

Disciple of Christ Study: Lesson 3 Identity in Christ

Purpose of study: *Live life as a disciple of Christ and intentionally make disciples for the glory of the triune God. A disciple is a “student” or “follower” who learns, studies, and acts in accordance to the teachings of Christ, the Master.*

Lesson 3: Identity in Christ (Day One) *Grace and Identity*

Definition: Grace is God’s divine power in action to undeserving people. God's grace may be displayed in, through, or to us.

As we imitate Christ, we *can* act in kindness toward undeserving people. We can show grace to others by relying on God's grace working in us. We usually do not begin a lesson with a ministry assignment, but it might add a little spice to our normal routine.

Call to Action: Your mission is to **show grace to one person each day for five days and be prepared to share one or two of those graceful acts.** Pray each morning and ask God to give you opportunities to be like Him, and show kindness and compassion (concern) to someone who does not deserve it. Also, ask the Holy Spirit to enable you to act like Jesus in love and mercy. Choose to depend on the grace of God in order to show grace to others.

Remember that grace and mercy were key character traits of Jesus. These are key qualities that Jesus wants reproduced in His disciples (followers). The extent (degree, amount) that we demonstrate God’s character is the extent that we show the world that we are indeed His beloved disciples.

1. Write and share about one or two of the situations in which you acted in grace toward another:

****See end of lesson for repeat of questions and blank spaces for you to write your answers.**

Definition: Relationship is the way in which two or more people (or groups) talk to, behave toward, and deal with each other.

We ended Lesson 2 with a few words about relationships. God's grace is sufficient to work through any battered or broken bond. However, He may want us to do some *inward* housecleaning. Before we begin this *inward* work, it is prudent to take an initial survey and see where we stand in our relationships.

Self-Awareness on Relationships

In order to disciple others, it is important that we continue to grow in all areas of our walk with the Lord. One way to do that is to become aware of areas that God would like us to grow in by asking and answering questions about specific spiritual areas. Self-awareness is knowing and

understanding ourselves so that we can pray and cooperate with the Holy Spirit in becoming like Jesus.

Questions 2-7 (Self-Awareness), see answer sheet.

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. 2 Corinthians 10:5

8. Read 2 Corinthians 10:5. We are not responsible for our thoughts. True False (Circle One)

Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. Hebrews 4:16

9. Read Hebrews 4:16. God will help us have the right thoughts. True False (Circle One)

The family unit contains the basic building blocks of life. It is through these critical familial (family) relationships that one is grounded, supported and nurtured (nourish, encourage) for healthy development. Family relationships can be particularly painful because these are the people who are supposed to love us the most. For some people, a loving family was not part of their lives. For others, the current family structure has been fractured and needs repairing.

If we do not receive, or *feel* we have not received, our families' love, we *may* not be sure of our identity or have an identity crisis. In other words, we may not know exactly who we are as an individual. Our sense of worth and value diminishes (lessens). Our sense of aloneness and isolation increases.

Definition: Identity is the distinguishing character or personality of an individual. It is the fact of being who or what a person or thing is. The condition of being the same with something described or asserted.

Definition: Identity crisis is a feeling of unhappiness and confusion caused by not being sure about what type of person you really are or knowing your true purpose in life.

Read Romans 8:15-17 and answer questions 10-13:

For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."¹⁶ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.¹⁷ 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. Romans 8:15-17 (Sonship is the relationship of son to father.)

10. Fill in the blanks (v. 15): "For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to _____, but you received the Spirit of _____."

11. What does the Holy Spirit enable us to call God (v. 15c)?

Definition: Abba is the Aramaic¹ word for father. Although the word does not appear in the Old Testament, its Hebrew associate ab (אב) which also means father, occurs frequently. In the New Testament, Abba is translated from the Greek word abba (ἀββᾶ).

The apostle Paul was using the word Abba (Romans 8:15) to describe a believer's intimate relationship with God through faith. He was repeating the truth of our relationship that he either learned from the other apostles or from Jesus Himself. Recall Jesus used the word Abba to express His own close and familial relationship with God (Mark 14:36).

12. What does the Spirit Himself testify with our spirit (v. 16)?

13. How does the truth of having God as your Father change *your* other relationships?

You are deeply loved and cared for by your adoptive Father and heavenly family. However, being a son and child of God carries responsibilities. The rest of the passage says: *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.* Romans 8:17

Those of us in the United States have not endured or encountered much suffering for Christ compared to believers in other parts of the world. Nevertheless, your case may be different. You may be in a situation where your life is on the line or you may have scars on your body right now because of standing firm in Christ. Either way, Abuk's story from another land may encourage you.

Abuk lives in the war-ravaged country of Sudan, Africa, where a jihad, or holy war, against the mostly Christian south has raged for nearly two decades. The atrocity occurred in 1999 in a small village near the frontlines of a battle being fought at the time. The following is a 2001 written account from "The New Foxe's Book of Martyrs."

"One morning just after dawn, Islamic soldiers raided her village. Most of the villagers fled before the marauding soldiers, but Abuk was not able to get away in time. Several soldiers abducted her and told her that she had to go with them. She refused. They then told her that she must convert from Christianity to Islam by immediately renouncing Christ and accepting Mohammed as the chief and last prophet of God. She again refused.

Enraged at her refusals, the soldiers savagely tore off her clothes and tied her up. After starting a fire, they put their large knives into it until they were red hot, and then stabbed, sliced and mutilated Abuk's upper chest, shoulders, and back. Fighting to hold back her screaming, Abuk prayed to Jesus for the strength to withstand the agonizing torture and not deny or turn from Him.

¹ Aramaic is a Semitic language known since the ninth century B.C. as the speech of the Aramaeans. These people inhabited Aram (modern Syria) and part of Babylonia in the 11th–8th centuries B.C. This language was adopted as customary speech by various non-Aramaean peoples including the Jews after the Babylonian exile. Semitic relates to or denoted a family of languages that includes Hebrew, Arabic, and Aramaic and certain ancient languages such as Phoenician and Akkadian, constituting the main subgroup of the Afro-Asiatic family.

When Abuk would still not renounce her Christianity, the soldiers beat her unconscious and left her to die of her wounds. Sometime later, she regained consciousness, and stumbling, falling, and crawling, she made her way to the other villagers to get help.

Although it has been several years since she was tortured for her Christianity, Abuk still suffers from her massive wounds. She is almost in constant pain from them, and because of a lack of proper medical help where she lives, there is often infection in many of the scars she carries on her body.

Abuk has a strong faith in Jesus Christ and would undoubtedly suffer again for Him. But like any of us would be, she is always strengthened when Christians come to her village to bring supplies, to encourage them, and to tell them that their brothers and sisters in Christ throughout the world are praying for them."²

Lesson 3: Identity in Christ (Day Two) *Faith in Identity*

Abuk has a strong faith in Jesus Christ and it has been put to the test. She identifies with Christ, has shared in His sufferings and will share in His glory. The key word is faith. Abuk trusts God's Word that her identity is in Christ. Abuk lives her life fully in this truth. She is a son of God. Yes, son. She is a full member of God's family with all inheritance rights.

Those people who are in Christ and do God's will are sons of God according to the New Testament. The apostle Paul tells us that those *who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God* (Romans 8:14). Jesus tells us that peacemakers are blessed because *they will be called sons of God* (Matthew 5:9). Recall, our Heavenly Father *is* the God of peace (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

A peacemaker is one who establishes peace (no war or fighting) between two or more parties. Jesus, the Prince of Peace, came to earth to establish peace between rebellious mankind and God. He did the will of God the Father, and as such has given us a prime example of being a family worker for peace.

Read Galatians 3:26-29 and answer questions 14-18:

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus,²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.²⁹ If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Galatians 3:26-29

14. How do you become a son of God (v. 26)?

15. According to v. 27, how is faith explained?

16. What does it mean to be baptized into Christ (v. 27)?

² Foxe, John, Chadwick, Harold, J., "The New Foxe's Book of Martyrs," Bridge-Logos Publishers, Gainesville, FL, 2001. pp.394-396.

17. What does it mean to be clothed with Christ?

One of the first steps of discipleship is being immersed or dipped in water to give testimony to our faith in Christ. At this baptism we are declaring that we believe in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus as the only way of salvation. We are trusting Jesus and professing death to our old life and *identity*. The immersion into water symbolizes death to our old life of sin.

When we arise from our water burial, we are professing a new life and identity. We are showing the world that we are spiritually united with Christ. Baptism is a way of showing the world that we are His disciples and live a life of righteousness.

The early church would put on white garments to signify their new life. The white clothes meant that they were taking on the clean, sinless characteristics of Christ. Thus, they were stepping into a personal and spiritual union with Jesus, *the Son*, and claiming sonship in His Name. Being clothed with Christ is referring to this same concept.³

Definition: One is simply defined as being a single unit or thing. It also means being the same in kind or quality. One can refer to a unified entity (body) of two or more parts.

18. What does the statement "you are all one in Christ Jesus" mean (v. 28)?

The beautiful thing about our new identity in Christ is that we are not alone. We share our identity with others who belong to Jesus. There are no ethnic, social or gender distinctions that would cause us to be discriminated against or separated from each other.

Definition: Discrimination is the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people or things, especially on the grounds of race, age, sex, or social status.

19. Do you think unkind thoughts, or treat others badly because of either race, age, sex, or social status? Explain your answer.

