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# In Christ I Am

2024 Summer Devotional



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# Booklet Intro

Who do you think you are? Depending on the tone in which you hear this question, it may make you feel defensive, out of place, or in the wrong. If you hear it asked with genuine interest however, it can invite you to pause and reflect, considering all of the elements that make you who you are. Our ancestors, our work, our hobbies, our stage of life, and our relationships are just a few of the ways we identify ourselves.

In our family, each person has a birthday book. Each book is a growing record of a tradition. In their book, others write messages and blessings, identifying and affirming what God is growing in that person. These books

provide a chance to speak life over one another and call out our identity as beloved members of our family.

After some time with his disciples, Jesus asked them, “who do people say the Son of Man is?” (Matthew 16:13, CSB). What would you write in Jesus’ birthday book? The disciples’ answers indicated that people associated Jesus with many significant figures from recent and ancient Israelite history.

Then Jesus asked them directly, “But you—who do you say that I am?” Peter was the first to speak up, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” Jesus was delighted with what God the Father had revealed to Peter. He had become aware of the truth of Jesus’ identity.

It’s one thing to answer the question, “who is Jesus?” What about the question, “who are you?” or more specifically, “who does Jesus say that you are?”

In this study, we’ll spend time answering this question through a biblical lens as we discover who we are in Christ. What titles and roles does he assign us? How does our relationship with him impact our identity?



Each week's theme includes four devotional reflections, all completing the statement "In Christ I am..." Each reflection is based on one or more short readings and concludes with a reflection question.

Each theme also suggests a key Scripture for you to practice reflective journaling, using the SOAP method. Here's a quick summary in case you're unfamiliar:

**S – Scripture.** *Slowly write out the words of the Scripture itself, and the reference.*

**O – Observation.** *Carefully observe the passage, and make notes. What is being said, and to whom? Are any words or themes repeated? What do you notice? Is the Spirit directing your attention to a particular part?*

**A – Application.** *Determine the main message or truth of the passage and write it down. What action will follow from this reading? Try to phrase an action point in positive, concrete terms (i.e. avoid saying what you won't do, or making it vague, like 'be more loving').*

**P – Prayer.** *Pray God's Word back to him. If he has revealed something to you during this time, pray about it. This may also be a place for confession, thanksgiving, or adoration. Write your prayer.*

We'll have an opportunity to discuss the week's material in each of our Sunday gatherings throughout January.



If you are reading through the reflections and think "this is great writing," I confess I can't take much credit—I've put this booklet together by adapting and editing an existing reading plan written by **Love God Greatly**. Their resources are available at [lovegodgreatly.com](http://lovegodgreatly.com), and the original reading plan is also accessible through the YouVersion Bible app, entitled "In Jesus You Are: Understanding Your Identity in Christ".

I pray that through this booklet, the Lord will illuminate, and help you to ruminate on, the truth of your identity in him. I pray he would strengthen your footing so that you can stand firm amidst enemy attack, advance in and with the gospel, and glorify God in all that you do. May the Lord bless you as you send your roots down into him and build your life on him.

Ngā mihi nui  
Gareth Davies  
Co-Pastor, KBC

# 1: In Christ I Am Renewed



*Forgiveness, new creation, sealing, and righteousness*

## I Am a New Creation

*Read 2 Corinthians 5:17 and Colossians 3:9-10.*

Our first reading comes from 2 Corinthians, a letter in the New Testament that was written by Paul to the early Christian church in Corinth. In this section of his letter, Paul was encouraging the early church leaders to understand that they had not only been reconciled to God through the birth, death, and resurrection of Christ, but they were to see themselves—and other believers—as new creations.

**“So then, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; what is old has passed away—look, what is new has come!”**

**2 Corinthians 5:17**



It can be difficult to accept that someone we've known our whole lives has truly changed when we've only known them in one way. Paul was reminding the church, which includes us, not to focus on the outward identity of other believers but to focus on our new identity. In Jesus, we are a new creation. The old ways, thoughts, and motivations can be left in the past as we walk in freedom toward the next step in our journey in with Jesus.



Q. How are you made a new creation in Christ? In what ways do you recognise Christ has removed your old nature from your life and made you more like Him?

