

# Identifying With Christ



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condemnation to them which are in  
Christ Jesus. Rom. 8:1

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## **Forward**

### **OUR TRUE IDENTITY IN CHRIST**

We are identified with Christ in His death, in His burial, in His resurrection, and in His ascension (Colossians 2:11-12; 3:1, 3).

We died with Christ, we were buried with Him, we were raised with Him, and we ascended with Him.

We are no longer the old man but the new man (vv. 9-10). In our daily walk we must always reject the old man and everything of the old man as that which is dead and buried and has nothing to do with us any

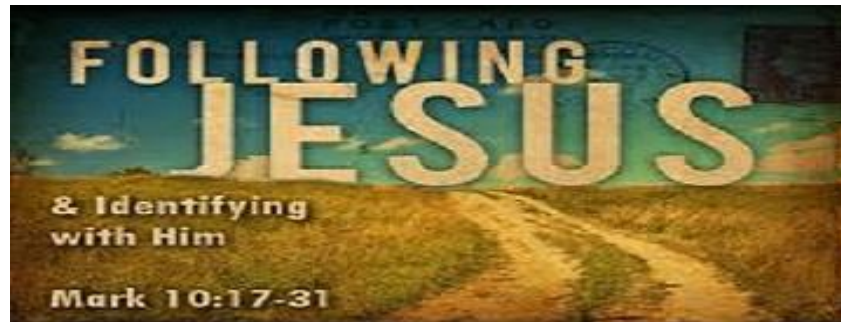
We are now resurrected and ascended with Christ in the heavens, and are the members of the new man.

Within this new man there is nothing old. There cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, man everything is Christ. Christ is all and in all.

We are now in the new man, so we must put on the new man in our experience. We realize that we have been united and identified with Christ; we are dead, buried, resurrected, and ascended in Him and with Him.

All the things of the old man have nothing to do with us; we put them off and reckon them as buried. We then live in the new man and walk as the new man. In this way we enjoy Christ not only by ourselves but by and in the corporate Body, which is the church, the new man.

## Chapter 1



**We are justified (declared “not guilty” of sin).**

### **Romans 3:24**

Yet now God in his gracious kindness declares us not guilty. He has done this through Christ Jesus, who has freed us by taking away our sins.

When we believe, an exchange takes place. We give Christ our sins, and he gives us his righteousness and forgiveness (see 2 Cor. 5:21). There is nothing we can do to earn this. Only through Christ can we receive God’s righteousness. What an incredible bargain this is for us! But sadly, many still choose to pass up this gift to continue “enjoying” their sin.

**No condemnation awaits us.**

### **Romans 8:1**

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

“Not guilty; let him go free”—what would those words mean to you if you were on death row? The fact is that the whole human race *is* on death row, justly condemned for repeatedly breaking God’s holy law. Without Jesus we would have no hope at all. But thank God! He has declared us not guilty and has offered us freedom from sin and power to do his will.

**We are set free from the law of sin and death.**

**Romans 8:2**

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

This Spirit of life is the Holy Spirit. He was present at the creation of the world (Genesis 1:2), and he is the power behind the rebirth of every Christian. He gives us the power we need to live the Christian life

**We are sanctified and made acceptable in Jesus Christ.**

**1 Cor. 1:2**

Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

Corinth, a giant cultural melting pot with a great diversity of wealth, religions, and moral standards, had a reputation for being fiercely independent and as decadent as any city in the world. The Romans had destroyed Corinth in 146 B.C. after a rebellion.

But in 46 B.C., the Roman Emperor Julius Caesar rebuilt it because of its strategic seaport. By Paul's day (A.D. 50), the Romans had made Corinth the capital of Achaia (present-day Greece). It was a large city, offering Rome great profits through trade as well as the military protection of its ports.

But the city's prosperity made it ripe for all sorts of corruption. Idolatry flourished, and there were more than a dozen pagan temples employing at least a thousand prostitutes. Corinth's reputation was such that prostitutes in other cities began to be called "Corinthian girls."

A personal invitation makes a person feel wanted and welcome. We are “called to be holy.” God personally invites us to be citizens of his eternal kingdom. But Jesus Christ, God’s Son, is the only one who can bring us into this glorious kingdom because he is the only one who removes our sins. *Sanctified* means that we are chosen or set apart by Christ for his service. We accept God’s invitation by accepting his Son, Jesus Christ, and by trusting in the work he did on the cross to forgive our sins.

