

Gathering

JESUS

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Like it or not, the place where we live is connected to our identity. I live in America... I am American. The letter of 1 John was written to Christians in Ephesus. This was the city that had it all: warm beaches, wealth, art, power, and every pleasure imaginable. It's easy to imagine how the identity of a first-century Christian living in Ephesus could get intertwined with the identity of the city itself.

John reminds them (*and us*), "Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God" (1 John 4:15). The act of confession, the public, and life-shaping claim that Jesus is who he says he is offers a new identity to whoever... anyone!

When we confess Jesus, two things happen. First, we dwell in him. Our old, sin-stained identities are washed away under the cleansing flow of Jesus' blood! In our proximity to Jesus, we learn to live like him, to walk like him, and to talk like him. Not only do we live in Jesus, but he lives in us! From the inside-out, our minds are transformed (*Romans 12:2*). We are conformed to his image (*Romans 8:29*). Paul echoes John, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

No matter what our identity was, when we make the public, life-shaping claim that Jesus is the Son of God, that identity and all its baggage pass away. We live in Jesus. Jesus lives in us. We are a new creation. Hallelujah!

After reading scripture, consider these questions:

- Do you remember what sorts of things influenced your identity before you followed Christ?
- How does public, life-shaping confession that Jesus is the Son of God change us?
- How has your identity been transformed by living in Christ, and by Christ living in you?
- Who is someone you know who has shown strong evidence of a life transformed by the indwelling of Christ?

Complete your monthly report and turn it in to the Corps Officer.

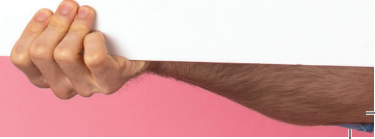


1 John 4:15

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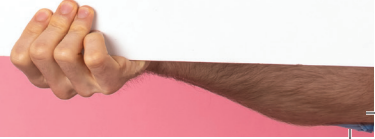
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The idea of living, or “abiding” in Christ is a familiar theme in John’s writings. It is sometimes translated “remain.” Abiding in Christ is an active, conscious choice that we make moment by moment. The power of the Holy Spirit enables us to choose to abide in Jesus and become more and more like him.

READ JOHN 15:4–5, 7, 16, 1 JOHN 2:28, 3:6–9, 2 JOHN 9

- What are the results of abiding in Christ?

READ 1 JOHN 2:27

- What is the anointing that helps us to abide in Christ?

READ JOHN 15:2,6

- What happens to those who fail to abide in Christ?



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