

GROWING UP INTO CHRIST:

Our full identity





GROWING UP IN / INTO CHRIST: our full identity

A. IDENTITY

1. ADOPTED CHILDREN OF GOD

Brothers and sisters with Jesus and each other with our heavenly Father

2. BRIDE OF CHRIST

More intimate picture

3. GLORY CARRIERS / RELEASERS

Deeper experience of the Glory of the Lord is more and more wonderful to our spirit and more and more painful to our flesh

4. INFINITE BEINGS

Greater capacity than we realise

5. TRANSFORMED

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed (transfigured) by the renewing of your mind

Romans 12.2

But we do not have a prosperity Gospel

Taken to greater levels of Glory to face greater levels of suffering — we are given more revelation to face suffering and through that suffering we gain greater revelation.

Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

2 Corinthians 4.16-18

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we¹ have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we³ boast in the hope of the glory of God. ³Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

Romans 5.1-5

To take us to new levels of experience with God the Lord 'opens up' new paces in our souls where we have been previously damaged or shut down.

He loves us so much He will not leave us where we are

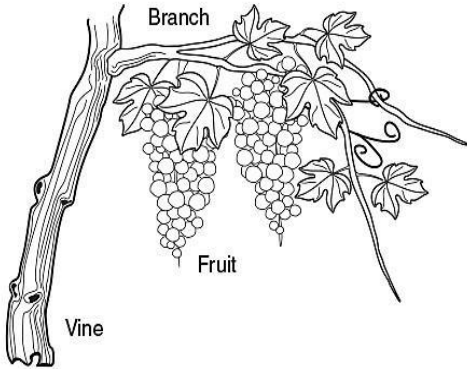
3 Illustrations to help us get a handle on being 'in Christ' and so growing in our experience of this reality



B. GRAFTED INTO THE TRUE VINE

'I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ² He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. ³ You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. ⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. ⁶ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

John 15.1-8



Promises — Instruction — Warnings
What do you hear?

I am the True Vine
fulfillment of Israel — the vine (Jeremiah 2.21)
offensive to Jewish ears

Father is the Gardener Gardener = Yhwh
claim to divinity **v1**

so if Jesus = Vine who am I?
In Christ so = a branch

Vine branches that touch the ground has leaves but no fruit - looks like part of the vine but will not die but feeding from elsewhere — dependent on self / elsewhere not the vine

No fruit? Cut off

Fruit? Pruned - there will be discipline and cutting away of that which is not of God **v2**
- required for fruiting EVERY branch needs it
Train a vine hard for 3 years it will fruit for the rest of its life
Treat a Vine with kid gloves it may even stop growing and give up fruiting

You are CLEAN - word spoken is Jesus — uses the past tense — the cross is effective **v3**
received Jesus? then CLEAN

Make good choices - Remain in me **v4**
God promises - I'll remain

Lifeblood of Jesus (sap of the vine) flows in us (branch)

Outside of Jesus there is nothing — only death **v6**

Jesus took death at the fall that stopped us eating of the Tree of Life (c.f. Genesis) and dealt with it Now we are not just able to eat of the Tree we are grafted into the Vine



C. RADICAL TRANSFORMATION — caterpillars to butterflies

Fullness of life also means that we need to be changed and we are committed to walking the Calvary Road. Jesus walked in total obedience and reliance on His Father and saw amazing things happen and saw pain - emotional and physical, suffering and ultimately death in pursuit of that obedience.

But the outcome was Resurrection

Egg	Caterpillar	Pupa/Chrysalis	Butterfly
<i>Creation</i>	<i>immature</i>	<i>mitosis/ meltdown</i>	<i>new life</i>
Contains all required	old self	transformation moments	free to fly
Mitosis	break down of structure wings not hiding inside the caterpillar danger of external influence	powerless	dna effectively lost

Breaking out of the Chrysalis

beating its wings — strength to breakout, strength to live

no passivity but no striving either

engage spirit nature — different for different people at different times

rest, worship, get up and walk etc etc

Only as Butterfly can it reproduce and bring forth NEW LIFE

We are all mixtures of stuff — glory carriers and in meltdown at the same time. We are being changed from glory to glory — big and small mitosis moments. God is the ultimate life coach!!! — He has the bigger vision of what we can be than we do.

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES

MOSES	Call — self reliance, own strength	CATERPILLAR
	Royal Prince now Shepherd in Midian	MITOSIS 30-40 years Who am I?
	Burning Bush	BREAKING OUT - beating wings
	Leading the People	BUTTERFLY
	not perfect, big mistake at the end and no Canaan for him but he was at the Mount of Transfiguration	

Let go of our self-image and the need to get everyone else to accept this projection of ourselves

No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

Hebrews 12.11

Mitosis can make you harder, more arrogant etc unless you choose to be trained by it otherwise there is bitterness and resentment as you project on to God the rejection and abandonment



PAUL 3 Years in the desert, 15 years from conversion to Jerusalem — loses everything Yet writes...

