

Who Am I? Understanding Our Identity in Christ (Part 2)

Colossians 1:2

BGT τοῖς ἐν Κολοσσαῖς ἀγίοις καὶ πιστοῖς ἀδελφοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ, χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν.
NKJ To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ *who are* in Colosse: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Review Colossians 1:1 – As an INDIVIDUAL:

- I am an individual, growing in discipleship
- I am part of God's plan, progressing in service
- I am under God's authority, yielding to leadership
- I am a family member, responding to relationship

As Part of a GROUP (Colossians 1:2):

1. I am part of a group that has been set apart as holy by God.

Explanation – "To the saints" – *hagiosis* = 'set apart ones' or 'holy ones' – Over and over again this term is used of believers (even those at Corinth!)

- This term is based upon our **position** or standing in Jesus Christ, based upon His holiness. Reflects our position in Christ which does not change, and cannot be improved upon or added to, not our spiritual condition.
- This positional holiness carries with it the **enablement of, and obligation and expectation** for of holy living:
Rom 12:1 – I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. (see Eph 4:24)
1 Cor 3:17 – If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which *temple* you are. (cf. 1 Cor 6:19)
2 Cor 7:1 – Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.
1 Thes 4:7 – For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness.
Heb 12:14 – Pursue peace with all *people*, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:
1 Pet 1:15-16 – ¹⁵but as He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct, ¹⁶because it is written, "*Be holy, for I am holy.*"
2 Pet 3:11 – Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, (Other references: Rom 6:17-22; Eph 1:4; 2 Tim 1:8-9; Heb 12:10)

Application:

Do you comprehend your complete holy standing in Christ? Do you affirm that you have been set apart from sin to God? Do you seek to live out this holiness? Are you pursuing holiness? "Be holy for I am holy."

2. I am part of a group that God has made into a family.

Explanation – "faithful" – *pistis* – "believing, believable; faithful"

- This seems to indicate the practice of believers, living in accordance with their beliefs as God has taught. "The just shall live (be living) by faith" (occurs 4x) – a life of continuing belief, and obedience based upon that belief.
- Not perfection, either in practice or in knowledge (Paul went on to teach them). Rather, in **purpose**, in **presence**, and in **persistence**.
- Several were called "faithful" in the Word: Tychicus (Eph 6:21; Col 4:7); Epaphras (Col 1:7); Onesimus (Col 4:9); Paul (1 Tim 1:12, counted faithful by God); Moses (Heb 3:2); Silvanus (1 Pet 5:12)

Faithfulness is Required of Those Assigned Responsibility (1 Cor 4:2)

Faithfulness is Necessary for Walking in Christ (Col 2:6-7)

Faithfulness is a Fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22)

Faithfulness is a Key Quality to Look for When Seeking Future Leaders (2 Tim 2:2)

Application:

Are you faithful, brethren? Could you be described as one that is living consistently, faithfully, according to what God has taught you? Are you faithful in your presence (gathering); purpose (discipleship); & persistence?

3. I am part of a group that God has made into a family.

Explanation – **"brethren"** – **adelphois** – "brothers" – a family term – I am not just a family member (mentioned last week), a recipient of the blessings and service of others. I am part of the ministering family, caring and serving them (exercising the "one anothers"; serving the body with your spiritual gift or gifts, and body care).

- **Eph 3:15** – from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,
- **1 Tim 5:1-2** – ¹ Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort *him* as a father, younger men as brothers, ² older women as mothers, younger as sisters, with all purity.
- **1 Peter 3:8** – Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous;

Application: Am I being part of the family in my responsibilities to my spiritual family members?

4. I am part of a group that has been placed in Christ.

Explanation – **"in Christ"** – we are in union with Jesus Christ – the basis of our connection to God, and how God sees us as He does Christ Himself. We are the body, He is the Head. Salvation is being placed in the body of Christ, so that all things that are true of Christ are true of believers.

