

IDENTITY IN CHRIST: Reclaim Your God-given Identity

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The year was 2004—just one year into my marriage. Life was exciting, unpredictable, and full of firsts. My husband and I had settled into a cozy basement apartment in Washington state, right in the heart of Silverdale. It wasn't a dark, musty place with creaky pipes; it was pretty nice. And best of all it was ours. It felt like the perfect little spot for two newlyweds figuring out life together.

Then one day the phone rang. It was my mother, and the second I heard her voice I knew something was wrong.

"It's Nana," she said.

Now, let me pause here and tell you about Nana—my grandmother. She was a woman of faith, wisdom, and an un-shakable love for butter pecan ice cream. And by that I mean unshakable. I have this vivid memory of walking downstairs in the middle of the night, the house completely dark. I flipped on the kitchen light and saw her sitting in the corner with a spoon in hand and a tub of butter pecan ice cream balanced on her lap like a priceless treasure.

"Nana, why are you eating ice cream in the dark?" I asked, trying not to laugh too hard.

She just gave me this look, as if I were the weird one for needing light to eat. And that was that. No explanation. Just Nana, her ice cream, and absolute peace.

So when my mother told me that Nana had stubbed her toe and the doctors were planning to amputate, it hit me hard. A stubbed toe? Amputation? How did we go from something that happens every day to something so permanent?

I called my dad and told him what was happening, still trying to process it. I muttered, "I guess it's the Lord's will."

But my dad stopped me cold.

"No," he said. "It's never the Lord's will for someone's body parts to be chopped off."

That was the moment I realized there are things in life that don't have to happen. There are battles that can be won before they even start, but many of us don't know how to fight them. We just assume that whatever happens must be God's plan.

But what if it's not?

What if the loss, the struggle, the suffering was never meant to be? What if the only reason we go through certain things is that we don't realize we have the power to stop them?

Nana's condition worsened. First they took her toes. Then they took her foot. Then part of her leg. And not long after, she passed away from complications. It was heartbreaking.

But the comfort in all this? I knew where she was. I knew she loved Jesus more than she loved butter pecan ice cream, and that's saying a lot. Now I picture her in heaven: sitting in a big, comfy chair, eating unlimited ice cream, walking on two perfect legs, and feeling no more pain. But her situation left me thinking.

How many of us accept things we don't have to? How many of us live under constant attack, struggling, barely holding on—not because God wants it that way but because we don't know how to fight back?

More Than a Label

Roman-born Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel once shared that when the Nazis captured him during World War II, they tattooed a number on his arm. At that moment they took away his name and identity.

Why did he say this, and what did he mean by it? It might be tempting to think, "It's just a tattoo. It's just a number." But that mindset misses the point entirely. It wasn't just any-thing. That number wasn't a mark of belonging or even survival; it was a calculated attempt to strip him of everything that made him human.

The untold truth is that a name is more than a label; it's a connection to who you are. It's tied to your story, your memories, and your purpose. Without it you're untethered like a ship adrift with no anchor. Names give us a place in the world.

So when Wiesel said that losing his name felt as if he had lost his identity, he wasn't exaggerating. The Nazis sought to erase the essence of who he was, and they did so in a way that robbed him of hope, dignity, and individuality.

This practice of stripping away names is not unique to the Holocaust. Since the beginning of time, slavery has been a part of human history, and it nearly always involves the erasure of identity. When a person is taken captive, often the first thing that happens is their name being changed. Slaveholders know that taking away a person's name is a way to dehumanize them and make them feel like nothing more than property. Across generations, those who were enslaved described feeling invisible—like they no longer existed as individuals. Without names, they were reduced to something that could be bought, sold, or discarded.

It's not just a historical issue, though. Even in modern prisons this pattern continues. Globally when someone is

incarcerated, their name is replaced with a number. It's not just administrative; it's dehumanizing. Prisoners often describe feeling like they've been reduced to nothing more than statistics, or numbers in a system. It's no accident that many of them say things such as "I feel like I'm nobody."

Here's the bigger question: "Why does losing a name—losing identity—cut so deeply?"

It's because at our core we all long for significance. We're all searching for purpose. Our greatest fear isn't failure; it's being nobody, or not existing in any meaningful way. Even those who seem proud or self-assured wrestle with this question deep down: "Why am I here?"

