

DISCIPLESHIP PRINCIPLE #14

Eph. 2:10; John 15:16; Rom. 8:28

LEARNING AND ACCEPTING WHO YOU ARE IN CHRIST

Of all the things God could have made for Himself – He made YOU!! Of all the things your Savior could have given His life for – He gave it for YOU!!

¹⁰*We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus...* — Eph. 2:10

The Greek word we translate “workmanship” was used to describe the greatest masterpiece of an artist or a builder. We are God’s masterpiece! Wow. But...

But if this is true, why am I 4’11” instead of 6’4”? Why am I blind? Why was I raised in an abusive home and abandoned? Why am I like I am, facing what I face, if I really am God’s masterpiece? If He really loves me? How can this be?

What Are The Truths That Allow Us To Accept Who We Are In Christ And What We Face?

1) The Truth About **You**.

- God designed your physical appearance before you were conceived and fashioned you in the womb before you were born.

¹³*For Thou didst form my inward parts; Thou didst weave me in my mother's womb.*

¹⁴*I will give thanks to Thee, **for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;** Wonderful are Thy works, and my soul knows it very well. ¹⁵*My frame was not hidden from Thee, When I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth. ¹⁶Thine eyes have seen my unformed substance; And **in Thy book they were all written, the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them.*** — Psalm 139:13-16*

⁵*Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations.* — Jer. 1:5

- God designed you to fulfill His purpose.

⁵ *And now says the LORD, who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant...*
— Isa. 49:5

- God treated you as a person before you were born.

¹ *The LORD called me from the womb; From the body of my mother He named Me.*
— Isa. 49:1

2) The Truth About **God's Choices For You** That You Cannot Change.

- **He** chose your parents, your gender, your brothers and sisters, your birth order, your physical features, your racial background, your national heritage, your time in history, your mental abilities, and your aging and time of death.
- God has waited a long time since the coming of Christ to deal in finality with man's sin. What has He been waiting for? You.

¹⁶ *You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain.*
— John 15:16

3) The Truth About **God Himself**.

- God cannot and does not make mistakes. He made none regarding **you**.
- God knew you and His plans for you before He created the world. He designed you and planned your time on earth accordingly. He is omniscient, knowing everything that could and would happen.
- God's plans and will cannot be thwarted, because He is also sovereign. Nothing can separate you from Him or the fulfillment of His plans.
- God overrules all attempts by men and angels to thwart His plans and ultimately turns them by His power into glory for Himself and those He loves. *You. (Rom. 8:28)*
- God keeps His promises. He will keep them regarding you.

4) The Truth About **What God Does With The "Unchangeables"** In Your Life

- He causes all of the hard things that we did not choose for ourselves and cannot change ourselves (our bodies, our family and our situation in life and in the world), by His infinite power and predetermined plan...

²⁸ *...to work together for good, for those who love Him and are the called according to His purpose.*
— Rom. 8:28

Satan thought that having Jesus crucified would be a great victory for him. How foolish. The very worst thing he could think of doing to thwart God was allowed by God to accomplish His eternal purposes, and glorify the One who was crucified!

The same providential rule and overrule is used by our God to use the grievous things He has allowed in our lives to accomplish His eternal purposes and glorify, not only Himself, but those He loves also.

¹⁶ “You did not choose Me (Jesus speaking), but I chose you, and I ordained that you should go forth and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain.”

— John 15:16

¹⁰ We are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which He prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

— Eph. 2:10

Unless we know the perspective on life that these truths bring, and impose them on our mind, will, and emotions – the hard things in our life regarding how God made us and what He has allowed to happen to us – they bring us to bitterness and resentment rather than joy and contentment.

But remembering these truths, and that God takes these grievous things in our life and turns them by His power into glory for Himself and those He loves, gives us hope and allows us to thank Him and even have joy as we face them.

The apostle Paul is a wonderful example of these truths to us. He was born in a Jewish family, the son of a Pharisee, in the first century under Roman rule. He chose none of these, but God had a plan that these things fit perfectly.

