

Clarify Your Identity

Romans 11:8 (NIV®)

as it is written: "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes so that they could not see and ears so that they could not hear, to this very day."

I. Dissipate the Clouds of Confusion

A. Do You Not Know?

1 Corinthians 6:9–11 (NIV®)

⁹Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders ¹⁰ nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Ephesians 2:1–3 (NIV®)

¹As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, **the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.** ³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

Ephesians 4:18–25 (NIV®)

¹⁸They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. ¹⁹ Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more. ²⁰ You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. ²¹ Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. ²² **You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires;** ²³ to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴ and to **put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.** ²⁵ Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body.

B. A God of Grace, Not a God of Division???

John 1:17 (NIV®)

For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.



Luke 12:49–53 (NIV®)

⁴⁹“I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! ⁵⁰ But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is completed! ⁵¹ Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. ⁵² From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three. ⁵³ They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”

C. Therefore, a Message of Kindness & Hope!?!

John 8:10–11 (NIV®)

¹⁰Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” ¹¹ “No one, sir,” she said. “Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.”

Luke 3:7–14 (NIV®) [John the Baptist]

⁷John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸ Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. ⁹ The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.” ¹⁰ **“What should we do then?” the crowd asked.** ¹¹ John answered, “The man with two tunics should share with him who has none, and the one who has food should do the same.” ¹² **Tax collectors also came to be baptized. “Teacher,” they asked, “what should we do?”** ¹³ “Don’t collect any more than you are required to,” he told them. ¹⁴ **Then some soldiers asked him, “And what should we do?”** He replied, “Don’t extort money and don’t accuse people falsely—be content with your pay.”

Acts 2:36–38 (NIV®) [Peter]

³⁶“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” ³⁷ **When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”** ³⁸ Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 5:28–34 (NIV®)

²⁸ “We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name,” he said. “Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man’s blood.” ²⁹ Peter and the other apostles replied: “We must obey God rather than men! ³⁰ The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead—whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. ³¹ God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel. ³² We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.” ³³ **When they heard this, they were furious and wanted to put**



them to death. ³⁴ **But a Pharisee named Gamaliel**, a teacher of the law, who was honored by all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered that the men be put outside for a little while.

Acts 7:51–55 (NIV®) [Stephen]

⁵¹“You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit! ⁵² Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him— ⁵³ you who have received the law that was put into effect through angels but have not obeyed it.” ⁵⁴ **When they heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him.** ⁵⁵ But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

D. Our Objective — See Clearly in “The Mirror”

James 1:22–25 (NIV®)

²²Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. ²³ Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror ²⁴ and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. ²⁵ But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 (NIV®)

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Proclamation

Now may the God of Peace, Himself, sanctify us completely. May our whole person-- spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, amen.