

Fil-Am Community Church
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Independence Day

Do you have an Identity Crisis?

Christians are hindered because we don't understand our full identity in Christ. Today we are going to look over some principles that will help you in your quest to become not only a **Disciple** of Christ but a **Victorious** One at that.

1. It's time for your Liberation

Standing in New York Harbor is a special lady that is called, "**Lady Liberty**" She is a symbol of freedom for the entire world.

- ✓ The lady holds a **Lamp** high in her hands , to light the way for those seeking freedom,
- ✓ She has a seven point **Crown** on her head representing the seven seas or the seven continents, inviting every part of the earth to bring their oppresses to America.
- ✓ In her hands is the **Declaration of Independence**
- ✓ At her feet lays the broken **Chains** of representing tyranny that have been broken.

We need to take the same image of the Statue of liberty and apply it spiritually and understand that just like lady liberty that...

God is holding his **Lamp** high and telling the world to bring me your...

- ✓ **Pain,**
- ✓ **Addictions,**
- ✓ **Depression,**

- ✓ **Guilt,**
- ✓ **Failure,**
- ✓ **Broken homes,**
- ✓ **Broken relationships,**
- ✓ **Broken marriages,**
- ✓ **Bring me your sin,**

Because the chains or **Bondage** of Sin has been broken through Christ Jesus.

God wants to set us free!

2. Reality of your Spiritual Bondage.

Why do we try so hard and don't seem to get anywhere or gain any growth?
How can we seem to leave Church on Sunday on a **spiritual high** only to return to the **spiritual bondage** on Monday morning?

Most people who are in spiritual bondage want to be free but the key is to understand that you are in bondage.

Let's look at **2 Corinthians 11:3, (NASB)**

*³But I am afraid that just as Eve was **deceived** by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ."*

Let's also look at **Revelations 12:9 (NKJV)**

*⁹ So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who **deceives** the whole world....."*

So let's look at how Satan Deceived Eve?

In **Genesis 2:17 (NKJV)** says, ¹⁷ *"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."*

Look again at **Genesis 3:1-3 (NASB)**

¹Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?" ²The woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; ³but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'"

We know that the **deception** worked, he tricked Eve into thinking she **didn't need God**, that she could do it by herself. Many also call this do it yourself Christianity.

One of Satan's main goals is to keep sinners from going to heaven, as well as keep the saints from enjoying the journey, by tying them up in **spiritual bondage**.

3. Confusing your Identity

Confusing your identity is one of many tricks Satan uses, but it's one of his favorite because it is so **effective**.

This is one way he can keep you off balance, by confusing your identity, by doing this Christians will not know how to act in a given situation.

A female presence was requested for the monetary system and the Susan B. Anthony Dollar was created to fill that void.

The Susan B. Anthony Dollar was produced but it did not reach the level of circulation of other coins that were more familiar.

Why?

One reason was because it looked too much like a quarter. People had trouble distinguishing it from a quarter and opted not to use it.

A lot of Christians are just like that. We know we are **worth a dollar** but the way we live our lives makes us look like we are only worth a quarter.

Satan liked confusing you, making you think you are only worth a fraction of what you are really worth.

He does this by making **Sinners** think they are **Saints** and **Saints** to think they are **Sinners**.

Satan does not care about your class he is no discriminator at all, he goes after all...

- ✓ the rich and poor,
- ✓ white & black,
- ✓ male or female,

Satan is an equal opportunity offender.

He wants to control your mind, because if he can control your mind he can control your actions.

In the Marine Corps we have a saying that is, Mind over Matter, meaning when you can control your mind the rest doesn't matter! This is the key that allows us to overcome physical pain and do what some may seem as impossible.

It is the ability to put a full combat load on your back and hump for countless miles, or to find yourself in a fire fight and never feel physical exhaustion. It's the ability to not allow your body or conditions surrounding you control your mind but make your mind control your body.

Satan understands this and plants thoughts in your mind all the time.

He does this in hopes that if he tries it enough they will become our thoughts. Just like when he told Eve, "You will be like God", that is what he **planted** in her thoughts.

When a believer says, I can't make this marriage work anymore, or I can't kick this habit....

Who does that sound like?

There are endless examples but here are just a few...

- ✓ I'm not good looking enough,
- ✓ I'm not popular enough,
- ✓ or I will never be accepted,
- ✓ or fit in.....

