

YOUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST

Colossians 3:12

By Andy Manning

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Who are you?
 - i. You might say, "I'm Joe." But that's your name; that's not who you are.
 - ii. You might say, "I'm a teacher." But that's what you do, not who you are.
 - iii. You might say, "I like to play sports." But that's your hobby, not who you are."
 - iv. You might say, "I'm an human being; a homo sapien." But that's your species, not who you are."
 - v. Who are you?
2. One of my favorite TV shoes is "The Office." One year Michael gives Dwight a gift. But when Dwight opens it up, he has no idea what it is because it is in pieces. He has to put it together first. As he assembling it, he still can't figure it out. He guesses it is a gun, and a bunch of other crazy things. Eventually he puts it all together and realizes it is a nutcracker. Until Dwight figured out that it was a nutcracker, it would have been used for the wrong thing, or it would have been useless.
3. Until you figure who you are in Christ, you will live your life for the wrong reason, and you will be useless to God and to your generation.
4. This morning I am going to teach you who you are in Christ.

II. TEXT

1. **Colossians 3:12** "Therefore, as God's chosen ones, holy and dearly loved, put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience,"
2. This verse says three things about you: You are chosen, holy, and dearly loved.

III. WHO YOU ARE IN CHRIST

1. **You are chosen by God.**
 - i. **Colossians 3:12** "Therefore, as God's chosen ones, holy and dearly loved"
 - ii. Christians are called God's chosen ones, or God's elect.
 1. **Luke 18:7** "Will not God grant justice to his elect who cry out to him day and night? Will he delay helping them?"
 - iii. Six Facts About Election
 1. God chose us for many spiritual blessings.
 - a. To be justified (made right with God). **Romans 8:33** "Who can bring an accusation against God's elect? God is the one who justifies."
 - b. To be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ. **Ephesians 1:4-5** "4 For he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in love before him. 5 He predestined us to be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ for himself,"
 - c. To be saved. **2 Thessalonians 2:13** "But we ought to thank God always for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God has chosen you for salvation

through sanctification by the Spirit and through belief in the truth.”

- d. To be sprinkled with the blood of Christ. **1 Peter 1:1-3** “To those chosen, living as exiles dispersed abroad in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient and to be sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ.”

2. *God chose us.*

- a. God is morally perfect, and yet He chose us sinners.
- b. God did not have to choose us, and yet He did. **Psalm 115:3** “Our God is in heaven and does whatever he pleases.”
- c. God did not need to choose us, and yet He did. **Acts 17:25** “Neither is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives everyone life and breath and all things.”

3. *God chose us.*

- a. We are terribly sinful, and yet God chose us.
- b. If God had not chosen us, we would not have chosen Him.
 - i. **John 15:16** “You did not choose me, but I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce fruit and that your fruit should remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he will give you.”
 - ii. **Isaiah 53:6** “We all went astray like sheep; we all have turned to our own way; and the LORD has punished him for the iniquity of us all.”

4. *God chose us before the foundation of the world.*

- a. **Ephesians 1:4** “For he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in love before him.
- b. Does this mean that salvation is not conditional upon faith and repentance? No.

5. *God chose us for His glory.* **1 Peter 2:9** “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”

6. *God does not choose everyone.*

- a. **Matthew 22:14** “For many are invited, but few are chosen.”

iv. *Why doesn't God choose everyone?*

1. *God wants to choose everyone.*

- a. God loves everyone. **John 3:16** “For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.”

- b. Christ died for everyone. **2 Corinthians 5:15** “And he died for all so that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for the one who died for them and was raised.”
 - c. God invites all to be saved. **Matthew 11:28** “Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”
 - d. God wants everyone to be saved. **1 Timothy 2:3-4** “This is good, and it pleases God our Savior, who wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”
 - e. It is God’s will that none should perish. **2 Peter 3:9** “The Lord does not delay his promise, as some understand delay, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance.”
2. Why doesn’t God choose everyone? God’s election is conditional.
- a. Some believe in unconditional election – God chose to some not based on anything them.
 - i. This makes it seem like God’s choice is arbitrary (random); not based on reason or logic.
 - ii. This makes it seem that if God did not choose you for salvation, then He chose you for eternal damnation, and this has nothing to with you. There is no difference between the elect and the non-elect.
 - iii. This makes it seem like God is immoral – a moral monster.
 - iv. If election is unconditional, then why the commands to repent and believe for eternal life?
 - b. The Bible says that God’s election is conditioned upon faith in Christ:
 - i. Election is based on God’s foreknowledge. There is something that God foreknew that caused Him to choose some and not others.
 - 1. **Romans 8:29** “For those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.”
 - 2. **1 Peter 1:1-3** “To those chosen, living as exiles dispersed abroad in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, chosen 2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient and to be sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ.”
 - 3. What did God foreknow?
 - ii. Salvation is offered to everyone on the condition of faith.

