



# IDENTITY IN CHRIST

A Three-Day Journey in God's Word



AMERICAN  
BIBLE  
SOCIETY

# Day 1: Knowing Christ

## Begin

Quiet your heart and ask God to take all your worries and distractions, trusting him to teach and encourage you through his Word. Pray and ask him to open your eyes to the lessons he has for you today!

## Read: Colossians 1:15–20

<sup>15</sup>“The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. <sup>16</sup>For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. <sup>17</sup>He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. <sup>18</sup>And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. <sup>19</sup>For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, <sup>20</sup>and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.”

## Reflect

Before we can fully know ourselves, we must know the one who made us.

In Colossians 1, we read a beautiful description of Jesus—the image of the invisible God. Our Creator chose to reveal himself through his Son, who took on flesh to become our perfect Savior. Knowing Christ and understanding that we need the reconciliation he offers becomes the first step in our journey to claiming our identity in him.

The Bible tells us that Jesus was born in a lowly stable in Bethlehem, but Paul begins this letter by reminding us of the majesty of our Savior. Through Jesus, all things were created, and through him, all things hold together. Our existence depends on him, and he is our only reliable source of purpose and identity. No matter the circumstances we face in life, we can trust that our lives are in the hands of the one who made all things. God loves us as our Creator, and he made a way for us to become his children through Christ ([1 John 3:1](#)). We can rest in the truth that this will never change, as Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever ([Hebrews 13:8](#)).

In this passage, Jesus is also described as the head of the church. His redemptive work brings together different identities—all nations, tribes, and tongues—and makes us part of a new family of believers. We experience reconciliation not only with God but with each other—something we could never accomplish on our own! If we are in Christ, we have the hope of eternal life through him and can encourage one another in our walk of faith. The Bible tells us that Jesus took on flesh and experienced our sorrows ([John 1:14](#); [Isaiah 53:4](#)). His perfect life means that we are no longer defined by our sin and failures. Instead, we are now identified as righteous in him ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#)). We are forgiven and empowered with a new purpose as members of Christ’s body.

Finally, this passage ends with the truth that our peace with God depends fully on our relationship with Jesus. There is nothing we can add to our salvation. There is no way we could create a more perfect identity than the one Christ has won for us. We are God’s beloved children, and we can rest in being fully known and loved by our Heavenly Father. We can also depend on Jesus to help us reflect his redemptive work in our own lives by sacrificially loving those around us. In this way, we help others see that our identity—rooted and secure in Christ—can be theirs, too!

## Consider

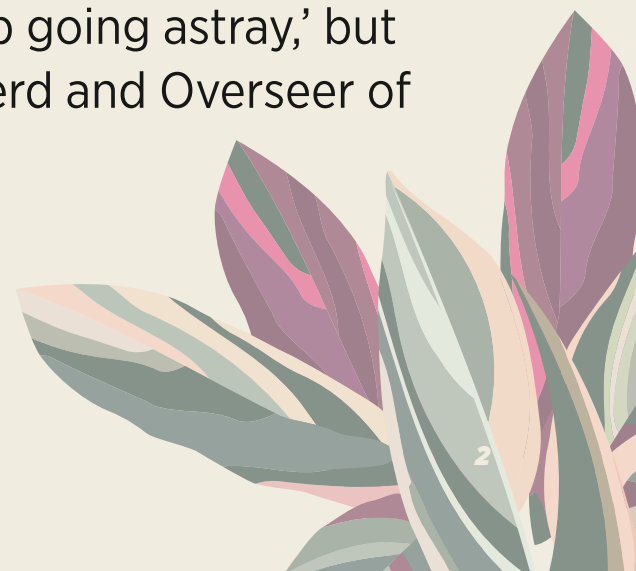
- ❖ Where have you found your identity in the past? Did you seek to define yourself by family, career, generosity, talents, or service? In what ways did these aspects of your life fall short of being your ultimate purpose?
- ❖ Where do you find your identity today? Are you resting in Christ, or do you get distracted by other things that promise worth and purpose?
- ❖ Reflect on the Scripture you read today. How can God’s Word help you refocus your heart and life in your ultimate identity as a beloved daughter of God?

## Meditate

Spend a few moments reading and considering how this Scripture relates to the other truths you encountered today. What connections can you make?

