

God's Word says we are chosen: selected, purchased, and redeemed by God. As we build our identity, we need to recognize that we already have all that we need in being chosen - it just needs to be redefined. The creator can take what is cumbersome, useless, or unvalued and build something valuable. The building requires things being removed and some things redefined. Our craftsman has a plan like the craftsman making something out of a plank of wood.

Look at our identity breakdown from God's Word. Peter, in the New Testament, begins to talk about the persecution of Christians. He presents to them what identity looks like. **I Peter 2:9** *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.*

You are... *a royal priesthood*. But those two words didn't go together to Jews. Royalty came from King David's lineage. Priesthood was passed through the Levitical line. You had to be born into each particular bloodline. You could not be both - a king and a priest. We can use this excuse of where we come from to declare ourselves unworthy to do what God has called us to do. This reminder of Peter brings isolation to the Jews, not excitement. There was nothing they could do to change their lineage. But Peter is instructing how this royal priesthood is attainable through Christ. We are adopted... to be royalty and priesthood. These were now attainable by being born into the kingdom of God through Christ. We are chosen and also being refined to become royalty.

Royalty also brings responsibility. Three aspects of royalty:

**1) To Love.** King David loved with an unconditional love. An example is the love showed to King Saul as King Saul pursued to kill David for many years. David even wept for King Saul at his death. David gave love to many who rejected him. For many of us, love has been poorly defined by the imperfect people around us. People can hurt us and say they do so because of their love. Have you decided not to give or receive love because of this kind of hurt?

**I Corinthians 13:4-8** *Love is patient, love is kind, it is not jealous; love does not brag, it is not arrogant. It does not act disgracefully, it does not seek its own benefit; it is not provoked, does not keep an account of a wrong suffered, it does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; it keeps every confidence, it believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.*

Compare our understanding of love with these words. Are they different? If we are going to build our identity, then it must be built on a solid foundation of the creator of love. These words can be challenging. **I John 4:7** *Beloved, let's love one another; for love is from God, and everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. John 3:16* *For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life. We build our identity on the sacrifice of Jesus for us that we might be set free.*

**2) To Reign** – to exercise authority over. Do we resist earthly authority because it doesn't come from love? Authority is redefined by Jesus – to reign is to become a servant to all - to willingly be a servant to those around us. If we want to change our heart toward someone, then serve them. Pray for the people who hurt us and God will soften our hearts. Reign as Christ has called us to.

**I Corinthians 9:24-27** *Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. So they do it to obtain a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore I run in such a way as not to run aimlessly; I box in such a way, as to avoid hitting air; but I strictly discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.*

Do we want people to submit to areas that we ourselves are unwilling to submit? **2 Corinthians 10:5** *we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.* To reign, we must take authority in our own thoughts and the things within us before we can take authority of things around us. Reigning begins in our own heart first, building our identity on the foundation of God's Word.

**3) To Battle.** Jesus made it clear that we will have tribulation but He tells us not to fear. He has overcome. Do we have exhaustion in fighting our battles on what we see? Remember that we have spiritual battles.

**Ephesians 6:12** *For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.*

**Ephesians 6:13** *Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist on the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm therefore, having belted your waist with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having strapped on your feet the preparation of the gospel of peace; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. With every prayer and request, pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be alert with all perseverance and every request for all the saints, and pray in my behalf.*

The battles belong to the Lord. We fight on our knees – crying out to God who cares for us and can change any situation we are in. **James 1:2** *Consider it all joy, my brothers and sisters, when you encounter various trials knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.*

**Philippians 4:6** *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and pleading with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.* Does anxiousness describe a relationship in our lives? Or our emotions? Or situations we are facing? Through prayer and supplication – continue to go to the throne.

**Philippians 4:7** *And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.* Our peace is not based on a world situation resolution. It is based on the King who purchased our peace on the cross. The battle will be won on our knees.

An identity that will not fail, will not waver, or will not be misguided is based on a willingness to allow the creator to reshape and rearrange our unorganized pieces and put them in the rightful place. He has given us all we need. God has a plan and a purpose for our lives! Give Him the opportunity to rearrange our lives!

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How have you used the excuse of where you came from to declare yourself unworthy to do God's work?

Are you the recipient of an imperfect love? Or have a skewed understanding of love?

What places in our lives are unreigned or unruled over?

Have you given up fighting a battle expecting no peace? What should we do?