

## CROSS TRAINING – ESSENTIALS 2, CLASS 1

### UNDERSTANDING THE CHRISTIAN’S NEW IDENTITY

*Experiencing the victorious Christian life requires that you know your God given identity and walk in your God given purpose. Identity and purpose are inseparable - the fact that you are a Christian carries with it a job description. It is your responsibility and opportunity to walk in your God given identity & purpose.*

*“We are not human beings having a spiritual experience; we are spiritual beings having a human experience.” – Unknown.*

#### 1. Today’s Christians are so indoctrinated with cultural misconceptions about identity that many have no idea what their God given identity is and what that entails.

- a. Society’s view of identity (**Self on the throne**): You must live the 5 C’s lifestyle (cash, cars, careers, condos and cuties). Worldly Identity is based on purpose – the 5 C’s. In the world, who you are is based on what you have and do.
- b. God’s view of Identity is drastically different (**Christ on the throne**) – we’ll discuss this today. Godly identity is the foundation for purpose! As a Christian what you have and do is based on who you are.
- c. Many Christians live out their entire lives trying to live up to the world’s idea of identity. This results in a lack of fulfillment, joy and purpose; it leads to a mundane and eternally unfruitful life.
- d. Some common hindrances to living in your God given identity:
  - Selfishness – living for own plans and agenda.
  - Pride – independently going own way.
  - Fear – scared His plan is impossible, believe you can be happier with your own plans.
  - Lack of knowledge – Don’t understand true identity.

#### 2. The Bible describes human beings as three part beings consisting of<sup>1</sup>a spirit, <sup>2</sup>a soul and <sup>3</sup>a body.

**Verses:** 1Thes. 5:23 – “...may your whole **spirit, soul and body** be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus.”

**Heb. 4:12** – “The Word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the division of **soul and spirit, joints and marrow.**” (Joints and marrow are a reference to the physical body).

The Bible refers to each of these parts (spirit, soul and body) in very specific ways with very specific meanings. Many Christians confuse the truth about their identity and end up with a disabling misunderstanding of who they are. Here’s how the Bible uses them:

**Spirit** (Gk: pneuma, Heb: ruah): The dynamic force, which constitutes a person.

It is the higher part of the immaterial being, the real you.

**Soul** (Gk: psyche, Heb: nepesh): Mind, thought-life, intellect, emotions, feelings, attitudes, appetites, personality, etc. The lower part of the immaterial being.

**Body** (Gk: soma, Heb: basar): The material part of you, your flesh and bones.

- a. The **Body** is nothing more than your physical body. It is not the real you. Someday it will die and – you’ll get a new one.

**Verses:** 1Cor. 9:27, Rom. 12:1, 2Cor. 12:23, 2Cor. 5:8, James 2:26

1. **It will die** (you’ll receive a perfect new one – 1Cor.15:44).
2. Your body allows you to be on earth (James2:26).
3. Your body is not the real you, your body is to be controlled by the real you.

- b. The Soul is the sum of your mind, thought-life, intellect, emotions, feelings, attitudes, appetites, personality, etc.  
*Verses: Col. 3:1-2, Luke 21:19, Rom. 12:2, Eph. 2:6, 2Cor. 10:5.*
  1. **It won't die**, you won't receive a new one, it must be renewed.
  2. Your soul is not the real you, you're commanded to control it (Luke 21:19, 2Cor.10:5).
  3. Many Christians believe that and act as though their soul (mind, thought-life, intellect, emotions, feelings, attitudes, appetites, personality) is their identity – resulting in a life without victory.
  
- c. The Spirit is the real you.  
*Verses: Rom. 8:10, Col. 3:1-2 and 9-10, Heb. 12:23, 2 Cor. 4:17 and 5:17, Eph. 2: 6-7*
  1. Your spirit is dead before knowing Jesus (Eph. 2:5), but is made alive when He comes into your life.
  2. Because of Him, you are first and foremost a Christian (Phil. 3:9), chosen by Him (Eph. 1:4), set apart for a purpose (Jer. 29:11, Eph. 2:10), called to be His ambassador (2 Cor. 5:20), His child (Jn. 1:12, Rom. 8:15), a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17), perfect (Heb. 12:23), righteous (Phil. 3:9), holy (1 Cor. 3:17, Eph. 1:4, 1Peter 1:15-16), victorious (Rom. 8:37) and much more.
  3. Christians need to see their identity how God sees it, and live accordingly. Live your new life based on his work at the cross not your shortcomings and inabilities.

**Remember: You are a spirit, you have a soul and you live in a body.** The spirit is the real you (a new creation, perfect, etc.). The body and soul (emotions, desires, appetites, thoughts) must submit to your spirit in line with His Holy Spirit.

3. When Jesus saves you the REAL person is made alive. The old nature is being put to death and the new person is made alive (Gal.2:20-21, Eph. 2:1-10).
  - a. The new person is your identity. It is who you are.
  - b. The old nature is no longer your identity. It is only a “flash back.”
  - c. Many Christians are stuck in a mindset of believing that the old nature is their identity. They start to believe the Christian life is “hard” and they think God is against them.
  - d. There are two fundamental truths arising out of what we've learned:
    1. As a Christian God sees you through His son Jesus (2Cor.5:17) and He empowers you to obey His will and plans for your life (Col.1:28-29, Phil.4:13).
    2. The old nature is still being put to death – it is a process – you are learning to control the body and soul.

