

Who Am I? Understanding Our Identity in Christ

Colossians 1:1

BGT	Παῦλος ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ καὶ Τιμόθεος ὁ ἀδελφός
NKJ	Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother
KES	Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ through will of God, and Timothy the brother

Individuals, but not individualistic; we are in groups and have identities given to us by God.

THE WRITER – "Paul" (means "little")

Paul's given Jewish name was Saul ("asked for") — the name of the only king from the tribe of Benjamin. Named after a celebrity of whom he was related! Paul's changing of his name (possibly his Gentile name) seems to indicate Paul's transition from proud Pharisee to humble servant of the Lord as he grew spiritually.

- **(56 AD) 1 Cor 15:9-10** – *For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God [which was] with me.*
- **(60-61 AD) Eph 3:7-8** – *of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power. To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,*
- **(62 AD) 1 Tim 1:15-16** – *This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.*

Saul – the enemy of Christ → directly approached by Jesus – GOD'S GRACE TO SAVE ANYONE

God used to proclaim the gospel to the known world, and to write 13 books of the NT (here, in prison)

Is there progress in your life? Are you growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord?

THE WRITER'S AUTHORITY – "an apostle of Jesus Christ" – one sent with a mission

Paul was chosen to lead and sent by Jesus Christ. The concept of his divine appointment involves his authority from God and his accountability to God. Apostles were foundational to the establishment of the church (Eph 2:20), and seem to have been temporary. Qualifications included knowing Christ personally. Apostles appeared to receive direct revelation from God, and have direct authority of God.

Eph 2:19-20 – *Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner [stone].*

God provided the foundation necessary to properly establish the church. God had a plan from before time! He has stated it (Matt 28:18-20). Are you working with His plan, or against it? The church is not an accident, or a hodge podge, but a detailed, defined entity begun supernaturally by God. Is it part of your plan? Does your plan coincide with God's plan?

THE WRITER'S SELECTION – "by the will of God" – God's choice, not man's choice

Eph 4:9-11 indicates that God appoints specific men, gifting them to perform specific abilities, with specific authority to minister to specific people in specific places at specific times. God chooses these as He wills (cp spiritual gifts). These positions are not self-selected or self-described. God's program built on foundation of God's leadership.

Gal 1:1 *Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead), – divine origin of Paul's apostleship*

Eph 4:9-11 – *(Now this, "He ascended"--what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) And He Himself gave some [to be] apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,*

Hebrews 13:17 – *Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.*

Do you acknowledge God's rulership in the affairs of men? In choosing your leaders? Do you believe what the Word says when it states that no authority comes unless it is from God? Do you submit (saying "yes" when you want to say "no") to God's ordained leaders?

THE WRITER'S COMPANION – "Timothy" – "one who honors God"

Timothy's Home Life

- Timothy's father was unbelieving Greek – Mom was a Jewish believer – impact of one parent can have!
- Timothy was also influenced by his grandmother – don't underestimate your influence to your grandchildren.

2 Tim 1:5 – *when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also.*

2 Tim 3:15 – *and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

- Timothy was saved during Paul's first missionary journey, but the groundwork was laid at home!

Believing parents, are you faithfully training your children in the Word of God, laying the groundwork for faith in Jesus Christ, and faithful service to him?

Is your home an incubator for Timothys?

Timothy's Faithfulness in Ministry

Acts 16:1-3 – *Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, [the] son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father was Greek. He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted to have him go on with him. And he took [him] and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region, for they all knew that his father was Greek.*

Timothy was faithful, commended to Paul by fellow believers (Acts 16:2). Paul took Timothy as a helper, and Timothy assisted him in establishing several churches, eventually becoming the pastor at Ephesus. This shows the progressive nature of discipleship, as well as leadership development – levels of proven faithfulness and service as learning continues to take place. This also indicates the priority of mentoring new leaders, and team ministry.

Timothy appears to have been timid and hesitant at times, easily given to tears (2 Tim 1:3-7), yet God used him!

Phil 2:19-21 – *But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state. For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus.*

Do you understand the progressive nature of discipleship, learning and living out what you learn?

Are you faithful in your responsibilities? Are you growing in responsibility, because you have been faithful in smaller things?

Would you let God use you in this way?

Timothy's Relationship – "our brother" – a family member

The church IS family, with corresponding privileges and responsibilities.

- **Eph 3:14-15** – *For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,*
- **1 Tim 3:15** – *but if I am delayed, [I write] so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house {lit. household} of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*
- **1 Tim 5:1-2** – *Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger as sisters, with all purity.*

Every believer in Jesus Christ is a family member. If you are saved, you are a brother or sister. You have a family! This includes those that are unmarried (there is no indication that Timothy was ever married).

Are you understanding your family relationship to your church?

Do you relate to your church family as a family member?

Do you seek to enjoy your church family, gathering when they gather?

Is your church family receiving family attention from you? Do you seek to enjoy your privileges from that relationship? Do you fulfill your responsibilities in that relationship?