

## Teen Devotion

Year A – Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

The Savior's Sermon



**One truth shared:** God-given identity moves us to live differently.

*But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

**1 Peter 2:9,10**

### Different me acts differently

Two teachers teach the same class to the same grade at the same school. Both teachers give the same test on the same day. Teacher 1 says, "Don't cheat" and then leaves the room to use the bathroom. What happens? Many students cheat. Teacher 2 also needs to use the bathroom while the students are taking the test. Before leaving the room, Teacher 2 says, "Don't be a cheater." What happens? No one cheats. Why do many students cheat for Teacher 1 but no one cheats for Teacher 2? It is to do with connection between identity and actions. Actions ("don't cheat") do not determine identity. Identity ("don't be a cheater") determines actions.

Look at the identity God has given you. "You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession." All of these groups are people who are different from the rest. If the rest are the sinful people of the world, then that means God is saying your identity is a person who is sinless. God has called you out of the darkness of sin and unbelief and brought you into the light of forgiveness and faith. Your identity is now as a person who has no sin.

You might think that can't be true. You know the sin that you have committed. But remember, your actions don't determine your identity. God does. Instead, your God-given identity is going to determine your actions.

So here is what you should do. Every day, wake up and say, "I am different. I am a holy, chosen, child of God." And then, go be who you are! Do things that godly children of God do because that is who you are. Stop sinning, love others, and tell people about Jesus. Be different. And then at the end of the day, if you messed it up and didn't act like a child of God, be honest and confess it. Hear God say, "I forgive you." Have peace knowing that your identity hasn't changed. God still announces that you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession. You are sinless.

**Prayer:** Lord, you have given me my identity. Help me to live in a way that reflects who you have made me. Help me to find my self-worth and value in the person that you have made me. Thank you for sending Jesus to make me like Jesus, someone who is sinless. Amen.

## Foundation Teen Facilitators Guide

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#### The Savior's Sermon

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### Different me acts differently

**Starting the Discussion:** *This first section is intended to be light and easy, to engage and get the conversation going. Have a little fun with these questions.*

Solving Bible riddles:

- How can there be stars that are millions of light years away, but the universe is only thousands of years old according to the Bible?  
*Answer: God created a mature universe with light rays already on their way to earth.*
- How did the wise men know to follow the star to find the promised Messiah?  
*Daniel 2:48*
- Human beings wrote the books of the Bible, human beings collected those books into a group of 66 books, and human beings declared that this collection of books is God's Word. Why is this historical fact proof that the Bible is God's Word?  
*With so many sinful human beings' fingerprints all over the making of God's Word that spanned such a long period of time (40+ authors over 1500 years), there is no way the final product could be perfect like the Bible is with a central message that is completely foreign to humans (Christ crucified) ... unless ... God was always in control. Unless, God used humans to produce his Word.*  
*1 Peter 1:24,25 and 2 Peter 1:20,21*

**Connecting:** *This section serves as a bridge between the opening conversation and the body of the study/discussion. It should get the group thinking about the topic/text even before they've looked at it.*

What determines your identity? Another way to ask, what determines who you are? (*E.g., attributes, occupation, what you think about yourself, what others think about you.*)

**Digging In:** *Here we want to dig into some texts or the text for the day and see what Scripture says. The questions are meant to be open ended to give a beginning of a scriptural conversation. These are a guide for a spiritual and scriptural conversation.*

- What is a similarity that you notice about the groupings in verse 9?  
*They are all special groups that are separate from the rest.*
- What does mean that God "sanctified" you? In what way has God separated you?  
*sanctified = to be separate and made sinless.*
- What is the identity that God has given you according to these verses? (*Look for "you are" phrases.*)
- How does this identity given by God give you peace, joy, and honor?

- How does the world determine their identity and why does it not give them peace, joy, and honor?
- How does your God-given identity motivate you to behave and act differently from the world?

**Conclusion:** *Here we want to wrap up the discussion, perhaps circling back to the “connecting question” above.*

- In light of today’s Scripture, who are you?
- How do you know?
- Identify a time when it is most important to remember who you are? Another way to say it, in what situations is it vital for you to remember what your identity is?