

# Who does God say I am?

*7-week study on our identity in God...then our purpose*

|                     |       |           |
|---------------------|-------|-----------|
| <b>Introduction</b> | ..... | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>Week 1</b>       | ..... | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>Week 2</b>       | ..... | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>Week 3</b>       | ..... | <b>12</b> |
| <b>Week 4</b>       | ..... | <b>15</b> |
| <b>Week 5</b>       | ..... | <b>19</b> |
| <b>Week 6</b>       | ..... | <b>23</b> |
| <b>Week 7</b>       | ..... | <b>26</b> |

## Who Does God Say You Are?

How we identify and recognize Jesus is part of our confession of faith that makes us members of His Body, His Church, His Bride for whom He will return. Those words are critical. Think that might be a little strong?

The initial study just completed but, more importantly, from Jesus' own words, a high value is placed upon what we say. **Matthew 12:35-37** records Jesus teaching about the treasure of your heart producing words that bear witness to either your goodness or evil. *"A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."* Straightforward.

Today, culture is a force of its own that exerts great pressure on each person to conform to ways of life, words of life, and how we believe in life. This culture has taken words and redefined them forcing the Christian life to run perpendicular to the popularity and accepted ways as defined by people, not God.

This is obviously relevant to our eternal judgment when we **will** stand before Christ Himself (**2 Corinthians 5:10**). The significance of our words and standing in Christ carry immense importance in this life, not just at the moment of judgment, that form the way we think, the actions we take, and define who we are.

One of the key truths of applying God's word is to confess it, or say the same thing that God said and the same thing that Jesus said. Speaking His truth - The Truth - is taking the Sword of the Spirit and using it as the offensive weapon He gave us as part of the Armor of God.

**Ephesians 6** doesn't offer God's Armor as an option. It's *the* solution. The engagement daily in our lives is to be more than defensive. We are supposed to do business and occupy until Jesus returns (**Luke 19:13**). We are to live and endure in a culture that very often demands that Christians "tolerate" all other beliefs while our faith in Christ Jesus is marginalized.

The only offensive weapon we possess is "*the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*" according to **Ephesians 6:17**. One of the very important ways we are to employ that offensive weapon begins with us. We are to say the same thing that God says, especially about our identity, our worth, and our purpose.

And stop there just a moment. Most are seeking earnestly to find their purpose in life. But have you *first* made sure you find your identity in God's Son, Jesus? Why would this be important? Take a guess. Make a few notes and let's return to answer this. Why do you think it's first important to know Who Jesus says your are according to God and His word before you find and know your purpose? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you write anything down? If not, flip the page back over. Write down why it's important to know who you are in Christ Jesus before truly understanding your purpose and then living in it.

Seriously.

Now, we can resume. That was critically important. Not because your purpose is **not** important, but we often become the things we *do*, the roles we play, the titles on our badges and business cards, and overlook our identity. In God's kingdom, we are *not* what we do.

Really? You better hope not! If we are what we do, then we carry the burden of being sinners. And yes! The blood of Jesus covers us, making us redeemed saints, praise God! But as those who take on the identity of what we do, we miss the fellowship of living in pursuit of the mind of Christ, the heart of Christ, the love of Jesus Christ brought to life, the joy of Jesus, the peace of Jesus, the patience of Jesus, and on and on.

This analogy still works, despite its frequent use. If you stand in your garage, make noises that sound like a revving engine, and run down the road in gum sole shoes, are you a car? No. So what makes us believe that imitating Jesus with no inward change makes us any different?

Do you believe that there are good people who do good things, maybe even religious things, that don't know Jesus as Savior and are on their way to hell? Sadly, there are!

Our identity in Christ Jesus is our very life. Literally. We can change someone's behavior, but for the change to become transformation, Jesus has to possess our identity.

When we are *in Christ*, as Paul wrote about all throughout his letters in the New Testament, we are buried in His death, raised in His life, and live in His power. It's critical! It's the purpose of this study.

*Then*, once we more fully understand who God says we are, then we do move to learn our purpose. Once we know both who God says we are, find our identity in Him, then, operating in the love of Jesus Christ as He modeled, we love, we act, we serve, we do. We find our purpose and are fulfilled. Who doesn't want to be fulfilled?!

Never be told otherwise: Every single created person has a purpose. God has placed each of us in a place certain, in a time, certain, for a purpose. He also equips us to accomplish that purpose. All of this is true as His word tells us all of these things.

Yet culture and the enemy of Jesus Christ is determined to make us believe the exact opposite, while also working to redefine our identity *outside* of God, His word, and His love.

Let's answer the question that helps equip us to counter the lies of satan and the deception of culture. "***Who does God say that I am?***"

Jesus tells us in His own words that we are:

- Created, He formed us, we are His possession.
- We are loved – made in His identity and His possession.
- We belong – part of His family, loved as a son, gifted an eternal inheritance.
- We are needed – God’s plan happens as God works through His people with purpose.
- We are entrusted – to serve as a bondservant and a steward.
- We are influencers – as salt and light our purpose is to glorify King Jesus with impact.
- We are sent – if we love like Jesus, He sends us to do the Father’s will & bring His kingdom.

Begin each session in prayer asking the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of God with us now, to give you eyes to see divine truth, ears of your heart to be fashioned into the beautiful Image He created to reflect God in fullness, and understanding to apply what is revealed to live a flourishing life as He purposed.

## 1 – God says I am His Possession.

**Scripture: Genesis 1:27; Isaiah 43:1; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Deuteronomy 7:6-9**

Have you ever had anyone tell you how much you favor a parent or relative? Many, if not most have. The obvious reason to have the resemblance of parents is that their very DNA, or genetic code, determines our appearances, our sizes, and many things about our health and habits.

Just as our makeup as an offspring is determined by our parents, the same applies when we consider the Maker and Creator of all things – God, the Trinity. We are created in His Image.

When we read **Genesis 1:26-27**, we may ponder a minute as to the physical features of God to wonder what He looks like. But do we really consider what this means, really means to us in practical life today?

- Do we see that our very essence of humanity is also created in mind, body, and spirit, just as the Trinity fashioned man?
- Do we acknowledge the characteristics of God that He placed within us, like the capacity to love, like Him? What are some of the many others?
- Do we understand that as created beings that are His Imagebearers, who not only carry His joyful and kind countenance, but also have the capacity to be more like Him?
- Do we see and enjoy the fact that His identity given to man and woman was not given to any other living creatures, not even the angels?
- Do you understand that God owns all of creation, but those who accept His love and take His name are unique above all?

**Isaiah 43:1** spells this out in the physical and spiritual sense. Yes, God created us as unique humans above the animals. He also called us out to be His unique people. Those who accept His predetermined way to His presence are His people, His possession.

*But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob, And he who formed you, O Israel:  
“Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name, **You are Mine.**”*

God the Creator created us in His 3-part Image. He gave us the capacity to love, speak and commune in fellowship and His love. He also gave us the capacity to accept, return, and give His love, making us His people, *a chosen generation and a royal priesthood.*

God calls us by a unique name and also used the personal possessive pronoun, Mine, to designate His ownership as a proud Creator and God.