**“In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our offenses, according to the riches of his grace...”**

**Ephesians 1:7**

## **I Am Forgiven**

*Read Ephesians 1:7-8 and 1 John 1:9.*

Have you ever felt like your identity was wrapped (and trapped) in the mistakes of your past, instead of the hope of your future? Although most of us would never introduce ourselves to someone with a list of our failures and sins, we have probably found ourselves identifying others by what they've done and how they've hurt us, instead of who they really are.

When we take the time to explore what God's Word says about our identity, we discover He doesn't see us as the world sees us. He sees our hearts, and through the death of His Son on the cross, we can claim a new identity for ourselves when we accept Him as our Saviour: forgiven.

We're forgiven not only for the small things, or only temporarily. When we ask God to forgive our sins, He forgives fully and completely. God will not bring up your past mistakes to use them against you or use them to define you. In Christ, we are forgiven.

Paul's letter to the Ephesians contains a beautiful portion of Scripture that scholars identify as a doxology. In Ephesians



1:3–14, Paul praises God while focusing our attention on the amazing things God has done for us. When we spend time remembering all God has done for us, the way He planned our redemption, all that was done to restore our relationship with Him, and the forgiveness we are offered through Jesus, our response should be gratitude and a willingness to offer that same love and forgiveness to others.

Q. What does it mean that we are redeemed through the blood of Christ?

Q. In what ways have you experienced Christ's forgiveness as you've confessed your sins to Him?

## I Am Sealed

*Read 2 Corinthians 1:21-22.*

Have you ever picked up a package from the supermarket and noticed a warning that says, “Do not use if seal is broken”? Seals are placed on items to keep the contents on the inside away from anything harmful on the outside. Letters used to be sealed with wax for privacy, and important documents are sealed in envelopes today.

What does it mean that in Jesus we are sealed? In addition to seals providing security and protection,

**“But it is God who establishes us together with you in Christ and who anointed us, who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a down payment.”**

**2 Corinthians 1:21-22**



they were also used as a way to indicate ownership of an item. God is the one who establishes us with Christ, who anoints us, and who claims us as His. Our identity is secure in God, not because of the work we can do, but because the Holy Spirit is at work in us, sanctifying us, separating us from our past, and promising us a fully redeemed future.

Unlike seals on food or letters that can be tampered with, torn away, or melted, God's seal on us is secure. Our identity as children of God is secure, with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit all at work in us, through us, and for us, now and forever.

In 2 Corinthians 1:20, Paul wrote, "For every one of God's promises is 'yes' in him. Therefore, through him we also say 'amen' to the glory of God." Our identity is secure in God, and all of His promises are "yes"—they will happen, in His perfect timing and way—and "amen"—His promises are true, reliable, and will be established.

Q. What difference does it make to have an identity in Christ that can't be taken away by any person or circumstance?



**"Therefore, since we  
have been declared  
righteous by faith,  
we have peace with  
God through our  
Lord Jesus Christ..."**

**Romans 5:1**

## **I Am Righteous**

*Read Romans 5:1-2.*

The dictionary defines "righteous" as being morally right or justified. We justify our actions by explaining our motives, or how it led to a positive outcome. We justify spending money or eating another slice of cake or going on vacation by trying to prove that we need or deserve it.

When we trust in Jesus as our Saviour, ask Him to forgive our sins, and commit our lives to Him, we are made righteous. Everything that separated us from God is covered by Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. We are not only made new, but we are made right before God.

In the earlier chapters of Paul's letter to the Romans, he explains our need for salvation and how we could receive salvation. In chapter 5, where our reading begins today, Paul explores the benefits we receive because of our salvation.



**Peace.** When we are made right with God through Jesus Christ, we experience the fruit of peace. Peace helps us live and act confidently because of what Jesus has done for us. This peace and confidence is not based on our circumstances or what we can achieve, but is real and lasting and only comes from Jesus.

**Access.** Layman's New Testament Bible Commentary notes the word used for "access" isn't simply an open door that we walk through, but "refers to ushering someone into the presence of royalty, or a ship sailing into the protection of a safe harbor." When we are made right before God, we are ushered into a place of protection, rest, and security.

Q. What does it mean to be righteous by faith? How does being righteous by faith give us peace?

## SOAP Journalling

*Follow the SOAP journalling process (see booklet intro) for **2 Corinthians 5:17**, writing on the following page or in your own journal.*

## Responding in Your Renewal

*In Christ, you are a new creation! This week, record all the ways you have seen God renew your life and make you a new creation in Christ. Ask God to reveal His work in you as you seek Him this week.*

## Closing Prayer

Father God, thank You for sending Jesus to live and die and be raised again so I can become a new creation. I pray my words and actions would bring You glory so that I would be easily identified as Your child. Help me walk in freedom, leaving the old behind so I can fully embrace who You say I am. Amen.

