

April 19, 2026

Series: Godly Ambition

Title: Identity

Scripture: John 1:12-13; Ephesians 4:1-3, 22-24

Speaker: Pastor Ian Bonthron



Ambition - Aspiring For a Goal

All of us have moments when our ambition shifts from godliness to greed. Where we take our gifts, time, talent, and treasure, and use them to achieve more for ourselves.

How can we be _____ without _____ others or ourselves?

“What you believe - about who you are and who God is - determines how you behave.” — Craig Groeschel, Altar Ego: Becoming Who God Says You Are, p 165

Our _____ drives our _____.

John 1:12-13 ESV

12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

Our ambition harms when our identity is in achieving. But for the Christian, our identity is in receiving.

1. _____ your Identity in Christ - It’s received, not achieved

John 1:12-13 ESV

12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

Identity in:

_____ Achievement

_____ Achievement

Don't settle for a Virtual Ambition or Identity. Set your mind on Christ and his Kingdom.

Matthew 6:33 ESV

33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Don't give your kids access to content that outweighs their character. — Josh McPherson

2. _____ because of your identity in Christ

Ephesians 4:1-3 ESV

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3 eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Ephesians 4:22-24 ESV

22 to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, 23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

If you want to be strengthened in your new Identity, run from sin and toward God at the same time. — Ruslan KD, Godly Ambition, p. 32

3. _____ your identity in Christ

I am accepted.

John 1:12 - I am God's child.

John 15:15 - I am Christ's friend.

Romans 5:1 - I have been justified.

1 Corinthians 6:17 - I am united with the Lord, and I am one spirit with Him.

1 Corinthians 6:20 - I have been bought with a price. I belong to God.

1 Corinthians 12:27 - I am a member of Christ's Body.

Ephesians 1:1 - I am a saint.

Ephesians 1:5 - I have been adopted as God's child.

- Neil T. Anderson

I am secure.

Romans 8:1-2 - I am free from condemnation.

Romans 8:28 - I am assured all things work together for good.

Romans 8:31-34 - I am free from any condemning charges against me.

Romans 8:35-39 - I cannot be separated from the love of God.

2 Corinthians 1:21-22 - I have been established, anointed and sealed by God.

Philippians 1:6 - I am confident that the good work God has begun in me will be perfected.

Philippians 3:20 - I am a citizen of heaven.

- Neil T. Anderson

I am significant.

Matthew 5:13-14 - I am the salt and light of the earth.

John 15:1, 5 - I am a branch of the true vine [Jesus], a channel of His life.

John 15:16 - I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit.

Acts 1:8 - I am a personal [Spirit-empowered] witness of Christ.

1 Corinthians 3:16 - I am God's temple.

2 Corinthians 5:17-21 - I am a minister of reconciliation for God.

Ephesians 2:10 - I am working with God as he works in me.

- Neil T. Anderson

4-19-2026 Discussion Questions

Getting to know you Questions:

1. Have you ever yelled at a group (team, kids, coworkers) in a moment of frustrated ambition, then immediately regretted it? What's your most embarrassing "captain meltdown" story?
2. What's the funniest way you've tried to "achieve" your identity—like posting 10 gym selfies in a row or bragging about your accomplishments—only to realize it didn't make you feel any more secure?

Into the Bible Questions:

1. Read John 1:12-13

12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

How does this passage redefine identity from something we "achieve" to something we "receive"? Why is this shift so hard for us to live out?

2. In what ways do we still live like "nervous strays" even after being adopted into God's family—worrying we'll lose our place with God if we fail?
3. The sermon mentions "virtual ambition" and identity through social media, gaming, or online escapes. How have you seen this play out in your life or others?
4. Pastor Ian said "Don't give your kids access to content that outweighs their character." How might this statement apply to kids and adults? What does "guarding" our kids and ourselves look like practically?

5. Read Matthew 6:33

33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

The passage calls us to seek Christ's kingdom first. How does chasing worldly things (success, likes, achievements) distract from true life in Him?

6. Read Ephesians 4:1

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called,

It urges us to "walk worthy" of our calling as God's children. How does knowing our identity in Christ change how we approach ambition?

7. Read Ephesians 4:22-24

22 to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, 23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

In the passage, Paul says to put off the old self, renew the mind, and put on the new. What does “renew your mind” on your true identity look like day-to-day?

8. How has trying to just “stop bad behaviors” without renewing your mind on your new identity and God’s character fallen short for you?

9. Why does failure hurt so deeply when our identity is tied to achievement? How does being a child of God change our response to setbacks?

10. Look at the “I Am Accepted/Secure/Significant” list from Neil T. Anderson. Which truth surprises you most, and why?

Application Questions:

1. In what relationship might your ambition be harming others? How can viewing them through your identity as a “minister of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5:18-20) change that?
2. Identify one area where your ambition is currently self-focused or virtual. What small step can you take to redirect it toward Christ’s kingdom (Matthew 6:33)?
3. When content outweighs character, it causes chaos. What boundaries will you set on social media/virtual content to protect your (or your kids) identity formation in Christ?
4. Is there any content you are consuming that you should “put off” because it does not reflect God’s character?
5. Share one way you’ll run from sin and toward God to strengthen your new identity.
6. Choose one truth from the “I Am” list How will you rehearse it daily this week (e.g., say it aloud, write it, pray it)?
7. When ambition tempts you to overcommit or blame others, what reminders can you have of your identity in Christ to help stop the cycle?
8. What does “seeking Christ first” look like practically in your daily schedule—replacing virtual escape with real relationships or mission?
9. Based on this sermon, what’s one ambitious step you’ll take this week that flows from your received identity in Christ, not achievement? How can the group pray for you?

Neil T. Anderson - I Am... Identity in Christ Statements

I am accepted.

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