

IDENTITY – THE KEY TO TRANSFORMATION

PART 1

Note: This teaching on *Establishing a Kingdom Culture: Identity – The Key to Transformation* is taken from the teaching that Graham Cooke presented during International Council in 2011, Session 1. You should take time to allow your group to view the DVD or listen to the CDs from this session to strengthen this teaching. Before teaching, your team, personally, should review the DVD. Additional reading should include Graham Cooke's *The Way of the Warrior* series, especially *Qualities of a Spiritual Warrior*.

We draw our identity from many different places. We are sisters, brothers, mothers, fathers, married, single, professionals, working class, Gentiles, Asians, widows, grandparents, Baptists, Spirit filled, non-Spirit filled, and the list goes on. God has a plan in place from where we are to draw our identity. From one man, Abraham, a family came forth, and from that family, a people. From that people a Savior came forth and now, we draw our identity from Christ. He lives in us and we are in Him. All other places where we can draw our identity become secondary to Christ being in us.

In the sixteenth chapter of Matthew, Jesus asks His disciples who did people say He was. Then His question became more pointed. "Who do *you* say I am?" Jesus was really asking them, do *you* perceive who I am? He knew that if they could truly believe that He was the Son of God that they would be able to carry on with Kingdom business after He went back to Heaven. He was looking for a people group to deposit Himself into so that they could show the world a way out of the bondage of an old religious system that had no power, only judgment and criticism.

It is time for us to understand the measure of the stature that God wants to bestow on Aglow worldwide. It is important that we receive the upgrades that God has for us so that we can walk as Heaven walks, think as Heaven thinks, speak as Heaven speaks, and do as Heaven does. We want each upgrade - to raise or improve or to advance to a higher level - so we can encounter God in new ways. We want to have new experiences and fresh encounters that propel us into a rightful place.

Our strength is derived from our truest identity in Christ. If we do not know who we are, we will always be asking for help. Once we begin to understand who we are in Christ, we need to allow it to come forth in our conversations with each other. Truths are not received until they are spoken forth and integrated into the fabric of our being. We will face each day from our identity knowing we are the beloved of the Father and resourced by Heaven. We walk in favor and it is His good pleasure to give us the Kingdom and all it contains. (Luke 12:32)

Our biggest hindrance has been that we have not understood the fullness of who we are in Christ or who Christ is in us. Understanding this is the key to our transformation. We are in Christ, learning to be Christ like and learning to abide in what He has already done for us. We are learning to face everything from the place of who we are in Jesus processing everything through His majesty. And Christ is in us, living through us, displaying the Father's glory for all to see. We must live out of our inheritance for *a people without inheritance have no substance.* (Qualities of a Spiritual Warrior, Graham Cooke, p.14) *We must of necessity position ourselves daily in Christ in order to reveal the nature of the Kingdom.* (p.16)

Mindsets are shifting and behaviors are coming into alignment in every level of leadership in Aglow. As we understand our identity more fully, we will see that our inheritance and favor is connected to our identity. For us to become the prototype in the earth that God spoke to us of in 2008, we must latch onto the identity that Christ purchased for us.

Like David's mighty men, we have been raised up for this time to restore nations. We have the zeal to take a city, a state, a region, and a nation. We fight within the political sphere, the judicial system, the world of commerce and for social justice to change laws and create legislation that is fair and equal to all. (Paraphrased from Qualities of a Spiritual Warrior, p. 18)

STARTING POINT

Our starting point for life in the Spirit is the resurrection of Jesus. The cross meant judgment, punishment and death for Jesus. For you and I, the cross means freedom, promise, and resurrection. Jesus's death, burial, and resurrection provided all that we would ever need to walk Heaven to earth. In His death, Jesus did not only die *for* us, He died *as* us.

II Corinthians 5:17 *You are a new creation, all the old is passed away and everything has become new.*

Galatians 2:20 *I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*

Romans 6:11 *Likewise you also, reckon – consider - yourselves to be dead in deed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Being in Christ means that we never start with a negative. We never start with our behavior. We always start with the truth of who He is in us. When we asked Jesus into our lives, He became to us the four things we need to walk effectively with God in this life – wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

I Corinthians 1:30-31 *By His doing, you are in Christ Jesus who became to you, wisdom from God, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. So that just as it is written, let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.*

We have this mindset that believes God still gets angry with bad behavior. Behavior is simply the echo of what we believe. Those mindsets come from a system that looks at people negatively. That wrong mindset only sees what is wrong with people. It never sees people as God sees them. It is a mindset that comes from the wrong side of the cross! When we accepted Christ into our life, those old ways of thinking passed away and we received new mindsets.

To be great leaders, we have to be delivered from a wrong way of thinking, first about God, then about ourselves, and then about everyone else. We must have a perspective that comes to people through our hearts from Heaven so that when we connect with people our connection is through outrageous grace and goodness.

QUESTIONS

1. **Has Jesus been judged enough for sin?**
2. **Has Jesus been punished enough for sin?**
3. **Did God pour out every last ounce of wrath, anger, and indignation upon Jesus for sin?**

So God cannot be angry with us because He was angry with Jesus.

4. **Were you included with Jesus in His crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection?**

Romans 6:4 *Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

Colossians 2:12 *In Him you were buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.*

Colossians 3:1-3 *If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*

Galatians 2:20 *I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*

5. **In the eyes of God, did you die when Jesus died?**

Galatians 2:20 *I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*

6. **When Christ was buried, were you buried with Him?**
7. **In the purpose of God, when Jesus rose from the dead, did you rise with Him as a new man with newness of life?**

II Corinthians 5:17 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*

8. **Do you have God's permission to consider yourself dead to sin and only to be alive to Him?**

Romans 6:11 *Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

God is not dealing with your old nature. He has already dealt with it. Being a new creation in Christ means you are not subject to anything in the world. Anything in the world that is problematic to the Kingdom, you are *dead* to it. You are subject to Heaven. You are a citizen of Heaven. Your resources are from Heaven so you have access to things the world does not understand.

There is no bad word over you in Heaven. God is not mad at you. He is not displeased with you. There is richness in your life. You are walking in newness of life and you are learning how to abide in all the things God is showing you about your identity.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. A. W. Tozer wrote, “What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.” The way you think about God is the foundation of everything. How you ‘perceive’ Him is how you will ‘receive’ Him. What 5 words best describe your current thoughts about your relationship with God?
2. When Jesus was nailed to the cross, died, was buried, and rose again, He didn’t only make the journey for you, He made the journey AS you. Describe in your own words what that means to you.
3. For Jesus, the cross meant judgment, punishment, and death. For you, the cross means freedom, promise, and resurrection. Many Christians live their lives expecting judgment and punishment for their actions. God is not dealing with bad behavior. He dealt with it on the cross. How do you live your life on a daily basis that demonstrates the freedom and fullness of Heaven that Jesus purchased for you?
4. List as many words as you can to describe your current understanding of your identity as a child of God, and as a vital member of the tribe of Aglow.
5. Describe what you think Heaven on earth would look like.