

“Releasing God’s Identity”

Galatians 2:11-21

Introduction

How do we distinguish one store or product from another? We can tell them apart by their branding. Sometimes, we can recognize a company by its logo or colors before we notice the name or the message. Sometimes, we can identify a brand by a song or a sound without seeing anything else. Branding represents a company’s identity. The clearer that identity is, the better known and more successful the company will often be. Our Christian identity should be more visible than any company logo or jingle. As believers, our identity in Christ defines how we view ourselves and relate to others to maximize our experience with God.

Our identity in Christ must be the first point of reference by which everything else about us is measured. Failure to do this leads to confusion about our identity and disunity among believers. In Galatians 2:12, Peter allows race to cause division between the Jewish and Gentile believers. Paul then calls Peter out on his lack of consistency with the gospel, which is not only about salvation in heaven but about how we relate to people on earth. Our identity in Christ trumps human criteria—things like race, culture, class, and gender—but it does not make us lose our uniqueness as individuals. All our unique qualities should be placed under the banner of Christ. We have been crucified with Christ, and yet, the life we now live, we live by faith (Galatians 2:20). Our faith in Christ takes precedence.

Defining ourselves by our faith in Christ results in spiritual unity wherever illegitimate division has occurred in our spiritual family. We need to remember that at one time, we were all separated from Christ and hostile toward God until we were reconciled to Him through Christ’s blood (Ephesians 2:13). Understanding our identity also results in spiritual victory. When we stop trying to void the grace of God, we realize that we cannot earn righteousness through the Law (Galatians 2:21). Christ imputes His righteousness to us through His work on the cross. Making Christ our central reference point will release more of God’s grace in our lives so we can experience an outpouring of His favor and blessings.

Getting Started

1. What are some of the most recognizable brands? Why is branding important?
2. What are the qualities or characteristics that cause the most division among people?

Let’s Get Personal

1. What is something you have found your identity in other than Christ? How did that affect your relationship with the Lord and with others?
2. Where do you need more spiritual unity or victory in your life?
3. What blessings have you received from putting your identity in Christ first?

Take the Next Step

1. What are the first steps you need to take toward making Christ the central reference point of your identity?
2. How should understanding your identity in Christ impact how you relate to others? What can you do this week to build unity with other believers?
3. Want to go deeper? Take time to look at the following passages: Galatians 2:11-21; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21; Galatians 6:14; 1 Peter 2:9-12; James 2:1-13; Philippians 3:20; John 4:1-42; Revelation 7:9; Numbers 12:1-14; Colossians 1:19-23; Ephesians 2:11-22; Romans 14:19; Psalm 133:1-3.

Renew Your Mind

"I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."

Galatians 2:20