20. What will you do to rid yourself of even the slightest discrimination?

21. How can your CLI Discipeler pray for you so that you can resist discrimination and build loving relationships?

Remember the golden rule of Luke 6:31: *Do to others as you would have them do to you*. It has a good application here. As much as it depends on us, we should be kind and loving toward all people. However, we cannot make others, even professing Christians, treat us well.

This is where faith in our new identity is critical. Our identity is not tied to what other people think or say about us. Even though we may treat all people well regardless of their race, age, sex,

³ Hays, Richard B., *The Letter to the Galatians*, The New Interpreter's Bible, Volume XI, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 2000. p.272

or social status, others may not. We may be treated badly by others because we are different in some way.

22. Are you being mistreated in either actions or words? Yes No Sometimes (Circle One) If yes, explain the situation and how your CLI Discippler may pray for you:

Our identity cannot be graded or judged according to any kind of popularity contest. Perhaps you have envied the guy or gal who always has a ready laugh and clever joke. Or maybe you are jealous of the natural leaders who others follow and look up to. Of course there are those among us who are handsome or beautiful and command attention just because of the way they look.

Definition: Envy is the painful or resentful awareness of an advantage enjoyed by another joined with a desire to possess the same advantage.

Once we understand our true identity in Christ, we will cast aside any kind of envy or resentment of others' gifts or talents. First we will be eternally grateful for being a son and child of God and second, we will understand that we are fitted perfectly for our job here on earth. A word of caution to those who are powerfully gifted or popular in some way. Your gifting is also for the purpose of serving God and His purposes. *Your* challenge may be to overcome pride, another deadly sin.

Whether you are tested by envy or pride, the important thing to remember is that your identity is in the hands of Your loving Father. His unfathomable (beyond our understanding) love propels His children to shed their sinful garments and replace them with the righteous coverings of Christ. Thus, we walk in the assurance of our new identity and not in the old rags of wickedness.

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! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.² Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

1 John 3:1-2

23. Ask God to speak to you as you read and meditate on 1 John 3:1-2. Share what God revealed to you:

Walking in assurance of our new identity means that we trust God. We have confidence that God has adopted us as sons and daughters in Christ Jesus. This is our faith in identity. We have a heavenly family who approves of us and therefore we do not have to be concerned with what others think, say or do. Besides, *If God is for us, who can be against us?* Romans 8:31b

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!
2 Corinthians 5:17

24. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17. What does your identity in Christ mean for you?

Read Colossians 3:2-4 and answer questions 25-29:

Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.³ For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.⁴ When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.⁵ Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Colossians 3:2-4

25. What does it mean to set your minds on things above and not on earthly things (v. 2)?

26. As a new creation in Christ, where is your life now hidden (v. 3)?

27. When Christ returns, will you appear with Him in glory (v. 4)? Yes No Maybe (Circle One)
Why or why not?

28. For those of us who will appear with Christ in glory, what are some things that He expects of us (v. 5)?

29. What is another name for sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed (v. 5)?

Definition: Idolatry is the worship of a physical object as a god. It also means excessive attachment or devotion to something. Anything or anyone that is preferred or worshipped over the one, true, living God may be considered an idol.

Colossians 3:2-4 is a beautiful passage of hope and joy. While on earth, we have a partial realization of our salvation and relationship with Christ. But the full realization of new bodies and seeing Christ face to face is hidden with Him. In other words, there is still some mystery for us, but the reality of our eternal and glorious life is safely tucked away with Christ in heaven.

In the meantime we are secure in our identity. God says, *Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you* (Hebrews 13:5b). *Though my father and mother forsake me, the LORD will receive me* (Psalm 27:10). No matter who leaves or abandons us, God will not. He alone fills our lives with meaning, purpose, joy and love. Praise Him.

Lesson 3: Identity in Christ (Day Three) *Identity and Approval Rating*

It is part of our sinful nature to desire attention and approval. We want others to think well of us and secretly desire popularity and recognition. It is a way for us to feel good about ourselves. If we are liked and sought after, well, we must be okay.

30. Why do you think people care so much about what others think or say about them?

A politician's approval rating is secured when a firm takes a poll (survey) of a percentage of the population in order to tabulate (chart) the results. If the majority of the people in the poll approve of the official and his work, he gets a good rating. Politicians or elected officials usually watch their ratings for various reasons, but an important one is reelection.

Sometimes we act like politicians seeking public approval and reelection, instead of sons, already approved and redeemed. Instead of seeking God for our approval rating, we look around us to see how many friends we have, who is following us, or how well we are treated in a group. When we take our eyes off God, the source of our well being, we set ourselves up for failure.

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. Romans 8:1-2

Definition: Condemnation is a statement or expression of very strong and definite criticism or disapproval. It also means the act of judicially condemning. Related to the Greek word for condemnation is the word penalty, which is defined as a punishment imposed for breaking a law, rule, or contract.