# 2: In Christ I Am Redeemed



*Rescue, salvation, freedom, and love*

## I Am Rescued

*Read John 3:16-17, Colossians 1:11-14 and Hebrews 2:14-15.*

In Jesus we are rescued. Not from flat tyres or power outages, but from the enemy of our souls and an eternity in hell, separated from God because of our sin. Not only are we saved, we are fully rescued, moved from where we were to a new, safe, home in the kingdom of God, with no bill to pay back. We are fully rescued, paid in full.

**“He delivered us  
from the power of  
darkness and  
transferred us to the  
kingdom of the Son  
he loves...”**

**Colossians 1:13**

Our identity in Christ is based on what God has done for us, not what we have done for ourselves or anyone else. The way we act, treat one another, the words we speak and the motivations in our hearts are a reflection of who we are in Christ. As the rescued, we now have eyes to see where help is needed so we can serve as the hands and feet of Jesus to those around us.



The more we know of God, the better we understand who we are. And the more we understand and live out who we are as children of God, the more we will impact the lives of those around us in a way that draws others to the kingdom of God. The world's definition of identity puts the focus back on us, while understanding our identity in Christ gives us a vertical focus, back on God, and a horizontal focus to serve others.

No matter what you are facing today, no matter where you need God to step in and rescue you, He is faithful. He will deliver you.

Q. How has Christ rescued your life from the power of darkness? How does it comfort you to know that He is always working for your deliverance, no matter the circumstances?



**“But God, being rich  
in mercy, because of  
his great love with  
which he loved us,  
even though we were  
dead in offenses,  
made us alive  
together with Christ  
—by grace you are  
saved!”**

**Ephesians 2:4-5**

## **I Am Saved**

*Read Romans 5:8-10 and Ephesians 2:1-5.*

There is something incredibly compelling about a “before and after” photo. Home renovations show us the potential we can find in our own rooms, while fitness transformations give us hope that our work will also pay off. It can be fun to look at photos that show others what we looked like in those awkward teenage years, or the difference between the start and end of a creative project.

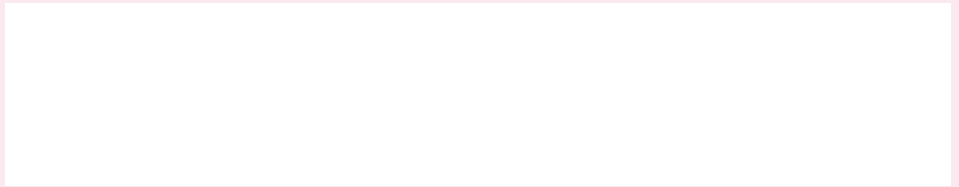
In Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, he spent time reminding them—and us—of the transformation that happens when we accept Jesus as our Saviour. We are not only saved, but our identity shifts from “dead” to “alive.” Paul wasn’t speaking

of a literal raising from the dead, but of the condition of our souls. Layman’s New Testament Commentary describes it as “an existence devoid of the true purpose, character, and fulfilment of human life created in the image of God.”

God loves us so much that He could not allow us to only have “death” as an option for our identity. When He planned our redemption through the sacrifice of His Son on the cross, we were given a new choice and a new identity: alive in Christ. When we understand who we were before Jesus came into our lives, we can appreciate even more the love, grace, and mercy God extends to each of us.

In Jesus we are saved, not only from the deserved punishment for our sins, but from our “before” identity to an “after” transformation that brings us to true, abundant life.

Q. Because we are saved by grace, nothing we can do will change our status as a child of God. Do you believe this? Why or why not?



## I Am Free

*Read John 8:36 and 2 Corinthians 3:17.*

Jesus was speaking to the Jews who had gathered in the temple in Jerusalem, a crowd who had mixed feelings about His identity as the Messiah. Those who did not believe pointed to the small town Jesus was from and His apparent lack of impressive family to discredit His claims (John 7:41–43). Little did they know, Jesus was about to fulfill every prophecy ever written about the coming Messiah!

