



devotional guide

This devotional guide was prepared by the
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as part of the sermon series
“Identity Theft”

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Introduction

Reclaiming Your Identity



Have you suffered from Identity Theft? Over 8.9 million Americans had their identity stolen in 2006 which resulted in \$56.6 billion of fraudulent activities. We live in a culture where we know that our identity is a risk every time we use a credit card, give out our social security number, or simply throw out our trash. With all of this known danger surrounding us then we must ask the question: *Why did so many Americans get their identity stolen?* The answer is simple: It is a lack of a good defense. Americans are no longer defending themselves from predators that want to steal their identity. We believe that the minimum safeguards put in place by the government will be sufficient to protect us but this is not true.

Many Christians are suffering from Identity Theft as well with regard to their spiritual identity. We have Christians that are walking around with a very shallow, if any, defense. The ultimate predator, Satan, is on the prowl at this very moment with the intention of robbing and destroying your identity in Christ. He desires to sow the seed of doubt in your mind with the hope that it paralyzes your walk with Christ. He desires to afflict you with physical ailments and poverty so that you would question God's provision. He desires to run rampart through the world causing war, rumors of war, and destruction that murders seemingly innocent people so that you would question the existence of God.

Christians are under assault more than ever before in our modern day culture and it is imperative that we defend ourselves against Satan by first understanding our true identity in Christ. This study guide will accompany the **Identity Theft Sermon Series** in order to help you wrestle with the weekly topic in much greater detail and then to provide a deeper understanding with practical application becoming visible in your life. This series will help you walk with confidence as you live out your faith in a doubting world.

2 Corinthians 5:17 ~ New International Version

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation;
the old has gone, the new has come!

Being Ordained into Service

Many Christians have heard of the term “Ordination” but few understand the true significance of this word. The term ordination is an official charge given from one person to another with the purpose of carrying out a specific duty. As Christians God has ordained each one of us into service for Him. We have been charged to go out into all the world and make disciples of many nations, spreading the message of the Gospel to those near and far, and to set an example of righteousness to all the world. It is the highest calling that anyone can receive and it is the most important task that one could ever devote their lives to. Study more about the charge God has given to you as a Christian.

Step 1 - Look Closely

observe what you are reading

1 Timothy 6:11-12 (NIV) But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

- Who wrote this passage of Scripture? To whom was it written?
What is the background of this text? (Time, Location, Events)
- What are the key words and phrases that you see in this text?
Explain why these are important.
- What is the overall theme(s) found in this text? Is this theme(s) relevant for Christians today? Explain.

Step 2 - Think Carefully

interpret what you have read

The Message of the Passage The Apostle Paul was always concerned with a Christian’s walk with God. He knew that there would be many obstacles that every follower of Christ would encounter because of the simple fact that we live in a fallen world that is anti-God from the word Go! The charge given in this text is meant to be one of encouragement, support, and confidence that God will use you in a mighty way in this world to glorify Him if you choose to cling the Him and His ways.

- What are Christians called to flee from in this world?
- What are some of the obstacles that Christians may encounter as they cling to their faith in a fallen world?
- Why does Paul refer to a Christian's walk with God as: Fight the good fight of faith?

Define these characteristics that are to be imitated by Christians today: righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. How do these characteristics strengthen your faith and bring God Glory?

Step 3 - Respond Wisely

apply what you have read

Throughout Scripture we read about God's desire for His people to be follow Him and His commands. James 1:22 reminds us that part of following God's commands for our lives is not hearing His Word but also applying His Word. Try some of these challenges to apply what you have learned this week.

Memorize It! Try memorizing **1 Timothy 6:11 (NIV)**

“But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.”

Pray It! Try praying this prayer for your children, friends, or for yourself. “Dear Lord, Help _____ to live a life for you this day and pursue a righteous life—a life of wonder, faith, love, steadiness, courtesy.”

Experience It! Try spending one hour per day this week reading your Bible and praying. Include your family by reading to them or praying with them during a meal time, bed time, or in the morning.

Day #1

Realization Hits



Step 1 - Look Closely

observe what you are reading

Romans 7:18-25 (NLT) I know I am rotten through and through so far as my old sinful nature is concerned. No matter which way I turn, I can't make myself do right. I want to, but I can't. When I want to do good, I don't. And when I try not to do wrong, I do it anyway. But if I am doing what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing it; the sin within me is doing it. It seems to be a fact of life that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. I love God's law with all my heart. But there is another law at work within me that is at war with my mind. This law wins the fight and makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin? Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.

- Who wrote this passage of Scripture? To whom was it written? What is the background of this text? (Time, Location, Events)
- What are the key words and phrases that you see in this text? Explain why these are important.
- What is the overall theme(s) found in this text? Is this theme(s) relevant for Christians today? Explain.

Step 2 - Think Carefully

interpret what you have read

The Message of the Passage There is a war that is raging on inside of each one of us. It is the same war that Moses faced, Joseph faced, David faced, and that the disciples faced. Every follower of God from the beginning of time has entered into this battle. What is the battle? The answer is summed up by the very words of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane when he referred to His disciples: "The Spirit is willing but the flesh is weak." (Mt. 26:41) Is there any hope then? If I do what I do not

want to do? Is there any hope? The answer is Yes. You can overcome your life of sin, but the hope is found only with a life centered on Jesus Christ.

- Explain what this phrase means: The Spirit is willing but the flesh is weak?
- In this passage, is Paul giving people an excuse to continue sinning? Why or why not? Explain.
- Briefly look at Romans 8. How does it help us understand that we are to turn away from our lives of sin and not become entrenched in them?

Step 3 - Respond Wisely apply what you have read

Throughout Scripture we read about God's desire for His people to be follow Him and His commands. James 1:22 reminds us that part of following God's commands for our lives is not hearing His Word but also applying His Word. Try some of these challenges to apply what you have learned this week.

Memorize It! Try memorizing **Romans 8:17 (NIV)**

“Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.”

Pray It! Try praying this prayer for your children, friends, or for yourself. “Dear Lord, Help _____ to live a life as a child of light, an heir of God, a co-heir with Christ and to flee from a life centered on sin, embracing a life focused on pursuing the Spirit.”

Experience It! Try changing one bad habit that you found in the lifestyle which you are living. Give up this bad habit for a minimum of one week and seek to glorify God through your one week commitment.

Day #2

Claiming Your True Identity



Step 1 - Look Closely

observe what you are reading

John 1:12-13 (NIV) He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

- Who wrote this passage of Scripture? To whom was it written? What is the background of this text? (Time, Location, Events)
- What are the key words and phrases that you see in this text? Explain why these are important.
- What is the overall theme(s) found in this text? Is this theme(s) relevant for Christians today? Explain.

Step 2 - Think Carefully

interpret what you have read

The Message of the Passage Many Christians have come to accept Jesus Christ as their Savior but have failed to understand what it means to be a true child of God. It is only through a relationship with Jesus Christ that we can become children of God which is a divine gift from the One that created you. In order for us to truly understand what it means to be a child of God then we must recognize Jesus Christ is as the ultimate authority in our lives and embrace Him as both Lord and Savior over our lives. This is when we begin the true journey as a child of God.

- What does it mean to be a “Child of God?” Explain.
- What makes you a child of God? Explain.

- What does it mean for Jesus to be the Savior of your life? The Lord of your Life? How does this help you understand more about being a child of God?

Step 3 - Respond Wisely apply what you have read

Throughout Scripture we read about God's desire for His people to be follow Him and His commands. James 1:22 reminds us that part of following God's commands for our lives is not hearing His Word but also applying His Word. Try some of these challenges to apply what you have learned this week.

Memorize It! Try memorizing **1 John 3:1a (NIV)**

"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!"

Pray It! Try praying this prayer for your children, friends, or for yourself. "Dear Lord, Help _____ to live as a child of God and to live a life that embraces Jesus Christ as both Lord and Savior."

Experience It! Try living out your new identity as a child of God by serving someone in need this week. Buy an extra bag of groceries for someone in need, give extra clothes to a child or adult in need, or buy a child some school supplies.

Day #3

Removing the Obstacle of Doubt



Step 1 - Look Closely

observe what you are reading

2 Corinthians 1:21-22 (NIV) Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

- Who wrote this passage of Scripture? To whom was it written?
What is the background of this text? (Time, Location, Events)
- What are the key words and phrases that you see in this text?
Explain why these are important.
- What is the overall theme(s) found in this text? Is this theme(s) relevant for Christians today? Explain.

Step 2 - Think Carefully

interpret what you have read

The Message of the Passage There are many Christians that are living a life that is centered on doubt. They believe in God but they have trouble accepting the fact that God will deliver on His promises. Many Christians even take this to the point of doubting their salvation. According to what we have read, salvation has never been dependant on what we do but on what has already been done for us through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. Does God have expectations of His children? Absolutely, Yes. He expects you to Accept His Son as your Savior, Follow His commands, and Live for Him as Lord of your life which is truly a life of service, sacrifice, and love. Throughout the New Testament we never see Christians doubting their salvation. Why? The answer is because they are simply living a life centered on following Jesus Christ and glorifying God. Doubt has no room where God's glory reigns.

- What are things that Christians might doubt? Why?
- How do we remove the obstacle of doubt and walk with confidence?

Throughout Scripture we read about God's desire for His people to be follow Him and His commands. James 1:22 reminds us that part of following God's commands for our lives is not hearing His Word but also applying His Word. Try some of these challenges to apply what you have learned this week.

Memorize It! Try memorizing **2 Corinthians 1:22 (NIV)**

"He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come."

Pray It! Try praying this prayer for your children, friends, or for yourself. "Dear Lord, Help _____ to live a life of encouragement and confidence as they learn to live a life centered on glorifying your name."

Experience It! Try removing the obstacle of doubt through prayer. Take one item that may be an item of doubt and commit it to the Lord. Ask God to remove that item of doubt and replace it with confidence.