By including a salutation to “all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,” Paul is making it clear that this is not a private letter. Although it deals with specific issues facing the church at Corinth, all believers can learn from it. The Corinthian church included a great cross section of believers—wealthy merchants, common laborers, former temple prostitutes, and middle-class families. Because of the wide diversity of people and backgrounds, Paul takes great pains to stress the need for both spiritual unity and Christlike character.

### **We are righteous and holy in Christ.**

#### **1 Cor. 1:30**

**But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:**

Paul continues to emphasize that the way to receive salvation is so simple that *any* person who wants to can understand it. Skill and wisdom do not get a person into God’s kingdom—simple faith does—so no one can boast that his or her achievements helped him or her secure eternal life. Salvation is totally from God through Jesus’ death. There is *nothing* we can do to earn our salvation; we need only accept what Jesus has already done for us.

God is the source of and the reason for our personal and living relationship with Christ. Our union and identification with Christ results in our having God’s wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:3), possessing right standing with God (*righteousness*, 2 Cor. 5:21), being holy (1 Thes. 4:3-7), and having the penalty for our sins paid by Jesus (*redemption*, Mark 10:45).

## Chapter 2



**We are made alive by the power of the resurrection.**

### **1 Cor. 15:22**

**For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.**

Death came into the world as a result of Adam and Eve's sin. In Romans 5:12-21, Paul explained why Adam's sin brought sin to all people, how death and sin spread to all humans because of this first sin, and the parallel between Adam's death and Christ's death.

**We are a new creation.**

### **2 Cor. 5:17**

**Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.**

Christians are brand-new people on the *inside*. The Holy Spirit gives them new life, and they are not the same anymore. We are not reformed, rehabilitated, or reeducated—we are re-created (new creations), living in vital union with Christ (Col. 2:6-7). At conversion we are not merely turning over a new leaf; we are beginning a new life under a new Master.

## **We receive God's righteousness.**

### **2 Cor. 5:21**

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

When we trust in Christ, we make an exchange—our sin for his righteousness. Our sin was poured into Christ at his crucifixion. His righteousness is poured into us at our conversion. This is what Christians mean by Christ's atonement for sin.

In the world, bartering works only when two people exchange goods of relatively equal value. But God offers to trade his righteousness for our sin—something of immeasurable worth for something completely worthless. How grateful we should be for his kindness to us.

## **We are one in Christ with all other believers.**

### **Galatians 3:28**

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

Some Jewish males greeted each new day by praying, "Lord, I thank you that I am not a Gentile, a slave, or a woman." The role of women was enhanced by Christianity. Faith in Christ transcends these differences and makes all believers one in Christ. Make sure you do not impose distinctions that Christ has removed. Because all believers are his heirs, no one is more privileged than or superior to anyone else.

It's our natural inclination to feel uncomfortable around people who are different from us and to gravitate toward those who are similar to us. But when we allow our differences to separate us from our fellow believers, we are disregarding clear Biblical teaching. Make a point to seek out and appreciate people who are not just like you and your friends. You may find that you have a lot in common with them.



## **We are blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ.**

### **Ephes. 1:3**

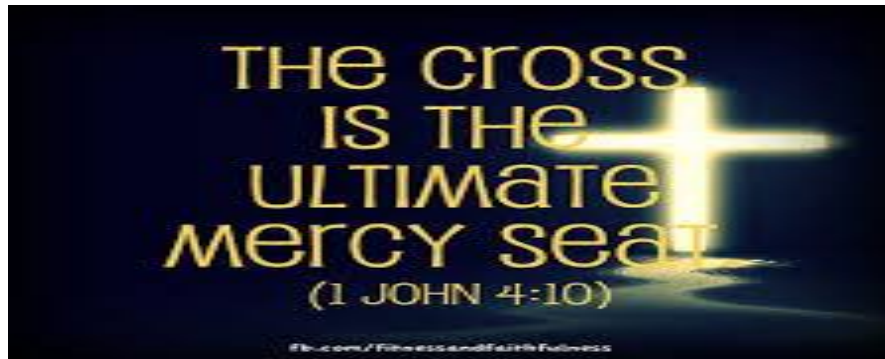
**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:**

“Who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing” means that in Christ we have all the benefits of knowing God—being chosen for salvation, being adopted as his children, forgiveness, insight, the gifts of the Spirit, power to do God’s will, the hope of living forever with Christ.

Because we have an intimate relationship with Christ, we can enjoy these blessings now. The *heavenly realms* mean that these blessings are eternal, not temporal.