31. Read Romans 8:1-2. How does this promise set you up for success in life?

For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form,¹⁰ and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority. Colossians 2:9-10

32. Read Colossians 2:9-10. What have you been given?

As a Christian, your identity *is* Christ. He *is* your distinguishing character or personality. You have the fullness of Christ; you partake of His divine nature. In Him you have a 100 percent approval rating from God. No condemnation or disapproval exists in the blood of the Lamb.

Do not feel badly or fear those who disapprove of you. Recall Jesus' words about fearing God. *But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him (Luke 12:5).*

Jesus then tells His disciples not to worry because God cares so much that even the number of hairs on their head is counted. He says the same to us. However, Jesus continues with a warning that we should not disown (reject) Him or we also will be disowned.

Let us keep this warning in mind but turn our focus to the positive side. Whoever acknowledges Jesus before men, He will also acknowledge before the angels of God (Luke 12:8). I pray and believe that we will always declare that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, who died for our sins and rose from the dead.

Read Acts 11:21 and answer questions 33-36:

The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord. Acts 11:21

33. What does the expression "the Lord's hand was with them" mean?

34. What happened because "the Lord's hand was with them"?

35. What does it mean that "the people believed and turned to the Lord"?

36. Have people believed and turned to the Lord because of your testimony (telling about your faith)? Yes No (Pray for the Lord's hand to be continually with you so others believe.)

The first disciples had God's 100 percent approval rating. Having the Lord's hand with or upon someone marks His approval and blessing. Sometimes His divine blessing is accompanied by signs and wonders. Recall that John the Baptist's father could not speak from the time the angel appeared to him until after he wrote the baby's name on a tablet. *Everyone who heard this wondered about it, asking, "What then is this child going to be?" For the Lord's hand was with him.* Luke 1:66

Nehemiah was cup bearer (serving wine) to the King of Persia in 445 B.C. when he heard that the walls around Jerusalem were broken down and the gates had been burned with fire. He was distraught (upset) by the report and wanted to do something about it. He fasted and prayed and then approached the King. Although Nehemiah was considered an official of the court, he was not a free man.

Read Nehemiah 2:8 and answer questions 37-38:

And may I have a letter to Asaph, keeper of the king's forest, so he will give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel by the temple and for the city wall and for the residence I will occupy?" And because the gracious hand of my God was upon me, the king granted my requests. Nehemiah 2:8

37. Besides asking permission to go to Jerusalem, what else did Nehemiah ask for?

38. Why did the king grant Nehemiah's requests?

After Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem, he examined the wall and the work to be completed. After his survey he called together the Jews, priests and nobles who would be doing the work. He pointed out the disgrace they all suffered because of the broken walls and urged them to join him in the rebuilding project.

Read Nehemiah 2:18 and answer questions 39-40:

I also told them about the gracious hand of my God upon me and what the king had said to me. They replied, "Let us start rebuilding." So they began this good work. Nehemiah 2:18

39. What did Nehemiah tell the Jews about God's gracious hand?

40. How did they reply?

So they began this good work. Yes, it was a good work and God's gracious hand was on Nehemiah and his building project. However, there was opposition. Nehemiah had his

detractors (critics) and enemies. Indeed, Satan is always ready to incite trouble for the people of God.

Facing trouble does not mean that God is not with us. His gracious hand helps us to overcome opposition (hostility) and to stand in victory. So it was with Nehemiah. He overcame the resistance and under his leadership, the Jews rebuilt the wall and gates in 52 days.

41. Do you become easily discouraged when you face opposition or resistance to your faith?
Y N Sometimes (Circle One) Explain your answer:

42. Read the book of Nehemiah. What lessons did you learn and how will you apply these lessons to your life to stay encouraged even in the face of hostilities (aggression)?

Lesson 3: Identity in Christ (Day Four) *Identity and Good work*

As Christians we have the Holy Spirit who testifies (confirms) with our spirit that God is with us. Jesus has made it possible for us to have a new identity with the gracious hand of the Lord upon us. We may be gifted and called in different ways, but one way is the same for all of us. That mandate is to make disciples who will also serve God and serve others.

Before we talk about making disciples, it is good to review Jesus' teaching on how we treat His mature followers. We will meet many people who may not need our help in knowing Christ or learning the Bible, but that does not mean that we can ignore them. Perhaps they have other needs or God has brought them into our lives for a reason.

And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward. Matthew 10:42

43. Read and meditate on Matthew 10:42. As a disciple, how should you treat other disciples of Christ from other denominations, ministries or backgrounds?

Meditate on 1 John 3:17-18 and answer questions 44-45:

If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?¹⁸ Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. 1 John 3:17-18

44. If you know that another Christian is in financial (monetary) need, what are some ways that you could help with action and in truth?

45. Pray and ask God to show you someone with a physical or financial need and how He would like you to help. Do as the Lord leads and share what happened:

Novelist Anne Isabella Ritchie coined a familiar proverb in 1885: "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." The Chinese were

credited with a similar saying in a 1964 U.S. publication: "Give a man a fish, and you have fed him once. Teach him how to fish and you have fed him for a lifetime."