As God’s perfect redemptive plan has unfolded across the millennia, those who have accepted the invitation of the Holy Spirit to welcome the love of God in a personal relationship are more than just some keepsake. Turn to **1 Corinthians 6:16-20.**

Paul wrote to the Christians at Corinth to honor and glorify God in body and spirit, acknowledging that the conduct of those following Jesus must be different from sinners and the religious, both. While Jesus taught that the defilement of one's person happened from within through our minds, thoughts, and words, rather than foods, rituals of the Old Covenant, and practices to appease false gods, not everything that is legal is good for us.

Further, in **verses 16-17**, one *does* defile him or herself when joined in sexual immorality by being joined in the flesh to another who is not your marriage partner. But one also becomes one with the Lord when united in "*one spirit with Him.*"

So, as Paul continued in **verses 18-19**, we are to flee sexual immorality while remembering that our bodies are the temples of God. This fact from **verse 19** should cause us to think a great deal about what we permit in through our eyes to our minds and hearts. We must take care and caution that the words and content that we listen to may be the very words of the devil spoken by him, his demons, or those who are careless and sin by repeating him. Read that again.

Let's take a few moments to consider those last points. The reason for the previous study, "*Who Do You Say I Am?*" as asked by Jesus of His disciples and us, was to make certain the Jesus we have declared as Savior is the Jesus of the Bible and not the one wrongly defined by culture, our conveniences that created our own definitions for preference and to pacify our own ways, and by the religious...but not the Bible.

As you recalled, we studied that if we don't say the same thing about Jesus as the Bible, our confession of faith is *NOT* saying the same thing that God says through His word, or *homologeō* in the Greek. Instead, we're repeating a lie of satan.

Likewise, when we say something different about sin that the Bible says or if we repeat things that may even be true, but we say them to harm another person, rather than to show love, which covers a multitude of sins, we are repeating the same thing that the devil says and repeats. We become vessels of satan instead of Imagebearers of God. Which are you?

Yes. It is serious. We are to be one in spirit with God. The blood of Jesus Christ promised the Holy Spirit would never leave or forsake His believers. Instead, we would be sealed at the moment of our confession, or saying the same thing about Jesus, our need for Him as Savior, and our sin as the Bible. In addition to being sealed by the Holy Spirit revealing that God has marked us as His, the Holy Spirit can come upon us and operate through us in powerful ways when we have died to self and taken up our cross to follow Jesus.

Consider what exactly that means. Died to self. It means you have denied your own identity and declared yourself dead. When we take up our cross, we become take on the public identity as walking to carry the same burdens that Jesus carried and put to death in the flesh to be resurrected with Christ Jesus with the same power of the Holy Spirit.

We become one with God through becoming like Jesus and allowing the Holy Spirit to unite with us and govern us.

Read **1 Corinthians 6:20**. *“For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and your spirit, which are God’s.”*

As we conclude the first week, consider how special you are to God. The Hebrews were told this by God Himself through His words to Moses. Specifically, Moses reminded the Hebrews that their disobedience, grumbling, and lack of preparedness to obey and be strong and courageous in the LORD turned an 11-day journey into a 40-year trek wandering in the wilderness.

Still, Moses repeated the words of Yahweh to His people in **Deuteronomy 7:6-9**, *“For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.”*

As believers in Jesus Christ in the Twenty First Century, who have accepted the love of God through His Son, Jesus, and walk in His love and obedience, we are able to read these words as the chosen people of the New Covenant, the Church, the Body of Jesus Christ, Who is the Head.

We are chosen, because God extended His love to us on His terms, to establish His kingdom in this earth, now, through love and being Christ in our days. We are seen as holy just as the homes of the Hebrew people had the blood of the lamb on their doorposts and lintels. We are a special, or peculiar treasure in our day. We are to say as such, praise God for such a truth, and live and love in this manner.

But keep reading in **verses 7-9**; that’s just **verse 6!** *“The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples, but **because the LORD loves you**, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Therefore, know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments...”*

The LORD loves us. We are His possession, His people. How can we know this? God has sworn to Himself and based on His holiness, not on any aspect of our works and condition. He made a binding oath with His people. If we accept His love, return it, walk in it, and obey Him, we are His. Period.

Are you God’s prized possession? Have you decided to accept God’s love, His *agapeo*, unconditional, sacrificial, unmerited love that we are to model to others?

Make this declaration: *God loves me. God created me in **His** Image to share and live in **His** love. I am **His** Imagebearer. I am **His** vessel filled with as much of **His** love and Spirit as I make room for! **I am His**. Abba, I belong to **You**.*

## **2 – God says I am loved.**

**Scripture: John 3:16; 1 John 4:19; Romans 5:8; Romans 8:38-39**

It may be the most known Bible verse, especially among children. **John 3:16** declares in the red letters quoting Jesus in the First Person, “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*”

Since the New Testament was written in Greek, the words used have great meaning.

God so *agapaō*, or had the attitude of love toward humanity as He did His Son – a beloved, unconditional love. God’s love was for the entire world, not just a singular people group. His love extended to the organized world as He made it of all people.

**First John 4:19** reminds us again that God *first* loved us, permitting our ability to return our love to Him. This love is so great and the provision of His only Son as the required sacrifice for the debt’s payment of our sins that we are promised everlasting life, or life without end.

While we consider love in our minds and the seat of our emotions, we experience it with greatest awareness in this life in our bodies as feelings and thoughts toward our husbands, wives, significant other as we date, family members, and friendships.

This love varies from *agape* love that is sacrificial, to *phileo* that is as a brother or dear friend, to *eros* that is expressed intimately between a man and woman in marriage, *storge*, the motherly love of a bird nesting and covering her young, to the *philatia* love of self that is narcissistic and pathological.

But what about our spirits? Remember, we are God’s possessions. We are His. He created us in His Image and Identity. We, just like God, have three separate parts.

**We are a spirit that has a mind, a will, and emotions, that lives in a body.** The love we experience from God’s Holy Spirit relates to us through our spirits, our eternal existence that will never die. This is how we receive, accept, and live in Christ; how we live in the Identity of God in His Trinity and in our identity He has given each of His children.

We must seek God’s presence, Who in this Church Age of Grace, is the Holy Spirit. Our spirits united in love with the Spirit of the Living God is the divine connection that permits us to experience God’s love and to have it within us to share.

Understand a hard fact: You cannot give away that which you do not possess.

Why do the super religions often seem unloving? They may not have the love of God in their spirits to live, share, and give. Why do the wicked certainly have a coldness, even a darkness? Simply because they are vessels filled with something other than the love of Jesus Christ through the presence of the Holy Spirit.

There is nothing, zero, zilch we can do to earn the love of God. Look at **Romans 5:6-10**. Our faith in Jesus which gives us access to the grace that makes us just in the eyes of God. But it was and still is, and will forevermore be the love of God that precedes any love we may have for Him.

God initiates salvation. God, just as the Holy Spirit implanted Divine Seed in Mary to conceive Jesus, implants His Seed, His word in us by His Spirit and is brought to life as a new birth, a new life in Christ Jesus.

