



TRANSFORMED

DEVOTIONS CONNECTING TEENS TO CHRIST

"See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who trusts will never be dismayed."

Isaiah 28:16

An identity on unshakable ground

Who are you? I suppose there are a few ways you could answer that question. Maybe you'd answer with your name. But *who* you are is *deeper* than that. Maybe you'd then give your occupation, where you go to school, your hobbies, or your interests. But even these are all *peripheral* things. "Who are you?" demands a far more *foundational* answer. If you had asked me this question in high school, my "foundation" would have been popularity and acceptance. For example, when I was a freshman in high school, I got an invite to this *huge* party—hosted by a *senior*. For someone whose identity was founded on popularity and acceptance, this invitation was *pure gold*. I thought "My stock just went *way up!*" This was a vertical move up the social ladder if I had ever seen one! Me—a puny, wimpy freshman—was hanging out with the *cool* kids.

About an hour into the party, some of the seniors started making fun of a kid at school—*really* digging into him. And me? *I said nothing*. I thought if I did, the conversation might turn on *me*, and *I'd* be the focus of everyone's insults. I mean, if I stood up for this guy, my chances of being seen as "cool" would be gone, and my social stock would go down. So, I said nothing. I just kept quiet and pretended they weren't saying anything. But pretending didn't change the fact that they *did* say something. Even worse, the person they were making fun of was one of my close friends. And because I anchored my identity on popularity and acceptance, *I hid from an opportunity to be a friend*.

You and I hunger for acceptance, belonging, and a sense of community. We tend to wrap up our identity—who we *are*—in all sorts of *peripheral* things, like popularity, our social affluence, how much we are admired by others, our accomplishments, or by the material things we either have or hope to have. When these peripheral things become the foundation of who we are, we find ourselves willing to sacrifice quite a bit to prop up that identity—even *the truth*. Maybe you fear sharing your faith because of the ridicule you'll get. You're worried what people will say if they catch you praying at lunch. Maybe you've felt the pressures to compromise your Christian convictions and adopt more *trendy* world views—to tap out in the wrestle with temptation and give in to our sinful nature. Soon, the "Christian" flavor is indistinguishable from the world. The "light" of the gospel gets snuffed out.

But that is not who you are! Jesus, the light of the world, has shined on your darkness and brought you into his wonderful light—into the *light of truth*. We—once spiritually blind—now see! We—once bound in darkness by our sinful nature—have been called out of our darkness and into God's wonderful light—the light of the gospel; the gospel that shows our Savior fulfilling *all* the promises of Scripture; the gospel which shows our Savior living the perfect life we could not; the gospel which shows our Savior not running from suffering, rejection and isolation, but taking it all on himself so you wouldn't experience that for eternity; the gospel that shows our Savior dying the death *our sins* of fear and silence deserved; the gospel that shows our sin, guilt, and shame nailed to the cross; the gospel which gives new life *now* and for eternity; the gospel which shows us our identity: blood-bought, redeemed *children of the light*. If someone asks you who you are, you know the answer. You know your identity's foundation: *Jesus*. And he is a *sure* foundation.

Prayer: Dearest Jesus, draw us ever closer to you. With your holy precious blood, you bought for us an identity that lasts forever. Remind us that our identity is eternally found in you. Amen.