

Rooted in Identity
Grow Series, Part 2
July 14th 2024

It is hard to believe that in just two short months our only begotten son will be 18 years old. I remember being at a staff Christmas party when Nikki and I were only two months married. The counseling pastor on our team said, “You are going to blink and then you will be married ten years, then blink again and be married 25 years.” It is true what they say, don’t blink because it goes fast.

Since Gabriel could speak, we always said that the kid could easily be a lawyer. He is a master negotiator and very annoying manipulator. When he was a young kid and wanted something, he wouldn’t just come out and ask me. If Gabe had a friend over and he wanted ice cream, or to have that friend spend the night, he wouldn’t come out and just ask me, he would have his *friend* come out and ask me. He knew I would have a harder time saying no to his friends than him. But over time his friends became like my kids so I could say no to them easily. So as Gabe became a teenager, he had to change his tactic. Now what he does (even this past week) is go in and woo his mom with his idea. He will paint a masterful picture of his coveted prize and tell her all the benefits while at the same time eliminating all the cons to his plan. Once he gets her buy in, he will come to me and say, “Hey dad, mom wants to go get frozen yogurt, can we go.” He knows “happy wife, happy life.” He knows that if he can get mom’s agreement, he had double the chances to get what He wants.

That’s exactly what the enemy does. Did I just compare the devil to my son, yes, I did, he needs to repent. The devil is aggressively coming after your identity in Christ and lying to you to get your agreement. If you agree with the devil, he can use your own power against you to accomplish his will.

Have you ever stopped and thought about why it seems like our identity is being attacked on every level of society? There is a war on gender identity. There is an agenda for our kids in public schools. The media is trying to manipulate and control the political narrative. It seems like everywhere we look; our identity is being attacked. And if we are not careful, if we are not rooted and grounded in our identity, we can become a pawn for the enemy. If you have your Bibles go with me to the book of Colossians. This is not our main Scripture we are going to study today but it will highlight the main point of today’s message. We are going to Colossians chapter 2. As you are turning there, we are in a series titled “Grow.” We are looking at four things we can be rooted and grounded in based on the Scripture found in Ephesians 3. Last week we looked at how to be rooted and grounded in God’s love. Today we are going to study how to be rooted and grounded in our Identity. I hope you are in Colossians, let’s begin in verse 4:

4 I say this so that no one will delude you with persuasive argument. 5 For even though I am absent in body, nevertheless I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good discipline and the stability of your faith in Christ. 6 Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the

***Lord, so walk in Him, 7 having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.
– Colossians 2:4-7 NASB1995***

Paul here is saying not to let anyone get your agreement and confuse you of your identity. He is encouraging us to be rooted and built up in our identity in Christ. So, what does that all mean? If you were to google a list of Scriptures that speak of our identity in Christ, it will come out to several, several pages. I know because I have done it. But today, before we get into our main Scripture, I want to highlight the top four truths of our identity in Christ. If you are taking notes, please look in your bulletins:

Who we are IN Christ:

#1 - I am a child of God.

When Jesus spoke of Himself in the Gospels, do you know what phrase He used 99% of the time? It was not Messiah, Savior, or King...it was Son. Jesus always referred to Himself as "Son." He called Himself the "Son of God, the Son of Man, the Son of David...Son, Son, Son." Jesus stated that His primary goal in His ministry was to reveal the Father. The top revelation of our identity in Christ is to fully understand that we are dearly beloved children of God. 1 John 1 says:

12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. – John 1;12-13 NASB1995

When you understand you are a child of God, you turn to the Father for all things needed. Your provision comes from your Father, your protection comes from your Father, your perspective comes from your Father. If you are not convinced that you are a beloved child of God, you may be tempted to look elsewhere for these serious things. Jesus said in John 14 "I will not leave you as orphans." If you want a 60,000 word explanation of this, I encourage you to buy my book *Wrecked by Love*." If you don't have money, email me and I will send you the PDF.

#2 - I am a new creation, not a sinner.