**“So if the son sets  
you free, you will be  
really free.”**

**John 8:36**

In Jesus we are truly free. For a people who had experienced bondage and slavery as a nation, in a time when rulers and winners of battles enslaved their captives, they knew freedom as a fleeting opportunity. In John 8:35, Jesus reminded them that “the slave does not remain in the family forever, but the son remains forever.” In Jesus, your identity is transformed from slave to son. You are offered full, complete, and

permanent freedom—and a place in the family of God.

Although the world may attempt to limit our identity, influence, and impact because of our age, background, experience, or ability, our identity is secure in Jesus. In Him, we're free. In Him, we have purpose. In Him, we become children of God and part of a family that will never leave us, doubt us, or run out of love for us. The chains of sin that have held us back are no longer effective against the power of Jesus Christ. We are free to be a

light to those around us, a beacon of hope to our communities, and children of God who are secure in our identity no matter what comes our way.

Q. How has Christ given you freedom? What are you free from today that you were not free from before you were walking with Christ?



**“In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.”**

**1 John 4:10**

## **I Am Loved**

*Read 1 John 4:10-19 and Romans 8:35-39.*

In the English language, we only have one word for “love” and we use it dozens of ways. We say we love our new shoes, we love our spouse, we love the new book we borrowed from the library, and we love our favourite coffee. Love is often thought of as a feeling, an emotional response to something that brings us joy or delight. This also



means love can be fleeting as our tastes change, our relationships shift, or things that used to bring us joy are replaced by something new.

God's definition of love is not based on what we feel, but what was revealed to us through Jesus' life and death. Love comes from God. Love came down to us from heaven in the physical presence of Jesus Christ, giving us a gift so unimaginable and undeserved that we could never do enough to earn it. It is simply and profoundly a gift from God.



First John 4:19 says, “we love because He first loved us.” When our identity is firmly rooted in the knowledge that we are loved by the Creator of the universe, the love we show others comes from an overflow of what God has already done for us. This love will not change its mind and it is not dependent on what we can do to deserve it. God's love will not fail.

Q. Did Christ love you before you loved Him? Why? What had you done to earn His love before you loved Him?

A large, empty rectangular box with a light blue border, intended for journaling or writing a response to the question above.

## SOAP Journaling

Follow the SOAP journaling process for **Ephesians 2:4-5**, writing on the following page or in your own journal.



## Responding in Your Redemption

We are alive in Christ! In what ways has God made you alive? *Reflect on the ways God has restored your life spiritually, mentally, emotionally, physically, and relationally.*

## Closing Prayer

God, as I think about all the ways I don't deserve Your love, grace, and mercy, I am even more in awe of the gift of salvation You offer through Jesus. Thank You for giving me a new identity, an "after" that is full of life and hope and purpose. Amen.

# 3: In Christ I Belong to God



*Reception, adoption, chosenness, and childness*

## I Am Received

*Read Romans 15:7-9.*

As much as we all crave connection, a big part of our hearts also crave acceptance. An open door is nice, but a personal invitation and a seat saved for us at the table is better. When we feel accepted, we can come as we are, without the masks and without faking “fine.”

In Paul's letter to the Romans, he encouraged the believers to receive—or accept—one another, the way they had been accepted by Jesus. Jesus receives us into His family already knowing the worst things we've ever done, said, or thought. He knows our past, present, and future, and He still makes a place for us with Him in eternity.

**“Receive one another, then, just as Christ also received you, to God's glory.”**

**Colossians 1:13**



The early Roman Christians were struggling to accept other believers who did things a little differently, like the food they ate or the special days they observed. It was in these grey areas that some believers were starting to consider themselves better than others, judging their choices and practices. Paul was very clear in his letter that the only thing that would come out of this type of behaviour was division.

In Jesus, we are received fully and completely into the family of God. Our differences make up a beautiful tapestry that brings life to the gospel. We are uniquely created in the image and likeness of God to use our gifts and talents to bring glory to God and grow His kingdom. If we are accepted with open arms by God, who are we to pass judgement on one another?

We need one another, and our witness to the gospel is hindered when we compete with and judge other believers. In Jesus we are not only received, but called to receive, accept, and support one another with open hearts.

Q. What does it mean to be received into the body of Christ? How can you receive and welcome others into the body of Christ?



