

Identity

Who was I? Who am I? Who can I be?

Week 1	In Christ
Week 2	Sonship
Week 3	Recreated
Week 4	Royalty
Week 5	Heavenly Citizens
Week 6	Ambassadors

Week 5 – We are HEAVENLY CITIZENS

Eph. 2:1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

We must understand who we are without Christ before we can ever understand who we are with Christ.

SPIRITUALLY DEAD : SONS OF DISOBEDIENCE : CHILDREN OF WRATH

4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— 6 and raised us up with him and **seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,**

18 For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, **but you are fellow citizens** with the saints and members **of the household of God.**

Phil. 3:20 Our citizenship is in heaven, and **from it we await** a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

1/ Paul lived with this sense of dual citizenship – Roman & Heavenly

“Citizens of Philippi, a Roman colony, were automatically citizens of Rome, sharing all the rights and privileges of Roman citizens even though most of them had never been there. Paul’s readers in Philippi therefore understand quite well what it means to be citizens of the supreme city while not yet living there.” IVP Commentary

Women & slaves could never be citizens. A roman citizen had the right to vote, the right to make a contract and own property, the right to sue in court, the right to stand for public office.

2/ We MUST understand our dual citizenship applies NOW

Eph 2: 6 ‘seated us with him in the heavenly places’

Phil 3:20 ‘our citizenship **is** in heaven’

John 3:11 Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony. 12 If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? 13 **No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.**

" Heaven is not a future destiny, but the other, hidden dimension of our life - God's dimension if you like!" NT Wright

3/ Living with this understanding will dramatically affect us

a/ It affects how we see things

2Cor. 4:18 as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

CONSCIOUSLY STOP AND THINK “HOW DOES THIS LOOK FROM GOD’S PERSPECTIVE?”

b/ It affects your attitude to finance and material resources

Matt. 6:19 “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your **treasure is**, there your heart will be also.

It releases radical generosity

It opens us to the supernatural provision of God “whenever we start with what we don’t have we start in the wrong place”

STOP AND THINK “WHILST MAKING THIS DECISION AM I TAKING INTO ACCOUNT HEAVEN’S RESOURCES?”

c/ It fuels our love for one another because of grace

Col. 1:3 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, 4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the **love that you have for all the saints**, 5 **because of the hope laid up for you in heaven.**

Self-giving love: patient, kind, does not envy, does not boast, always hopes, always perseveres, etc., etc.

Why do we lack self-giving love? Because **TO GIVE LOVE** somehow **TAKES AWAY** from me. **THIS CHANGES** when **I UNDERSTAND** that **I HAVE UNLIMITED RESOURCES IN HEAVEN IN CHRIST.**

STOP AND THINK “Does what I’m about to DO or SAY (email, text, facebook, twitter) or NOT DO or NOT SAY REFLECT THE FACT THAT I HAVE ACCESS TO UNLIMITED RESOURCES THAT WILL NEVER RUN OUT”

d/ By giving it attention it renews my mind helps me live free from sin

Col. 3:1 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 **Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.** 3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Col. 3:5 **Therefore**, put to death what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, *ungodly* passion, lust, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6 On account of these the wrath of God is coming.

Why does it work?

Sexual immorality – need for intimacy – John 14:23 Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my **Father** will love him, and **we** will come to him and **make our home with him**.

Covetousness – mostly the need for comfort (retail therapy) – 2 Cor 1:3 God of all **comfort**, 4 who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to **comfort** those who are in any affliction, with the **comfort** with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

POINT: Learn to satisfy your needs with the real thing and all desire for fakes will die. God is not offering you less BUT MORE.

How do you seek them? Set your mind on them. Pursue them, meditate on them.

STOP AND THINK “AM I SETTLING FOR CRUMBS WHEN STEAK IS ON OFFER?”

e/ It prepares us to deal with persecution & even death

Heb. 10:34 For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.

2Cor. 5:1 For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling,

E.g. Christians who would rather be demoted or sacked than deny their moral principles.

STOP AND THINK “WHAT DECISION WOULD I MAKE IF I REMEMBER THAT GOD WILL PROVIDE FOR ME, LOVE ME AND DELIVER ME WHATEVER HAPPENS”