The blessings come from Christ’s spiritual realm, not the earthly realm of the goddess Artemis. Other references to the heavenly realms in this letter include Ephes. 1:20; Ephes. 2:6; Ephes. 3:10. Such passages reveal Christ in his victorious, exalted role as ruler of all.

## Chapter 3



**We are holy, blameless, and covered with God's love.**

**Ephes. 1:4**

*According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*

Paul says that God "chose us in him" to emphasize that salvation depends totally on God. We are not saved because we deserve it, but because God is gracious and freely gives salvation. We did not influence God's decision to save us; he saved us according to his plan. Thus there is no way to take credit for our salvation or to allow room for pride.

The mystery of salvation originated in the timeless mind of God long before we existed. It is hard to understand how God could accept us. But because of Christ, we are holy and blameless in his sight. God chose us, and when we belong to him through Jesus Christ, God looks at us as if we had never sinned.

All we can do is express our thanks for his wonderful love.

## **We are adopted as God’s children.**

### **Ephes. 1:5-6**

Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

“Predestined” means marked out beforehand. This is another way of saying that salvation is God’s work and not our own doing. In his infinite love, God has adopted us as his own children.

Through Jesus’ sacrifice, he has brought us into his family and made us heirs along with Jesus (Romans 8:17). In Roman law, adopted children had the same rights and privileges as biological children, even if they had been slaves.

Paul uses this term to show how strong our relationship to God is. Have you entered into this loving relationship with God? For more on the meaning of adoption, see Galatians 4:5-7.

“Freely given us in the One he loves” means that God graciously accepts us (though we don’t deserve it) now that we belong to his dearly loved Son.

## **Our sins are taken away, and we are forgiven.**

### **Ephes. 1:7**

In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

To speak of Jesus’ blood was an important first-century way of speaking of Christ’s death. His death points to two wonderful truths—redemption and forgiveness. *Redemption* was the price paid to gain freedom for a slave (Leviticus 25:47-54). Through his death, Jesus paid the price to release us from slavery to sin.

*Forgiveness* was granted in Old Testament times on the basis of the shedding of animals' blood (Leviticus 17:11). Now we are forgiven on the basis of the shedding of Jesus' blood—he died as the perfect and final sacrifice. (See also Romans 5:9; Ephes. 2:13; Col. 1:20; Hebrews 9:22; 1 Peter 1:19.)

Grace is God's voluntary and loving favor given to those he saves. We can't earn salvation, nor do we deserve it. No religious, intellectual, or moral effort can gain it, because it comes only from God's mercy and love. Without God's grace, no person can be saved. To receive it, we must acknowledge that we cannot save ourselves, that only God can save us, and that our only way to receive this loving favor is through faith in Christ.

### **We will be brought under Christ's headship.**

#### **Ephes. 1:10-11**

**That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:**

God was not intentionally keeping his plan a secret ("the mystery of his will"), but his plan for the world could not be fully understood until Christ rose from the dead. His purpose for sending Christ was to unite Jews and Gentiles in one body with Christ as the head. Many people still do not understand God's plan; but when the time is right ("when the times will have reached their fulfillment"), he will bring us together to be with him forever.

Then everyone will understand. On that day, all people will bow to Jesus as Lord, either because they love him or because they fear his power (see Phil. 2:10-11).

God's purpose is to offer salvation to the world, just as he planned to do long ago. God is sovereign; he is in charge. When your life seems chaotic, rest in this truth: Jesus is Lord, and God is in control. God's purpose to save you cannot be thwarted, no matter what evil Satan may bring.

**We are marked as belonging to God by the Holy Spirit.**

**Ephes. 1:13**

In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise,

The Holy Spirit is God's seal that we belong to him and his deposit guaranteeing that he will do what he has promised. The Holy Spirit is like a down payment, a deposit, a validating signature on the contract. The presence of the Holy Spirit in us demonstrates the genuineness of our faith, proves that we are God's children, and secures eternal life for us. His power works in us to transform us now, and what we experience now is a taste of the total change we will experience in eternity.

**We have been raised up to sit with Christ in glory.**

**Ephes. 2:6**

And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

Because of Christ's resurrection, we know that our bodies will also be raised from the dead (1 Cor. 15:2-23) and that we have been given the power to live as Christians now (Ephes. 1:19). These ideas are combined in Paul's image of sitting with Christ in "the heavenly realms" (see the note on +Ephes. 1:3). Our eternal life with Christ is certain because we are united in his powerful victory.

**We are God's work of art.**

**Ephes. 2:10**

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

We become Christians through God’s unmerited grace, not as the result of any effort, ability, intelligent choice, or act of service on our part. However, out of gratitude for this free gift, we will seek to help and serve others with kindness, love, and gentleness, and not merely to please ourselves.