**"He did this by  
predestining us to  
adoption as his legal  
heirs through Jesus  
Christ, according to  
the pleasure of his  
will..."**

**Ephesians 1:5**

## **I Am Adopted**

*Read Ephesians 1:5-6 and Colossians 1:12-13.*

Have you ever watched a video of a child learning they're going to be adopted, or witnessed the celebration of a family when a judge declares their adoption complete? It's one of the most beautiful, heartwarming moments. Despite any past trauma and brokenness, God has provided a new way for family, for togetherness to exist. Suddenly a child's life is changed as they become a permanent, legal, complete member of a family. Adoption tells a child they are wanted, loved, and secure.



If you say your identity is “abandoned,” “unwanted,” “ignored,” “overlooked,” or “forgotten,” there is good news—great news, in fact! When we accept Jesus as our Saviour we get a new identity as adopted sons and daughters of God. You are chosen. You are wanted. You are known. You are loved. You are secure. No one has the power to undo what God has done. When we’re adopted into the family of God we are His, forever.

The even better news is, God didn’t wait for us to get our lives together or become perfect people before He decided to offer us the full rights, privileges, and responsibilities of believers. It was decided, in love and in accordance with God’s will, that we would be adopted into His family through Jesus Christ.

When was the last time you embraced that identity? Have you come before God in amazement that He would choose you? Have you celebrated the amazing gift you’ve received through Jesus? God loves you so much, there isn’t a “Welcome Home” sign big enough or confetti-filled enough to celebrate when you become part of His family. In Jesus, we are adopted!

**Q.** Being an adopted child of God means He can never disown you, no matter what you have done or may do. Do you believe this is true? Why or why not?

**“But you are a  
chosen race, a royal  
priesthood, a holy  
nation, a people of  
his own, so that you  
may proclaim the  
virtues of the one  
who called you out of  
darkness into his  
marvelous light.”**

**1 Peter 2:9**

## **I Am Chosen**

*Read Ephesians 1:4 and 1 Peter 2:9.*

Our second reading today contains key words and phrases that are important to explore as we look at our identity in Jesus. The author of the text, Peter, made a specific point to quote several passages of Scripture from the Old Testament: Exodus 19:5–6, Isaiah 43:20–21, and Malachi 3:17. In the verses in Exodus, God told His people they would be a “kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” In Isaiah we read God addresses His “chosen people” whom He created for His glory. In Malachi the God-of-Heaven’s-Armies says they belong to Him.

It may have been easily understood by the Jews in the early church that they were God’s chosen people, but Peter’s message was a reminder that *all* Christians, including Gentiles, were chosen by God. That was new information for the early Christians, but it was important for the unity and identity of the church to understand that, in Jesus, we are all chosen by the One who called us out of darkness and into His light.

The truth shared with the early believers applies to us as well. Although the world may try to tell us we are insignificant, ordinary, or unwanted, we can claim a new identity in Jesus: *chosen, royal, purposed, and called*. When we remember all God has done for us and who we are in Him, our next step is to proclaim it to the world. Don’t keep the Good News of the gospel to yourself; it’s meant to be shared! The gospel is for everyone, and in Jesus, all are invited to step away from the darkness of their sin and into the marvellous light of forgiveness and eternity with God.



Q. Why has God chosen us to be His people? What does He ask us to do now that we are chosen as His?



## I Am a Child of God

*Read John 1:12 and 1 John 3:1-2.*

When was the last time you played pretend or built a fort? Have you had a moment recently to let your imagination run wild, to laugh with your whole body, or make a mess in the name of creativity? Children see the world in an amazing way, as though everything in it is their playground. Items we see as rubbish become precious art supplies and silly games with no rules bring the loudest giggles.

Children live with open hearts and minds, ready to learn and willing to change. They rely on the adults in their lives to love them, keep them safe, and answer all the questions that come to mind when they should be getting ready for bed.

**“But to all who have received him—those who believe in his name—he has given the right to become God’s children.”**

**John 1:12**



That’s the relationship we’re invited into when we become part of God’s family. We are His children, and we receive not only the rights and privileges that come with our adoption, but a perfect Father who loves us, protects us, and listens to all of the questions that keep us awake at night. He is big enough to carry the weight of our worries so we can find freedom.



In Jesus, we are called children of God. If your experience with an earthly father makes it hard for you to lean into God the Father, bring all of that hurt and disappointment to Him. Spend time in God's Word and learn more about who He is and how much He loves you. Look for the small gifts He offers throughout your day and write down the little, ordinary ways He shows up in your life. Our God is unchanging and perfect. He made a place for you in His family—and that was not a mistake.