1. **John 3:16** “For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.”
- iii. God elected those whom He foreknew would believe in Jesus Christ.
 1. **2 Thessalonians 2:13** “But we ought to thank God always for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God has chosen you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and through belief in the truth.”
 2. **Ephesians 1:4** “4 For he chose us in him”
 3. Salvation is offered on the condition of faith.
- v. We must make our election sure. **2 Peter 1:10** “Therefore, brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election, because if you do these things you will never stumble.”
 1. **1 Thessalonians 1:4-10** “4 For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you, 5 because our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, in the Holy Spirit, and with full assurance. You know how we lived among you for your benefit, 6 and you yourselves became imitators of us and of the Lord when, in spite of severe persecution, you welcomed the message with joy from the Holy Spirit. 7 As a result, you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. 8 For the word of the Lord rang out from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place that your faith in God has gone out. Therefore, we don’t need to say anything, 9 for they themselves report what kind of reception we had from you: how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God 10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.”
 - a. You are an imitator of the Lord. 1 Thess 1:6
 - b. You welcomed the message with joy. 1 Thess 1:6
 - c. You are a witness. 1 Thess 1:8
 - d. You turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God. 1 Thess 1:9
- vi. When I was in middle school, I was good at basketball; the best in my school. In PE the teacher would let another boy and me be team captains, and we had to pick our teams to compete against each other. The other boy picked the best players; the biggest, strongest, most athletic kids. But for some reason I decided to fill up my entire roster with the shortest, and most unathletic kids in the class. I knew they weren’t any good. I knew they had nothing athletically to contribute. I probably could have played better without them. But I chose them. Why? Because I felt compassion for them.

I didn't want them to be picked last; or to be unselected altogether. I wanted them to feel wanted for a change. Because I knew that God loved them, and I loved them too.

- vii. God chose us. He knows we are no good. He knows that we don't have anything to offer Him. He knows He could do much more good without us. But He chose us because He feels compassion for us. He loves us.
- viii. We must fulfill our responsibilities as God's chosen ones.
 - 1. Go and produce fruit. **John 15:16** "You did not choose me, but I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce fruit and that your fruit should remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he will give you."
 - 2. Come out of the world. **John 15:19** "If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own. However, because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of it, the world hates you."
 - 3. Become like Christ. **Romans 8:29** "For those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters."
 - 4. To be holy and blameless in love before him. **Ephesians 1:4** "For he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in love before him."
 - 5. To be obedient. **1 Peter 1:1-3** "To those chosen, living as exiles dispersed abroad in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient and to be sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ."

2. You are set apart for God.

- i. **Colossians 3:12** "Therefore, as God's chosen ones, holy and dearly loved"
- ii. The word "holy" means "set apart." In the Old Testament, "holy" is used to describe people, things, and places that were set apart for God for a special purpose.
 - 1. The temple was holy because it was set apart from other buildings for a special purpose.
 - 2. The high priest of Israel was holy because he was set apart from other men for a special purpose. He wore a hat with the words "holy to the Lord" inscribed on it.
 - 3. The Sabbath was holy because it was set apart from the other days of the week for a very special purpose.
 - 4. In the same way, Christians are holy because they have been set apart for a very special purpose for God.
- iii. To be holy is to be set apart for God, and set apart from sin.
- iv. The moment that you trust in Christ Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you become holy. God sets you apart for Himself. In fact, Christians are called "saints" (holy ones) in the New Testament more than any other name.
- v. Consider some of the ways that Christians are set apart for God.

1. In Christ you are set apart as God's child (Jn 1:12),
 2. God's witness (Acts 1:8),
 3. God's temple (1 Cor 6:19-20),
 4. God's property (1 Cor 6:19-20),
 5. God's servant (1 Cor 15:58),
 6. God's representative (Col 3:23),
 7. and as a member of God's church (1 Cor 12:27).
- vi. Lydia and I were given a set of fine china as a wedding gift. We have been married for 18 years, and we had never used it. We set it apart. We finally decided to use this past December at Max and Mary Ault's wedding. They got married in our home, and then we had a meal together afterwards. So Lydia decided this would be a good occasion to use our fine china.
1. Why did we set apart our china?
 - a. We cherish it.
 - b. It is important to us.
 - c. It is valuable.
 - d. We want to protect it.
 2. What does it say about us that God has set us apart for Himself?
 - a. We are cherished.
 - b. We are important.
 - c. We are valuable.
 - d. We are protected.
- vii. There are two kinds of holiness: Positional and Practical.
1. We are holy in our position because of our relationship to God.
 2. Now we must pursue holiness in our practice. Because God has set us apart for Himself, He has called us to be set apart from sin. In this sense, the word holiness means moral blamelessness.
 - a. We have the responsibility to make every effort to grow in holiness (2 Pt 3:14).
 - b. **1 Peter 1:15-16** "But as the one who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct; for it is written, Be holy, because I am holy."

3. You are loved by God.

- i. **Colossians 3:12** "Therefore, as God's chosen ones, holy and dearly loved"
- ii. God loves you.
 1. **1 Thessalonians 1:4** "For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you"
 2. **1 Peter 5:7** "Give all your worries to him, because he cares for you."
- iii. God's love is:
 1. Faithful. Ex 20:6
 2. Abounding. Ex 34:6
 3. Enduring forever. 1 Chron 16:34
 4. Abundant. Neh 9:17
 5. Total. God only acts out of love toward us. Ps 23:6; Ps 25:10

6. Reaches to heaven. Ps 36:5
 7. Priceless. Ps 36:7
 8. Constant. Ps 40:10-11
 9. Better than life. Ps 63:3
 10. Great. Ps 86:13
 11. Unfailing. Jer 3:12
- iv. How does God show His love?
1. The cross.
 - a. **1 John 4:9-10** “9 God’s love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his one and only Son into the world so that we might live through him. 10 Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.”
- v. In what ways does God love us? **Deuteronomy 32:10-14** “He found him in a desolate land, in a barren, howling wilderness; he surrounded him, cared for him, and protected him as the pupil of his eye. He watches over his nest like an eagle and hovers over his young; he spreads his wings, catches him, and carries him on his feathers. The Lord alone led him, with no help from a foreign god. He made him ride on the heights of the land and eat the produce of the field. He nourished him with honey from the rock and oil from flinty rock, curds from the herd and milk from the flock, with the fat of lambs, rams from Bashan, and goats, with the choicest grains of wheat; you drank wine from the finest grapes.”
1. He surrounds us. Deut 32:10
 2. He cares for us. Deut 32:10
 3. He protects us. Deut 32:10
 4. He watches over us. Deut 32:11
 5. He is near to us. Deut 32:11
 6. He catches us. Deut 32:11
 7. He carries us. Deut 32:11
 8. He leads us. Deut 32:12
 9. He feeds us. Deut 32:13
 10. He gives us good things to enjoy. Deut 32:14
- vi. One of the best ways to understand God’s love is that God is for us.
1. **Romans 8:31** “If God is for us, who is against us?”
 2. **Max Lucado:** “God is for us. In fact god is for you. Your parents may have forgotten you, your teachers may have neglected you. Your siblings may be ashamed of you but within each of your prayers is the maker of the oceans. God is for you. Not maybe, not was, not has, not has been, not would be, but God is. He is for you today at this hour at this minute as you read or hear this sentence. You don’t need to wait in line or come back tomorrow. He is with you. He couldn’t be closer than he is at this moment. His loyalty won’t increase if you are better, nor lessen if you are worse. He’s for you. God is for you.

Turn to the sidelines. That's God cheering your run. Look past the finish line. That's God applauding your steps. Listen to him in the bleachers, shouting your name. Too tired to continue, He'll carry you. Too discouraged to fight he'll pick you up. God is for you. Had he a calendar your birthday would be circled. If he drove a car your name would be on his bumper. If there were a tree in heaven he'd carved your name on the bark. And we all know that God does have a tattoo. It says in Isaiah 49:16, "I have written your name on my hand, declares the Lord."

- vii. How should we respond to God's love?
 - 1. We should love God. **Matthew 22:37** "He said to him, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind."
 - 2. We should love others. **1 John 3:16** "This is how we have come to know love: He laid down his life for us. We should also lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters."

IV. CONCLUSION

- 1. So, who are you?
 - i. You are chosen by God; set apart for God; loved by God.
- 2. Now that you know who you are, you are ready to live a life of joy, purpose, and significance.
- 3. But you are only chosen, set apart, and experience God's love if you are saved. Are you?