**Romans 5:6** first acknowledges the weakness of flesh, mind, and even spirit of humanity. But at the right time, the opportune and appointed time, Jesus Christ died for the ungodly, and as the New Living Translation (NLT) states it, “*when we were utterly helpless*” Jesus “*died for us sinners.*”

That is so hard for some to say out loud. Many are so good. Many have grown up in church or a God-respecting culture. But to be saved, one must die to self – confess sins and the helpless state of being a sinner – and receive the blood of Jesus applied to our lives as the atoning covering. That begins the process for our minds to exert the will over our flesh to live for Christ. It also empowers us to evict all from our lives that would otherwise displace the Residence of God’s beautiful presence in our current lives – we make room for the Holy Spirit.

Keep reading **verses 7-8**. Paul notes that the sacrifice of one’s life is infrequent, even for a righteous or good person. “*But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*” Dear friends, see it!

God’s love is by His choice. It’s not by chance or random. He chose to send Jesus to die for us, for Jesus’ blood to cover our sins, and to give us eternal access to God. But consider how God sees us absent this covering, exposed carrying our sins.

Read **Romans 5:9-10**. Despite our weak, helpless state of sin, God proved His undeniable, unmatched, and undeserved love that comes without any effort on our behalves that could earn it. He sent Jesus to die, Whose blood justified us, or made us just as if we had never sinned.

And what did Jesus’ blood save us from? **Verse 9** reveals we are “*saved from wrath through Him.*” Wrath. The Greek word describing wrath is *orgē*. This represents the strongest of all passions, a violent anger. God’s violent anger is set against those who refuse His Gift of Love, Jesus.

And **verse 10** paints a beautiful picture of reconciliation. The NLT paints the accurate word picture: “*For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of His Son while we were still His enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of His Son.*” The Greek for enemies is no simple acknowledgement that we stood in opposition. Oh, no! We were seen as odious, hated, hostile toward God as we stood in our sin.

Reconciliation by the blood of Jesus gave us God's love, His eternal access as those He loves not hates. We were literally changed by the blood of Jesus, and our debt was exchanged for His life.

PRAISE GOD! We are loved!

This love, first shown by God, gives us life and permits us to avert and avoid life condemned in spiritual bondage and slavery. If you have ever had a near miss in a car accident, or a sudden change of circumstance that abruptly positioned you in a more favorable state, you understand this beautiful image of God's eternal love, His grace given, and His mercy taking away the debt we owed.

Serious question: If we can't do something to earn the love of God, can we do something to lose it?

Turn to **Romans 8:38-39**. Well, turn to **Romans 8:31-39** to see the full context and walk in love!

Paul presented to the Church at Rome - no, not just Catholics who organized their religion later, all the believers in Jesus Christ Rome - the wondrous truth that God's love is everlasting; it has no end. And the declarations of truth the murdering Pharisee-turned-disciple and author of half the New Testament were empowering then, and must be spoken and lived to empower each believer today!

*"What then shall we say to these things?"* Paul opens this argument in **Romans 8:31** for our secure love and eternity in Christ with the first of five questions. He then posits, *"If God is for us, who can be against us?"* While life maybe hard, difficult, and even come with enemies, when we're in Christ, He is for us, regardless. Hard stop. Period.

Paul then recalled in **verse 32** that God didn't even spare His own Son, but *"delivered Him up for us all."* Then he asked, *"How shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"* This doesn't convey the existence of God as some divine vending machine; instead, we are guaranteed the eternal inheritance borne out of love from God.

In **verses 33-34**, Paul rhetorically asked, *"Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us."* Love has the risen Christ standing at God the Father's right hand interceding, pointing to the blood-encrusted Mercy Seat of heaven, and declares, *"Paid in full."* Jesus does this despite the efforts of the devil, demons and unclean spirits, and even our own mouths which repeat lies about who were are and what God has said.

But the definitive answer made known through Paul's continued questioning is found in **Romans 8:35-39**: *"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"* After Paul lists all sorts of rational, earthly forces, sin, and conflicts that might present themselves a powers that would sever our relationship with God, he uses one of the most powerful terms in language for Bible-believing Christians, "Yet!"

“*Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.*” No, not through out strength. Nope, not from speaking in tongues and taking a holy lap around the sanctuary. Not from attending every trendy Christian conference. We are made “*more than conquerors through Him who loved us*” despite any force, effort, or failure.

Paul’s conclusion should be our declarations in the abundant Gift of God’s love that is secure in His Covenant. “*For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*” Now, you can take a holy lap around your house!

Now, consider one question that we must all answer honestly considering these nine powerful truths from God’s word: When I do not feel loved, who has told me that? What has caused my mind to entertain such a thought? What has my spirit been exposed to, considered, listened to, and even turned into my own speech from my flesh, my own mouth? Or maybe that should be who has caused that hurtful chain of events?

Answer these questions privately.

1. Am I more often saying what God says about me, about what God says about life, truth, and love, or what the world says? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Do I put into my mind, God’s word, music that honors and praises Him and lifts me to a point of fellowship? Or do you give little thought to what music you hear or sing? \_\_\_\_\_

3. When I pray, is it after all other efforts in my own strength have failed? Have you decided to praise God first in prayer, then seek His presence and wisdom for your needs and ways? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Do you pray, using God’s word to thank Him in advance that His word will accomplish that which He purposes and that you choose to follow Him, listen to Him, and seek His wisdom and ways, not your own? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Do you understand that prayer is permitted between you and the Most High God of all of creation and eternity because He loves you and wants desperately to spend time with you? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Will you commit today to a daily time of prayer – listening and speaking with God – and reading God’s word from the posture that you are loved dearly by the Covenant God Jehovah who wants the very best for you and to see Himself and His love in and through you? \_\_\_\_\_

### **3 – God says I belong.**

**Scripture: Romans 8:15; Galatians 3:26-Galatians 4:7; Hebrews 2:11**

Every person has a biological female and male parent. Some of you may have essentially biological DNA donors who were absent from your life, or worse, present but hurtful. Others have been blessed to have mothers and fathers in their lives to serve as God’s representatives or surrogates to raise you, shepherd you, and to love you.

Some, however, did have biological DNA donors, but were “put up for adoption” for whatever reason. Adoption is a civil and legally established relationship that originated more as a transaction of an arrangement for preserving family lines and wealth; for transferring inheritances and property rights, securing political and civil coalitions and alliances, along with simply arranging care in the late years of life.

Roman adoption inspired the writings of Paul as he explained the status of a born-again believer in Jesus Christ. We are adopted by our Heavenly Father. But the Roman adoption laws were different than what we practice as today’s adoption methods in the US.

When God the Father sees the blood of Jesus Christ, He sees a family member, purchased through an exchanged identity that was done in love and as part of adoption.

#### ***Roman Adoption – More than a Legal Arrangement***

In the First Century as Paul penned the book of Romans, paterfamilias, or the Roman fathers had complete legal authority over his household. As this authority, his actions were binding, especially in the act of adoption.

There were two types of adoption: *adoptio* or *adrogatio*.

*Adoptio* transferred legal custody, rights, and responsibilities of one son from one family to another family. This was a legal proceeding that required witnesses.

