



# RESTORING... Our Identity

## Day 1—A Study in Contrasts

Other religions offer what they say is truth; Jesus says he is the truth (*John 14:6*); others enumerate works one must do to be saved; Jesus finished the work of salvation and simply invites us to believe (*John 3:16; 6:29; 19:30*). Our faith is not based on our works but in God, who took the initiative, became flesh, bore our sin and guilt, accepted death—the punishment we deserve (*Romans 6:23*), and offers us his life and righteousness. Are you trying to earn your way into God's kingdom; do you measure your goodness or worth by looking at others, or have you thrown yourself into the loving arms of our Redeemer God? Read *John 1:12-13; Ephesians 2:8-9; and Titus 3:4-7*. Pray!

## Day 2—A Righteous Judge

In our courts of law, we would disdain a judge who winked at wrong and acquitted the guilty, yet often we act as if that is exactly what we expect God to do. Scripture, however, paints a different picture: sin is judged (*Romans 6:23a*), but then we see something absolutely breathtaking and amazing: God, the judge of all the earth (*Hebrews 12:23-24a*), steps down from the bench, assumes the guilt, accepts the death penalty, and dresses the criminal (us) in his own pristine robe. Read *Romans 3:10-12,19-28; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 2 Timothy 4:1a; and Isaiah 61:10*. Pray.

## Day 3—Mercy and Grace

We sing songs such as “Amazing Grace” (Newton) and “There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy” (Faber), but do we stop to ponder what the words mercy and grace mean? Stated simply, mercy is not receiving what we deserve (God’s wrath and judgment); it embraces God’s compassion; grace is receiving what we do not deserve (God’s riches at Christ’s expense). Search for insight into God’s mercy and grace as you read *Psalm 51:1-2; Isaiah 55:6-7; Lamentations 3:21-26; Daniel 9:17-19; Romans 3:19-28; Ephesians 2:4-9, and Hebrews 4:16*. Ponder the wonder of God’s unfathomable love; with a thankful heart, ask God how you can show mercy and grace to others.

## Day 4—Atonement

Atonement is a “churchy” word, but one that’s important to understand. It is about reconciliation and God’s action and initiative. We cannot atone for our own sin and restore our relationship with God, which is broken by sin, but God, in Christ, does what we cannot do. In the Hebrew Scriptures, the blood of sacrificed animals “covered” the sin of the people; it looked ahead to the perfect sacrifice, when the cross became the altar and Jesus the sacrificial Lamb. Read *Leviticus 17:11; John 1:29; Romans 3:23-26; 5:6-11; 2 Corinthians 5:14-21; and Hebrews 7:26-27; 9:22; 10:11-14*. Spend time telling Jesus, the spotless Lamb of God, of your gratitude and love. Worship him.

## Day 5—Justification

Justification refers to our right standing before God. When we are justified, we aren’t made righteous; we are declared righteous. What is the difference? We are declared righteous, not because of our action, but because of Jesus’ death on the cross. And we embrace this gift by faith. Read *Genesis 15:1-6; Romans 3:19-28; 4:13-25; 8:31-34; and Galatians 2:15-21*. Ponder God’s activity in grace, justification, and even faith. Meditate on the reality that it’s all a gift as you read *Romans 5:8-9; Ephesians 2:8-9 and Hebrews 12:2a*. How will you respond to such amazing love? The gift is of infinite worth, costly beyond measure (*John 3:16*). Read *Revelation 3:20*; pray.

## Day 6—Redeemed!

To be redeemed is to be ransomed, set free, and delivered from bondage. In the Exodus, we see God deliver the Israelites from physical slavery and bring them into the Promised Land. God gives his people the Covenant (Law) and provides numerous pictures that point to Jesus; the prophets amplify the pictures and promises, and Jesus fulfills them (*2 Corinthians 1:20*). Jesus, our deliverer, redeems us from sin and death and promises us eternal life in his presence. Read *Exodus 19:3-6; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Mark 14:22-26; Galatians 4:4-7; Hebrews 9:11-15; 10:14-23; and 1 Peter 2:9-10*. Prayerfully ponder all this and then allow *Revelation 5:9-14* to form your prayer.

### **Day 7—“In Christ Alone”**

Read Romans 3:19-28; reflect on the week’s key themes; pray your heart, and meditate on Getty and Townend’s lyrics: “In Christ alone my hope is found; He is my light, my strength, my song...In Christ alone, who took on flesh, fullness of God in helpless Babe; this gift of love and righteousness, scorned by the ones He came to save. Til on the cross as Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied, for ev’ry sin on Him was laid, here in the death of Christ I live...Then bursting forth in glorious day, up from the grave, He rose again, and as He stands in victory, sin’s curse has lost its grip on me...bought with the precious blood of Christ...” (2001, *ThankYou Music*).