“To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. ‘He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.’ When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. ‘He himself bore our sins’ in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; ‘by his wounds you have been healed.’ For ‘you were like sheep going astray,’ but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.”

*1 Peter 2:21–25*



# Day 2: Being Known

## Begin

Quiet your heart and ask God to take all your worries and distractions, trusting him to teach and encourage you through his Word. Pray and ask him to open your eyes to the lessons he has for you today!

## Read: Psalm 139

- <sup>1</sup>You have searched me, LORD,  
and you know me.
- <sup>2</sup>You know when I sit and when I rise;  
you perceive my thoughts from afar.
- <sup>3</sup>You discern my going out and my lying down;  
you are familiar with all my ways.
- <sup>4</sup>Before a word is on my tongue  
you, LORD, know it completely.
- <sup>5</sup>You hem me in behind and before,  
and you lay your hand upon me.
- <sup>6</sup>Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,  
too lofty for me to attain.
- <sup>7</sup>Where can I go from your Spirit?  
Where can I flee from your presence?
- <sup>8</sup>If I go up to the heavens, you are there;  
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.
- <sup>9</sup>If I rise on the wings of the dawn,  
if I settle on the far side of the sea,
- <sup>10</sup>even there your hand will guide me,  
your right hand will hold me fast.
- <sup>11</sup>If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me  
and the light become night around me,"
- <sup>12</sup>even the darkness will not be dark to you;  
the night will shine like the day,  
for darkness is as light to you.
- <sup>13</sup>For you created my inmost being;  
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
- <sup>14</sup>I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;  
your works are wonderful,  
I know that full well.
- <sup>15</sup>My frame was not hidden from you  
when I was made in the secret place,  
when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.

- <sup>16</sup>Your eyes saw my unformed body;  
all the days ordained for me were written in your book  
before one of them came to be.
- <sup>17</sup>How precious to me are your thoughts, God!  
How vast is the sum of them!
- <sup>18</sup>Were I to count them,  
they would outnumber the grains of sand—  
when I awake, I am still with you.
- <sup>19</sup>If only you, God, would slay the wicked!  
Away from me, you who are bloodthirsty!
- <sup>20</sup>They speak of you with evil intent;  
your adversaries misuse your name.
- <sup>21</sup>Do I not hate those who hate you, LORD,  
and abhor those who are in rebellion  
against you?
- <sup>22</sup>I have nothing but hatred for them;  
I count them my enemies.
- <sup>23</sup>Search me, God, and know my  
heart; test me and know my anxious  
thoughts.
- <sup>24</sup>See if there is any offensive way in me,  
and lead me in the way everlasting.

## Reflect

It isn't easy to be known, even by those closest to us. But Scripture tells us that every person is perfectly known to God. **Psalm 139** is a reminder that we can embrace this truth as we seek to know and love those around us.

Even David, who was called a man after God's own heart (**1 Samuel 13:14**), wrestled with God's complete knowledge of our thoughts, desires, and intentions. Scripture tells us that nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight (**Hebrews 4:13**). The shepherd-turned-king experienced this reality in his unsuccessful efforts to hide his sin with Bathsheba and his murder of Uriah. Yet **Psalm 139**, which is attributed to David, doesn't focus on the terror or condemnation of being fully known by a holy God. Instead, it connects God's knowledge to his deep, abiding love for us as our Creator. The language used to describe God calls to mind a gentle protector who surrounds us and holds us. He is not a cold observer of our lives. He cares about the struggles we face—and he has the power to deliver us from our troubles.

In addition to knowing us completely, God is also a constant presence in our lives. As **Psalm 139** acknowledges, there is nowhere we can go to hide from God, and there is no path we will walk without him. Even our most faithful friends can't endure each moment of suffering with us. But in our hardest times and darkest valleys, this psalm helps us remember that God is with us and understands our pain. He cares for us uniquely as the Creator who formed us and gave us life.

As we read yesterday, our identity as beloved children of God is found in Christ. But think about what that means! If our identity is in Christ, we are free from the fear that we must be perfect to earn God's love.

