



DOCTRINE OF IDENTIFICATION



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INTRODUCTION

“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.” II Corinthians 8:9 NKJV

Jesus identified Himself with us in taking our humanity and bearing our sins at the cross. We identify ourselves with Him by faith.

When Christ came to earth, He identified with us in His incarnation. Our Savior identified with us in a flesh and blood body. He came to die for the human race.

Because He first identified with us and presented His body to accomplish the Father's will for our salvation, we can now identify with Him. *(II Corinthians 8:9)*

He set the plan of redemption in motion by identifying with us.

Understanding this doctrine of Identification is critical for growth and maturity. The more we understand our identity in Christ, the more we will grow, mature, and overcome.

If we are to grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we need to understand who we are in Christ.

Identification

“Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”
Romans 6:3-4 NKJV

In this all-important chapter of Romans, we see the doctrine of Identification. We identify with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. This wonderful doctrine sets us free – free from the penalty and power of sin!

As we think about identification, we are talking about the sameness of character. Naturally speaking, we may wear a bracelet or carry a driver’s license to identify ourselves. In the military, they wear tags for identification purposes.

In the spiritual realm, believers identify with Jesus Christ. In the verses above, we see identification with the Lord Jesus Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. All believers are “in Christ.”

“For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body — whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free — and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.”
I Corinthians 12:13 NKJV

Christians are a part of His Body.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”
II Corinthians 5:17 NKJV

As believers, we now have a Divine nature. We have been born from above. (**John 3:3,7**)

Our identification is important to the understanding of our sanctification and our justification. So, let us examine this doctrine, primarily in the light of Romans and other passages in the Bible.

We see the powerful doctrine of Identification found from Genesis through Revelation, and it will transform us from glory to glory if we apply it to our lives.

*“In putting everything under Him, God left nothing that is not subject to Him.....Since the children have flesh and blood, He, too, shared in their humanity so that by His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death – that is, the devil,” **Hebrews 2:9, 14 NKJV***

Remember, when Christ came to earth, He identified with us in His incarnation. Our Savior identified with us in a flesh and blood body. He came to die for the human race.

Old Testament Identification

In the Old Testament, we read about the Israelite coming to the door of the Tabernacle to offer a sacrifice (**Leviticus 1:3**) The sacrifice had to be without spot or blemish. The offerer laid his hands on the head of the animal, and the blood of the sacrifice was shed. (**Leviticus 1:4-5**) How does this relate to the doctrine of identification?

When the person laid his hands on the head of the animal to be sacrificed, that act represented his identification with the sacrifice. The offerer knew he was the sinner, and the animal was innocent and blameless, and yet the animal died in the place of the sinner.

The offerer understood Identification. “I deserve to die, but this substitute sacrifice will die in my place.” Many Israelites understood the types and shadows pointing forward to the Messiah (**Hebrews 11:1**) The shedding of blood looked forward to the spotless Lamb of God that would die as our Substitute.

Jehoshaphat

“The LORD was with Jehoshaphat, because in his earlier years he walked in the ways his father David had followed. He did not consult the Baals but sought the God of his father

and followed His commands rather than the practices of Israel.” II Chronicles 17:3-4 NKJV

Jehoshaphat began as a godly king in Judah, and we read that God blessed him because he “*took delight in the ways of the Lord.*” (KJV) We also read that godly men were “next to him.” They identified with Jehoshaphat. Unfortunately, Jehoshaphat allied himself, by marriage, with Ahab, king of Israel, who was a very wicked man.

This alliance speaks to identification. He went down to visit Ahab, and he made the wrong choice to join Ahab in going to war against Ahab’s enemy. Ahab died in the battle, and Jehoshaphat is rebuked by the Lord. Why? Because he allied himself with this wicked king. He identified with Ahab and his war.

“After this Jehoshaphat king of Judah allied himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, who acted very wickedly. And he allied himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish, and they made the ships in Ezion Geber.” II Chronicles 20:35-36 NKJV

Unfortunately, Jehoshaphat allied himself with another wicked king. One would have thought that he had learned his lesson. But we read, “*Because you have allied yourself with Ahaziah, the Lord has destroyed your works.*” (v. 37)

Who we spend time with and who we align ourselves with impact the outcome of our lives. This teaching of identification will impact you now and in the ages to come. This is critical for growth and maturity.

New Testament Identification

Identification according to the Apostle Paul is clearly expounded in his epistles. Remember, we will be judged according to his Gospel.

“...in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my Gospel.”

Romans 2:16 NKJV

Two Identifications

We know from Romans that as sons of Adam we were sinners. We were identified with him in sin. The result of this is a sinful life. But we are now identified with Christ and His righteousness. The result is a righteous life.

*“Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him.” **Romans 6:3, 8***

We believe that we shall also share His life.

The reason we are now identified with Christ and no longer with Adam is because we, by faith, are identified with Him in His death. In that He died for us, we died with Him. As He now lives, we too live in Him.

Identification – Old and New Man

*“That you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.” **Ephesians 4:22-24 NKJV***

Here we see that the Old and the New Man are likened unto clothing. The Old Man is the clothing of all those who are in Adam; the New Man is the clothing of all those who are in Christ.

Sad to say, many Christians are still wearing the clothing of the Old Man. If that were not the case, Paul would not have told these Christians to put it off.

The way we dress and the clothing we put on will determine how we live. We have a choice to make every day. Believers can walk after the spirit or after the flesh.

As believers, we can no longer walk in the flesh. Only non-believers are in the flesh. We are in Christ as Christians. Followers of Christ need to know their identity.

Identification – Two Realms

“Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son,”
Colossians 1:13

The first creation was plunged into darkness by man's sin, and the prince of the power of the air became the god of the world, the prince of darkness, and all humankind are his captives.

