

## Christian Growth – 2014 Week 3: New Identity in Christ

### Introduction

Eph. 1:13,14\* - <sup>13</sup> In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, <sup>14</sup> who is given as a pledge of our inheritance . . . (NASB)

Two key provisions for our spiritual growth the moment we believe in Christ:

- We are given the Holy Spirit (WEEK 4)
- We are sealed in Christ (NEW IDENTITY)

Today's goals:

- To learn *who we are* and *what we have* “in Christ”
- To learn how our new identity gives us the capacity to be freed from slavery to sin

### The Importance of our New Identity in Christ

*“Who are you?” – Ways we answer this question before coming to Christ*

*Why is our identity so important?*

2 Cor. 5:16,17\* <sup>16</sup> Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer. <sup>17\*</sup> Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. (NASB)

- The *basis* for this new standing:
- The *reality* of this new standing:
- The *implication* of this new standing:

**Key aspects of our New Identity (Eph. 1:3-14\*\*,2; Col. 2:10-15; Rom. 6:6)**

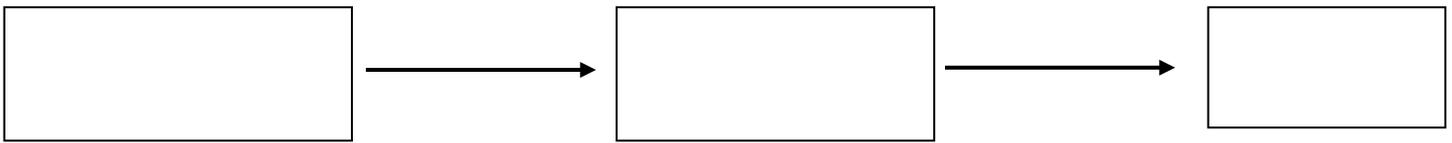
The New Testament refers to dozens of aspects of our new identity in Christ. See Dennis McCallum, *Walking in Victory*, pp. 13-15 – which refers to 16 aspects. See Neil Anderson, *Victory over the Darkness*, pp. 45-47, 57-59 – which refers to 68 aspects.

See “Symptoms of False Identity Beliefs” & “Aspects of Our New Identity” columns in the “New Identity Worksheet” for 6 keys aspects.

**Freedom from Slavery to Sin**

There are two approaches Christians commonly take to deal with sin:

- 1. Legalism- “You know it’s wrong, so just stop sinning.”



Legalistic power-source:

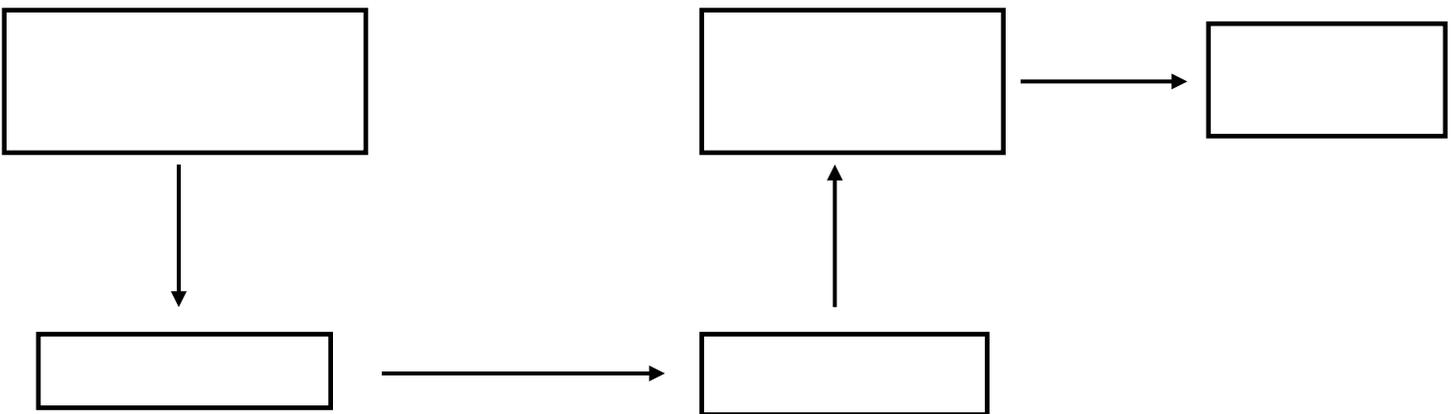
Legalistic motivation:

Legalism results:

Jesus rejects the legalistic approach in Matt. 23:25,26 – “What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are so careful to clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside you are filthy—full of greed and self-indulgence! <sup>26</sup> You blind Pharisee! First wash the inside of the cup and the dish, and then the outside will become clean, too.” (NLT)

- 2. Biblical Approach

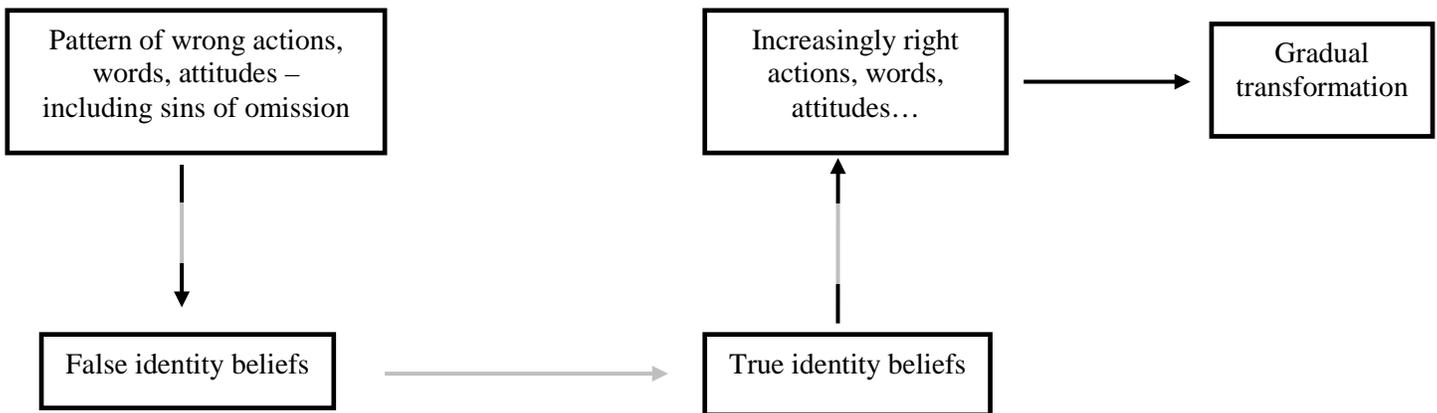
“I am a new person in Christ, and by His power, I can begin to live like who I now am.”



When we are in bondage to sin, we must ask the question:

This is not simply cognitive therapy! The Holy Spirit helps us through each of these steps:

### Appropriating our New Identity (Romans 6:6,11,13\*\*): Know, Consider, Present



#### “Know”

Rom. 6:6\* . . . *knowing* this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.<sup>1</sup>

DEFINITION:

<sup>1</sup> "Your old self was crucified with Christ . . ." Our old identity (in Adam) has been completely obliterated; it no longer exists (see also Jn. 3:3,5; Col. 3:3; 2 Cor. 5:17). “. . . so that your body of sin may be done away with . . .” “Body of sin” refers not to our old identity, but to our sin-nature. “Done away with” (*katargeo*) can mean this, but other passages clearly teach that Christians still have a sin-nature (Rom. 7:17). It should therefore be translated here “made powerless” (NASB margin) or (better) “put out of authority” (see Rom. 7:2 – “. . . she is released from (*katargeo*) the law . . .” SUMMARY: Our old identity has been destroyed, so that our sin nature has been put out of authority over us. “. . . so that you may no longer be slaves of sin.” This is the desired behavioral result. God has struck at the root of the problem rather than leaving us to deal with it by our own will-power.

How important is “knowing” about your change in identity?

*Illustration:* The United States abolished slavery when the Thirteenth Amendment became law on Dec. 18, 1865. The legal identity of all slaves instantly changed. Their old identity as property/slaves was “killed.” They received a new legal identity as citizens. Why was this important? Because this changed their relationship to their previous owners. Their previous owners continued to exist, but their authority over them was now removed, so that they were no longer legally obliged to live as slaves. Tragically, many of these new citizens remained slaves because they never learned about this change!

“Knowing” is a life-long challenge for you and a priority in helping other Christians!