Q. What does it mean to be a child of God? Do you find comfort in this truth? Why or why not?

## SOAP Journalling

Follow the SOAP journalling process for **Philippians 3:20**, writing below or in your own journal.

## Responding in Your Belonging

This week, reflect on what it means to have citizenship in heaven. How does your citizenship affect where you are able to live and work on earth? How does knowing that, in Christ, you have eternal citizenship in heaven affect your life today? *Pray, thanking God for the identity he has secured for you.*

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## Closing Prayer

God, thank You for giving me a fresh start when You forgave my sins, and for giving me a new identity, a new home, and a new hope. I pray my life would be a reflection of the love You have shown me so others might one day be able to claim their forever home in heaven with You. Amen.

# 4: In Christ I Am Capable



*Blessing, equipping, empowerment, and triumph*

**“Blessed is the God  
and Father of our  
Lord Jesus Christ,  
who has blessed us  
with every spiritual  
blessing in the  
heavenly realms in  
Christ.”**

**Ephesians 1:3**

## **I Am Blessed**

*Read Numbers 6:24-26, 2 Corinthians 9:8-10, and Ephesians 1:3.*

For many of us, to say we are “blessed” often describes feeling lucky or glad we have obtained something we’ve been working toward. We’ll say we’re blessed to be given an opportunity, or we feel blessed a certain situation worked out in our favour. But in Paul’s letter to the early church in Ephesus, the blessing he wrote about had nothing to do with luck and everything to do with the gifts we receive as believers.

God is blessed because He is holy, and it is only through the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit that we are able to be sealed, adopted, redeemed, and chosen. Those are the spiritual blessings we receive. We are also blessed with spiritual gifts and abilities to serve God’s kingdom that flow out of the blessing we receive when we accept Christ as our Saviour.

As citizens of heaven, created intentionally and fully known by God, our identity is rooted in Whose we are, not who we are. The gifts we receive from God are not by luck or fate or accident, but beautifully and purposefully planned out for our good and His glory. This opening portion of Paul’s letter is considered a doxology, as Paul begins his message by first praising God for what He has done in a format that conveys worship and honour.

In Jesus we are blessed, not because of who we are or what we have done, but because our holy, amazing, wonderful God has chosen to bless us with gifts beyond anything we could ever ask or imagine.

Q. In what ways do you see God's blessing on your life? How has He given you every spiritual blessing in Christ?



## I Am Equipped

*Read Ephesians 2:10 and 2 Timothy 3:16-17.*

Children are wonderfully creative. They can see a pile of cardboard tubes and create telescopes, or turn a stack of blankets into a fort. Paint is meant to be messy, and colouring is best when it goes outside the lines. They look at clouds and see animal shapes and can create entire worlds and endless stories while playing with building blocks. Beauty isn't found in perfection, but in the experience.

As adults, it can be difficult to embrace our creativity. Our past experiences, doubts, and failures keep us from creating something simply for the sake of creating. If we are not able to do it perfectly, we wonder if we should even bother to do it at all. Beauty is found in the celebration and acceptance of what we produce, not in our enjoyment of the experience.

**“For we are his  
creative work,  
having been created  
in Christ Jesus for  
good works that God  
prepared beforehand  
so we can do them.”**

**Ephesians 2:10**

In Jesus we are equipped to do good works that God has prepared for us. We have been creatively designed to fulfil the plans and purpose He created specifically for us. What God created is beautiful. We can bring God glory and honour when we embrace who He made us to be and the work He designed for us to do.

God will equip us for the work, not because He knows we can do it perfectly, but because we are His creation, masterfully, intentionally, and creatively designed.

Q. What specific good works have you seen God equip and prepare you for? How have you seen Him work through your strengths and gifts to advance His kingdom or encourage others?



**“I am able to do all things through the one who strengthens me.”**

**Philippians 4:13**

## **I Am Empowered**

*Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 2 Corinthians 12:9, and Philippians 4:13.*

We are constantly surrounded by the shouts of the world telling us that we can do anything and be anything that we want, as long as we work hard enough, try often enough, or buy enough stuff. We can earn that promotion at work on our

own if we're simply *better* than everyone else. We can build a fabulous life for ourselves as long as we have enough, make enough, and surround ourselves with the right people.

In God's kingdom, we are at our strongest when we are weak, and we are our most sufficient when we are dependent on God. The verse above does not mean that we

*should* do all things, but that we can find joy as we rely on God to empower and equip us to do the work He calls us to do.