These sayings bring to light the importance of teaching and instructing others how to meet their needs. Instead of a simple gift or handout, take extra time with the needy and help them strategically (purposefully) so they can provide for themselves. Your overtime can pay handsomely with positive and radical changes that last not just for a day, but forever. When Jesus called His disciples, He taught them how to interpret Scripture and live by it. He spent three years modeling behavior and preparing them to serve without His physical presence. He wanted them to be successful in fishing for people.

Fishing is a familiar occupation in the New Testament. When Jesus called Simon Peter and Andrew, they were successful fishermen. They had employees working in their business and owned a home. They already knew how to make a living and feed themselves.

However, instead of throwing their nets for fish, Jesus said they would be throwing spiritual nets for disciples. Jesus used figurative language to arouse interest and enthusiasm for God's purpose. He was talking about making them into disciples for the Kingdom of God.

Jesus taught them how to be His followers and how to make other followers. They were to reproduce themselves and teach others how to do the same. This was God's plan for taking the gospel to the world, generation after generation.

Definition: Spiritual relates to the human spirit or soul as opposed to material or physical things. Spirit is the nonphysical part of a person that is the seat of emotions and character.

46. If you know that another Christian is in spiritual need, what are some ways that you could help with action and in truth?

People may have many different spiritual needs, but all are fulfilled in and through Jesus Christ. The Bible is the instrument of truth that reveals Christ and gives perfect guidance and direction. Therefore, helping others study the Bible is one way to help in time of spiritual need.

We would like to suggest a partnership with CLI as one approach to helping others meet their needs by becoming a "Bible Minister." You would enroll others into the CLI Leadership Bible Study, making sure they received and completed their lessons. As a "Bible Minister" you would review their lessons and offer encouragement and guidance. CLI will mail the lessons and answer sheets to you and your "Learners" as needed. Another name for "Learner" is disciple.

If you are able to meet in a small group, we would recommend about one to seven individuals. Not only does it take time to review each lesson, but since you are physically present, you will want to spend time with your "Learners." If you have the ability to meet in a group, each disciple may review his or her own lessons with you leading the review. However, there are personal answers that you will want to review carefully and prayer requests to write down.

When your "Learners" complete the Leadership Bible study, you can continue to disciple them one on one or in a small group with the CLI Disciple of Christ Study in which you are currently enrolled. In the same way, we can mail you the lessons and answers as needed.

47. I would like to volunteer and help others with CLI Bible studies. 1. Yes 2. No 3. I am already a CLI Volunteer (Circle One of the three choices) *If your answer is yes, please fill out the "CLI Discipler and Volunteer" form on pages 23-24.*

Read Matthew 13:23 and answer questions 48-49:

But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."
Matthew 13:23

48. Why would you consider yourself a person having good soil in this parable (story)?

49. How can you cooperate with Jesus to produce a hundred times what was sown in your life?

The fact that you are in the Disciple of Christ Study and interested in helping others know Christ would indicate that God's word is living and active in your life. Staying or living in Jesus assures us of a crop of righteousness. We know that our power to do anything, including producing a good return on our lives, comes from Jesus.

Therefore it is not surprising that we start our discipleship journey with prayer. We need to ask God for the Christians that He has prepared for us to disciple. We are specifically and intentionally looking for those whose hearts God has prepared. It is also important to be open to God's Spirit as He may place someone on your heart who is not a Christian and in need of salvation first.

In that case, pray for the Holy Spirit to prepare that person's heart and your own. Ask for the right opportunity to share the gospel in love and sincerity. Your next step, whether or not the person's accepts Christ's offer of salvation, is to pray for the Spirit's further guidance.

If this person does accept Jesus as his or her Lord and Savior, you will want to prayerfully consider your role as discipler. God may have planned for this person to be disciplined by another, so the only way to know is to ask Him.

Although we are thinking that your pool of disciples will come from those you are able to see and talk to on a weekly basis, we do not want to limit God. Therefore, just as you are being disciplined through the mail, the Lord may desire the same of you. There would be the additional cost of postage for you, but if this is the Lord's will, He will provide.

50. Ask God the Father in Jesus' name for ten people of the same sex to disciple. Write the names the Lord places on your heart:

God may not place names on your heart right away so be patient and continue to pray. We are asking for ten names because not everyone you approach may agree to be discipled. Perhaps after praying through the list for a time, the Lord may remove some from the list or add others. By the way, our materials are free for you to use, but not mandatory (binding). If you feel led to disciple by another means, please do so. Just make sure the plan is centered on the Bible.