### “Consider”

Rom. 6:11\* . . . Even so *consider* yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

DEFINITION:

“Consider” (*logizomai*)

*Illustration:* Assume that you have never had more than \$150 in your checking account. Suddenly, a trusted friend informs you that he has deposited \$100,000 into your account. You check with the bank and ascertain that this is indeed the case. How important is it that you “consider” this change by entering that amount in your check ledger and believing that entry? What if you listened instead to your feelings or your family members who keep telling you that you only have \$150? If you want to reap the benefit of the \$100,000, you have to choose to believe the actual amount! Otherwise, you could go on living as though you were poor!

“Considering” involves monitoring our thought-lives, becoming aware of false identity beliefs as God exposes them, and choosing to counter those false identity beliefs with what God says is true (2 Cor. 10:5).

(D. M. Lloyd-Jones) We must talk to ourselves instead of allowing “ourselves” to talk to us! Do you realize what that means? I suggest that the main trouble in this whole matter of spiritual depression in a sense is this, that we allow our self to talk to us instead of talking to our self. Am I just trying to be deliberately paradoxical? Far from it. This is the very essence of wisdom in this matter. Have you realized that most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself? Take those thoughts that come to you the moment you wake up in the morning. You have not originated them, but they start talking to you, they bring back the problems of yesterday, etc. Somebody is talking. Who is talking to you? Your self is talking to you. Now this man's treatment was this; instead of allowing this self to talk to him, he starts talking to himself. “Why art thou cast down, O my soul?” he asks. His soul had been depressing him, crushing him. So he stands up and says: “Self, listen for moment, I will speak to you.” Do you know what I mean? If you do not, you have had but little experience.

The main art in the matter of spiritual living is to know how to handle yourself. You have to take yourself in hand, you have to address yourself, preach to yourself, question yourself. You must say to your soul: “Why are you cast down?—what business have you to be disquieted?” You must turn on yourself, upbraid yourself . . . exhort yourself, and say to yourself; “Hope you in God”—instead of muttering in this depressed unhappy way. And then you must go on to remind yourself of God, Who God is, and what God is and what God has done and what God has pledged Himself to do. Then having done that, end on this great note: defy yourself, and defy other people, and defy the devil and the whole world, and say with this man: “I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance, who is also the health of my countenance and my God.” (D. M. Lloyd-Jones, *Spiritual Depression: Its Causes and Cure* [Eerdmans, 1982], pp. 20,21.)

Our culture discourages this type of mental and spiritual engagement:

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“Considering” is a life-long challenge for you and a priority in helping other Christians!

**“Present”**

Rom. 6:13\* . . . do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. (NASB)

## DEFINITION:

“Presenting” usually involves both a negative and positive step:

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(6:13a: “do not go on presenting yourselves to sin . . .”)

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(6:13b: “. . . but present yourselves to God . . . as instruments of righteousness”).

Real change involves the willingness to say “No!” – but this is ultimately futile unless we also say “Yes!” to the ways that expose us to God's life-changing power.

2 Tim. 2:22 – *Flee* youthful lusts and *pursue* righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call upon the Lord . . .

Eph. 4:28 – He who steals must *steal no longer*; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have *something to share with one who has need*.

Eph. 4:29 – *Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth*, but only such a word as is *good for edification according to the need of the moment*, so that it will give grace to those who hear.

“Presenting” is a life-long challenge for you and a priority in helping other Christians!

SUMMARY: Who are the Christians who experience a life of increasing freedom from slavery to sin? Those who:

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See “Examples of How to Present” in the “New Identity Worksheet”

### Conclusion:

Tonight’s goals:

- To learn *who we are* and *what we have* “in Christ”
- To learn how our new identity gives us the capacity to be freed from slavery to sin

### Memory Verses

2 Corinthians 5:17\* - In Christ we have new identity

Eph. 1:3-14\*\* - Various aspects of our new identity in Christ

Romans 6:6,11,13\*\* - Know, Consider, Present: the dynamic for victory over slavery to sin for those who are in Christ

### Assignment

Read McCallum, *Walking In Victory*, Chapters 4-6. Record your answers to two questions:

1. What struck you about this reading?
2. Why do you think it struck you?

Prayerfully consider an area of recurrent sin in your life and work through the process from know, consider, present:

1. Why do I \_\_\_\_\_? What are the false identity beliefs that drive my sin?
2. What are the true identity beliefs that contradict my false belief system?
3. How is God calling me to present my members as “instruments of righteousness?”

It might be helpful to discuss this with a trusted friend.