*Adrogatio* was the adoption of an independent adult male, very often in the case of a man with no heir of his own but desiring to preserve his name and his wealth or property. The independent, adult man would transfer his rights to the authority of his adopting father.

In both cases of adoption, the individual adopted is legally bound with their identity erased. Their debts are erased. They become heirs and family of the adopting father who assumes all their debts, all their responsibilities, and gives the newly adopted son his name, his inheritance, and access to his property and wealth, along with authority. Even if the adopting father had biological children, the adopted son had at least equal inheritance rights and standing as the biological children.

Finally, the adoption was permanent. It was irreversible. It solemnized the importance and tremendous meaning of Roman adoption beyond the new name, new identity, and new rights of property and authority.

Now, consider your adoption by God the Father in Christ Jesus. He gave you a new name. **Isaiah 43:1** records Yahweh's words, "*Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine.*" God the Father purchased our debt. He has called us by our name and given us identity. As believers redeemed in Christ Jesus, we are His.

Now read what the New Covenant or New Testament says about our adoption in **Romans 8:12-17**. Paul acknowledges we are debtor, but not to flesh. Connecting in the love of the Holy Spirit with our spirits, we have put to death the deeds of our flesh (**verse 13**) and are, instead, led by the Spirit of God. This identifies us as "*sons of God*" in **verse 14**.

**Romans 8:15** explains that we are not given a spirit of bondage or slavery to sin, flesh, and fear. Quite the opposite, we are given the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "*Abba, Father,*" the familial salutation of a Hebrew child to the Daddy.

The Greek term for adoption is *huiiothesia*. The word literally describes the placing of a son. A deliberate act, one we know is a result of divine love, and one that exchanges our entire identities- permanently. Roman adoption was one of the most transformational legal acts of the day. In Christ, we are likewise transformed beyond our capacity to explain, *if* we yield.

- We are chosen.
- We have secure placement and place.
- We have been elevated and honored through this selection and choice by God.
- We belong and have rights and responsibilities.
- We carry the legacy of God's Name in Christ to share with generations

We belong as a family member. We also belong as a child of God who is an heir to an inheritance of the Creator Who created and owns all things.

### ***God sees us as sons...not just children***

While we speak of being a child of God, He sees us as sons. Look at **Galatians 3:26-4:7**. Paul asserts and instructs that in the eyes of God we are neither Jew nor Greek – we're citizens of God's Kingdom. We are neither slave nor free – our state of earthly existence in society has no bearing on God's placement of us. We are neither male nor female – we are seen and adopted as sons for the purpose of rights, responsibilities, and authority. And we are all one...one race, one people, one in Christ Jesus.

Therefore, **Galatians 4:4-7** records that God sent His Son to redeem us, or purchase us from the debts we owed in our sin and flesh, and to receive His adoption as sons. This adoption is

confirmed as our spirits are brought alive in the Holy Spirit and cry with the heart of a child, “*Abba, Father!*”

“*Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.*”

YES! AMEN! HALLELUJAH!

Each and every Bible-believing, blood bought Christ follower is a son, a member of God the Father’s family through His act of adoption that gives us the inheritance of sons!

### ***Jesus sees us as brothers***

Not only do we belong to the Heavenly Father as His sons who have His inheritance, but we are brethren of Jesus, the Son of God.

**Hebrews 2:10-15** clarifies this role as brethren of Jesus.

Jesus is identified as the captain of our salvation (**verse 10**). He is unique and singularly the One who sanctifies, or set apart, all with His blood. “*He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying: ‘I will declare Your name to My brethren...’*” We are, as **verse 14** explains, “*children who have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same...*”

Jesus was born from a fleshly Mother, Mary, whose lineage came from the Tribe of Judah, fulfilling God’s word, but also establishing Jesus as man. He was literally the Word made flesh.

Now, consider a few things based on these truths from God’s word. You can speak these as declarations.

1. God says I belong to Him.
2. God says I belong to His family.
3. God says I am a child of God, specifically, I am a son.
4. God says I have His eternal inheritance given in love out of His immeasurable riches.

There are many more declarations of truth that can be stated, but even with these four, answer the next question honestly.

If these things are true, why do we struggle with our self-worth, our standing, and our authority in Christ? Why do we allow the devil’s whispers to speak more loudly in our minds, hearts, and defeat our flesh than these powerful facts and truths of God?

How do you plan to apply this study? \_\_\_\_\_

Choose to listen, say, and live the truth of God. Accept His Identity given to you in His great love!

#### **4 – God says I am His servant, His steward, and His bondservant.**

**Scripture: Matthew 25:14-30; 1 Peter 4:10, Romans 12:1-2**

This topic is dear and important to Jesus. The topic that gained most attention by Jesus in His parables was the Kingdom of God. The second most often taught parable and lesson, totaling 20 times in the Gospels captured by the authors of these first four books of the New Testament, was about being a servant and entrusted to be a steward.

For those who read the Bible, too often we read the stories as lessons based on events of the past that sound virtuous and have a moral appeal to know that Jesus spoke of rewards for people who were God's faithful. Yet we fail miserably at doing as Jesus purposed in applying His word as a double-edged sword to our lives to open us, expose our motives, allow the Holy Spirit to take the words from the page and insert our names in the various roles and examine our hearts as if we were present in these stories told to reveal and instruct.

***God says I am His servant and His steward.***

Turn to **Matthew 25:14-30**. The Parable of the Talents or of the Three Servants is often a message tied to financial giving in relation to God's entrusting of monetary resources in our control and for our use. It can be used, also, to encourage church members to engage in a greater level of investment in church life and leadership, speaking of our lives as that which we are stewarding.

But the verses carry deeper meanings, in addition to those. These words were recorded right after Jesus spoke of being watchful, alert, and prepared while awaiting the return of the Bridegroom to His wedding party in the parable of the wise versus foolish bridesmaids.

Jesus was teaching about being a faithful steward in many respects of knowing the nature of the Master and serving to please Him upon His return. He spoke to being not just faithful with our attentiveness and preparedness, but our idleness or fruitfulness for His kingdom.

**Verse 14** puts the frame around the story to be about the kingdom of heaven on this earth but in regard to a Master entrusting His own servants with responsibilities in His absence and until His return.

**Verse 15** reveals that the Master, while one of these servants claimed later he believed him to be a "*hard man*," reaping and gathering at the expense of others work not His own, was responsible in assigning responsibilities that came with accountabilities.

This is where many choose to tune out and refuse to put themselves in these roles. Why? It's not comfortable knowing that Jesus, or the Master, is able to distinguish between those who have the capacity to be trusted with a lot or a little. But it's written in red that the Master gave "*to each according to his own ability.*"

Do you want more from God? Can He trust you with more? How have you stewarded what He has *already given* you? We might want to recall an oft repeated and often true idiom, “Past performance is often a reflection of future performance.” That is, of course, a negative statement when applied to individuals who reject Christ and operate in their own strength, reasoning, and preferences. It’s a very positive statement when applied to a Spirit-filled believer who surrenders to and makes room for the Holy Spirit with the Fruit to prove it.