Lesson 3: Identity in Christ (Day Five) *Identity and Recruitment*

Recruit is a word that means enroll someone as a worker or member. In relating to matters of war, men and women may enlist or sign-up in the military or armed forces. For heavenly purposes recruit means enroll someone as a worker in the Kingdom. We are recruiting to raise an army for the Lord.

You will be doing recruiting on various levels. The top level is discipleship. This level takes more time and commitment for both the Discipler and the Disciple. Recall Jesus had twelve disciples or apostles but fellowshiped, conversed, taught, healed, cast out demons from many and sent out others to do the same.

Read Luke 10:1, 17-20 answer questions 51-53:

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. Luke 10:1

The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name."¹⁸ He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.¹⁹ I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.²⁰ However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." Luke 10:17-20 (some translations note seventy workers)⁴

51. How many workers did Jesus send out and how many returned with joy (v. 1, 17)?

52. What were they rejoicing about (v. 17)?

53. Why did Jesus say, "do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven" (v. 20)?

The seventy-two returned from their mission filled with the joy of successful service. There is joy when we do something that the Lord has asked us to do. Even to this day and as early as last night, I am thrilled when I complete an assignment from the Lord. When I arrived home yesterday from the office, I felt God saying to call one of my single neighbors and go visit her. I followed through and felt particularly joyful that night and today.

⁴ Early manuscript evidence is balanced between the two choices, seventy or seventy-two workers. We do not have to be dogmatic (rigid) about it. It may be a round number for a large group or there may be some significance of the seventy nations in Genesis 10 and Moses appointing seventy elders in Exodus 24:1.

These disciples had executed the Lord's will and were happy about that, but they were even happier that evil spirits had to flee in Jesus' name. They saw the power of His name and were elated.

Jesus confirms (backs-up) their account. He saw Satan's power diminished in their anointed work. They had surely taken back enemy territory by following the One who has ultimate control over evil forces. Jesus reiterates (recaps) that the reason they are able to overcome Satan and his evil forces is because He had given them authority to do so. Snakes and scorpions represent or refer to the organized army of Satan, his soldiers or militia.

After Jesus acknowledges their work in His name He *commands* them not to rejoice that the evil spirits submit (subject to, obey, under authority) to them but instead rejoice (be glad) that they are saved. Jesus says be glad that I know you and your name is written in heaven in the Lamb's book of life (Revelation 21:27). The disciples are to remember this humble attitude and practice it from now on.

Read Matthew 7:21-23 and answer questions 54-56:

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.²² Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?'²³ Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"

Matthew 7:21-23

54. Will everyone who prophesies, drives out demons and perform miracles using the name of Jesus enter the kingdom of heaven when they die? Yes No (Circle One)

55. What name does Jesus call men and women who do not do the will of God the Father (v. 23)?

56. Which would be better, spirits submitting to you on earth or spending eternity in heaven?

There is a difference between using the name of Jesus and living *in* His name. When someone uses Jesus, it means they are trying to manipulate or exploit Him for personal pleasure or purposes. He or she just wants to benefit in some way with no real love or concern for our Savior. There are all kinds of reasons for this, including a person desiring attention, honor, money or power.

Living *in* Jesus means just that. We live our daily lives following Jesus and doing as He would do for the reasons that He would do them. After all, Jesus provides our identity. This is who we are. We love the triune God and our acts arise out of our devotion to Him. We are willing to do anything to please and glorify His holy name. It is not about us but about God.

We want to recruit men and women to live in Jesus, identify with Him, and *not* attempt to use Him. We also want to recruit on various levels. Time wise, you may only be able to disciple a

few people but you could recruit more to do good works, a Bible study, to serve on a particular project or in a ministry.

We are in a war with the forces of evil and need our brothers and sisters in Christ marching with us side by side in freedom, love and power. This can only be done in the blood of the New Covenant. We need to understand it, refer to it and live in it every day. There will be more about the New Covenant in future lessons.

The New Covenant is important to keep us in God's terms and in His promises and benefits. If we are walking in the way God desires, then we are confident to enter into His presence and get all the help we need.

Some of you are natural recruiters. It may be your gift to attract people to a cause. You may have a magnetic (charismatic) personality that draws others to you. Congratulations! We are happy for you and equally happy that we are on the same team. However, not many of us have this God given gift. But it really does not matter, because gift or not, we are not let off the "recruiting" hook. We are all heavenly recruiters.

Read Jude 1:20-21 and answer questions 57-58:

But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit.²¹ Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. Jude 1:20-21

57. Jude, the brother of James and half brother of Jesus, calls the godly to _____ yourselves up in your most holy _____ and _____ in the Holy Spirit (v. 20).

58. Jude also tells friends in Christ to _____ yourselves in God's _____ as you wait for the mercy of our _____ Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life (v. 21).

