

INTRODUCTION

Imagine walking into your bank, expecting to be treated according to your same old account with zero credit, overwhelming debt, and the label of “financial risk.” Suddenly, the banker tells you that your debt has been paid, your record is perfect, and you have been reclassified as a trusted partner with access to wealth. This is the picture of what God has done for us in Christ. Sadly, many Christians today have the reclassified “black card” of heaven, but they still live like they are penniless when heaven is rich. In Romans 6, Paul seeks to root us in our identity so that we know how to spend our lives.

Since God gave us grace to cover our sin, should we continue sinning so we can receive more grace? Paul asks this question and answers it with an emphatic *no*. Grace is not permission to continue living in the identity from which Christ delivered us. We have been made participants in Christ’s death and resurrection through our spiritual baptism, and we are a new creation. We cannot be old and new at the same time. Christians, however, still struggle with sin and the flesh, but our struggle must not become our identity. We must consider ourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ (Romans 6:11). That means we agree with what God has already declared to be true about our identity to unlock the experience of that new identity.

In Christ, you have moved from sinner to saint, from orphan to child, from condemned to saved, from darkness to light, and from death to life. No longer allow your struggles to become your titles. Begin operating according to the new standards of who you are now. Make new choices, develop new relationships, and consume new kinds of influences by allowing God’s Word to shape your thinking and behavior. You do not need to earn this new identity—it has already been given to you through Christ. The question is whether you will agree with God and unlock your new life in Him.

GETTING STARTED

1. If you suddenly received a life-changing inheritance, what would you do differently?
2. What happens when someone’s position or status totally changes? How are they treated?

LET’S GET PERSONAL

1. Why is treating grace as permission to sin a misunderstanding of what grace actually is?
2. What is the difference between struggling with something and allowing that struggle to become part of your identity?
3. Are there places where you know intellectually who you are in Christ but have difficulty living as though it is true? Why do you think that gap exists?

TAKE THE NEXT STEP

1. If your identity in Christ truly shaped your daily decisions, what would change about the way you spend your time?
2. What is one sinful pattern you need to stop excusing?
3. ***Want to dig deeper?*** Take a look at the following passages: 1 Peter 2:9; Romans 8:17; 2 Peter 1:4; Romans 5:20-21; 2 Corinthians 12:9; John 1:16; Jude 1:4; Colossians 2:13; Galatians 5:17; Romans 7:14-25; 1 Peter 3:21; Titus 3:5; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 2:20.

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***