Keep reading. **Verses 16-18** give details as to the varying number of talents, which equated to about \$1,000 each. The first two servants were given five and two talents, respectively, and each doubled their return. The third proved the Master correct in His initial distribution in having only the original talent after hiding it for safe keeping in the ground.

**Verse 19** records the Master’s return to “*settle accounts with them.*” These words by Jesus should give us clear understanding that the Master will return. The Master will settle accounts of us with that which He has entrusted to us to steward for Him. And this settling of accounts determines a great deal in this life and in our eternity. Let’s keep letting the Holy Spirit reveal these truths in God’s word.

**Verses 20-23** record Jesus explaining the Master’s pleasure and reward for expected stewardship from His servants. Let’s pause here to look at a couple of terms. In the Greek, servant means *doulos* or one bound in service to another. Depending on other identifiers or adjectives used, it could mean the lowest title of servitude as a slave, or it could be used, as the Master did in these verses as one who is good and faithful. But notice the Master gave a promotion.

In **verses 21 and 23**, each of these servants heard the Master declare in response to their faithful and good work in His absence, “*Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.*” He promoted them from servants to stewards.

The Greek word *kathistēmi* describes appointing one over a thing, to put one in charge, as if to administer an office. The Master made them ruler over many things in the same Old Testament sense that Joseph was set in a place of authority by Potiphar and by the Pharaoh, King of Egypt. Jesus as the Master welcomed the good and faithful ones who were fruitful into His presence because they knew Him, His nature, His ways, His expectations, and the Law of the Harvest in putting seed to work.

In contrast, **verses 24-28** verify the Master’s lack of trust in this servant. The Master rebukes the servant and cast Him out of His presence for not knowing Him, His ways, His expectations, and taking His assignment seriously. The “*wicked and lazy servant*” was deemed unprofitable or useless and good for nothing in **verse 29**. Even that one talent which he still had preserved was taken from him and given to the one who had the greatest returns on his work.

Jesus modeled service so very many times. By the time this parable was told, He had settled disputes about who would be first in the kingdom of heaven; He had declared that those who

humbled themselves would be exalted. Jesus was approaching the time of the establishment of the Lord's Supper where He washed His disciples feet.

If you are not serving others like Jesus, be ready to answer in the settling of *your accounts*. But the promotion to ruler with authority came after these two fruitful servants proved their capacity as stewards and employing stewardship.

Read that again...both sentences.

Father God and Christ Jesus forgive us! We don't take seriously Your words, Your ways, and Your Example. Holy Spirit increase our faith and opportunities to grow in You and in our standing in Your Kingdom.

Finally, the settling of accounts permits our promotion *in this life* with greater opportunities and more capacity for God to entrust us with His blessings and purpose. But it also rewards us for the life to come in the presence of God.

We sing of casting crowns at the feet of Jesus. Those crowns come from our earthly works in Christ Jesus' love that are rewarded in heaven.

**Revelation 7:15** speaks of those whose robes were washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb busy at work to "*serve Him day and night in His temple.*" The joyous opportunity to serve Christ the Risen Lamb will be occur in God's coming kingdom. But His kingdom is to be experienced in our here and now through the work we do in His great name.

Decide to serve. Decide to serve as a good and faithful servant expecting the Master to elevate you in your stewardship to ruler.

**1 Peter 4:10** authenticates this thinking of a steward being a ruler. The Greek word used here is *oikonomos*, or one who manages and administers, one who rules a house, one entrusted to oversee, is a superior servant given greater duties. Peter tells us, as those given good gifts and graces by God through Jesus Christ to "*minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*"

Are you?

### ***So what exactly is a bondservant?***

Both Paul and James, the brother of Jesus who made his confession of faith after Jesus died, rose, and ascended, declared themselves "*a bondservant of Jesus Christ*" or "*a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,*" respectfully.

Both men being Jewish by birth, raising, and faith tradition, we look back to Exodus to see how a bondservant was defined and worked. Jews were commanded to observe the laws of Sabbath. There was a Sabbath day – the 7<sup>th</sup>. There were Sabbath years – the 7<sup>th</sup> year. And there was a Sabbath of the Sabbath years – Jubilee.

In **Exodus 21**, the laws of God were given regarding the use of servants by Hebrews, which was often done to pay down debt or settling accounts. Servants were to be set free the 7<sup>th</sup> or Sabbath year, as commanded in **Exodus 21:2**. But in **verses 5 and 6**, the LORD said, “*But if the servant plainly says, ‘I love my master, my wife, and my children: I will not go out free,’ then his master shall bring him to the door, or to the doorpost, and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him forever.*”

The contrast is that a servant was held in a state of servitude to work off debt or for wages for six years. If that servant was treated well, made as if part of the family, and chose not to depart from the employ of the master, then he would *voluntarily become a bondservant*, marked by the master or owner.

When we *choose to remain* as the possession of our Master Who paid our debts and Who loves us beyond any imagination, we *voluntarily submit* to His service for life.

What does that look like in our current culture and faith walks? We surrender; we yield as a possession to God our Creator and Jesus as King. We willingly serve the Living Triune God with our lives in our homes, in our families, in our communities, in our workplaces, and, yes, in His Body as a reliable, trustworthy steward of the gifts God has given us.

Paul paints this picture in **Romans 12:1-2**. “*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.*” In this **first verse**, Paul takes the picture of a sacrificial animal being fixed to the four horns of the altar to be sacrificed as the payment of sin as a visual. We are to willingly lay down our lives daily as our reasonable act of service in love by dying to self, serving Jesus in humility and gratitude, and see verse two materialize.

“*And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*” We all want to know God’s will, which is good and pleasing and perfect. The way that happens begins with our personal, voluntary surrender.

The Greek word for sacrifice in **verse 1** is *thysia*, or that which has been slaughtered or killed. If you have not died to self, you have not surrendered.

These words, as do all of God’s words, have tremendous meaning. Have I positioned myself to serve God? Can He trust me? What has God placed in my care? Do I serve Him from a sense of obligation, fear, or out of devoted love?

As you read through those questions, answer them. God knows the answers. We must align our lives with His will after our surrender. The power and beauty of serving are awaiting you.

## **5 – God says I am needed and created with and for a purpose.**

**Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:18; Ephesians 2:10; Romans 12:3-8**

Have you ever heard the pretty clever rebuttal called the Watchmaker theory that poses a challenge to theories that life developed through random mutation and natural selection or the Darwinian Theory of Evolution?

In its simplest form, it explains that if one were walking down the street and happened upon a timepiece lying on the ground, you could not assume that it had assembled itself over time through some random activities and external forces that didn't involve a designer and a creator.

Genesis is clear about how God in His Trinity formed man in His Image. But the Bible is also clear on how the Church, or Body of Jesus Christ is deliberately fashioned and specifically set.

### ***Placed on purpose with purpose.***

Look at **1 Corinthians 12:18**. *Tithēmi* is the Greek term to describe one setting something in place for a use. Jesus used it in the sense of an appointment made of His disciples as ordained, appointed. Here, Paul explained that God has put in place for an appointed use the members, or separate limbs, units, and extensions to operate in unity through the One Spirit (**1 Corinthians 12:12-14**) with Jesus Christ as the Head.

