

Week 1



"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."

- 1 Peter 2:9

Distinct Identity

Who is someone you know that has a unique and attractive personality? What makes them that way? Where does this come from?

If you were asked to describe yourself without saying what you do, how you spend your time, or anything about your family, how would you respond?

Biblically defining identity

Investigate the following verses. What could these verses be saying about Biblical identity? (Use the space on the right to jot down observations and build your own definition)

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| 1. Genesis 1:27 | 4. Colossians 3:12 |
| 2. 1 Corinthians 12:27 | 5. Ephesians 2:10 |
| 3. 2 Corinthians 5:17 | 6. 1 John 3:1 |

Character Study

It's appropriate that we would begin with Jesus and Peter when discussing identity. Jesus was keenly aware of his sonship and belonging with God the Father, and Peter struggled on a moment-by-moment basis to truly trust his new nature in Christ. Peter includes this descriptive passage about our identity as a distinct group of people belonging to God in his first letter. Look first at Peter's description of us, then study how Jesus lived this out in a particularly powerful moment for

Peter. Pay close attention to how Peter describes God's people. Underline, highlight and circle what stands out to you. Use the space provided on the right to write any observations or questions that come to mind.

Peter

1 Peter 2:9-12

⁹But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. ¹¹ Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. ¹² Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

Observations & Questions

Living Distinctly

In 1 Peter 2:9-10, how does Peter describe God's people?

For what purpose(s) does Peter say we have been given this distinct identity (vs 9, 11, 12)?

What part of this description is hardest for you to see in the Body of Christ as a whole? What is hardest for you to see in yourself?

How do you imagine life would change if you fully embraced this definition of your identity?

Now, let's look at Jesus and the example he set for his disciples that last week of his life on earth. Make sure to mark up the text and write down everything you observe about how Jesus's identity impacted his actions.

Jesus

John 13:1-8

1 It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

2 The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. **3** Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; **4** so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. **5** After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

7 Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

8 "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

Observations & Questions

Living Distinctly

What did Jesus know to be true about himself and his circumstances (vs 1, 3)?

What did Jesus do with this knowledge? How did his identity impact his actions?

Why do you think Peter responds the way that he does? What part of his identity was he operating from?

Would Peter have responded differently if he had been fully convinced of the identity of the people of God that he wrote about later (1 Peter 2:9)?

If so, how?

Case Study

Now we will look at an example from modern culture where we see this dynamic of identity playing out. Notice where these characters are finding their sense of worth. Consider yourself in this situation, what identity pieces are at play?

Jason & Lorelai

Gilmore Girls: Season 4, Episode 19

In this episode of Gilmore Girls, Lorelai and her boyfriend Jason were discussing a major incident that had occurred in the family. Jason had just been forcibly pushed out of business with Lorelai's father in a shady deal. Jason tells Lorelai that he's going to sue her father. Lorelai reacts with a bewildered look and Jason says, "I have to, Lorelai."

Lorelai: "No you don't."

Jason: "I've gone over it. I've weighed every option...I can not sit back and do nothing while my career is going up in flames."

Lorelai: "Please don't do this."

Jason: "You know I wouldn't do this if I didn't have to."

Lorelai: "You don't have to."

Jason: "If I intend to continue working in my chosen profession then yeah, I have to."

Lorelai: "Don't do that. Don't be just some business guy, put this on another level, please!"

Jason: "I have no choice...you know how hard I work. My job is who I am. I can't lose everything."

After this, Lorelai says she cannot be with someone who is suing her family and she walks out.

Observations & Questions

How do you think the general public view this relational conflict? Do you think Jason's argument is legitimate to most viewers?

What is defining Jason's identity? What will it cost Jason to continue placing his identity where it is?

What could this situation have looked like if he had his identity firmly placed in Christ above everything else? What could have changed?

Application

Where are you most tempted to place your identity outside of Christ's life, death, and resurrection?

How has being a member of God's chosen people changed your life?

Considering Christ's solid foundation and Peter's change of heart, what about your identity in Christ are you curious to learn more about?

Memorize: 1 Peter 2:9

Commit to memorizing this verse for the rest of the week. Let it remind you of the solid and sure identity you've been given in God. Pray that truth over yourself and the believers in your life.