

HIS STORY. YOUR STORY.

WEEK 2: YOUR STORY

EMBRACING YOUR NEW IDENTITY IN CHRIST



BIG IDEA: Knowing your true identity helps you understand your part in God's Story.

DATE: Wednesday, February 7 & Sunday, February 11

SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 1:4-5

ANNOUNCEMENTS & WELCOME NEW GUESTS

"SUPER SUNDAY"- FOOD AND FELLOWSHIP TIME

PRAYER REQUESTS: Pass around the prayer notebook and include any answers to prayer.

OPENING QUESTION

The concept of "identity" is a hot topic these days. How does the culture define you as a woman? As a man? (What are some stereotypes?) How does the enemy define you? **Leader – write these words on the board as people share them.**

The whole issue of IDENTITY is very much in question in our culture today. That is why it is so important to know your identity and find your identity in Christ. When we find it in what we DO or what we are GOOD at then what if that is taken away? Sports identity – what happens when you are injured? Parent – what happens when the nest becomes empty? Business owner – what happens when it fails? Identity crisis! But when we know who we are in Christ, our footing is secure and we cannot be brought down, manipulated or confused.

[WATCH VIDEO]

DISCUSSION QUESTION

Who or what are you tempted to find your fulfillment in? (career, relationship, children, fitness, abilities, possessions, etc.)

SCRIPTURE READING

Ephesians 1:4-5 (NIV)

"Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to

himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure."

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE

What does this passage teach us about God? *(Possible answers: He knew He was going to create us before He even created the world, He loves us, He chose us, in Christ we are holy in His eyes; He decided to adopt us; He wanted to do this! It gives Him pleasure!)*

What does this passage teach us about humanity? *(Possible answers: chosen, wanted, adopted, loved, holy, without fault, part of the family, forgiven, accepted, etc.)*

Leaders: cross out the words on the board from earlier and write these above or beside them.

How does this truth about your identity in Christ change the way you see yourself or others?

This week in your reading you will see how God sees you: you are chosen, you are a worshipper, you are forgiven and made new, you are adopted, you are never alone, you are holy, and you belong to God.

APPLICATION EXERCISE

"God's Love Letter"

On Day 8 you will read a Love Letter from God to you – all coming directly from Scripture. *We have printed them for you.*

CHALLENGE: Share "God's Love Letter" with someone this week. Pray and see who God brings to mind. Think of someone who may be struggling this week. What a perfect time to share this with Valentine's Day coming up. Do you have a neighbor or friend who is far from God? Or one who is hurting, possibly a widow or shut-in, co-worker, family member, or recently divorced? Hand deliver this letter (you can roll it up and tie it with a red ribbon) or mail it in a Valentine's Card.

Close by reading "God's Love Letter" over your group and then pray for the people God calls us to share this letter with this week. (see attached or found on Day 8 of the book)

READING PLAN

2/11: Day 8 **2/12:** Day 9 **2/13:** Day 10 **2/14:** Day 11 **2/15:** Day 12 **2/16:** Day 13 **2/17:** Day 14

COMMENTARY

Blessings from God the Father

He has chosen us (v. 4) Salvation begins with God, and not with man, all Christians will agree. The lost sinner left to his own ways, does not seek God. God in His love seeks the sinner. Note that God chose us even before He created the universe, so that our salvation is wholly of His grace and not on the basis of anything we ourselves have done. He chose us in Christ, not in ourselves. And He chose us for a purpose; to be holy and without blame. In the Bible, election is always *unto* something. It is a privilege that carries a great responsibility.

He has adopted us (v.5) Adoption has a dual meaning, both present and future. You do not get into God's family by adoption you get into His family by regeneration, the new birth. Adoption is the act of God by which He gives His "born ones" an adult standing in the family. What does He do this? So that we might immediately begin to claim our inheritance and enjoy our spiritual wealth! A baby cannot legally use this inheritance, but an adult son can - and should! This means you do not have to wait until you are an old saint before you can claim your riches in Christ. The future aspect of adoption is found Romans 8:22-23, the glorified body we will have when Jesus returns, this "private adoption" will be made public for everyone to see!

v. 5 – note that the Greek word for *adoption to sonship* is a legal term referring to the full legal standing of an adopted male heir in Roman culture.

Predestination - refers primarily to what God does for saved people. Nowhere in the Bible are we taught that people are predestined *to hell*, because this word refers only to *God's people*. Election seems to refer to people, while predestination refers to *purposes*.