Now once again who does this sound like?

He has been programming thoughts like this into countless Christians heads for so long many think it is their thoughts and not his.

The Bible is full of accounts where Satan has deceived the saints time and time again.

Let's look at an example where Peter and Jesus were talking and Jesus revealed to him his plan to go to the cross, and peter said in...

Matthew 16:22-23 (NIV), ²²*Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!"*

Now look what Jesus says to him in verse 23,

²³*Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."*

Jesus understood the words were Peters but the thoughts came from Satan.

Satan knows that once he gets his claws into your mind he can start to control your emotions.

Once the Devil gets your mind and emotions next he will start to control your actions.

Deception is one of Satan's best plays; Why? Because he is so effective at it.

Some of you may follow football, and understand what a play action pass is, for those of you that don't it is when the quarterback receives the ball from the center, he turns and fakes a handoff to one of the running backs.

The goal of the fake is to make the defense think the running back has the ball and send all their defenders in that direction.

If he has done his job well, the defense has been distracted for a moment, thinking that someone else has the ball so that the quarterback can throw the ball to a wide-open receiver.

Satan also uses a play-action-pass on us, he fakes us out with the wrong purpose, to distract us from the real play, if even for a moment.

Just like a pick pocket loves a crowd, Satan has been robbing us of our purpose, by distracting us of God's plan.

The result of Satan's Deception is a **Separation from God.**

John 10:10 (NIV)

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

Satan does this by robbing Christians of their gifts, he wants to take your joy and peace and replace it with lust and greed.

Why is he so effective at this?

He does it a little at a time until one day you wake up and find you are in way over your head.

If someone were to knock on your door wearing a **ski mask** and holding a hand gun do you think you would open the door? He sneaks in and more importantly sneaks out, he doesn't want you to be on guard.

Many Christians are kept in bondage by not being able to overcome their situation just like a hamster on a wheel in his cage.

They can see freedom but after spending countless hours running faster and faster on their treadmill they have only managed to exhaust themselves.

True freedom for them is only there when their master reaches down and takes them out of their cage.

It's the same spiritually for us; we can run countless hours on our own spiritual treadmill thinking we are getting closer and closer to freedom only to wear ourselves out going nowhere at all, it is only when Jesus reaches down and takes us out from our situation that we become free.

4. Clarifying your Identity

If you ask anyone who Michael Jordan is they will almost always say he was or is a great basketball player. He was great, many would say the greatest player that ever played the game, but basketball is what he does not who he is.

Just like a few weeks ago when I also confessed that I struggled to separate my identity as a US Marine when my career was over and questioned who was I?

If I could not be a Marine anymore what could I do? It was a transition and one of the greatest mistakes we can make is be defining ourselves by what we do or what job title we have.

If Satan can keep you from discovering your spiritual identity he can hold you hostage.

Remember when we were born again we were given new natures as new creatures in Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:17, *"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. The Old is gone, the new is here."*

If this is true then why are so many Christians still in bondage living like the hamsters on their spiritual treadmills.

This is because Satan has fed them the lie that they are not changed that they are the same old person they always were.

Let's look at the word Saint which means "**Set-Apart-One**" which speaks of our relationship to Christ.

Believers are called Saints 66 times in the New Testament.

People tend to think that in order to be a Saint you need to be without blemish, but if that were the case there would be no saints at all.

We need to understand we are Saints and considered holy in God's sight.

We could look at our spiritual transformation much like the world sees a caterpillar and butterfly.

We could look at it like when we were in the world we are considered a caterpillar and once we have accepted Christ we are transformed into a butterfly. You don't hear the world describe a butterfly as a transformed caterpillar.

We have to understand there are wounded, broken, and sick or even defeated butterflies but they are still butterflies.

The same applies to Christians, even if we are going through something we are butterflies, (Saints)

We talk about this in **IMPACT** class but what is the difference between me and the worst sinner in the world?

Christ, that is the difference, not me just the Christ that dwells within me!

5. Understanding our New Identity in Christ.

Living in the Metro DC area we are all familiar with traffic Jams.

In order to avoid some of these traffic jams we tune into a local station that has an eye in the sky, or real time report from a helicopter flying overhead. Now there are other calls to the station from their phones that also let us know of traffic jams but they don't have all the information, like how long the cars are backed up what are alternate routes that have traffic flowing properly.