The first creation is the realm of the power of darkness. Anyone that is born into this world identifies with the first creation.

But thank God, there is another realm, the Kingdom of God's Dear Son, because in Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

Believers in Christ identify with the realm of the Kingdom of God's Dear Son. Christians identify with Christ and the Family of God. If Christians do not see their proper identification, they will live in defeat.

Luther said, “We cannot do what Christ procured for us.” Luther was right. We cannot finish the finished work. We are what we are because of what He DID for US.

Do you believe this: “I am no longer a product of my past. I am a product of the work of Christ on the cross. I cannot do what Christ has already done for me.”

It is true!

It becomes real and practical as I believe what Jesus did for me.

I died to sin because Jesus already died to sin.

Identification – Two Masters

“Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” **Romans 6:16**

There are two masters: Sin, in the realm of the flesh, and Righteousness, in the realm of the Spirit. But here is a paradox: Though we are no longer in the realm of the flesh, we can voluntarily yield ourselves to obey the master of that realm.

They that are in the flesh have no choice. They can only obey the master of the realm of the flesh, sin. We do have a choice. We are not sinless, but we do not have to obey sin as a slavemaster. He doesn't say we are sinless, as the Wesleyans would say, but he says we have a choice that those who are in Adam do not have. We can yield our members, our bodies, unto sin if we choose to; but we do not have to, for we have been made free from the tyranny of sin. To be "freed from sin" does not mean to be rid of sin. It means that sin no longer controls our lives. The choice is ours.

Which master do we identify with? We have a choice. We can identify with the Master of the Realm of the Spirit or the master of the realm of the flesh.

Knowing our identity in the light of the teachings according to Paul will help us to serve our New Master.

Our identity and how we think of ourselves will make a difference in our behavior. If we think of ourselves as sinners, we will sin. Sinners are born to sin. We were sinners, but now we are saints, children of God. There is a big difference, even though as God's children we can still sin.

Identification – Two Heads

"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous." **Romans 5:19**

Two heads are seen here. Adam's sin made all his descendants sinners. While this is not at all a popular doctrine, it is thoroughly scriptural. Common experience

and observation should be enough to convince, even apart from scripture.

Just as Adam's sin made all the sons of Adam sinners, just so the obedience of Christ unto death has made all the sons of God righteous. There are two creations, of which Adam and Christ are the Heads.

We see that non-believers identify with Adam, who was the head of the first creation, while believers identify with Christ, Who is the Head of the New Creation.

There are two ways to see ourselves: In Christ, or apart from Christ. We are in Adam or in Christ.

“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.” Romans 8:2 NKJV

“Hath made me free” is one word in the Greek. Christians have been set free, and this is past tense. We have been delivered once and for all. Believers have been placed in the Family and are free from the old creation. Thank God for the finished work of Christ and what He procured for us. This is our identity.

Identification – Practical Results

We have heard the expression that “if you run with the dogs, you will catch fleas.” In the same way, you can enter a smoke-filled room and not be smoking yourself, but you leave with the odor of smoke in your clothes. The same would be true of entering a kitchen where garlic is being used for cooking. Even though you are not eating the food, you leave with the smell of garlic in your clothes.

If we sit under a ministry where false doctrine is being taught, it will impact us. Where we go to church matters. Who we identify with, or align ourselves with doctrinally and spiritually has an impact. Remember Jehoshaphat.

The same would be true in a business setting. If we work for a corrupt institution, it can impact us.

If we identify with individuals who support infanticide, abortion, homosexuality, and/or same-sex marriage, it can be defiling to us and impact us spiritually.

We need to consider who and what we are identifying with as Christians. Judge all things. This is a teaching throughout the Bible that is of the utmost importance.

“Can two walk together except they be agreed?” Amos 3:3

This verse speaks to Identification. We walk with God by agreeing with His Word. We identify with Christ and He is the Word of God. (*John 1:14*) We will not accomplish anything if we do not walk with the Lord. We are in the world, but not of the world. (*John 17:16*)

We must not identify with the world, but remain separate and apart from it as did Christ when He identified with mankind. He was tested in all points, apart from sin. (*Hebrews 4:15*)

We can reign in this life, according to *Romans 5:17*.

Conclusion

This subject of Identification is far-reaching. It touches every aspect of our lives:

- All our relationships
- Our alliances
- Our friends and family
- Our business associates
- Organizations we support
- How we use our time
- Our choices of entertainment

How we perceive ourselves will determine how we live. If we do not see ourselves as God sees us, we will have a false identity and a poor image of who we really are in Christ.

“As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.” Proverbs 23:7

In closing, let us specifically look at what is said about you as a believer in Christ:

- You are justified (***Romans 5:1***)
- You are bought with a price (***I Corinthians 6:20***)
- You are a member of Christ's Body (***I Corinthians 12:27***)
- You are adopted as God's child (***Ephesians 1:5***)
- You are redeemed and forgiven of all your sins (***Colossians 1:14***)
- You are complete in Christ (***Colossians 2:10***)
- You are free from condemnation (***Romans 8:1-2***)
- You cannot be separated from the love of God (***Romans 8:35***)
- You are hidden with Christ in God (***Colossians 3:3***)

As a student of the Word of God, I would urge you to continue to search the scriptures daily as the Bereans did, to know and understand your identity in Christ.



Some of the material in this tract was taken from the following tracts. For more on this subject of Identification, please refer to them at www.agfwheatridgeco.com:

“In Christ” by Douglas Crook

“Opposing Pairs” by O. A. Freestone, Jr.

“Doctrines of the Bible” (pp.28-29) by O. A. Freestone, Jr.

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