

Dear God | Who Am I? | Discussion Guide - *Ephesians 2:12-13*

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"The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why." — Mark Twain

Our defining moment as a follower of Jesus Christ is the day we release control of our own destinies and start by trusting Jesus. In that moment, we experience a change of identity. Or, As Mark Twain put it, we find our "why". Paul described this crucial moment as transition from a life of distance *from* God into a life of intimacy *with* God.

Ephesians 2:13 (NLT) But now you have been united with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ.

We are no longer the sum of our worst decisions. But, having been so defined for so long, who are we now?

I am IN CHRIST

Ephesians 1:4 (NLT) Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes.

We are not an accident. God has loved us for a very long time. He looked forward to us. He knows every mistake and victory yet He still passionately loves us.

All of our mistakes have been credited to Jesus. Has someone else covered the cost of your mistakes? Jesus paid for our mistakes. We earned them. He paid for them.

Everything Jesus accomplished is credited to Us. In God's eye's everything Jesus did... we did. When Jesus Died on the Cross, we died with Him. When Jesus was buried, we were also buried. And the day Jesus rose again, we were resurrected with Him. All of Jesus' righteousness God sees as our accomplishment. These benefits have been stored up just waiting upon our Defining Moment.

I Am JUSTIFIED

Romans 8:1 (NLT) So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus.

Just like the day Barabbas went before Pilate. (Mk 15:11) He was a true enemy of society. He DESERVED the Cross, but he went home a free man. Jesus was condemned in his place. *Once a pastor described being justified of being "Just As If I'd" never sinned.* Our Savior was convicted and condemned by OUR actions and we were justified by HIS.

I Am ADOPTED

John 1:12 (NLT) But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.

We are not Alone. We haven't just been released from our guilt to figure things out on your own. We have been adopted into the *Family of God*. If you have ever wondered why many churches

refer to each other as “brother” or “sister”, this is why. Believers are family. We are family because...

God is our Father. God declares Himself the Father to the fatherless often in the Bible. He has brought us into His family. We are not the “Lost Boys” of Peter Pan's story. We are the Sons and Daughters of God's Story!

I Am SECURE

Romans 8:38 (NLT) And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love.

Jesus described His mission as that of a Shepherd seeking those that are Lost. He identified himself as the Good Shepherd who loves the sheep and calls them by name. He also said he would leave the ninety-nine safe sheep and find the one that was lost. (Lk 19:10; Jn 10; Mt 18:12)

It is God who finds us. (Ps 139:8;12) It is God who saves us. And it is God who keeps us safe.

I Am FREE

Romans 6:6 (NLT) We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin.

We are often trapped in destructive patterns. We would like to be free, but can't stop behaving in the way we are most comfortable. It's like we have a self-destruct virus stuck in our programming. Freedom may be the last thing we feel, but when we believe we ARE Free.

I Am UNFINISHED

Philippians 1:6 (NLT) And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.

God isn't done with us. We are a work in progress. We are becoming a bride, a warrior, and a priest. We are becoming something awesome, something different! God is committed to our completion, our holiness, righteousness and even our perfection. God sees us in the moment of the glory for which we were born. He knows us in our final moment before Him, in which we are perfect. And, He loves it! He loves you and every step between now and then.

Discussion:

- What is an Identity Crisis? Have you ever experienced such a crisis? Please share. Does being a Christian produce an identity crisis? How?
- Review **Ephesians 1:4**. Discuss the phrase “in Christ”.
- Review **Mark 15:7-11**. Summarize the story of Barabbas. Does Barabbas teach us anything about ourselves? What does it mean that we are “justified”?
- What does it mean to you to be a part of the Family of God?
- How secure are you as God's Child? How might you experience more security?
- Why do we struggle with freedom? How could your group pray for more freedom?
- Discuss Philippians 1:6. What is the finished product of YOU?
- Did anything stand out in your reading today that you could share with someone else?