But let's finish **verse 18**. "*But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.*" Each member of the Body of Christ, or each believer exercising and ministering in his or her calling using the gifts God has given according to the measure of your faith as referenced in **Romans 12:3**. This measure of faith corresponds to the calling and role(s) assigned to each of us as members of His Body.

So, you have been given a measure of faith to operate in your gifting and accept God's equipping beyond that gifting for His assigned role and purpose. Each believer has been created uniquely and given a purpose that pleases God. We are set in place, assigned roles and opportunities. All of this pleases God and is done according to His pleasure, His delight, for His kingdom and our good, our best.

### ***Good works, not good looks or good words.***

While we have been put in a God-selected and ordained place with a God-given purpose that pleases Him and is meant for our best, there's more! Look at **Ephesians 2:10** where Paul gives us an idea of the ultimate goal in our unique creation to serve a unique purpose in unity as a living, serving, and functioning member of Christ's Body.

"*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*" The Greek word for workmanship is *poiēma*. If that word looks familiar, it should. It's describing God as the author and His creations as a poem. The Greek word here means "poem, that which is made as a work of the Creator."

Just as Jesus was the word made flesh, so are we able to be when we die to self, permit the Holy Spirit to connect in love with ours and govern our spirit. We then are operating in God's word in our flesh governed by the Holy Spirit – His workmanship – in its best function and fullest.

No. We will never be Jesus. But we are His Imagebearers, as we studied earlier. We can also be the vessels that carry the power of the Holy Spirit after we are yielded to God and not of our own flesh or some manmade construct of religion, tradition, or superstition. Then we are not just created, not just purposefully placed, but also purposefully living...just as Jesus did.

Look at **Romans 12:3-8**. Often, we speak of **verses 1 and 2** that instruct us to be living sacrifices to God, just as Jesus was, in our reasonable act of service to die to self, and be dead in self but transformed in our minds, hearts, and flesh by the Holy Spirit's power in the perfect, complete will of God.

But **verses 3-5** address the purpose of this workmanship created by God. **Verse three** notes that each believer in Christ Jesus is dealt, or imparted to a divided portion that is different, a measure of faith. We are given a predetermined, measured off portion of faith to be about the will of God the Father.

**Verses 4-5** continue to remind us, just as the members of the Church at Rome were reminded, that we as unique members are all different. We are purposed to work together in unity, but we will operate as members collaborating and operating together in one body, or the One Body of Jesus Christ with a different measure or portion of faith that is sufficient to be successful in glorifying God to bring His kingdom come.

Don't stop. Read **verses 6-8**. Paul revisits the "*gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us.*" He acknowledges these varying gifts again and the various graces that are given to activate these gifts for God's glory and use to bring His kingdom to this world. Repetition in the Hebrew world stressed importance and was used to convey intensity. The Greek used the same literary device in language. God's highlighter was at work when something was repeated.

Why would Paul repeat the fact that we have different gifts, as given through varying graces given by God?

That question brings several opportunities to address very important truths around our roles, our gifts, and God's plan and purpose.

First, **our roles are different**. There are various needs within a church and a community, just as there are various needs within a family. Family is relevant because **God created family as the primary and first institution**. His Church is the Body of Christ that is in place in this age of the Church and Age of Grace to bring His kingdom into this world. But just as there are various roles in a family to meet needs, so are there various roles in a church.

We have varying gifts. And God gives us the graces that uniquely equip us in that gifting to answer His call to love Him, to love others as ourselves, and to fulfill Jesus' Great Commission to *"Go...make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them...teaching them..."*

Finally, God's plan and purpose for our roles and gifts must be our own; we must **align our minds** to have the mind of Christ. We must, then **have a decided heart** to mobilize and do God's work. As Paul wrote **Romans 12:6**, *"...let us use them...let us use it in our ministering..."*

The very calling that God has on your life as an individual will be equipped with the grace to employ your gifts to accomplish His plan and purpose, for His glory, but also your good.

But we must **first be obedient**. How many times do you see a truly gifted person offer little but lip service in the Body of Christ for the Kingdom of God? Sadly, too often.

Think of the **Seven Mountains of Influence** that many may have heard of but many may be reading this term for the first time.

1. Religion
2. Family
3. Education
4. Government
5. Media
6. Arts
7. Business

These seven areas of influence are now redefined by culture and, very sadly, controlled by man and not influenced for God. Religion has been perverted to be a lecture on a topic that fits an accepted political agenda of the attendees, not a sanctuary of broken humanity seeking the presence of the Most High God for His love. Family has been redefined by sexual perversion, false, evil identities, and to be little more than a connection of convenience, not a commitment, and certainly not a covenant. Education has become indoctrination where our children can demand their own rights, talk about safe sex, maybe even apply "safe sex protection" while being almost functionally illiterate unless in the medium of TikTok, Instagram, and whatever else social media platform filled with its own language and icons. Government is no longer an institution of individuals with a shared purpose to protect the people using the limit forces of government; now it's a mud pit of power-hungry individuals who vacillate between isms while ignoring inalienable rights and the Creator Who established and gave them. Media is a vehicle now to corrupt and defile, measured in clicks and payouts. Arts are so vague but filled with empty emotions reflecting the darkness and sadness of culture that there isn't as much to appreciate. Business continues but is more and more, like religion, comingling with government to become sullied by a favorable policy designed for their unique benefit that fulfills the saying, "He who has the gold rules."

That gloomy paragraph is thanks to a disrupted, chaotic, and divided church. And, people, **a church doesn't become disrupted, chaotic, or divided unless there are individual members doing the most abhorrent thing that God hates, according to Proverbs 6:19: sowing discord among the brethren.**

Grandparents of today's generation and older have the wisdom to have put into practice to stop the fact that "idle hands are the devil's workshop."

When members of a church body fail to focus on God's plan and His purpose, instead of their own preferences and agendas, there is disruption and discord. When members of a church body use their God-given gifts to further their own profits and not bother to mentor and disciple as a selfless vessel for Christ, there is disruption and an unmet need. When members of a church body are busy comparing their gifts to another's, they are seeking approval of someone other than God or they question the goodness of God in their lives.

***Fully Purposed after our identity is His***

And understand that these verses follow **Romans 12:1-2**. Paul began by saying, die to self. It's your reasonable act of service. Kill the flesh that would compare, that would disrupt, that would craft your own agenda, and would leave a need unmet because of your selfish pursuits or preferences.

Paul had already written that our minds must be renewed in the power of the Holy Spirit which first transforms us. Then our entire beings will have the capacity to prove the complete will of God. Then, the graces given to each of us will equip us to function in unity as one body, His Body. And as His Body, we are using those gifts to minister, to teach, to show the love of Jesus.

Dear friends, **you are needed**. You have been created with purpose. **You have been set in the midst of a purposed work of God**. Oh, please find your greatest love, joy, and peace in serving Christ, the Head of our Body in your unique gifting to fulfill God's perfect will and purpose.

And yes! You will be blessed!

What are you good at?

How has God equipped you to serve Him to fulfill His commands?

Are you faithfully using that gifting in your local Body of Christ?

If not, why are you choosing to disobey God?