Building yourself up in your faith is a positive action, as is praying in the Holy Spirit for assistance. Some opposites of "build up" are to erode, weaken, dwindle, disarm, demilitarize. The word demilitarize is especially revealing. It means to prohibit or remove soldiers or troop presence in a particular area. We are in a holy war against Satan and his followers. They are God's enemies and when we engage in activities that are the opposite of building ourselves up in the faith, we are removing ourselves from the battle.

Building yourself up does not mean that you are tearing yourself down. It does not mean telling yourself that you cannot do something or that you are less in some way than another person. For example, when we talked about the captivating and compelling personalities that we label as folks with charisma, did you think of someone and feel jealous or envious? Did you say to yourself, I am dull or no one likes me or I am just not good with people?

You just engaged in self-talk. Self-talk is the act of talking to yourself either aloud or silently. We do it all the time. Another word for self-talk is the process of thinking or mental activity.

What we continually say to ourselves does make a difference. Jesus made this clear when He said, "For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks" (Matthew 12:34). Perhaps, someone said you were stupid, ugly, a klutz or will never amount to anything. It does not matter who said it or where you got this idea about yourself but you have a recording in your mind that you have picked up and thus tell yourself these lies just as if it were reality.

Self-talk can be positive or it can be negative. When you are engaging in positive self-talk, you are building yourself up in your faith and trusting in God. When you are engaging in negative self-talk, you are denying the new blood covenant.

We all have some kind of negative self-talk going on in our minds. Listen to yourself when someone hurts your feelings or causes you some kind of pain. What do you say to yourself about that person and about yourself? Perhaps you might say: No one likes me, I'll never have any friends, people are jerks, Christians are hypocrites, etc.

Our self-talk can be very defeating. It will take us out of the battle before we even step in. Satan will not have to worry about us because we are on self-destruct mode. But the good news is that you and I can overcome all this negativity, which quite frankly is sin.

The first step is to recognize what you are saying to yourself. Listen to what you are actually saying to yourself on a daily basis and in different kinds of situations. What do you say about yourself and what do you say about others?

Recognize that you are self-focused and not God-focused. Begin telling yourself who you are in Christ, what His plans are for you and how He will accomplish His plans through you. The Bible is full of God's good promises that affirm your new identity in Christ. These promises all come from the New Covenant, which gives us the means to a full and abundant life. Before we study the New Covenant, let us review the first and older Covenants.

Next: Lesson 4: First Covenants

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS Lesson 3

CLI Disciple of Christ Study: Identity in Christ

Return your answers to your Discipler for discussion and review. Include your own personal letter and comments with your answers. The Disciple of Christ ministry is designed to forge a close, yet professional, friendship between you and your Discipler. Letters or short notes help bridge the distance and connect hearts in Christ.

Name: _____ Number _____ Date: _____

Name of Institution: _____ Street address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

1. Write and share about one or two of the situations in which you acted in grace toward another:

2. What do I need to change in relating to others? _____

3. How am I falling short in my relationships with family, friends and others? _____

4. How am I succeeding in my relationships with family, friends and others? _____

5. Who am I blaming for my unloving attitude or lack of friends? _____

6. By God's grace, what needs to change in my life and personality in order to have healthier and more realistic and loving relationships? _____

7. Think of one relationship that needs some work. Pray and ask God what He would like you to do or not do. Share results: _____

8. Read 2 Corinthians 10:5. We are responsible for our thoughts. True False (Circle One)

9. Read Hebrews 4:16. God will help us have the right thoughts. True False (Circle One)

10. Fill in the blanks (v. 15): "For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to

_____, but you received the Spirit of _____."

11. What does the Holy Spirit enable us to call God (v. 15c)? _____

12. What does the Spirit Himself testify with our spirit (v. 16)? _____

13. How does the truth of having God as your Father change *your* other relationships?

Lesson 3: Identity in Christ (Day Two) *Faith in Identity*

14. How do you become a son of God (v. 26)? _____

15. According to v. 27, how is faith explained? _____

16. What does it mean to be baptized into Christ (v. 27)? _____

17. What does it mean to be clothed with Christ? _____

18. What does the statement "you are all one in Christ Jesus" mean (v. 28)?

19. Do *you* think unkind thoughts, or treat others badly because of either race, age, sex, or social status? Explain your answer: _____

20. What will you do to rid yourself of even the slightest discrimination? _____

21. How can your CLI Discipler pray for you so that you can resist discrimination and build loving relationships? _____

22. Are you being mistreated in either actions or words? Yes No Sometimes (Circle One) If yes, explain the situation and how your CLI Discipler may pray for you:_____

23. Ask God to speak to you as you read and meditate on 1 John 3:1-2. Share what God revealed to you:_____

24. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17. What does your identity in Christ mean for you?

