



## LESSON ONE: INTRODUCTION TO IDENTITY

### Part Two: Why Identity Matters

Are you a sinner or a saint? The New Testament refers to Christians as “saints” or “holy” over and over again. We are not meant to take our identity from our malfunctions and failings. A lot of us think that what we do defines who we are, but it is actually the other way around. Who we are drives how we live.

As Christians, the core identity God wants us to have is that we are saints who sometimes sin, as opposed to being sinners who just expect to sin.

The goal is to see my identity as a person uniquely designed to relate to God in a Father-Child relationship.

#### **Reflect:**

Read these verses and reflect on the question to follow:

- “When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God.” (*Gen 5:1b ESV*)
- “having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints” (*Eph 1:18 ESV*)
- “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God” (*Eph 2:19 ESV*)
- “giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light” (*Col 1:12 ESV*)
- “he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him” (*Col 1:22 ESV*)
- “put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience” (*Col 3:12 ESV*)
- “And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.” (*1 Cor 6:11 ESV*)

What do you think about identifying yourself as “saint” instead of “sinner”? Is it a new idea? A disconcerting idea? An exciting idea?

### **Ask God:**

God, is there any particular way I have let my old identity as a sinner or my malfunctions drive me instead of my new, reclaimed identity as a saint? Please, convict and call me toward the true identity You designed in me.

### **Practice:**

Sometimes we can read the Bible in an impersonal way, without recognizing what is true about ourselves. It can help to read scripture by putting ourselves in the story. Try it out! Read the verses below by putting your name where we've inserted blanks.

- “When God created \_\_\_\_\_, he made \_\_\_\_\_ in the likeness of God.” (*Gen 5:1b ESV*)
- “having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, \_\_\_\_\_, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints” (*Eph 1:18 ESV*)

- “So then, \_\_\_\_\_, you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you, \_\_\_\_\_, are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God” (*Eph 2:19 ESV*)
- “giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you, \_\_\_\_\_, to share in the inheritance of the saints in light” (*Col 1:12 ESV*)
- “he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you, \_\_\_\_\_, holy and blameless and above reproach before him” (*Col 1:22 ESV*)
- \_\_\_\_\_, “put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience” (*Col 3:12 ESV*)
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### **Go Deeper:**

Like “John” in the teaching illustration, choose one of the following of Paul’s epistles (Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians) and practice circling or taking note of the identity statements you find. Mark what patterns stand out to you, and ask God what He wants you to know about yourself based on the major pattern you see.

If you go through this course multiple times, choose a new epistle each time. Or, if you can make time on the first pass, work through all these epistles and practice this exercise. God will not waste the time you spend!