You may never have asked yourself that question, but if you haven't, you probably are asking it now—or you will eventually—because none of us wants to simply go through the motions of life. We all want to know that we matter.

Here's the truth: You were made in God's image. That fact alone changes everything. It means you are the most valuable creation on earth. Sure, the Bible says we're a little lower than the angels for now, but even angels don't bear the image of God. And God promises that one day, we will surpass them and be more like Him.

Let's step back and think about creation itself. God didn't just form the earth, plunk us on it, and then say, "Here, survive." No, He created the perfect environment for us to thrive in. Imagine you had a child, watched them grow up, saw them get married, and wanted to provide the new couple with the best possible home. Would you give them an empty plot of land and say, "Here, figure it out"? Or would you hand them a half-built house and say, "At least you have a roof over your head"? Of course not. A loving parent wouldn't do that.

God didn't either. When He created the earth, He thought of every detail. He created the sun to provide warmth and light.

He made the moon to regulate gravity and to guide us at night. He filled the earth with soil to grow food, water to sustain life, and trees to provide shelter and beauty. He even created flowers—not because we needed them but because He wanted us to have something beautiful to enjoy. Everything in creation was formed with us in mind.

All that God created in earth was made for us, not the other way around. Everything in nature reflects God's care for us. I live near the Rocky Mountains, and every time I see them, I'm reminded of His greatness. Those mountains weren't an accident; God crafted them for us to enjoy. No matter how advanced humanity's technology becomes, nothing we create will ever match the perfection of His work. Human creations always have flaws because they're not formed by the perfect hands of the Creator.

Why does all this matter? Because if you understand how much God values you, you'll start to see yourself differently. You'll realize that your worth isn't tied to what others think or say. Your value is intrinsic, eternal, and unshakable.

Yet so many people spend their lives chasing fame or validation, thinking that being "somebody" will give them significance. They don't realize they already are somebody. If you're alive, breathing, and walking this earth, you have a purpose. You're more valuable than any other species on this planet. And this is one reason the devil despises you. He knows how much God treasures you, and he'll do everything in his power to keep you from discovering it.

From the moment you were born, the devil has been working against you. Often he starts with your family, using generational patterns to create footholds. Sororities, fraternities, Freemasonry, occult practices are just a few of the ways doors can be opened to spiritual attacks. Personal sins such as lying, jealousy, and sexual sin—including homosexuality, adultery, and fornication—can give him a

foothold. This is why it's so important to examine our hearts daily. Ask God to reveal anything that might be standing in the way of your purpose.

Deliverance is real, and I've seen it change lives. I know ministers who've witnessed generational curses broken. When people are set free, it doesn't just affect them; it transforms their families. Health issues disappear, financial struggles lift, and peace floods their homes. God's power is limitless, and His love for you is boundless.

So let me ask you this: If I were to inquire who you are—beyond your name, career, or family role—could you confidently answer? Because if you know who you are in Christ, it doesn't matter if the world does. Knowing your identity is the first step toward walking into your God-given purpose. And once you embrace that, nothing can stop you.

Live the Victory in Christ

Christians should not be living as defeated as the unbelievers around us are. That's not what Jesus died for. Yet we've somehow been tricked into believing that powerless Christianity is the standard. It's not. The Bible is clear: We've been granted authority and given weapons, but many of us have no idea how to use them.

We're like someone who's been handed a sword but never told how to swing it, so we just sit there, getting beat up, thinking, "Well, maybe this is just my fate."

No. It's not.

The problem isn't that God hasn't equipped us to fight and win. The problem is that we don't know what we're doing with the equipment we've been given.

If we, as the body of Christ, understood and walked in what we've been provided, the world wouldn't look as dark as it

does right now.

It is time to change the way you think, the way you see your faith and the way you live it out. One thing is for sure—you were never meant to live powerlessly.

Jennifer Bagnaschi is a fourth-generation believer, founder of Deep Believer Ministries and host of the internationally acclaimed Deep Believer Show. Jennifer is known for her wisdom, humility and deep, heartfelt interviews. Guided by her motto, “God, family, then ministry,” she emphasizes Christ-centered service and humility in all she does. Her new book, *The Devil’s Greatest Fear*, is available now at .