He rejected Christ as an adult, by then a Pharisee himself, and he persecuted to the death many Christians. But God had a plan and began to reveal it in a flash of light that blinded him! Paul didn't recognize this as God's doing at the time, but it was.

After he was saved and began to have a fruitful ministry for Christ, God allowed a physical weakness that He would not remove, but rather used to glorify Himself! Paul asked God to remove it – three times – but God said no, that He had done it for a purpose.

Paul was then was put in a Roman prison, chained to a guard in a lousy cell. But, surprise, this did not hamper his ministry, it enhanced it!

Finally, Paul was executed by beheading. What did that accomplish? Well, that was what caused him to immediately stand in the presence of the glory of God, blameless, with great joy! Talk about a blessing. Wow.

UNIT 14 STUDY SESSION #1

In preparation for the group study of this principle of living for Christ, read and study the above scriptures and summary and then complete the following self-evaluation.

Evaluating My Acceptance Of Myself In Christ And My Circumstances

I have prayed and said: Thank you, heavenly Father for...

1. The way you made me, especially those physical features I have wanted to change.
Yes I have _____. No I have not _____. I still struggle with this _____
2. My parents whom you chose for me.
Yes I have _____. No I have not _____. I still struggle with this _____
3. Each brother and sister You brought into my family.
Yes I have _____. No I have not _____. I still struggle with this _____
4. The color of my skin and racial characteristics You have given me.
Yes I have _____. No I have not _____. I still struggle with this _____
5. My mental and physical abilities and inabilities compared to others.
Yes I have _____. No I have not _____. I still struggle with this _____
6. The country and place (s) where I was born and have lived.
Yes I have _____. No I have not _____. I still struggle with this _____
7. That I am growing older and physically and mentally weaker.
Yes I have _____. No I have not _____. I still struggle with this _____

Discussion Questions for Unit 14 Study Session #1

1. How can I apply James 1:1-4 on a day to day basis – continually?
2. Is Romans 8:28 really true? It doesn't look like it.
3. How can I help another Christian who is struggling in this area?

UNIT 14 STUDY SESSION #2

In preparation for the second study session please consider pursuing one of the following projects and sharing about it.

- Review and study the accounts of the some of the following people in Scripture who faced unexpected hardships and handicaps in life that God clearly allowed or initiated. May they encourage you as you face what He is using in your life.

Daniel: Enslaved as a teenager for the rest of his life and mutilated physically.

All of the prophets: “Which one of My prophets did you not kill?”

Job: Who was never given an explanation of “why”.

Jonah: Who was asked to give his life for a people he hated, and said “no”.

The 11 apostles: All of them martyred except John.

Abraham: Who grew very old waiting, and waiting, to see what God had promised.

- See how many of the following verses you can memorize before the next study session and share any encouragement this has been to you in this area as you “put on the armor of God”. James 1:2-4, Rom. 8:28, 2 Cor. 12:7-10, Matt. 14:28-31
- List the hardest things you have faced from the list on your personal evaluation (physical features, family issues, etc.) and answer the following question regarding each:
“What has happened for good because these things were allowed or brought into my life that would **not** have happened without these things?”
- Read a biography from the list below before the next session. These are of Christians who faced difficult self-acceptance situations in life, but have and are, living by faith with them and through them, to the glory of God.

Fanny Crosby: The Blind Hymn Writer (reading her hymns might be more helpful!)

Joni Erickson: The Paralyzed Encourager Of So Many, Handicapped Less Than Her

Patch The Pirate: The One-Eyed Hymn Writer, With A Body That Doesn't Work

Discussion Questions for Unit 14 Study Session #2

1. If you were able to pursue one of the study projects can you share what you learned?
2. How can we bless and help a brother or sister in the Lord who is struggling in this area?
3. Non-Christians are taught to accept themselves and self-confidently “go get em” because “you can do it”. What is the difference between this self-confidence and the Christian who has “self-confidence” in the Lord?

Prayer Together