I am not sure what you prefer but if I had to negotiate through rush hour traffic I would rather rely on someone with an elevated view of what I am about to encounter.

It seems so simple when we are talking about traffic but when we look at our spiritual traffic jams and try and negotiate on our own instead of relying on God to lead me through the twists and turns of life.

Let's look Biblically at our identity in Christ.

Colossians 2:9-10

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

With the above verse we see that the fullness of God dwells in Christ.... And in Christ dwells you.....so what else dwell in you?

(The Fullness of God!)

Take 3 envelopes of different sizes and a slip of paper that says Jesus on it.

- ✓ The smallest envelope has **my name** on it.
- ✓ The mid-sized envelope has **Jesus** on it
- ✓ The largest envelope has **God** written on it.

The Bible tells me that when I accepted Christ he came to live and dwell within me.

So I take the slip of paper that says **Jesus** and put it in the envelope that has **my name** on it.

In John 14:20 it says, "*Jesus told his disciples in that day you will know that I am in my father and you in me, and I in you.*"

So I take the envelope with **my name** on it and put it inside the envelope that says **Jesus**.

And because Jesus is also in God you take both envelopes and place them inside the envelope that says **God**.

So how can anyone to include Satan get to me?

If he were able to open the envelope labeled God, (**Which he can't**) he would still have to open the next one labeled Jesus.

Now let's just say for arguments sake he was able to take my envelope away from Christ (**which he can't**) he then would have me correct?

The answer is still no because remember inside my envelope is also Jesus that dwells inside me.

When more saints come to this realization they will see that **Satan is a toothless tiger** and has no authority over us.

We can look at one last example and see that with the use of Air tanks that scuba divers can go into the depths of the sea for extended periods of time. They are down among the fishes looking at all the beautiful sights only because they have their oxygen from above in the underwater world with them.

What would happen if their air supply was cut off? They would be grasping for air scrambling to get to the surface to receive the air or die under the watery graves.

As believer (Christians) we are just like the diver in a foreign environment here on earth, just like the scuba divers air tanks we depend upon God for our life line also from above.

Guess who is trying to cut off your spiritual oxygen and confuse your identity?

In January 1863 the Emancipation Proclamation was declared. This legal document said that all slaves were free.

However in Texas, some kept that news a secret and didn't tell the slaves that they were free.

The slaves kept right on acting like they were slaves because no one had shared the Good News with them, so they remained in the bondage of slavery until someone finally told them.

Jesus Christ on Calvary, signed your emancipation proclamation, he declares to the world that you are free, yet Satan is trying to keep that a secret from you.

He is trying to keep you from realizing that you are no longer a slave. You no longer have to say "Yes Sir" to his demands on your life.

You can now start to live the freedom that you have been offered, as you have been made free in Christ Jesus.

Just like the slaves that didn't move on after the Civil War, Satan is still whispering in our ears today,

- ✓ that you can't make it out there,
- ✓ this is all you have ever known,
- ✓ why you would want to leave only to fail.

Saints don't believe the lie; you need to walk in the newness of your identity with Christ.

When temptations come in faster than we can defend against them we should know it is from Satan.

We need to realize that when temptation grips us so strong that all you can think about is that drink or whatever addiction is pulling you away from all you should be in Christ there is only one thing to do.

It is to shout to the Lord that I know I am more than a conqueror in you Jesus Christ , I may not feel like it right now because I am engaged in spiritual warfare but I am presenting my mind and body to Christ because its only through you that I can be victorious!

- ✓ Don't allow yourself to sit in an open cell thinking you are tied up in bondage.
- ✓ The doors to the cells have been flung open wide when Christ rose from the dead.
- ✓ We need to remember that greater is he that is in me than he that is in the world,
- ✓ I can do all things in Christ who strengthens me.

Saints it is time for liberation, its time you let go of the Spiritual Bondage the enemy has kept you in for so long.

He does this by confusing your identity, but now that you have a little more clarity on the subject, walk in the newness of life offered by Christ Jesus.

Don't leave here today with chains on your feet, chains on your heart, break the cycle and leave all the chains here at the foot of the cross.

Don't miss the opportunity you have been given, take a syand and do it today, do it now...

Let us pray.

