

# Your Identity In Christ

## You Are A Citizen Of God's Kingdom

The Bible demonstrates that those who are in Christ have a rich spiritual identity. This involves being a citizen of God's kingdom. Yet, while it is common for people to identify as "Christians," many may be unfamiliar with what it means for Christians to be citizens of this Heavenly kingdom. Still, we see this concept plainly taught in the pages of Scripture (Colossians 1:13). Therefore, if you are going to fulfill your true purpose in Jesus Christ, you must embrace your identity as a citizen of God's kingdom and all this involves.

**1) Jesus is your King.** The Old Testament Scriptures spoke of a coming King (Isaiah 9:6-7) and a kingdom that would never end (Daniel 2:44). Jesus fulfilled all the prophecies to accomplish what God had said concerning this King. When He ascended into Heaven after His resurrection, Jesus was given this full authority as King (Daniel 7:13-14; Acts 1:9-11). The Jews who had gathered in Jerusalem on the first Pentecost after these events were then given the opportunity to hear the message about how the one they rejected had now been exalted to be King (Acts 2:22-36)! Therefore, the central message of the gospel is: Jesus is King! This is a polarizing message many reject. However, as a Christian, you have accepted this truth and have acted to obey the will of the King (Acts 2:37-41). Throughout your life, you must continue embracing Jesus as your King and everything this involves. Namely, this acknowledges His full authority over your life so as to live according to His will (i.e. His law, Colossians 3:17). Then, having Jesus as your King means that you will surely experience the great victory He provides over all God's enemies (1 Corinthians 15:23-28)!

**2) You must properly value God's kingdom.** It was difficult for people living during the time of Jesus to embrace the kingdom Jesus was telling them about. For, while many were thinking about a mighty and prosperous physical kingdom, Jesus described something quite different in His

parables. Namely, Jesus taught a spiritual kingdom that consisted of people who were willing to submit to Him as King and experience spiritual blessings (Matthew 13:24-30, 37-43). Therefore, unlike those in the world who have rejected the reign of Jesus Christ, you must recognize the great opportunity it is to be part of His kingdom (Matthew 13:44-46)! As a Christian, you have "bought" the treasure that is God's kingdom, determining that being part of this kingdom is worth far more than anything else in your life (i.e. money, possessions, relationships, pleasures, etc.). However, you must continue to make this same judgment every day by continuing to see your participation in the kingdom of God as being worth more than anything and everything this world offers! For, Jesus offers you the opportunity to come out of the kingdom of darkness that brings slavery to sin and spiritual death and be part of His kingdom of light that offers spiritual life and peace (Colossians 1:13; Romans 6:15-23)!

**3) You must seek God's kingdom first.** Being part of the kingdom of Heaven is not something that you can just embrace in a half-hearted kind of way. Instead, you must recognize that being part of Jesus's kingdom means that you have totally devoted yourself to Jesus as your King – and Him alone! Therefore, Jesus taught people to make the choice to either be with Him or against Him (Matthew 12:30), stating that it is impossible to serve both Him and another as King/Master (Matthew 6:19-24). In fact, you being in Jesus's kingdom means that you must seek His kingdom and righteousness above every other person or endeavor, even above your basic physical needs (Matthew 6:31-33)! To be devoted to seeking God's kingdom first involves making the focus and will of King Jesus absolutely the most important thing in your life (Colossians 3:1-4:1). This involves seeking His kingdom first in your thoughts, your words, your decisions, your actions, your family, your relationships, your time, your money, your work, your service, etc. For, it is not your will that is important in

this kingdom; but the will of the King (Philippians 3:18-21)!

**4) You must embrace living as an exile on this earth.** Being a citizen of God's kingdom means that you are not at home in this world. For, your citizenship is in Heaven and you are eagerly awaiting the time when your King returns and you spend eternity with Him (Philippians 3:20-21). This makes you an exile on this earth (one who is forced to be absent from your true homeland; i.e. a pilgrim/stranger; 1 Peter 1:1-2). During this time of exile, though, you will face many temptations to live like the rest of the world, fit in with the world, and become comfortable ("at home") in this world. However, if you live in this way, you will fail to live to please your King and inherit eternal life in Heaven! For this reason, you must embrace your role as an exile/stranger and keep your focus on pleasing your King (1 Peter 1:17; 2:11-12). Although you may find yourself out of place in this life, you must be focused on the homeland you are seeking in Heaven (following the examples of faith recorded in Hebrews 11:13-16; 12:1-2)! For, how you live now will determine where you spend eternity later (Galatians 6:7-10).

Being in Christ (a Christian) means that you are a citizen of God's kingdom. But, as we have seen, this is not an empty title or merely a way of describing yourself. Instead, this means that you have embraced Jesus as your King and submitted your life entirely to Him, considering that participation in His kingdom is worth far more than anything else. Now, you must live your life seeking His kingdom first during the time of your exile on this earth!

## Thought Questions

(2 Timothy 3:16-17)

**Teaching:** What did you learn from this lesson?

**Rebuking:** What are some ways this lesson challenges you to live differently?

**Correcting:** How does this lesson help you make positive changes for Christ?

**Training & Equipping:** How can you apply this lesson to be trained and equipped in God's service?