



PATHWAY NEWSLETTER

IN THE KNOW

JAN - MAR 2026



MARK THE CALENDAR

Volunteer Appreciation
Church Event

March 8, 2026

Good Friday
Church Service

April 3, 2026 - 11am Only

Who's Coming To Dinner
Church Event

April 18-19, 2026



What is identity?

We carry identification cards, licenses and whatnot that say basic info about us, but that isn't who we really are. When we meet someone for the first time, we often ask them about their job, their family, and their hobbies. Those are the questions we use to get to know someone; we view them as the quickest ways to understand who a person is, in other words what their identity is. But do those things really define us?

What if... our hobbies change, we lose our family (or we don't want to be apart of our family), we get older, shorter, less fit, more fit, find out we got switched at birth (okay, probably not your story, but maybe?!), or we realize our dream is unattainable, the plan for what we are just isn't going to work out, what do we do then? What do we do when the foundation of our identity shifts?

We need a new foundation.

There is this beautiful short parable in Matthew 7, where Jesus encourages his listeners to build their house on the solid rock of His teaching, rather than refuse to listen to Him and build it on sand, where their house will be washed away. It is the same with identity; we need the solid rock of Christ to build our identity on. Without it, we become discouraged by our worldliness, devastated by our boringness, overwhelmed by our inability to change our surroundings. Jesus changes that. Here are a few aspects of our identity in Christ.

1. Christ makes us worthy: Paul writes in 1st Corinthians chapter 1:27 and 30 *"...God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong... It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption."* Friends, it isn't about your virtues; it is about Christ's virtues. He is our holiness. The next time you feel not good enough, remember that Christ is, and His righteousness, holiness and redemption are now ours in Him.
2. Christ gives us purpose: In 1st Corinthians 12, Paul talks about *"the body of Christ."* What is the body of Christ? It is the church. And how many parts of the body are useless? None. There is no appendix in the body of Christ, we all have a purpose now. No matter how insignificant you feel, you are a member of Christ's body, and you have purpose.
3. The Holy Spirit sanctifies us: 1 Thessalonians 2:13b: *"...God chose you as firstfruits to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth."* Notice what it doesn't say, it doesn't say we will be saved through the sanctifying work you do yourself. No, we won't be able to just make ourselves better. While we are called to faithfully serve and grow, the Spirit is working in us to sanctify us too, to make us holy!

These are three examples, three ways in which Christ and the Spirit reshape who we are. But the bottom line is this, the temptation in this world is to allow what we do, what we have been, and where we are now to shape our identity. But for disciples of Jesus, it is what Christ has done, who He is, and what God is doing in us now that shapes our identity.

Blessings,

REILLY SMITH
PATHWAY ELDER



LIFE

in Christ

ONE IDENTITY IN CHRIST

Wear one hat. As someone who owns and enjoys wearing many hats—over one hundred, in fact—this metaphor has guided my walk with Christ. In my previous life, I would conceal parts of my sinful life in certain circles yet openly indulge in those same sins in environments where they were accepted. This dual loyalty in my life was a path that only led to conflict, destruction, and ultimately took me further away from God to the point where I didn't know Him.

Wearing one hat simply means grounding my life in Christ. Christ's teachings, His Word, His Church, and my relationship with Him must guide every action and decision. My family, my work, my friendships, my leisure/hobby time and everything in between must be guided by my relationship with Jesus. Growing in faith takes intention. I must stay grounded in Scripture and prayer and seek fellowship and accountability within the Church. The evidence of this is a consistent witness—wherever I go, my life reflects Christ in word and action.

Following Jesus means acting out His greatest commandment—loving Him and others as we would have them love us (Matthew 22:38-39). Through grace, Jesus loved us first—even while we were still sinners—and that love transforms and continually renews us. This does not mean affirming sin. Christ confronted hypocrisy and corruption with righteous authority when He drove out the money changers and rebuked the Pharisees in the Gospels. Rather, it is by Christ's continued transformation in our lives that we discern how to love those around us. The clearest evidence is a faithful, day-by-day testimony lived without division. One identity. One allegiance. One hat.

PAUL SCHAAK
PATHWAY DEACON

HOW OUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST SHAPES OUR WORSHIP

When we become a new creation in Christ, everything changes. Second Corinthians 5:17 tells us that "the old has gone, the new is here." Our past no longer defines us. Shame no longer has authority. We are made new. And the natural response to that kind of transformation is simple: a life made to worship Him.

Paul explains it clearly in Romans 12:1: *"And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all He has done for you. Let them be a living sacrifice, the kind He will find acceptable. This is truly the way we worship Him."* Worship is not casual or convenient; it is a living sacrifice. It is offering our whole selves back to the One who gave everything for us.



God Almighty sent His one and only Son to be the ultimate sacrifice, the atonement for our sins. Through Him, we are no longer outsiders; we are sons and daughters of the King, co-heirs to His kingdom. Let that sink in..... We are welcomed into His presence not because of who we are on our own, but because of who we are in Him. Everything we offer in worship was first given to us by God. The breath in our lungs. The strength in our bodies. The resources we use to build His kingdom. All of it comes from Him. Worship, then, is simply returning what was always His.

Understanding our identity in Christ re-shapes our posture in worship. In the Old Testament, only the high priest could enter the throne room. Access was limited and sacred. But when Jesus came, He tore the veil and offered direct access to Him. Now we can approach the Father with confidence not based on our performance or our own strength but rooted in our relationship with Him.

When we truly live from our identity in Christ, worship becomes more than a song we sing. It becomes a life surrendered. It becomes a sweet aroma rising from a heart that knows who He is — and whose it is.

So the question becomes: **How does knowing I am a son or daughter of the King change the way I worship?** Does it make me bolder? More grateful? More surrendered?

If I truly believe I belong in the throne room because of Jesus, then my worship will no longer be hesitant or half-hearted. It will be confident, grateful, and wholehearted — because I know who He is, and I know whose I am.

HOLLY HAMM & SAM REIMER
PATHWAY WORSHIP MINISTRY

