



ESTABLISHING YOUR IDENTITY

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NORTHSTAR INSPIRATION

*Emotional
Health Insights
from a Christian
Perspective*



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SEE YOURSELF AS GOD SEES YOU

The foundation for victorious living is knowing and understanding who we are in Christ and what it means to be a child of God. This is also essential for overcoming depression. How people view themselves dictates their behavior and feelings. A biblically accurate view and appreciation of your standing as a child of God become crucial to wholly living the Christian life as God intended.

If you believe you are hopeless, worthless, defeated, or unwanted, your life would undoubtedly be characterized by defeat, despair, and depression. In contrast, if you view yourself as God does—loved, chosen, wanted, and valuable—it frees you to feel joyful, accepted, significant, and secure.

OVERCOMING NEGATIVE SELF-PERCEPTIONS

We will struggle with a poor self-image to the degree we do not see ourselves the way God sees us. Such negative perceptions of ourselves are based on lies we have believed. They are like weeds in a field of grain stunting the good seed's growth and robbing the harvest. "Whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life." Galatians 6:7,8

If you sow a lie, you will reap corruption (garbage in, garbage out, remember?). You cannot plant weeds and hope to reap a harvest of grain! You cannot believe lies about yourself and expect to feel free and confident. Repent of the lies. Learn who you are as God's chosen and loved child. Review those characteristics and attributes regularly.

WHO AM I?

Our identity and sense of worth come from knowing who we are as children of God. Dr. Neil Anderson wrote a book called *Living Free in Christ* to show how our spiritual needs are only met in Christ. Following is the book's outline, which not only reveals who we are, but how those needs are met:

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 (one spirit)
1 Corinthians 6:19-20	I am 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
Ephesians 2:18	I have access to God through the Holy Spirit
Colossians 1:14	I have been redeemed and forgiven
Colossians 2:10	I am complete in Christ

I AM SECURE

Romans 8:1-2	I am free forever from condemnation
Romans 8:28	I am assured that all works together for good
Romans 8:31-34	I am free from any charge against me
Romans 8:35-39	I cannot be separated from the love of God
2 Corinthians 1:21-22	I am established, anointed, and sealed by God
Colossians 3:3	I am hidden with Christ in God
Philippians 1:6	I am confident that the good work God began in me will be perfected
Philippians 3:20	I am a citizen of heaven
2 Timothy 1:7	I have not been given a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind
Hebrews 4:16	I can find grace and mercy in time of need
1 John 5:18	I am born of God; the evil one cannot touch me

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, a channel of His life
John 15:16	I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit
Acts 1:8	I am a personal 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
2 Corinthians 6:1	I am God's co-worker
Ephesians 2:6	I am seated with Christ in the heavenly realm
Ephesians 2:10	I am God's workmanship
Ephesians 3:12	I may approach God with freedom and confidence
Philippians 4:13	I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me

TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES

Holding false perceptions and believing lies about ourselves has several predictable consequences:

- 1. *False perceptions erode confidence and weaken our resolve.*** Many people think they are losers and choose to believe they cannot overcome their problems. And believing the lie, they do not overcome. John writes, "Dear friends, now we are children of God... everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure." (1 John. 3:2-3) It is not what we do that determines who we are; who we are determines what we do.
- 2. *False perceptions drive us to seek our own acceptance, security, and significance.*** Appearance, performance, and status are common means in trying to find who we are, but no matter how hard we try, we will still suffer from melancholy introspection, hostile criticism, overt rejection, and endless accusations. That is depressing! Acceptance, security, and significance are already
- 3. *False perceptions trigger a fear of failure.*** To stumble and fall is not failure, but saying you were pushed is. There are no unforgivable failures in the kingdom of God, but many live far below their potential because they have never learned the truth of who they are in Christ. "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." (Romans 8:1)
- 4. *False perceptions cause us to seek the approval and affirmation from others.*** The need for affirmation and approval is universal, yet it will never be met perfectly in this world, no matter how hard we try. Instead, this deep need should draw us to our heavenly Father. We do not try to please God hoping He might accept us. Instead, we are able to reach out because we already have His approval and affirmation in Christ.

5. ***False perceptions rob us of the courage to stand up for our convictions and beliefs.*** A person with low self-worth thinks, “My opinions do not matter. If I share what I really believe, others will only squash me.” Giving in to the fear of rejection undermines the courage needed to stand for our convictions. Courageous acts of independence, and the fortitude to hold true to your convictions, are only possible with an inner confidence in God. Believers find their strength not in themselves, but in the knowledge of who they are in Christ. “Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might.” (Ephesians 6:10)
6. ***False perceptions lead to codependent relationships.*** Every Christian is interdependent in a healthy sense because we absolutely need God and each other. We are

under the conviction of God to love one another (i.e., to meet one another’s needs). Relationships become unhealthy when one begins to think, “I can’t live without you, your acceptance, or approval.

7. ***False perceptions make it difficult to receive ordinary compliments.*** Affirmation, praise, and compliments do not remove the terrible pain some feel and they conclude, incorrectly, that because an expression of praise or gratitude did not dim their pain, it was not a genuine sentiment. Acceptance and affirmation accomplish more when directed toward a person’s character and having their identity in Christ reinforced. On the other hand, because they match the existing false perception, any kind of rejection and criticism contribute to the depressed state of an insecure person.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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He received his Master’s Degree from Wheaton Graduate School, his Doctorate of Psychology (PsyD) from the Illinois School of Professional Psychology, and his Certificate in Co-Occurring Disorders from Adler Graduate School. He serves frequently as a seminar leader, and has taught workshops in the USA, Canada, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, South Africa, and India.

He is the author of *Journeys* and *Destinations*, two books on co-occurring disorders treatment, and the co-author of *Finding Hope Again: Overcoming Depression* with Dr. Neil T. Anderson.

This information in this publication is not intended as a substitute for professional help or to be used as a diagnostic tool. If you have serious difficulties with anxiety, depression, or other mental health issues, please seek professional help.