Day #4

The Day of Restoration is Here



Step 1 - Look Closely

observe what you are reading

Colossians 1:21-23 (NIV) Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

- Who wrote this passage of Scripture? To whom was it written? What is the background of this text? (Time, Location, Events)
- What are the key words and phrases that you see in this text? Explain why these are important.
- What is the overall theme(s) found in this text? Is this theme(s) relevant for Christians today? Explain.

Step 2 - Think Carefully

interpret what you have read

The Message of the Passage – The Apostle Paul was truly an artist. He could paint the most beautiful pictures with his words. Colossians chapter one describes the human nature apart from Jesus Christ and then sanctified through the unification with Jesus Christ. Romans 3:23 reminds us that we are all sinners that have fallen short of the glory of God yet there is hope for humans. Jesus Christ came to the earth to save us and restore us through His atoning death on the cross. What can wash away my sins, nothing but the blood of Jesus!

- What does it mean to restored or reconciled by Jesus Christ?
- What are areas in the life of a Christian that might need to be restored? How does this effect a believers walk with Christ?

Throughout Scripture we read about God's desire for His people to be follow Him and His commands. James 1:22 reminds us that part of following God's commands for our lives is not hearing His Word but also applying His Word. Try some of these challenges to apply what you have learned this week.

Memorize It! Try memorizing **Colossians 1:22 (NIV)**

“But now God has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation.”

Pray It! Try praying this prayer for your children, friends, or for yourself. “Dear Lord, Restore _____ by giving him/her a steadfast spirit to live a life of faithfulness to you and your Word both now and forevermore.”

Experience It! Invite the children or grandchildren to help you clean a dirty piece of furniture, a dirty room, or a dirty car and explain to them that just as they have taken part in restoring this certain object back to its original beauty, that is exactly what God does in our lives when He restores us. He takes us out of the mud and mire, cleans us up, and makes us shine like a precious jewel.

Day #5

Putting on Strength



Step 1 - Look Closely

observe what you are reading

2 Corinthians 10:3–5 (NIV) For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

- Who wrote this passage of Scripture? To whom was it written? What is the background of this text? (Time, Location, Events)
- What are the key words and phrases that you see in this text? Explain why these are important.
- What is the overall theme(s) found in this text? Is this theme(s) relevant for Christians today? Explain.

Step 2 - Think Carefully

interpret what you have read

The Message of the Passage Once again we are reminded that every Christian is in the midst of a daily battle. This battle is not a battle between mankind that can be won by physical strength or human intellect. This is a spiritual battle and the victory can only come through centering a life upon the Word of God, prayer, and life in pursuit of glorifying Jesus Christ!

- What are some examples of spiritual battles that Christians face?
- What are the divine weapons that Christians are to use to achieve victory in these spiritual battles? Explain.
- What does it mean to take every thought captive and make it obedient to Christ?

Throughout Scripture we read about God's desire for His people to be follow Him and His commands. James 1:22 reminds us that part of following God's commands for our lives is not hearing His Word but also applying His Word. Try some of these challenges to apply what you have learned this week.

Memorize It! Try memorizing **2 Corinthians 10:5 (NIV)**

"We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

Pray It! Try praying this prayer for your children, friends, or for yourself. "Dear Lord, Give _____ the full armor of God to stand for their faith in you in order to gain victory in the spiritual battles they may face today and to glorify your name."

Experience It! This week take the time to read through Ephesians 6:10-20 which is known as the full armor of God and pray it on yourself and your family at the beginning of each morning.

Day #6

Living Out Your New Identity



Step 1 - Look Closely

observe what you are reading

Ephesians 2:19-21 (NIV) Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

- Who wrote this passage of Scripture? To whom was it written? What is the background of this text? (Time, Location, Events)
- What are the key words and phrases that you see in this text? Explain why these are important.
- What is the overall theme(s) found in this text? Is this theme(s) relevant for Christians today? Explain.

Step 2 - Think Carefully

interpret what you have read

The Message of the Passage Every Christian has a longing deep inside of them to reach and live for something much greater than themselves. Christians will be wrestles this side of heaven because they were not created to live for eternity in a fallen world. We are citizens of heaven and that is our true home. We long for our true home, yet God has placed here at this moment in time to make be His messenger and invite others to join us for eternity in heaven. The time has come for us to live out our new identity as God's chosen ambassadors of light to a world drowning in darkness.

- What does it mean to be members of God's household? Explain.
- What does it mean for God to dwell inside of you? How does He do this? How does this affect the way you live your life?

Throughout Scripture we read about God's desire for His people to be follow Him and His commands. James 1:22 reminds us that part of following God's commands for our lives is not hearing His Word but also applying His Word. Try some of these challenges to apply what you have learned this week.

Memorize It! Try memorizing **Ephesians 2:10 (NIV)**

"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

Pray It! Try praying this prayer for your children, friends, or for yourself. "Dear Lord, Help _____ to claim his/her new identity in Christ and to live a life centered on this new identity which no one can take away!"

Experience It! Write a letter to your children or grandchildren explaining the identity of a Christian within Jesus Christ. Tell them what you have learned about this new identity and what they need to be prepared to face when living for this new identity.

**It's not about me,
it's all about Jesus.**