



# SATURATE

## STUDY GUIDE

Throughout the New Testament, whenever the people in the churches that Paul influenced went sideways, Paul didn't just confront their wrongdoing and tell them what to do. He started by reminding them of who God is, what he had done for them in Jesus, and who they were in light of that. Then, he reminded them of how believing the truth about the gospel and their new identity would lead them to a different behavior. Paul knew that all of our behaviors are the result of what we believe about God, revealed through what God does, and lead to what we believe about who we are. God's work in Jesus Christ grants us a whole new identity, and this new identity leads to a whole new way of living.

We do what we do because of who we are. You "do" who you are. *Being* precedes *doing*. Similarly, what God does reveals the truth about who He is.

### CREATION: TRUE AND FALSE IDENTITIES

This week is the first of three in which we'll consider our gospel identities. Our identity informs everything we do, and our identity is founded on who God is and his work in us. We see this truth from the first pages of the Bible, in the story of God's perfect creation.

God is the Creator (who he is) who created (what he did) images of himself (who we are) to create and co-create (what we do). Do you see the progression? Who God is (Creator) is revealed through what God has done (created), which leads to who we are (image bearers created in God's likeness) and what we do (display God and co-create more image bearers).

Adam and Eve's perfect identity only lasted for about a page and half of our Bibles, at which point an evil Tempter enters God's garden and says, "Don't look to God to define you, to declare you good! Look elsewhere. Look to what I say will make you great. Look to yourself. Look to what you do!" Pause here for a moment: who or what is defining you? Are you letting someone or something other than God's Word and work define you? Are you defining yourself? Are you looking to your own abilities and actions to make you who you are? Are you looking to what has been done to you or what you hope will be done to you to define you?

### OUR NEW IDENTITIES, IN THE GOSPEL

All humanity falls into the Tempter's lie with shattered relationship with God and shattered identities. But thankfully, God was not content to leave his creation in this shattered condition.

After Jesus died and rose again, just before he ascended back to the right hand of the Father, he commissioned his disciples, saying: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:18-20).

Jesus had claimed back the authority that Adam and Eve had given away, and he was bringing about a new

beginning—a new creation. This new creation has a new people—people who were dead in their sins and defined by the works of sinful humanity, but who are now alive in Christ and defined by Jesus, the better Word and the better work. Paul says to the church in Corinth: “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come” (2 Cor. 5:17).

This is why Jesus commands that we baptize disciples in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Our baptism is a physical display of our old life of sin and death being buried with Jesus Christ in his death. It is also a sign of our new life of faith, hope, and love, as we have been raised with Christ into new life. We have a new life, a new identity, and a new name. Just as Abram was given a new name that represented what God had done and would do through him, our new name represents what God has done and will do through us.

## **WE ARE FAMILY: BAPTIZED INTO THE NAME OF THE FATHER**

Because of who God is and what God has done in the gospel, our new identities are as family, servants, and missionaries. The identity we consider this week is that of “family.”

If your life is now hidden with Christ Jesus (Col. 3:3), God dearly loves you, regardless of what you’ve done or will do. Just as God the Father loves the Son, so he loves you. Just as the Father said of Jesus the Son, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17), he now says the same over you. You are a child of God, part of his family. This is your new identity, for you have been baptized in the name of the Father. As a result, you have a new name: Child of the Father. Son of God. Daughter of God. If you believe this to be true, it changes how you live and how you love. What God has done to you, he now wants to do through you.

Above, we briefly considered who God is and what he has done, as well as who we are and what we are to do. Let’s think through those categories again in light of our baptism in the name of the Father. Consider these four questions: Who is God? He is our Father. What has he done? He has loved us by sending his Son, Jesus, to die for our sins. Who are we? We are the dearly loved children of God—God’s family. If we believe this, what do we do? We love one another as brothers and sisters in the same way God has loved us.

## **LIVING OUT OUR FAMILY IDENTITY WITH OTHER PEOPLE**

God has perfectly loved you so that, through you, he might love others. He pours his perfect love into your heart through his Spirit in order that you might love others with the love he gives you. When you believe the gospel regarding God’s love for you, you love others because he loved you first. If you believe God dearly loves you, you will love others in the same ways he loves you. You will love others like family.

Think about where you live. Do you know your neighbors? Has God given you a heart to love them like family? What would it look like if you did? What about the people in your small group or missional community? Do you love one another this way? How might your group change if you did?

Now think about who God has sent you to (your neighbors, coworkers, peers at school, and others). What might it look like if you were to love them as if they were your brothers and sisters? Like children of our Father in heaven? “But they’re not,” you might say. “They don’t yet belong to God.” Yes, but we don’t know whom he is drawing to himself. And how will they ever come to know the love of God the Father if they don’t experience it through us? Consider those God has put around you as the lost children of God who don’t yet know how much their Father loves them. Then show them his Fatherly love in tangible ways.

## LIVING OUT OUR FAMILY IDENTITY THROUGH THE POWER OF GOD

We love because we were first loved. And we love with the same love with which he loved us. When we fail to love, we show we don't yet fully know the love of God for us. We don't know who God is, what he has done, and who we are in Christ.

We need the Spirit of God to continue to reveal these truths to our hearts, to pour the love of God the Father into our hearts that we might love others with the same love and in the same way he has loved us. Baptized into the name of the Father, we are his family so that we might love one another as he has loved us.

God has perfectly loved you so that, through you, he loves others. He pours his perfect love into your heart through his Spirit in order that you might love others with the love he gives you. When you believe the gospel regarding God's love for you, you love others because he loved you first. If you believe God dearly loves you, you will love others in the same ways he loves you. You will love others like family.

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. What are some of the ways the Bible speaks of our relationship with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit in familial terms?
2. What are some of the ways the Bible speaks of our relationships with other followers of Jesus— and other humans, made in the image of God—in familial terms?
3. Whether you've experienced this or not, what are some ways that healthy nuclear families love each other? How should our new identity in the gospel lead us to even greater love?
4. Do you have a hard time considering yourself a son or daughter of God, and a brother or sister of Jesus and others? Why? If you need help believing this, we encourage you to reach out to someone in your community and walk through your disbelief and need in this area.