

SESSION 4: COVENANT RELATIONSHIP & IDENTITY IN CHRIST

Welcome, Prayer & Review of LIFE Starter Journaling: 5 minutes

Session #4 Teaching: Covenant & Identity in Christ: 10 minutes

Ephesians 2:8-9 reminds us that we are saved by grace through faith. **2 Corinthians 5:20** teaches that we are new creations in Christ – the old has gone, the new has come. Jesus taught his disciples to begin their prayers with the words, “Our Father.” **John 1:12** tells us that all who received Christ, even those who believed in his name are given the right to be children of God. Through faith in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven for our sins, given the promise of eternal life, and brought into God’s family. We become brothers and sisters. We gain a new identity. The key word for Covenant is “relationship,” and we are brought into a Covenant relationship with God through Jesus. When Jesus established the Lord’s Supper in **1 Corinthians 11:25**, he told his disciples, “This cup is the new covenant which is sealed in my blood for the forgiveness of sins...”. This is our **New Covenant Identity**. This is the identity that Jesus gave his own blood to purchase for you. Your identity is the way you perceive yourself, the way you see yourself, what you consider yourself to be. Your identity answers the question: Who are you? And in Christ you have a whole new way to answer that question! We are baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Being baptized into the name of the Father gives us a new family name, and a new identity. (see Ephesians 1:3-5). We are adopted into God’s family (a royal family), filled with God’s Spirit, and given all associated family privileges: salvation, forgiveness through Christ, the promise of eternal life, membership in the Church (the Body of Christ), spiritual gifts, and privileged access to the Father. These are the greatest possible gifts and are to be gratefully received. And our identity in Christ is greater than all others. God leads us to make other sources of identity subject to him. Sometimes this is painful. We gain a sense of identity, overtly and subtly, from career, abilities, heritage, marital status, accomplishments, family legacy, race, gender, sexuality, social groups, economic position, nationality, etc. Releasing our sense of identity from these things can be very difficult. But all of that really is nothing in comparison to the new identity we find in Christ. (see Philippians 3:1-12). The tasks related to our identity are to cultivate a relationship with God and hear what God is saying by the Holy Spirit, especially as God speaks through prayer, scripture, and circumstances.

This has two impacts on our marriages:

1. Understanding who we are in Christ is important for ALL our relationships, but especially our marriage. It is significant to note that when obedience does not flow from our sense of identity in Christ, we tend to miss the point and dishonor the name of Jesus Christ. If we allow God to direct us, we will be far more effective in our service to our family and the world. The first step is to allow obedience to flow from the Covenant Identity that God gives us. Much is at stake here in terms of our witness for Jesus Christ. Remember, your identity is important because: *How you live flows out of who you are. How you speak to your husband, or your wife, flows out of knowing who you are. How you treat others, flows out of how you see yourself. Even how you spend your time flows out of who you think you are. How you relate to God flows out of knowing who you are in his sight, knowing how he sees you, and how you see yourself before Him.*
2. Like the new family we join and the new person we become in our new covenant through Christ, we begin a new covenant family when we get married. We forsake our other earthly identities and this covenant relationship, second to the Lord, becomes primary in our lives.

Small Group Discussion: 25 minutes

- How hard is it to accept what God has done for us?
- Can you think of helpful analogies for the Covenant relationships? (For example, education or adoption.)
- Apart from Christ, where do you gain your sense of identity? Why is it so hard to allow our identity to Christ to trump all other sources of identity? What does finding our primary identity in Christ mean for the other sources of identity, work and family, for instance?

Small Group Wrap-Up: 15 minutes

What were the biggest take-aways and action items? Group Discussion: 15 minutes

Homework: 5 minutes

•Discuss together how do the following passages in the gospels help you understand the idea of being in a covenant relationships with God (See John 1:12, John 3:1-17, Matthew 6:25-34, Luke 15:11-31).

SESSION #4

WK. 4 DEVO 1

Read Ezekiel 11:14-25

Journal about "restoration" and radical change needed in your life.

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

F=Focus to the text to make it applicable for your own life. What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read?

E = Engage God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you've learned?

SESSION #4

WK. 4 DEVO 2

Read **2 Corinthians 5:11-21**

God has made you a NEW creation, so accept that fact and start acting like one.

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I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

F=Focus to the text to make it applicable for your own life. What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read?

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SESSION #4

WK. 4 DEVO 3

Read Romans 8:1-9

We need the Holy Spirit to overcome our flesh and to live with the gifts that God wants us to experience.

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F=Focus to the text to make it applicable for your own life. What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read?

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SESSION #4

WK. 4 DEVO 4

Read 1 Peter 4:1-11

Are YOU living for God? What changes do you need to make to fully live for God?

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I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

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