While no action or work we do can help us obtain salvation, God’s intention is that our salvation will result in acts of service. We are not saved merely for our own benefit but to serve Christ and build up the church (Ephes. 4:12).

We are God’s workmanship (work of art, masterpiece). Our salvation is something only God can do. It is his powerful, creative work in us. If God considers us his works of art, we dare not treat ourselves or others with disrespect or as inferior work.

### **We have been brought near to God.**

#### **Ephes. 2:13**

**But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.**

Pious Jews (“the circumcision”) considered all non-Jews (the “uncircumcised”) ceremonially unclean. They thought of themselves as pure and clean because of their national heritage and religious ceremonies.

Paul pointed out that Jews and Gentiles alike were unclean before God and needed to be cleansed by Christ. In order to realize how great a gift salvation is, we need to remember our former natural, unclean condition. Have you ever felt separate, excluded, and hopeless? These verses are for you. No one is alienated from Christ’s love or from the body of believers.

Jews and Gentiles alike could be guilty of spiritual pride—Jews for thinking their faith and traditions elevated them above everyone else, Gentiles for trusting in their achievements, power, or position. Spiritual pride blinds us to our own faults and magnifies the faults of others. Be careful not to become proud of your salvation. Instead, humbly thank God for what he has done, and encourage others who might be struggling in their faith.

Before Christ's coming, Gentiles and Jews kept apart from one another. Jews considered Gentiles beyond God's saving power and therefore without hope. Gentiles resented Jewish claims. Christ revealed the total sinfulness of both Jews and Gentiles, and then he offered his salvation to both. Only Christ breaks down the walls of prejudice, reconciles all believers to God, and unifies us in one body.

**We share in the promise in Christ.**

**Ephes. 3:10**

To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

The "rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms" are either angels who are witnesses to these events (see 1 Peter 1:12), or hostile spiritual forces opposed to God (Ephes. 2:2; Ephes. 6:12).

**We can come with freedom and confidence into God's presence.**

**Ephes. 3:12**

In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.

It is an awesome privilege to be able to approach God with freedom and confidence. Most of us would be apprehensive in the presence of a powerful ruler. But thanks to Christ, by faith we can enter directly into God's presence through prayer.

We know we'll be welcomed with open arms because we are God's children through our union with Christ. Don't be afraid of God. Talk with him about everything. He is waiting to hear from you.

**We are members of Christ's body, the church.**

**Ephes. 5:29-30**

For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

Paul devotes twice as many words to telling husbands to love their wives as to telling wives to submit to their husbands. How should a man love his wife?

- (1) He should be willing to sacrifice everything for her.
- (2) He should make her well-being of primary importance.
- (3) He should care for her as he cares for his own body. No wife needs to fear submitting to a man who treats her in this way.

**We have been given fullness in Christ.**

**Col. 2:10**

**And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:**

When we know Jesus Christ, we don't need to seek God by means of other religions, cults, or unbiblical philosophies as the Colossians were doing. Christ alone holds the answers to the true meaning of life, because he *is* life. Christ is the unique source of knowledge and power for the Christian life. No Christian needs anything in addition to what Christ has provided to be saved. We are complete in him.

**We are set free from our sinful nature.**

**Col. 2:11**

In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:



Jewish males were circumcised as a sign of the Jews' covenant with God (Genesis 17:9-14). With the death of Christ, circumcision was no longer necessary. So now our commitment to God is written on our hearts, not our bodies. Christ sets us free from our evil desires by a spiritual operation, not a bodily one. God removes the old nature and gives us a new nature.

In this passage, circumcision is related to baptism; therefore, some see baptism as the New Testament sign of the covenant, identifying the person with the covenant community. Baptism parallels the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and it also portrays the death and burial of our sinful old way of life followed by resurrection to new life in Christ. Remembering that our old sinful life is dead and buried with Christ gives us a powerful motive to resist sin.

Not wanting the desires of our past to come back to power again, we can consciously choose to treat our desires as if they were dead. Then we can continue to enjoy our wonderful new life with Christ (see Galatians 3:27 and Col. 3:1-4).

**We will have eternal glory.**

**2 Tim. 2:10**

**Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.**

When Paul says "obtain the salvation," is he contradicting grace? Salvation is not something that can be earned, as Paul taught in Ephes. 2:8-9. Paul is referring to being faithful to the end, not to a way to earn salvation.

## Rev. 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.



**To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:**

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

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Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print