We'll discuss both of these truths.

4. Be convinced of how He sees you. He sees you as a new creation. Most Christians would quickly agree that God sees us through his son Jesus (viewing us as blameless, not based on our performance but on Jesus' work at the cross). **But, do you really believe it?** Below we'll look at different Biblical characters and compare their actions and abilities with how God chose to see and use them.

There are many of these examples (David, Moses, Elijah and others). We'll look at two.

**Abraham.**

Purpose: To father the nation of Israel (this was physically impossible for Abraham).

Actions: In disbelief he fathered an illegitimate child (trying to physically fulfill God's calling).

God chose to see: (Rom.4:13-22) completely faithful, unwavering and fully persuaded of God's ability to accomplish the calling.

Accomplished: When Abraham finally trusted God the calling was fulfilled, not because he was correct in his own actions, but because he finally chose to agree with God and trust Him. God then accomplished the impossible through Abraham.

**Peter.**

Purpose: To lead the early church (this was impossible for anyone – especially Peter).

Actions: Emotionally fickle, lacked common sense, scared and timid to the point of denying Christ.

God chose to see: “A rock” (note: a little rock) worth building his church on.

Accomplished: Became one of the most effective and fearless evangelists ever, a writer of significant portions of the New Testament and was the leader of the early church. God accomplished the impossible through Peter when Peter began to trust God with his weaknesses, and very importantly, was filled with and learned to walk in the Spirit not in the flesh.

**Remember:** your God given purpose and calling in life are humanly impossible. Many Christians live very mundane lives and never experience the victorious Christian life. These Christians will never know the fulfillment of accomplishing what they were made to accomplish, because they live outside of God's will fearing their past actions and present weaknesses disqualify them from living out God's plan for their lives. It is vital to see yourself the way God does – through Jesus' work at the cross – and to step out in faith and obedience in what He has called you to – your purpose.

5. **Learn to control the body and soul.** You are a spirit, you have a soul and you live in a body. God has made you (your spirit) a new creation. The soul (mind, thought-life, intellect, emotions, feelings, attitudes, appetites, personality) is in the process of being conformed – the old nature must die. The body is dying and you'll get a new one. **The spirit, in line with His Spirit, is to control the body and soul (mind, thought-life, intellect, emotions, feelings, attitudes, appetites, personality).**
- a. Practical ways to control the body and soul.
    1. Keep Christ on the throne – be committed to periodic throne checks. Confess all known sin – He's faithful to forgive you (1Jn.1:9).
    2. Have quality daily quiet times – develop a habit. Make daily prayer and reading the Bible a priority – remember, priorities are what you get done, not what you hope to.
    3. Memorize scripture (Ps.119:11)
    4. Be committed to training – If you aren't learning and growing you'll become stagnant.

5. Be a doer of the Word and not a hearer only – (James 1:22) practice what you read in the Word and learn in training.
6. Be committed to fellowship and accountability.
7. Be active in sharing your faith. The Bible promises that this will lead to being “fully aware of every good thing you have in Christ Jesus.” (Philemon v.6)

- **Realize the world’s view of identity is not God’s.** As a Christian you will never be happy living out the world’s plans for your life.

- **Practice rejecting the world’s view of identity** (the 5C’s) and train yourself to think of yourself as a new creation, created to be like him, for a purpose.

- **Agree with God about how he sees you** – not based on your performance but on his perfect performance.

- **Practice controlling the soul** (mind, thought-life, intellect, emotions, feelings, attitudes, appetites, personality) and flesh.

- **Walk in the Spirit.**

- **Know your identity.** Because of Him, you are first and foremost a Christian (Phil. 3:9), chosen by Him (Eph. 1:4), set apart for a purpose (Jer. 29:11, Eph. 2:10), called to be His ambassador (2 Cor. 5:20), His child (Jn. 1:12, Rom. 8:15), a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17), perfect (Heb. 12:23), righteous (Phil. 3:9), holy (1 Cor. 3:17, Eph. 1:4, 1 Peter 1:15-16), victorious (Rom. 8:37) and much more.

**Remember:** Even in the midst of your mistakes He sees you as a new creation – accept it. Learn to live in agreement with what He has done. This is best described as walking in the Spirit. Let your knowledge of the way He sees you inspire you to control the body and soul (in His strength – not yours). **Your weaknesses present no challenge to His plans for your life, your willingness does.**

### **Application Points (start applying this principal now).**

1. **Describe how you will train yourself to think about your identity the way God does. Also think about and write how this will affect your relationship with God.**
  
2. **How will a knowledge of your identity affect your relationships with others (include what changes it will produce in how you treat others - i.e. your spouse, children, friends, etc.)?**
  
3. **How will a knowledge of your identity affect how you view and participate in the Great Commission (what influence will it have on how you reach the lost)?**

**Remember:** Be a doer of the Word, not a hearer only. Practice these application points this week. Make them habits. Learn to think of yourself as a Christian, made righteous through

His work. Practice taking every thought captive controlling the body and soul. This is the foundation for knowing and fulfilling your purpose.