Paul took the time at the end of his letter to the church in Philippi to show his appreciation for their support of his ministry. He noted his joy came from the Lord, not from his circumstances. Although he had experienced times of need and times of abundance (Philippians 4:12), Paul shared that true contentment came from understanding his strength came from Jesus.

In Jesus, we are empowered to navigate all that life has for us through the strength we have in Him. When our joy and our identity are rooted in Christ, our circumstances will not shake us. Our consistent, joy-filled, lives will be a witness to the grace and love of Jesus who sustains us in all things and through all things.

Q. What does it mean that we are able to do all things through Christ? How can you find peace in your weakness or in difficult circumstances knowing He is always working, even in your weakness?

**“You are from God,  
little children, and  
have conquered  
them, because the  
one who is in you is  
greater than the one  
who is in the world.”**

**1 John 4:4**

## **I Am a Conqueror**

*Read 1 John 4:4.*

Through our time together in this study on identity, we’ve learned that who we are isn’t about anything we have done, but who God is and what He has done for us. When our identity is wrapped up in our location, vocation, or circumstances, we’ll be disappointed and discouraged when those things change. When we lean into an identity that is rooted firmly in who God says we are and what Jesus has done for us, what happens around us will not change or challenge our joy and peace.

The apostle John’s letter to the early church was intended to remind believers of Jesus’ true nature: fully God and fully human. False teachers had started to pop up, denying Jesus was the Messiah. First John encourages us that we have already overcome these false teachers because the Holy Spirit is within us, helping us discern and conquer false teaching.

First John 4:4 reminds us of our identity as children of God. As God’s children, we have been equipped with the Holy Spirit and unified with Christ. In Jesus we are: a new creation, forgiven, sealed, righteous, rescued, saved, free, loved, received, adopted, chosen, blessed, equipped, and empowered. Our citizenship is in heaven with all of God’s children and our identity offers unity with a community of believers—a gift far greater than the individualism and competition of the world.

You are who God says you are. You are His.

Q. How are you empowered to fight against the enemy’s schemes every day? How can you overcome the enemy through the power of Christ?



## SOAP Journalling

Follow the SOAP journalling process for **1 John 4:4**, writing below or in your own journal.

A large, empty rectangular box with a light pink background, intended for the user to write their SOAP journaling response to 1 John 4:4.

## Responding in Your Empowerment

In Christ, we have power over the enemy, and power over sin. How can you combat the lies and schemes of the enemy this week, knowing that, in Christ, you are greater than any enemy? *Pray, calling on God's help and strength for your spiritual battles this week.*

## Closing Prayer

God, there are so many loud voices that try to pull me away from the truth of Your Word and who You say I am. Thank You for the gift of the Holy Spirit who helps me identify and conquer the lies so I can lean fully into my identity as a child of God. Amen.

# Booklet Conclusion

Who does Jesus say that you are? This is the question we started this study with, and over the four themes we've heard how we are chosen, forgiven, adopted, saved, blessed, made new, and free—to recall just a selection.

I wonder which of the reflections has most impacted for you in this season. It's helpful to meditate on these truths, especially as we hear the condemnation of the enemy, spoken through the world around us and sometimes through our own deceived spirit within us.

Jesus said knowing the truth would set his listeners free (John 8:32). I hear in this two dimensions:



First, we need to know the truth about ourselves, about God, and about the gospel. Sin makes for a death sentence that hangs over us unless we receive God's mercy in Christ. If we are to be free we must first see how we are bound.

Second, we need to know the Truth—Jesus himself (see John 14:6). When we know Jesus, developing and deepening relationship with him, then we can find and walk in the true freedom he brings. May you continue to grow in him!

My prayer for you and me as we move into this new year is adapted from Ephesians 3:18-19, in which Paul prayed for God's work within the believers in Ephesus.

Father God, out of the glorious richness of your resources, empower us to know the strength of the Spirit's inner reinforcement—that, as we trust in Christ, he would live in our hearts. Would you enable us, firmly rooted and strengthened in your love, to grasp (together with all of your people) how wide and deep and long and high is the love of Christ, and to experience it for ourselves—even though it is too great to be fully comprehended. Lord Jesus, make us complete, filling us with all the fullness of God! Amen.

**May Christ's  
work in, for,  
and through  
you bring  
glory to God  
and good  
to his world.**



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