family, and our sin is taken away. That's what Jesus did for you on the cross. Not only did He take your sin, but He invited you into His family. How amazing is that?

Read the following verses:

"But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God." (John 1:12-13, ESV)

"and because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!' So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God." (Galatians 4:6-7)

"See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him." (1 John 3:1)

We are adopted into God's family because of His love for us. We are chosen by Him to be loved. However, adoption comes with more than just affection. It comes with legal standing. When you are adopted, you legally become a part of the family, and receive all the benefits of a son or daughter.

You are secure

A question that we all ask when we first begin to follow Jesus is, “How can I know that I’m really saved from my sin?” It’s important to note that *doubt is a healthy part of faith*. It keeps us digging and growing. But one thing you will never need to doubt is your salvation. Why? Because it is not yours to gain or lose.

Read Romans 8:38-39.

In Romans, Paul shows us that *nothing* can take us away from His love. That means no circumstance, no sin, no misstep...nothing can take God’s love away from you.

Read John 10:27-30.

In John’s gospel, Jesus tells us that *no one* can take us away from His love. That means no person, no relationships, not even you...no one can steal away how much God loves you. His love for you is secure.

When you are in Christ, you can rest assured that Jesus has secured your eternal salvation.

You are never alone

“Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:20)

Following Jesus isn’t always easy. In fact, at times it is very difficult. This is why Jesus used some of His last words physically here on earth to let us know that He will always be by our side. Unlike being physically with us on earth, He is able to be with each and every one of us through the Holy Spirit. We’ll talk more about what it means to experience the Holy Spirit later on. For now, know that when the difficulties come, Jesus is right there with you.

His bride is also with you. That’s how Jesus described the Church. She is His physical representation on earth. The Church is designed to support one another, care for one another, and

encourage one another. Sure, there is no such thing as a perfect church, but there are many great ones who are aiming to follow Jesus and love each other well. We will also talk more about experiencing God's community, the Church, in a later session.

You are unfinished

Whether we have been following Jesus for days or decades, we are all a work in progress, and that's wonderful news!

Read Philippians 1:6.

God is not expecting any of us to say "yes" to Jesus one moment and become super saints the next moment. *Living a life in Christ is a life of growth.* To use an old churchy word, it is a life of "sanctification." That simply means that every day we are to surrender to Him and let Him form us more and more into the person we were always meant to be. Will there be setbacks as you follow Him? Maybe. Will you get everything right? No way. But He's not after perfection. He's after progress, moving you forward each day in your faith.

Do you see how significant it is to know who you are in Jesus? You are a new creation who is loved, forgiven, and growing. You have been lifted out of your sin and adopted into the family for all eternity. You are *in* Christ and that is quite a title to be placed on us!

Questions to Consider

- Are there any titles that you've carried in life that have not been positive? How do those titles change when you become "in Christ"?
- How can we tell the difference between condemnation and conviction?
- The Bible has a lot more to say about those who are "in Christ", but of the characteristics listed above, which ones stand out to you the most? Why do they speak to you the most?
- God made the ultimate sacrifice in sending His Son to die for us. Is there something in your life you feel God might be calling you to give up to Him? Take a moment to think about it.
- Do you believe that you are secure? What causes you to doubt your eternal security? What lies are you believing? Take some time to identify those lies and combat them with the truths you just read.

Next Session

This week commit **2 Corinthians 5:17** to memory. Write it down on a card and carry it with you. Post it on your mirror, your monitor, or on the dash of your car so that it is in front of you throughout the day.

Next time we will focus on knowing how to pray. To prepare for our time together *read Matthew 6:5-13*.