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Who defines your identity?

DISCIPLES.AWANAYM.ORG/IDENTITY

CORE VERSE

I have been crucified with Christ; 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 for me.

Galatians 2:20

When Paul makes this statement, he isn't professing an abstract idea. Paul is literally explaining the transformation that he experienced. When he decided to follow Jesus, Paul left everything behind. His religion. His

friends. His home. He left all of it to follow after Christ. Everything he was ever known for was turned upside down. From that moment on, his identity was now looking forward to the person Christ had called him to be.

USE THE SPACE BELOW TO HELP YOU REMEMBER THIS VERSE. FEEL FREE TO WRITE, DRAW, OR DESIGN IN WAYS THAT MAKE SENSE TO YOU.

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 5:14-21.

Paul drove people crazy. Many hated his message—that God was forgiving the sin of those who trusted in Christ. People are still dying for believing and teaching that message.

But not all of the attacks on Paul were physical. Some were more subtle, more personal. They questioned Paul's motives. Was he really in it for the money? For the fame? For the glory? Why else would someone keep persisting after all of the persecution he faced if there wasn't something in it for him?

The world doesn't really get it when Christians truly live as Christians. It's just not normal. Normal is to do things so that you'll get good feelings or status or money. To do things that cost you more than they give you seems foolish. Some suggested Paul was crazy (v. 13).

In this week's passage, Paul responded to some of those critics in a surprising way. He admitted that he wasn't normal in the human sense; he had become a *new creation* (v. 17).

In his letter to the Galatians (in this week's core verse), he explained it even more bluntly: It's not me living in me anymore. It's Jesus! Jesus gave up everything to come and suffer and serve and die for us. He's living in me and I am in Him.

Paul wanted his readers to get that he was not himself any more. He had a brand-new identity in Christ. Christ became the reason for everything that Paul did. That's what it means to be a disciple.

So what controlled Paul's actions? The *love of Christ* (v. 14). Because Paul was convinced the good news about Jesus' death in our place was true, he decided to stop living for himself—stop living a "normal life"—and start living for Christ (v. 15).

And Paul's understanding of who he had become in Christ changed the way he looked at everyone else. Every believer in Jesus was a *new creation*, no longer just themselves. And everyone who had not trusted in Christ was still lost, still themselves, alone and separated from God. Those people needed to hear that they could be changed, be reconciled with God, be forgiven of their sins.

So Paul's new identity in Christ gave him a new mission in life: He became an ambassador from another country, from the kingdom of Heaven. He represented Christ by sharing the message of hope—God loves you and wants you to come home. Paul wanted everyone to know that their identity would never be complete without a relationship with Jesus Christ.

So who are you? Are you just you or do you live out of the life and love of Christ in your corner of the world? Will you settle for being normal or will you live as one of those strangers from another kingdom?

Disciples become more and more like their masters. Followers of Jesus stop being normal and continue to take on the identity of their Savior. Let's keep trading our identity for His until the world around us sees Him in everything we do.

CORE CONCEPTS

Our true identity is found in a relationship with Jesus.

IDENTITY:

How someone defines him or herself or is defined by others

QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE OVER THE NEXT TWO DAYS

- » ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES, WHAT WORDS DESCRIBE THE IDENTITY OF A CHRISTIAN?
- » SINCE THE LOVE OF CHRIST IS SUPPOSED TO SHAPE AND GUIDE US (V. 14), HOW DOES IT IMPACT THE CHOICES YOU MAKE EVERY DAY?
- » IF THE BIBLE CALLS YOU A NEW CREATURE, HOW HAVE YOU CHANGED SINCE PLACING YOUR FAITH AND TRUST IN CHRIST?
- » WRITE YOUR OWN QUESTION: