

**HEALING THE PAST GOD'S WAY**  
**TEACHING NOTES**  
**I AM GOD'S CHILD; I AM CHOSEN**

**INTRODUCTION:** (all passages from ESV)

From the very first day that we began the F.O.C.I.S. (Finding Out Christ Is Sufficient) Ministry called "Healing the Past God's Way", this passage has been our foundation. As a prophecy of the coming Messiah (see Luke 4), God reveals His heart for the broken, the wounded, the prisoner and the lost. It is His promise that gives hope and the fulfillment of His promise in Jesus Christ that brings healing. Nothing with God is wasted or lost because God is so much bigger than our circumstances, our past and our present.

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,  
because the LORD has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor;  
he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives,  
and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;  
to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,  
and the day of vengeance of our God;  
to comfort all who mourn;  
to grant to those who mourn in Zion—  
to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes,  
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,  
the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit;  
that they may be called oaks of righteousness,  
the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified.

Isaiah 61:1 - 3

**OVERVIEW:**

The focus of the three chapters on identity is going to be *perspective*, learning to see ourselves as God sees us and not as we've seen us. Whether we have thought of ourselves as a victim or as a gift to all mankind, the truth of our identity lies with our Creator and not with the creation. For example, I am God's child requires an emphasis on God to whom I belong. I am chosen by Him, again put the focus on the One doing the choosing and not on the one (of millions) chosen.

**VALUABLE vs. HIGHLY VALUED**

**IDENTITY** filters **BELIEF** and **BEHAVIOR**

**SELF – DEFINED:** subject to impulse and emotion; hostage to the whim of internal/external forces

If my identity rests on the *value* of me, that value will fluctuate daily. What I did, didn't do, whom I pleased or impressed or even disappointed will impact the value of the commodity that is me. If my focus is on my value, I will never rise higher than my estimation of myself or the value others place on me. And certainly I will never know peace because that value, like stock on the Exchange will rise and fall with the prevailing winds.

**GOD – DEFINED:** immutable (unchanging), hope-filled and life altering; clearly defined

God's Word, however, teaches us that our value lies outside of ourselves. My value is set by the value that God places on me. He created me, saved me – sacrificing His only Son to save me from my sins and now He is sanctifying me. That last one, by the way, isn't a small thing. C.S. Lewis wrote, "As far as we know, it costs God nothing to create, but to redeem sinful souls cost Him His Son." (Romans 8) Therefore, I am not valuable in and of myself; I am, instead, highly-valued by God. My value comes from Him, therefore it is immutable and complete.

### **MY IDENTITY IN LIGHT OF ETERNITY: GLEANING AN ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE**

I love to teach about *perspective* using Ephesians 1:3 – 14 “. . . even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. . . as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Him, things in heaven and things on earth”.

The passage takes us through God's perspective of time, from the foundation of the world (actually before it) to the final act of Jesus uniting all things in Him in the final day. It reinforces the *Otherness* of God, that we would see Him as He is and not as we've believed Him to be (we will deal with that more in the six chapters on God's character); it emphasizes that all things work by and according to God's Sovereign will (v. 9 & 10) and finally, it places me, as part of God's created order and plan into an eternal perspective. My life is not longer limited by my vantage point but rather my life is immersed in the reality that God purposed for me before the beginning of time and now plans for my future into an unending eternity.

If I have lived as a victim, using my past to define my future, my perspective casts a shadow over every circumstance, relationship and opportunity. When I begin to see myself as a child of God, I begin to live out the eternal purposes of our God, and my reactions to those same circumstances, relationships and opportunities drastically change.

Don't be afraid to emphasize the difference between our value and God's value, our perspective and God's perspective during all three lessons on "My Identity in Christ". You can not spend too much time or energy focusing on how each perspective leads an individual to radically different places.

### **LANGUAGE LEADS TO IDENTITY: CHALLENGE “STATEMENTS OF FACT” WHEN THEY CONTRADICT SCRIPTURE**

One final thought before we begin. It is impossible to place too much emphasis on a person's vocabulary as you take them through these Biblical truths.

Ravi Zacharias, a Christian apologist, once said, *Language carries with it memory and context; so if you want to change a person, start by changing the vocabulary.*

No one talks to us as much as we do. So, repeating the word “victim”, for example, is not a neutral exercise. It has an impact on what we believe and how we act. Repeating the truth that “I am a child of God” is not neutral either. Thoughts, as we stated, fashion beliefs and beliefs lead to action (or inaction as the case may be). *Don't be afraid to challenge “statements of fact” made by the individuals in your group if those statements do not match God's Word.* Speak the truth in love, certainly, but don't sit by and let one of your group members, for example, diminish the value that God has placed on her by repeating the lie that “she doesn't matter” or “no one cares about her”. *You may have to repeat yourself, but replacing a lie with the truth is foundational in the process of change.*

Colossians 3:1 – 3 “Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”

Romans 12:2 “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. . .”

## ***I AM GOD'S CHILD***

### **MEMORY VERSE:**

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood,  
a holy nation, a people for His own possession,  
that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him  
who called you out of the darkness into His marvelous light.  
1 Peter 2:9

The Scriptures make clear that there are only two kinds of people on this earth and it has nothing to do with socio-economic status, race, nationality, culture or background. God's Word says that you are either a child of God or an enemy of God. 1 Peter 2:4 – 11; Romans 8

WHICH ARE YOU?

ARE YOU GOD'S ENEMY, HOSTILE TO HIS PURPOSES AND PLANS (living for self)?

OR ARE YOU GOD'S CHILD, IN A POSITION TO RECEIVE PRIVILEGES AND ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITIES (living for God)?

IF YOU ARE GOD'S CHILD, THEN THESE ARE *TRUE* OF YOU:

As God's child, I receive the *privileges* of my position in God's family. . .

\*As you teach on these, pick one verse to highlight. Encourage them to meditate on the other passages during their quiet time over the next weeks (see the worksheet). Model for them how to pull truth out of the Scriptures and put it into practice, then let them do it for themselves. Remember, we are doing two things here: teaching truth (to replace the lies by which they have been living) and teaching them to feast on God's Word so that they can feed themselves for the rest of their lives.

**HEIR OF CHRIST** – Romans 8; Ephesians 1; Galatians 4:1 – 4

**ETERNAL HOPE OF HEAVEN** – 1 Thessalonians 5:1 – 11; Revelations 21:1 – 4

**THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT** – Acts 1:8; John 14:26 – 27; Ephesians 1

**FORGIVENESS OF SINS; FREEDOM FROM BONDAGE** – 1 John 1:8 & 9; Galatians 5:1; Isaiah 61:1 – 3; Romans 6:15 - 22

**ANSWERED PRAYER** – Philippians 4:6 – 7; James 5:13 - 20

**GOD'S DIRECTION / PURPOSES IN OUR LIVES** – Ephesians 2:8 – 10; 2 Timothy 2

As God's child, I receive the *responsibilities* of my position in God's family. . .

**MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION** – 2 Corinthians 5:17 – 21; Philemon

**SERVICE** – Mark 10:45; Galatians 5:13; 1 Corinthians 12:31; Philippians 2; 1 Peter 4:7 - 11

**PRESENTING ONE ANOTHER COMPLETE IN CHRIST** – 1 Thessalonians 5:12 – 15; Colossians 1:28; Hebrews 10:19 - 25

**BEARING EACH OTHER'S BURDENS** – Galatians 6:1 & 2; Romans 15:1 – 7

**TEACH. . . ENCOURAGE. . . ADMONISH. . . TRAIN. . . CORRECT. . . REBUKE** – 2 Timothy 2:2; 2 Timothy 4:1 – 5; Titus 2

**LOVE ONE ANOTHER** – 1 John 4; Ephesians 4:32 – 5:21; Colossians 3:12 – 17

### ***I AM CHOSEN:***

The Scriptures teach us that God chose us in Him before the foundation of the world and we choose Him (free will). Both are equally true and both mysteries of God are beyond our comprehension. If you need to walk through the theology of election (predestination) and free will, I encourage you to read the chapter, *Election and Reprobation*, in *Systematic Theology* by Wayne Grudem.

Focus on response. God chose us because of the kind intention of His will, not because we were worthy of being chosen (Romans 3 – 5). While we can do nothing about the “whys” of our choosing, we can however choose to react to God’s kindness in gratitude, with thankfulness and intentionality (living for Jesus).

**GOD’S WILL:** Romans 8 & 9; Ephesians 1; 2 Thessalonians 2:13

**MY WILL:** John 3:18; Romans 10:9

**MY RESPONSE:** Ephesians 1:11 – 14; Philippians 2 & 3;

*gratitude* – 1 Peter 1

*a willing obligation (a covenant with the one who saved my life)* – Galatians 2:20

### **POSSIBLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

How does your daily life as a child of God differ from your life as an enemy of God? If it does not seem different, what needs to change?

How have you (can you) thank God for saving you, choosing you, changing you?