Several years ago, for Easter, the church I was serving had a special guest speaker. I won't say this person's name, but just know he was a best-selling Christian author, pastor, and speaker. Before the service we all got together as a staff with this guest speaker and prayed for him and the service. Before we prayed, we thanked him big time for accepting our request to speak on Easter. He replied by saying, "I'm nothing special just a sinner walking in God's grace." That sounds very humble and mature of him; however, I believe it is Biblically and Theologically wrong. I don't believe we are sinners. That is not our identity. We are saints, redeemed by the blood of Christ. Another way of saying it, is that we are saints who sometimes sin in the flesh. Remember, God is made three in one – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Genesis 1:26-27 says that

we are made in the image and likeness of God. So, if God is three in one, we are three in one – spirit, soul, and body. We need to recognize that it is our flesh/our body that has the ability to sin. Our spirit man was dead and when we were saved was resurrected with Jesus and became perfect, healed, and holy. Many can quote 2 Corinthians 5:17 which says:

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. – 2 Corinthians 5:17 NASB1995

Look at the powerful statement Romans 6 makes:

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? 2 May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? 3 Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; 7 for he who has died is freed from sin. – Romans 6:1-7 NASB1995

I want you to notice verses 5-6. We were baptized into His death, and we shall be in the *likeness* of His resurrection. As Jesus is, so are we in this world. Jesus was sinless and pure. Notice too, it says our *body* of sin, not our *spirit* of sin. We are no longer slaves of sin when we understand our identity.

#3 - I am a friend of God.

No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. – John 15:15 NASB1995

Why is it important to believe we are a friend of God? God is Sovereign, all powerful, and worthy of honor...why would we even consider being His friend? The answer is that the Father paid a high price for our fellowship. Friends can live with unhurried fellowship. Friends share secrets. Friends are the first ones called on for help.

#4 - I am more than a conqueror.

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?... 37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. – Romans 8:31;37 NASB1995

It is important to understand and declare you are more than a conqueror for many reasons. The first is that it rejects the excuse that you are a victim. You are not a victim when the same power

that raised Jesus from the grave lives in you. You are not a victim when Jesus gave you authority and every spiritual blessing on the cross. The more you believe you are not a victim, the more you will partner with God's will and be used by Him. To many Christians study and never apply. Listen, don't use revival as your scapegoat. Don't pray and pray for revival hoping that one singular move of God will fix all your problems and the issue of our society. YOU are revival. YOU are reformation. That begins with a firm understanding of your identity and knowing that you can do all things through Christ who gives you strength. If you are not firm on your identity, you will operate as a victim and give nothing but **excuses**. It is so important to understand and believe these Scriptures and truth about or identity. I would challenge you to make them part of your regular declarations.

Now let's get to our main Scripture this morning. Go with me to the book of Genesis chapter 3.

Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?" 2 The woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; 3 but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'" 4 The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die! 5 For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 6 When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings. 8 They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9 Then the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" 10 He said, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself." 11 And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" 12 The man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate." 13 Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

– Genesis 3:1-13 NASB1995

I want you to notice the sequence of the enemy's tactics. The first thing the enemy did was tempt Adam and Eve to question the Word of God. He said, "Did God really say?" He did the same thing with Jesus in Luke 4 "IF You are the Son of God." The first step is to make you question truth. That's why we need to live with a renewed mind and a mind that's already made up. We are to be ready in and out of season so that we are not taken captive by a lie. Eve did ok with this temptation. She responded with truth saying God specifically said not to eat from this tree. So, the enemy moved on to his second tactic which is to lie. He is the father of lies and his language is pure lies. So, he lied to Adam and Eve saying God was withholding something from them. He tried to get them to attain something *through* sin that they already had. The final tactic of the enemy was that he caused Adam and Eve to fortify the lie and build a stronghold. It

was bad enough that they sinned against God, but now the enemy was using everything around them to make the lie stronger. He made them aware of their nakedness and rather than live in that freedom, they now saw it as shame. All of that led to Adam and Eve *hiding* from the presence of God. How sad is it that the One they should have ran to, was the One they hid from. And finally, when God confronted them on their sin, they did not repent. The lie was so ingrained, and their identity was so tarnished, that they gave up an excuse.