

LEAD

WEEK ONE: IDENTITY IN CHRIST

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WATCH

Use these notes to follow along as you watch the video. Be sure to write your own thoughts and ideas down to share with your group.

The first step on this leadership journey was to become a **follower of Jesus**. You can see the whole plan, from beginning to end, in Ephesians 1:3-10.

We are disciples first. We are leaders second. We are followers of Jesus first, leaders of people second.

What God has said about who you are:

- You are His child. (John 1:12)
- You are a friend of Jesus. (John 15:15)
- You are an heir with Christ. (Romans 8:17)
- You have wisdom. (1 Corinthians 1:30)
- Your body is a temple. (1 Corinthians 6:19)
- You can be confident. (Ephesians 3:12)
- You are a citizen of heaven. (Philippians 3:20)
- You are forgiven. (Isaiah 43:25)
- You are free. (Romans 6:18)
- You are loved. (Romans 8:35-39)

To be a Christ follower means believing what God has said about you even if your feelings and logic betray that.

Humble and hungry leaders know who they are. They've been given an identity in Christ.

Humble and hungry leaders are **disciples first, leaders second**.

READ: EPHESIANS 1:3-14

Read: Ephesians 1:3-14, and identify what we have because of our identity in Christ. Circle those things here.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace, with which He has blessed us in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of His will, according to His purpose, which He set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Him, things in heaven and things on earth.

In Him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of His glory. In Him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of His glory.

Reflect: What does it mean to have hope in Christ? Spend time reflecting on what this means for you personally. Do you truly believe the things Christ said about you are really true? Or do you seek blessing, worth, and hope from other places and/or people? Take some time to be honest with yourself and to reflect.

PRAY

This week, pray through Psalm 139. Carve out time this week to intentionally pray through each verse, asking God to speak to you regarding how He sees you, and thank Him for the truth of what you have in Christ.

Verses 1 through 6: As you pray this verse, spend time acknowledging the fact that God knows you, inside and out.

*O Lord, You have searched me and known me!
 You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
 You discern my thoughts from afar.
 You search out my path and my lying down
 and are acquainted with all my ways.
 Even before a word is on my tongue,
 behold, O Lord, You know it altogether.
 You hem me in, behind and before,
 and lay Your hand upon me.
 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
 it is high; I cannot attain it.*

Verses 7 through 12: As you pray these verses, spend time remembering that God is everywhere, sees everything, and knows everything.

*Where shall I go from Your Spirit?
 Or where shall I flee from Your presence?
 If I ascend to heaven, You are there!
 If I make my bed in Sheol, You are there!
 If I take the wings of the morning
 and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
 even there Your hand shall lead me,
 and Your right hand shall hold me.
 If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,
 and the light about me be night,"
 even the darkness is not dark to You;
 the night is bright as the day,
 for darkness is as light with You.*

Verses 13 through 16: Thank God for revealing the unique ways He created you.

*For You formed my inward parts;
 You knitted me together in my mother's womb.
 I praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
 Wonderful are Your works;
 my soul knows it very well.
 My frame was not hidden from You,
 when I was being made in secret,
 intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
 Your eyes saw my unformed substance;
 in Your book were written, every one of them,
 the days that were formed for me,
 when as yet there was none of them.*

Verses 17 through 22: Ask God to transform your heart to reflect His.

*How precious to me are Your thoughts, O God!
How vast is the sum of them!
If I would count them, they are more than the sand.
I awake, and I am still with You.
Oh that You would slay the wicked, O God!
O men of blood, depart from me!
They speak against You with malicious intent;
Your enemies take Your name in vain.
Do I not hate those who hate You, O Lord?
And do I not loathe those who rise up against You?
I hate them with complete hatred;
I count them my enemies.*

Verses 23 through 24: As you pray these two verses, ask God to search you and reveal to you any unrecognized or unrepentant sin in your life. Allow God access to your heart and to continue His transformation in your life.

*Search me, O God, and know my heart!
Try me and know my thoughts!
And see if there be any grievous way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting!*

DISCUSS

Think on these questions throughout your week. Write a short response to each, and come ready to discuss them with your group.

1. What key learnings or things have stood out to you from the material this week?
2. What does it mean to be a disciple first and a leader second?
3. What did you learn about who you are in Christ, and how has that shaped the way you see yourself? Out of all of the truths that Greg walked through that God says about us, which one do you find hardest to accept, and why?
4. Think through and explain how your brokenness has influenced your leadership. How does your identity as a sinner saved by grace influence your leadership?

5. Read Philippians 2:3-5 together. All of us do things out of selfish ambition. In what ways do you identify when you do things out of selfish ambition, and how do you respond? What does having the “mind of Christ” mean, and what are the implications of that for our leadership?

6. Evaluate when a behavior comes from selfish ambition, insecurity, or vain conceit rather than an identity in Christ:
 - a. Do you have a need to know everything? Where does that come from?

 - b. Do you seek credit, even when others have contributed? Why do you need credit for others’ work, or more importantly, your own?

 - c. Do you compare your gifts to others? How do you respond to others receiving recognition, spotlight, or platform? Is your default to elevate others and selflessly serve those you lead? Why or why not?

7. In *Search for Significance*, Robert McGee references the “trip in” approach, which is to address heart-level sin issues by *identifying* them, *confessing* them to God and someone, *rejecting* their hold over your life, and *replacing* them with the truth of God. Ask yourself which one of the following you struggle with the most, and be prepared to share with your group ways you are going to replace that with the truth of God:
 - a. Do you struggle with shame and guilt from the past?
 - b. Do you have a fear of failing?
 - c. Are you addicted to the approval of others?
 - d. Are you obsessed with performance and/or attached self-value to your performance?

Before leaving today, commit with your group to find your identity in Christ alone, and memorize Galatians 2:20. When you’re tempted to make an issue about yourself, replace it with the identity of Christ.

ACTION

What’s the one thing you’re going to do differently in light of what God showed you this week?

RESOURCES

We want to point you in the direction of some essential books written on this topic, for further growth and development.

- *Search for Significance* Robert McKee
- *Freedom of Self-Forgetfulness* Tim Keller