25. What does it mean to set your minds on things above and not on earthly things (v. 2)?

26. As a new creation in Christ, where is your life now hidden (v. 3)?_____

27. When Christ returns, will you appear with Him in glory (v. 4)? Yes No Maybe (Circle One)

Why or why not?_____

28. For those of us who will appear with Christ in glory, what are some things that He expects of us (v. 5)?_____

29. What is another name for sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed (v. 5)?

Lesson 3: Identity in Christ (Day Three) *Identity and Approval Rating*

30. Why do you think people care so much about what others think or say about them?

31. Read Romans 8:1-2. How does this promise set you up for success in life?

32. Read Colossians 2:9-10. What have you been given?_____

33. What does the expression "the Lord's hand was with them" mean?_____

34. What happened because "the Lord's hand was with them"?_____

35. What does it mean that "the people believed and turned to the Lord"?_____

36. Have people believed and turned to the Lord because of your testimony (telling about your faith)? Yes No (Pray for the Lord's hand to be continually with you so others believe.)

37. Besides asking permission to go to Jerusalem, what else did Nehemiah ask for?

38. Why did the king grant Nehemiah's requests?_____

39. What did Nehemiah tell the Jews about God's gracious hand?_____

40. How did they reply?_____

41. Do you become easily discouraged when you face opposition or resistance to your faith?

Y N Sometimes (Circle One) Explain your answer:_____

42. Read the book of Nehemiah. What lessons did you learn and how will you apply these lessons to your life to stay encouraged even in the fact of hostilities (aggression)?

Lesson 3: Identity in Christ (Day Four) *Identity and good work*

43. Read and meditate on Matthew 10:42. As a disciple, how should you treat other disciples of Christ from other denominations, ministries or backgrounds? _____

44. If you know that another Christian is in financial (monetary) need, what are some ways that you could help with action and in truth? _____

45. Pray and ask God to show you someone with a physical or financial need and how He would like you to help. Do as the Lord leads and share what happened: _____

46. If you know that another Christian is in spiritual need, what are some ways that you could help with action and in truth? _____

47. I would like to volunteer and help others with CLI Bible studies. 1. Yes 2. No 3. I am already a CLI Volunteer (Circle One of the three choices) *If your answer is yes, please fill out the "CLI Discipler and Volunteer" form on pages 23-24.*

48. Why would you consider yourself a person having good soil in this parable (story)?

49. How can you cooperate with Jesus to produce a hundred times of what was sown in your life? _____

50. Ask God the Father in Jesus' name for ten people of the same sex to disciple. Write the names the Lord places on your heart: _____

Lesson 3: Identity in Christ (Day Five) *Identity and Recruitment*

51. How many workers did Jesus send out and how many returned with joy (v. 1, 17)? _____

52. What were they rejoicing about (v. 17)? _____

53. Why did Jesus say, "do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven" (v. 20)? _____

54. Will everyone who prophesies, drive out demons and perform miracles using the name of Jesus enter the kingdom of heaven when they die? Yes No (Circle One)

55. What name does Jesus call men and women who do not do the will of God the Father (v. 23)? _____

56. Which would be better, spirits submitting to you on earth or spending eternity in heaven?

57. Jude, the brother of James and half brother of Jesus calls the godly to _____ yourselves up in your most holy _____ and _____ in the Holy Spirit (v. 20).

58. Jude also tells friends in Christ to _____ yourselves in God's _____ as you wait for the mercy of our _____ Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life (v. 21).

Please Note: See pages 23-24 for your "CLI Discipled and Volunteer" form. Fill out the pertinent (applicable) information. For example, if you do not have a job, write N/A (Not Applicable) in the blank. Place your completed form in the envelope with Lesson 3.

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CLI Discippler and Volunteer Form

Date: _____

You are applying to live your life as a disciple of Christ and intentionally make disciples for the glory of the triune God. A disciple is a "student" or "follower" who learns, studies, and acts in accordance to the teachings of Christ, the Master.

Please print and fill out the appropriate information that applies to you:

Name (First): _____ (Last): _____ ID Number: _____

Name of Institution: _____ Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ E-Mail: _____

Phone: _____ My Birthday: Month: _____ Day: _____ Year: _____

Employer: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Church: _____

Spouse Name: _____ Children-Names & Ages: _____

Natural Talents or Spiritual Gifts: _____

I trusted or put my faith in Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior on (date or year): _____

This is how it happened: _____

How has your life changed since trusting Jesus?: _____

Turn over or see next page

I would like to **be a volunteer and disciple others** (Circle one or both) with CLI because:

I would also like to pray for CLI weekly and receive the Praises and Requests. Yes No (Circle)

If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen. 1 Peter 4:11

Please provide three personal references:

Note: One of the references should be either a chaplain or Bible teacher at your facility.

1. Name (First): _____ (Last): _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____ Person's Occupation: _____

Relationship to you: _____

2. Name (First): _____ (Last): _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____ Person's Occupation: _____

Relationship to you: _____

3. Name (First): _____ (Last): _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____ Person's Occupation: _____

Relationship to you: _____

Rev 5/25/2015

