



WEEK 8

1ST SEMESTER · FOUNDATION & IDENTITY

Who Am I?

Finding Our Identity in Christ

SPIRITUAL THEME

Who Am I in Christ?

PERSONAL THEME

**Identity, security & acceptance
as a child of God**

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Spiritual Theme: Who am I in Christ?

Personal Theme: Identity, Security, and Acceptance as a Child of God

Scripture Focus: Ephesians 1:3–14; Romans 8:14–17; 1 John 3:1–3

1. Introduction: The Crisis of Identity

Imagine a man who is a Prince, the son of a Great King. But because of a war, he was lost and grew up as a beggar in the streets. He is hungry, dirty, and ashamed. He thinks his name is "Beggar." One day, the King finds him and says, "You are my son. You are a Prince."

Does the man have to *earn* his way into the palace? No. He is already a son. But he must change how he **thinks** and how he **acts** because he now knows who he truly is.

As ministry workers, many of us still live like "spiritual beggars." We try to work hard so God will like us, or we feel crushed when people criticize us. Today, we learn that our identity is not based on what we **do**, but on what Christ has **done** for us.

2. Biblical Teaching: Blessed in Christ (Ephesians 1:3–14)

This passage is one of the deepest in the Bible. Paul lists the "spiritual blessings" we have. Let's look at the facts:

A. You are Chosen (Verse 4)

- **The Fact:** God chose you "before the creation of the world."
- **The Meaning:** God did not choose you because you were a great preacher or a good man. He chose you when you didn't even exist! Your value starts with God's choice, not your performance.

B. You are Adopted (Verse 5)

- **The Fact:** He predestined us for **adoption** to sonship through Jesus Christ.
- **The Depth:** In Roman law (during Paul's time), an adopted son had the same rights as a biological son. But our security does not rest on Roman law – it rests on God's Word. Paul says that as sons we are "heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:15–17). Because we are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, and "since you are his child, God has made you also an heir" (Galatians 4:4–7). And Jesus promises that no one can snatch His sheep out of the Father's hand (John 10:28–29); nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ (Romans 8:38–39).
- **Application:** You are not a "servant" or a "slave" in God's house. You are a son with a seat at the table.

C. You are Redeemed and Forgiven (Verse 7)

- **The Fact:** In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.
- **The Meaning:** The word "Redemption" refers to paying a price to buy a slave out of the market to set him free. Jesus paid the highest price (His life) for you. You are "expensive" to God!

Deep Fact for Students: In Ephesians 1, the phrase "**In Christ**" or "**In Him**" appears 11 times. This is the key to identity. Your identity is no longer "Sinner," "Follower," or "Poor Man." Your identity is now "In Christ." The Father's love and acceptance of the Son are now yours in Him (John 17:23; Ephesians 1:6): you are a child of God, an heir, and you have free access to the Father (Romans 8:15–17; Galatians 4:4–7; Ephesians 2:18). But be careful: Jesus remains the unique Son by nature – true God, the "one and only Son" (John 1:14) – while we are sons by grace, through adoption. We share His sonship; we do not become gods.

3. Personal Theme: Security and Acceptance (Romans 8:14–16)

"For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.'" (Romans 8:15)

The "Spirit of Slavery" vs. The "Spirit of Sonship"

- **The Slave:** A slave obeys because he is **afraid of the whip**. He is never sure if he has done enough. If he makes a mistake, he thinks he will be kicked out. Many leaders lead like slaves—always afraid of God's anger.
- **The Son:** A son obeys because he **loves his Father**. He knows that even if he stumbles, his Father will pick him up. He has "Security."

Abba, Father: The word *Abba* is an Aramaic word – a warm family word for "Father", used by small children and by grown sons alike. It is close and personal, but also full of respect. It shows that the Great Creator of the Universe is now your close, loving Father.

4. Practical Application: Leading from Security

In our culture, we understand what it means to serve a great leader or a landlord. We know the fear of making a mistake. But in the Kingdom, we do not lead to *get* an identity; we lead *from* the identity we already have.

A. The End of the "Approval Hunger" (No More Fear of Man)

In many of our churches, a leader feels they must please everyone. If the wealthy businessman in the pews is unhappy, the pastor trembles. If the village elders gossip, the deacon loses sleep.

- **The Slave's Way:** You are a slave to the opinions of people. If they clap, you feel like a King. If they frown, you feel like a beggar.
- **The Secure Leader's Way:** Because you are already "Accepted in the Beloved" (Ephesians 1:6), your "cup" is already full. You don't go to your congregation with an empty cup, begging them to fill it with praise. You come with a full cup, ready to pour out.
- **The Result:** You can speak the truth in love, even when it is unpopular, because your life does not depend on their applause.

B. Killing the Poison of Ministry Jealousy

Why do we get angry when the church down the road grows faster than ours? Why do we feel a "sting" in our hearts when another brother is invited to preach at the big conference?

- **The Identity Crisis:** We think God's love is a limited cake—if that brother gets a big slice, there is less for me. This is "Orphan Thinking."
- **The Secure Leader's Way:** A son knows the Father's resources are infinite. If your brother's ministry prospers, you rejoice, because it is your Father's Kingdom that is winning!
- **The Reality:** You are not competing for a prize; you *are* the prize. You are the Father's treasure. You don't need to pull another leader down to make yourself look taller.

C. Receiving Correction without Being Crushed

This is the hardest test for a leader in Uganda. When someone points out a mistake in our accounts or a sin in our lives, our instinct is to hide or to shout them down.

- **The Slave's Fear:** "If I am wrong, I am nothing. If I lose my reputation, I lose my life."
- **The Secure Leader's Way:** A Son can say, *"My brother, thank you. You have found a spot on my garment. I am a sinner saved by grace, and my value is hidden in Christ, not in my perfection."*
- **The Power of Honesty:** Security allows you to be vulnerable. You don't have to wear a mask of "The Perfect Man." When you are secure in Christ, you can repent quickly and publicly, because your "Righteousness" is a gift from Jesus, not something you manufactured.

D. Leading with "Rest" instead of "Hustle"

Many of us are tired. We are "burning out" because we feel the weight of the church is on our shoulders. We think if we stop working for one day, God will be disappointed or the ministry will fail.

- **The Slave's Toil:** Working to stay noticed by the Master.
- **The Son's Service:** We work hard—harder than anyone!—but we work *with* our Father, not just *for* Him. We can sleep at night because we know that "He who keeps Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps" (Psalm 121:4).



- **The Practical Step:** A secure leader knows how to Sabbath. He knows that the world survived before he was born, and it will survive when he is gone, because it is God's Church, not his.

5. Discussion Questions for the Students

1. **The Name Test:** If you had to describe yourself in three words *without* mentioning your job, your family, or your church title, what would they be?
2. **Performance vs. Grace:** Do you ever feel like God loves you "more" on days when you pray a lot, and "less" on days when you feel weak? How does Ephesians 1:4 (chosen before the world began) fix this thinking?
3. **Security in Ministry:** How does being "Adopted" by God help you when people in the church gossip about you or criticize your leadership?
4. **The Father's Love:** Many people in our culture have had "harsh" or "absent" earthly fathers. How does that make it difficult to believe that God is a loving "Abba"? How can we help people see the true character of God?