We can bring all our burdens to God, knowing that he is already aware of everything in our hearts. Not even our most harrowing secrets or deepest fears can separate us from him. This wonderful truth empowers us to join David at the end of this psalm in eagerly inviting God to search us, know us, and lead us forward. As we invite God to know us, we grow to better know him as our Good Shepherd (**John 10:14-15**). When we understand that God knows and loves us, we can trust him to guide us in his will and give us true peace.

Tomorrow, we'll learn how we can reflect God's love for us as we seek to know and be known by others. His faithfulness, love, and encouragement are all traits that we can seek to cultivate in our lives as we live out our identity in Christ.

## Consider

- ❖ Read **Psalm 139** again. Which aspects of God's knowledge of your heart and God's presence in your life are most encouraging to you today?
- ❖ How can the truth that you are fully known and fully loved by God shape your identity?
- ❖ How can **Psalm 139** and the reality that God knows you completely guide your prayer life? Consider how you can echo this psalm's invitation for God to search and know you in your prayers today. Pray and ask God to help you know him better through this time in his Word.

## Meditate

Spend a few moments reading and considering how this Scripture relates to the other truths you encountered today. What connections can you make?

“Whoever loves God is known by God.”

*1 Corinthians 8:3*

# Day 3: Knowing Others

## Begin

Quiet your heart and ask God to take all your worries and distractions, trusting him to teach and encourage you through his Word. Pray and ask him to open your eyes to the lessons he has for you today!

## Read: Galatians 6:1–10

<sup>1</sup>Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. <sup>2</sup>Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. <sup>3</sup>If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. <sup>4</sup>Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, <sup>5</sup>for each one should carry their own load. <sup>6</sup>Nevertheless, the one who receives instruction in the word should share all good things with their instructor. <sup>7</sup>Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. <sup>8</sup>Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. <sup>9</sup>Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. <sup>10</sup>Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

## Reflect

Our identity is rooted in Christ, and our faith is emboldened by knowing that God fully knows and loves us. But how do we take these lessons and apply them to our life with others?

In Galatians 6, the apostle Paul offers practical instruction on how to live in a community shaped by knowing and loving one another, as we have been known and loved by our Heavenly Father. Paul doesn't shy away from what this means—he starts with the topic of sin. When we see fellow believers struggling, we're not called to judge or condemn. Instead, our knowledge should drive us to seek restoration and extend grace. In the same way, we can depend on other believers to care for us and warn us when they notice us straying from God's ways. As we share our struggles and ask for prayer and support, we can encourage one another to remain firm in our identity in Christ.

As we seek to build each other up in faith, we can also bear one another's burdens. Paul rejects the idea that we're all responsible for shouldering our own problems. Instead, he reminds us that fulfilling the law of Christ means knowing and caring about what is weighing on each of our hearts. Whether we make a meal for a sick friend, organize a ministry outreach at church, pray with a friend struggling with discouragement, volunteer to help lead a Christian nonprofit, or visit an elderly church member who can't attend services, we're reflecting God's constant presence in our lives by caring for one another. In this way, we function together as the body of Christ and demonstrate the selfless love that God pours out on us.



You may have already experienced the difficult balance of living in a community called to know and be known by one another. Paul doesn't paint this as an easy calling. In fact, he reminds us that loving and knowing one another goes against our me-first natures. He cautions against the pride that can creep into our hearts when we think we're doing everything right. He warns us to avoid focusing on the things of the flesh, which can only yield destruction. But Paul also reminds us that when we follow God's instruction and model the love he shows to us, we will see fruit in his perfect timing. God, who knows our hearts and is always with us, will remain faithful.

Our identity in Christ means that everything we do for him has an eternal significance that we can hardly begin to imagine now. As you finish this brief study and take these lessons from God's Word with you, be encouraged by these reminders!

## Consider

- ❖ Consider the people God has placed in your life. How can you apply Paul's practical lessons in your relationships today? How is God inviting you to know and be known?
- ❖ When we are firmly rooted in our identity in Christ and assured of God's presence with us, we can live and love boldly. Pray and ask God to remind you of these truths in challenging moments.
- ❖ Next, choose a verse that was particularly encouraging or convicting from this study; write it out and place it somewhere visible so that you can revisit it throughout your day. Ask God to help you use this small piece of his Word to keep your identity in Christ at the forefront of your mind!

## Meditate

Spend a few moments reading and considering how this Scripture relates to the other truths you encountered today. What connections can you make?

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”

*John 13:35*

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