Declare this in prayer to God: Holy Father, You are Great. You created me for a purpose. Thank you for Your word that tells me to serve. Thank you for a church Body of Christ that is actively serving the local, regional, and global community. I know you have opened a door for me to serve. Equip me with your strength and add to my faith to be obedient. I will be blessed!

## 6 – God says I am an influencer.

**Scripture: Matthew 5:13-15; Philippians 2:12-15**

In modern culture that rewards remarkability as displayed on social media platforms and exaggerated profiles of individuals who suffer mightily to maintain or attempt to pull off their imposter syndrome, the term “Influencer” carries great weight.

And yet, it’s not a modern principle at all.

Jesus Himself taught that His followers must uniquely influence every environment in which we live our lives.

Last week, we touched on the Seven Mountains of Influence. Let’s only focus on *your* circle of influence. **Yours**. The one for which *you will* stand before Jesus at the bema seat of Jesus Christ and give an account as His servant, His steward, or His ruler.

Regardless of your gifting, regardless of your perceived calling to a specific area of service, regardless of the color of your skin, your ethnic heritage, your faith walk, your occupation, vocation, or profession, regardless of your socio-economic status, or regardless of your education, we all have several things in common.

We all are created by God. ALL. ALL are created in His Image. We are accountable what, who, and how that image or Image is used to reflect something or someone, or Some One in this life.

We are all given 60 seconds in a minute, 60 minutes in an hour, 24 hours in a day, 7 days in a week, and so on. We are ALL accountable for how we employ that time, how we steward that time, how we invest that time, or how we spend it on ourselves, our preferences, and our comforts.

We are all given the opportunity to experience God’s Presence in some form, whether through His word, His created nature, His voice of the Holy Spirit, or through His voice speaking through another. **We are all accountable** for our acceptance of Jesus Christ as Savior or our rejection of Him.

Now, let’s turn to **Matthew 5:13**. As you read these words, know that Jesus spoke these identifiers that had and still have great influence. *“You are the salt of the earth; but if salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.”*

Dear friends, this describes what has happened to the loss of influence of the Body of Jesus Christ over the Seven Mountains of Influence. We have lost our flavor and have been thrown out as useless to be trampled underfoot by the masses following culture and convenience.

What does salt do?

In the day Jesus spoke these words and generations prior, salt was a valuable compound used for many applications in days prior to refrigeration, advanced medicine, and the wide availability of culinary spices, herbs, and preservatives.

Salt was even used to pay wages, hence, the saying, “You’re not worth your salt!”

**Salt preserves.** It was used to pack perishable items to slow decay and prevent spoiling. As salt, as proclaimed by Jesus over His followers, we are the restraining, preserving force of His love, His grace, His mercy, His joy, His Presence in us on this earth working to fulfill His will that the Kingdom of Heaven is made known on this earth that needs Her returning King, Jesus Christ the Messiah.

Do you serve to preserve by bridging the gap in your family that needs prayer and Godly leadership? Do you build a hedge by applying the principles of spiritual warfare to surround your family, your home, your community, your church, and your own life with God’s divine protection?

**Salt purifies and disinfects.** Salt was used to purify water and to work as an anti-septic agent when applied to skin or wounds. Does your influence in your home, your workplace, your community, and your church serve to bring purity and drive out that which is meant to infect and kill?

Finally, and most often in our day, **salt is used to season.** The salinity of foods has a special way of tenderizing meats, enhancing flavors, and is noticeably missing in certain items. Do you bring a Godly tenderness to difficult situations? Does your life, yielded and used by the Holy Spirit add Christ-like flavor to any environment that enter and occupy? Are you noticeably missed when you’re not in your spot that is purposed and glorifying God while adding value?

We are salt. **We must influence.**

Read on. **Matthew 5:14-16** continues the words of Jesus instructing His disciples then and us today that we are influencers.

*“You re the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”*

Our light as a believer and follower of Jesus Christ comes from Him. We are His Imagebearers **reflecting His Light** as we abide in His Presence. So, don’t get all puffed up and misrepresent what Jesus is saying.

Our own personal light is little more than a flickering flame easily extinguished with a gust of wind or a light misting rain. Jesus, as **Revelation 1:16** reveals, has the countenance in heaven as He reigns as the Risen Lamb *“like the sun shining in its strength,”* or at noonday, according to

other translations. **We must reflect the countenance of Christ Jesus.**

The absence of Light, once extinguished or sealed completely, creates darkness.

Look it up. Look up the definition of darkness. The definition of darkness is “the absence of light.”

Understand vividly, dear friends, that **we have darkness in this world because the Light of Jesus Christ has been dimmed by our own flesh being defiled, tarnished, and modified.**

Oh, please speak your own prayers of confession and ask for personal forgiveness! Corporately, the Body of Christ has reflected more of the culture than our Christ, the Living and Loving Son of God!

Equally understand and be empowered to know **we can reverse course** in this world. But **it begins with you**, your family, your home, first. **FIRST.**

**Bishop Dale Bronner**, of the Word of Faith Family Worship Cathedral in Austell, Georgia, said it right: **“So goes the home, so goes the school. So goes the home, so goes the church. So goes the home, so goes the marketplace. So goes the home, so goes the government. So goes the home, so goes the culture. So goes the home, so goes the society.”**

Be the salt of Jesus Christ into your home. Be the light of Jesus Christ into your home. You are His vessel. Make sure your vessel is purged, cleansed, filled, and in use!

Paul spoke of this light of Christ Jesus shining through us as he spoke to believers at the Church at Philippi. The Apostle reminded them in **Philippians 2:13** that *“it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure”* and one of those ways is to shine!

**Verse 14** instructs believers to *“do all things without complaining or disputing.”* Yep, fussing and feuding in the church is no modern invention! It’s a fight to keep satan out! Nevertheless, he continued in **verse 15**, *“that you may become blameless and harmless children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.”*

What are we doing? How shameful we are as the created with purpose, placed on purpose, with purpose to expect a church staff to do this alone! How insulting to God the Father Whose great love sent His only Son to literally be the Lamb slain in a government-religious setup of haters to save all of humanity from our sins!

Jesus said *you are salt. You are light.* Not just at church on one Sunday occasionally. Not just around “churchy friends.” Not just when you can be affirmed and accepted.

No Christian is to be hidden. We are each placed. We are each to influence.

## 7 - God says I am sent out as a disciple, warrior, and ambassador.

**Scripture: Matthew 28:19-20; Ephesians 6:10-18; 2 Corinthians 5:20**

God says so very many things about who we are in Him. There are an estimated 250 identity statements that are made by God about who we are in Him throughout His word, Holy Scripture.

We finish this study with just a few more. But understand, the only way you will know who you are in God is to **know Him through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ**, time in prayer, lots of time reading and studying His word, and fellowshiping with Him through His Holy Spirit.

### *God says I am a disciple*

When we read God's word, Americans are the worst to make the mistake to miss that the Holy Writ is written to a set apart people. We take God's word and treat it like a buffet. We choose a little of this, because, well, it tastes good. And we need a little of that to balance the sweetness of the other, but not too much because I don't want to be labeled a cult member or something weird. And I'll have a little dash of that on top to make it look as if I'm really growing.