- It is a two-way relationship – "Saul, why are you persecuting ME?"
- No OT believers were said to have this relationship – unique to the Church

Rom 8:1 – There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

1 Cor 1:2 – To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

1 Cor 12:13 – For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. (see Rom 6:1-4; 12:5)

2 Cor 5:17 – Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

1 Thes 4:16 – For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

Application:

Do I understand that my righteousness comes from being in Christ? Is my eternal security based upon my being in Christ, not my works of any kind? Do I understand that my freedom from sin is true, based upon being in Christ?

5. I am part of a group that has been brought together in a particular location.

Explanation – **"in Colosse"** – Physical location (temporary). We serve where we are planted. God is ultimately in control of our location. Colosse had become an insignificant city. The church was probably never visited by Paul, and was not founded by Paul directly, though it probably began indirectly through his efforts (**Acts 19:10**)

Here we have specific believers living in a specific place in a specific time under specific conditions assembling with a specific congregation under specific leaders (e.g. Epaphras).

Application: We serve where we are planted. God is ultimately in control of our location, the timing, and all the details. This time – this place – these people – even these problems – they are all part of the providence and sovereignty of God. Are you accepting God's placement, timing, and conditions in which He has you?

6. I am part of a group that God desires to give His continuing grace. (Greek Greeting)

Explanation – **"Grace"** – **charis** – grace is "the undeserved approval, actions, and assistance of God, which work for us, in us, and through us, for our eternal benefit and the eternal benefit of others, for the ultimate emphasis of God's wonderful goodness. We were saved by grace (past tense). This passage to believers is referring to a blessing that more grace would be experienced by the believer.

We are to grow in grace (**2 Pet 3:18**), continue in grace (**Acts 13:43**); serve by the gifts given to us by grace (**Rom 12:3, 6; Eph 4:7**); commend some to the grace of God (**Acts 14:16**); serve God acceptably by grace (**Heb 12:28**); and are made strong by grace (**2 Tim 2:1**). We stand in grace (**Rom 5:2**). We are under grace, not under law (**Rom 6:14-15**). We are able to accomplish things and grow by grace (**1 Cor 15:10**). We can abound in grace (**2 Cor 9:8**) or fall short of grace (**Heb 12:15**). Grace is given to the humble (**James 4:6**). Grace allows us to have victory over sin (**Rom 6:14; Heb 4:16**); enables us to give (**2 Cor 8:1-5; 9:6-8**); and to thrive in the midst of affliction (**2 Cor 12:9**). More grace will be given at the coming of Jesus Christ (**1 Pet 1:13**). GET TO KNOW GRACE!

7. I am part of a group that God desires to give His continuing peace. (Hebrew Greeting)

Explanation – “Peace” – We already have peace with God through Jesus Christ. (Rom 5:1). This would relate to peace that comes after salvation, through God’s blessing and our obedience. We are to pursue peace and the things that make for peace (Rom 14:19). Peace comes through being spiritually minded, not fleshly minded (Rom 8:6), since peace is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22).

Peace from God (Internal Peace)

- **John 14:27** – Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.
- **Phil 4:6-7** – Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made know to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.
- **Phil 4:9** – The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

Peace with Others (External Peace)

- **1 Cor 7:15** – But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace.
- **2 Cor 13:11** – Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.
- **Col 3:15** – And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. (2 Tim 2:22)
- **Heb 12:14** – Pursue peace with all [people], and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:

Application:

- **2 Peter 3:14** – Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless;
- **2 Thes 3:16** – Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord [be] with you all.
- **1 Pet 3:11** – Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it.

8. I am part of a group that God reveals His relationship to as “Father”

Explanation – “*From God, our Father*” – *God identifies Himself as our Father, not just our God, Creator, and Savior.*

- **Rom 8:15** – For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."
- **2 Cor 6:17-18** – ¹⁷Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you." ¹⁸"I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the Lord Almighty."
- **Gal 4:6** – And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!"
- **1 John 2:23** – Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.
- **1 John 3:1** – Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.
- **Application: GET TO KNOW YOUR FATHER!**