

PART 4 – FINDING OUR IDENTITY AS A FOLLOWER OF JESUS

We read in the Gospels that when Jesus started His ministry he called fishermen and others from various walks of life to follow him. Today Jesus calls each of us to follow Him! But do we understand what it means to follow Him? Even when Jesus was on earth, many of His family members and disciples stopped following Him because of the cost to them personally and due to some of His teaching (Matthew 19:16-22; John 6:66; 7:5). It is important to understand what it means to be a true follower of Jesus if we desire to deepen our true identity in Him.

BIBLICAL INSIGHTS

- 1) We can find our identity in the cross of Christ. Read Luke 9:21-26; Luke 14:26-27. What are several challenging statements that Jesus made about the expectations for His followers? What does Jesus mean by “take up your cross daily”? (Philippians 1:29; 3:8-10)

- 2) We can find our identity in the word of God. Read John 8:31-32; 2 John 1:9. What does it mean to “abide in My Word”? How do we do this on a daily basis?

- 3) We can find our identity in God’s love. Read John 13:34-35. How did and how does God show His love for us? How do others identify God’s love in us?

- 4) We can find our identity as citizens of heaven. Read Hebrews 11:13; John 15:19. Why does Jesus say, “I chose you out of the world”? Why are we “strangers and exiles on the earth” when we live here? (Philippians 3:20)

APPLICATION

- 1) Jesus wants us to identify with His lifestyle and attitude of surrender to God’s will, sacrifice, and suffering. This identity is very counter-cultural to what our society promotes. Reflect on your attitudes and goals. What lifestyle do you identify with the most? What changes do you feel led by the Spirit and God’s Word to make? Who are good role models to inspire you?

2) The word “abide” is so rich and promising. How does abiding in God’s Word impact your identity? Share a time or practice when abiding in God’s Word enriched your identity in Christ.

3) Love is such a powerful life-changing action. How has God’s love changed your identity and life? As your identity in Christ grows, do you find your love for others growing?

4) C. S. Lewis said “*If I find in myself desires which nothing in this world can satisfy, the only logical explanation is that I was made for another world.*” Do you identify yourself as a citizen of heaven? Could this identity enable us to surrender and sacrifice our lives and endure suffering for the sake of Christ? Why?

TAKE AWAY

Following Jesus means taking up our cross just as He did on Calvary, abiding in His word just as He obeyed the word from His Father, and revealing His love just like Jesus did among the disenfranchised. As we discover our identity as citizens of heaven, we can live this life with purpose and hope for an eternity with Jesus. Let’s learn to surrender so that as disciples we will grow to be more like Jesus.

PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father, by Your Spirit and by Your Word please help me to understand and obey your command to take up my cross daily and follow You. Help me to daily abide in Your Word and show Your love to others. I know that following you will not always be easy. I know it takes commitment, perseverance and listening to the Spirit’s voice. I thank you for making me a child in Your heavenly kingdom, for Your promises and love. Amen.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

What God Thinks About You: www.desiringgod.org/articles/what-god-thinks-about-you

Father’s Love Letter: www.fathersloveletter.com