

i·den·ti·ty

ˌɪˈdɛn(t)ə dē /

*noun*

**the fact of being who or what a person or thing is.**

"Therefore, remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens,<sup>[a]</sup> but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by<sup>[b]</sup> the Spirit." – Ephesians 2:11-22

### **In Christ We Have a New, United Identity!**

#### **1. Remember Who You Were (11-12)!**

## 2. Remember What God Has Done Through Jesus (13-16)!

"In Christ we are part of the same family despite our pasts and their consequences. Being one in Christ has consequences for our community. This shared identity means that national identity does not take precedence over our identity as Christians. Racial prejudice cannot be justified and must be resisted. And, in contrast, racial identity that leads to a chip-on-the-shoulder judgmentalism toward other believers who have not fully realized their sin must also be swallowed in family understanding...we do not divide our pews or our perceptions into those deserving of grace and those not. We are pushed together into the arms of Christ with equal recognition of our total need of him, and equal dependence upon his grace, regardless of what has characterized our flesh in the past."<sup>1</sup>

"Despite our weakness, arrogance, coldness, or ignorance, we are in union with him. When I want to call myself "failure, liar, hypocrite, or betrayer," my God calls me "my child," because I am in union with his Son."

In essence, God says, "Take all of those other labels of the flesh and paste this one on top of them: 'God's Own Child, Heir of the Promises and Glory of Heaven.'"<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bryan Chapell, pg. 99

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, pg. 100



### 3. Remember Who You Are, **TOGETHER** in Christ !

"As you come to him, the living Stone – rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him-you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house" (1 Peter 2:4-5a).

"Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle." – Exodus 40:34-35

"And when the priests came out of the Holy Place, a cloud filled the house of the LORD, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD." – 1 Kings 8:10-11

We have reason to hate them, because of their race.

We will tolerate them, if they stay in their place.

We will accept them, if they become like us.

We will accept them, despite our differences.

We will love them, because God wants us to help them.

We will love them, because we need them to help us understand God.

"Unless I realize that there are treasures of God that I will not discover until I am in union with brothers and sisters quite different than I, I will not pursue the bonds of humanity that enable me to know the fullness of the God who is my delight."<sup>3</sup>

**In Christ We Have a New, United Identity!**

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<sup>3</sup> Bryan Chapell, pg. 115