Nope. God's word is written as a timeless and timely reference that holds the answers given by our Creator. He created us to fellowship, reason, and apply His instructions and commands, and serve in love.

So, when we read **Matthew 28:19-20**, we see words in red addressed to "*them*." The disciples, in this case, are the "*them*." But friends, that's too often how we read God's word. "Well," our justifying minds tell us, "that applies to them, you know, the staff, the ones called into fulltime ministry, to pastors" or to anyone but us! "Only the blessings and graces apply universally," our twisting minds rationalize.

Yes. These words were written to the disciples. But as we revisit them, **the Great Commission applies to all believers**. We are to go. Make disciples. Disciples of who? Disciples of Jesus Christ.

And there is the problem. **Most of us don't make disciples because we don't live like one ourselves.**

Ouch. Yep. That double-edge Sword of the Spirit cuts. Don't dare stop reading. Don't dare make a disciple of you or any other human. **Be a disciple of Jesus**, then teach others.

Disciple in the Greek is a word *mathētēs* that describes a learner, and in the case of how **Jesus taught**, an apprentice. He was a man of deep, profound **words**, but Jesus was also a **doer**; He showed how to be a **Spirit-filled human** in a sinful world.

That's us. We are to bear His Image as He taught the disciples, in both word and deed.

First **be a disciple by loving** as Jesus, just as He declared that the world would know us by His love and our love for each other. **Then replicate Him by modeling and mentoring** as He did.

Second, daily, **take inventory and die daily** to self; lose your own identity and be filled by the Holy Spirit to reflect His.

### *God says I am a warrior*

The whole armor of God is a topic of sermons, many references in Bible studies, and even in our prayers. Turn to **Ephesians 6:10-18**.

Don't think it to be some imaginary symbolism that is based more on a false confidence in repeating certain words than the power of God doing and accomplishing what He says it will do. We must simply *daily* adorn this armor from head to toe. We *must do* as these verses say.

Paul admonished the Church of Ephesus to be strong in His might, in the might of the Holy Spirit promised by Jesus. We spend a whole lot of time talking to others about our problems, fretting over this and that, calling this person and the next to get their advice, and even a fair measure of time talking to satan and his demons.

*Do you really see that the fight belongs to the Lord?* In the Old Testament when Moses repeated Yahweh's words in **Exodus 14:13-14** that He "*will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace,*" that set the model and covenant for us today. The Holy Spirit is God with us...even in battle.

Unfortunately, it's typically only after we've engaged in a bare-handed scuffle with some force of darkness or self in our own power and reasoning that we finally think about the armor.

Every single day, **we can prevail only in the power of the Holy Spirit** when we die to self, adorn the armor of God, then we able to "*stand against the wiles of the devil*" (**verse 11**).

We declare **verses 12-13** but don't really believe them! Otherwise, why would we have so many grudges, worry about what so-and-so said about another, or engage in behavior that is no different from our unsaved neighbors? We really don't "*wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rules of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*"

Remember the use of repetition is like God's highlighter? Well, here's another example. **STAND! STAND! STAND!** But don't stand naked, exposed without God's ordained armor. Don't stand in your own strength. Don't take on satan without being behind God in battle and armored up.

**Verse 14**, again, tells us to stand girded about the waist with truth – and that's God's truth, not your opinion, not a pastor's opinion, that's God's word. Remember when Jesus was tempted three times by satan, the Son of God quoted the Bible. Speak like Jesus. Speak God's word!

We are also to wear the breastplate of righteousness that guards our vital organs of our heart, lungs, abdomen, and key functions to live. But it's not our righteousness. We must be yielded, dead to self, filled with the Holy Spirit, covered by the blood of Jesus, and standing as one reflecting His righteousness.

**Verse 15** notes that our feet are shod with the gospel of peace that announces that as our feet fall, we leave a residue of divine peace.

**Veres 16** tells us that we carry the shield of faith that was a leather-wrapped object soaked in water to extinguish the fiery arrows used in battle with the wicked one.

**Verse 17** includes the helmet of salvation that covers our thinking, our minds, and the organ of our body that controls all others. The only offensive weapon, however, is the Sword of the Spirit, the word of God.

There is power in His word. Not yours. Not a pastor's. Not another's opinion. The only power that we have, as noted in **Revelation 12:11** is to overcome by the blood of the Lamb through Christ's sacrifice, the word of our testimony based on God's word and salvation, and loving our lives not unto death. We are willing to die to self and die for the cause of Christ.

Spiritual warfare is for "grown-folks" believers, as some might say. If you are unserious, you will be maimed. If you are not equipped, you may even be mad at God for injuries you experience from being spiritually naked and exposed in battle.

We are instructed to grow. We are expected to grow. We are accountable to grow.

We must be prepared to live up to what God says about us. We are warriors.

Finally, we are instructed by **verse 18**, that "*praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful...*" is our appropriate communication tool. We are to be in never-ceasing communion and communication with the Holy Spirit Who guides and leads us.

### ***God says I am an ambassador***

As a temporary citizen of this beautiful and amazing planet, we can either be *of this world* or just *in it passing through* to our home with God in eternity, if Christ's blood is applied to your life as your Savior and you have yielded to Him as Lord.

As the latter, being only a temporary resident in this earth, not of its culture, we are also assigned and called ambassadors. **2 Corinthians 5:20** is found at the end of an amazing chapter of Paul's writings to the Church at Corinth.

*"Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us; we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who know no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."*

We are to serve as representatives of the Most High King, Jesus Christ. Americans have a difficult time thinking of a monarchy that rules a kingdom, or the domain of the king, and who would be part of the church, or an embassy, in a foreign land and culture. But we are!

Jesus will not appear again until His second coming. We, as members of His Body, are His ambassadors, representatives of the King Who reigns over the Kingdom of God. We are to bring His ways into our cultures, our families, our lives, to create a similar culture that reflects His Kingdom, the King's love.

This representation of Christ's love and the call of a Savior that we are to make as ambassadors to a lost world, is for others to be reconciled, or to exchange our sin for His righteousness, to exchange our identity for His Identity, and to be set in Him to be our best.

These are all roles – that of disciple, warrior, and ambassador – that, along with being a servant, will be assessed as you take one last look back on the previous page of your Bible to **2 Corinthians 5:10**, in this same chapter, relating to these words of encouragement to fellow ambassadors.

*“For **we must all appear** before the judgement seat of Christ, that **each one may receive** the things done in the body, according to **what he has done**, whether good or bad.”*

This is that moment we will hear either *“Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord”* or some may hear, *“I never knew you; depart from Me!”*

### **These are serious times.**

God was serious and loving in sending His Son. Nothing has changed. He loves us in a way words cannot describe. He knows, He sees, and watches, and He fights for us, still.

Will you study and live in His Identity that He gave you? Or will you settle for that which the world has defined and crafted as an acceptable version of the Christian faith in our day?

Will you, after you accept and commit to live in His Identity, then live the purposed life that He as set you in to be a disciple, an influencer, a disciple-maker, and all other roles assigned that God will work through you for His glory and your good?

Let *today* begin life in Christ like you've never experienced before. God says He is pleased with the remnant which obeys in His love!