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶ As it is written: 'For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.' No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons¹ neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8.35-39

JESUS	Carpenter till he was 30	CATERPILLAR
	Desert / Cross	MITOSIS
	Ministry / Resurrection	BUTTERFLY

D. CHOOSE THE BETTER WAY — learning from Martha and Mary

As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, 'Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!' 'Martha, Martha,' the Lord answered, 'you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed — or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.' Luke 10.38-42

Martha caught up with pleasing Jesus by doing but misses being with Him - distracted

Don't you care

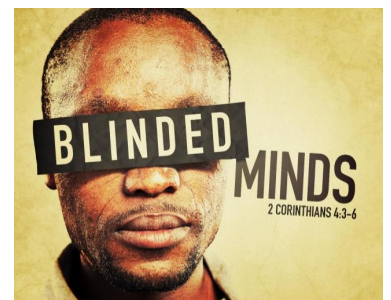
Tell her to

The only one thing that is needed is sitting at His feet and listening to what He is saying

E. THE WAY OF LIFE NOT THE RELIGION OF DEATH

1. SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS root of religion

it is written: "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes so that they could not see and ears so that they could not hear, to this very day." Romans 11.8



But to this day the LORD has not given you a mind that understands or eyes that see or ears that hear. Deut. 29.4

The LORD has brought over you a deep sleep: He has sealed your eyes (the prophets) he has covered your heads (the seers). Isaiah 29.10

- Religion is rife
- there is comfort in familiarity
 - trying to generate the power of God rather than relying on His presence



BLINDNESS ABOUNDS

John 9.1-38

Jesus' ministry in the Gospels offended people — religious people — especially religious leaders

vv1-7 Man born blind allegory of all of us born in sin and so blind to spiritual realities until Jesus intervenes and opens his / our eyes

Jesus is the light of the world and yet we do not see the light in the darkness

He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. John 1.10

vv8-12 Neighbours deny the evidence before their eyes
rocked out of their comfort zones so they take the man to ...

vv13-17 Pharisees all they see is the breaking of the rules not the freedom and restoration.

v18 No one will believe the truth in front of their eyes

v22 hardness leads to fear about the activity of God

v25 Man born blind has the first-hand experience of being set free and so believes

vv27-29, 34 Pharisees don't listen and become insulting — they condemn the man

vv30-33 The "blind" man "sees" the spiritual blindness

vv39-41 Jesus brings His diagnosis

ELI & SAMUEL

1 Samuel 1-7

a. ELI - 40 years in charge (4.18)

Leader - passive (1.9) - lack of authority / discipline (2.22-25)
- spiritual blindness / dullness (1.13; 3.1-9)
- easy tolerance of sin (2.29;4.4)
- no sign of repentance

Impact on Nation (chapter 4) — **DEFEAT**

- self-righteousness and self-justification
- presumption

b. SAMUEL

Leader - obedient (3.17-18) - humanity & repentance (7.3)
- decisive leadership (7.4) — hatred of sin (7.3)
- spiritual passion and prayer (7.8-10)
- thanksgiving and praise (7.12)

Impact on nation — purity and victory over the Philistines

- God moves in power (7.10-11)



N.B. Israel face the same Philistines, they have the same God, they have the same covenant, they have the same promises. Under one leadership they are defeated, under the next they are victorious.

Topos of the leader becomes the *topos* of the people

2. DEFINING RELIGION

We need to redefine normal and let the Spirit reveal the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

DEFINITION: The religious spirit is an attitude of heart energized by a deep rooted demonic spirit seeking to suppress and destroy the vital power and work of Jesus' presence. This is achieved through forms (methodia), belief systems and activities that have an outward spiritual appearance but lack the authentic life, truth and power of God.

The church of God becomes self-satisfied and remains foul tasting to the world. The focus is inward and self-reverential: religious language, activities, structures, programmes, rituals and regulations.

Religious spirit is looking for access points to alive churches to deceive believers, to harden their hearts and to choke the works of the Lord.

"All the false religions and cults combined have not done as much damage to the moves of God as the infiltration of the spirit of religion in the church" Ric Joyner

The LORD has brought over you a deep sleep: He has sealed your eyes (the prophets) he has covered your heads (the seers).
[implied because of your religion] Isaiah 29.10

Religion is rife - there is comfort in familiarity

- trying to generate the power of God rather than relying on His presence

Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed ears, then the weeds also appeared. The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?' 'An enemy did this,' he replied. The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?' 'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'

Matthew 13.24-30

1. Religion is a planting of the enemy

a. Weeds = Zizania / tares - counterfeit producing small dark seeds that contain poisonous fungus

b. Counterfeit Church

Matthew 13.38 – sons of the evil one look like sons of the Kingdom – How Clever!!!

Causes: i) People believe they are saved when they are not

ii) true church is forced to spend too much time weeding and not sowing and reaping – though some weeding is essential!!!!

Be careful, Jesus said to them. Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Matthew 16.6

2. Religion referenced

But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control,



brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God — having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them. 2 Timothy 3.1-5

Don't be naive. There are difficult times ahead. As the end approaches, people are going to be self-absorbed, money-hungry, self-promoting, stuck-up, profane, contemptuous of parents, crude, coarse, dog-eat-dog, unbending, slanderers, impulsively wild, savage, cynical, treacherous, ruthless, bloated windbags, addicted to lust, and allergic to God. They'll make a show of religion, but behind the scenes they're animals. Stay clear of these people.

2 Timothy 3.1-5 (MSG)

'morphosin' = form / outline / shadow – these lower expectations and distort definitions

Programming and defining the work of the Holy Spirit is anathema to the presence of Jesus and the fruit of the Kingdom.

We need to redefine normal and let the Spirit reveal the yeast of the Pharisees and Saducees.

2. CHARACTERISTICS OF RELIGION

1. **Self-focus — self-righteousness**
2. **Appearance of Truth but really counterfeit**
 - vision distorted - reality of Jesus is distorted
 - mission of the church is misdirected and opposed
3. **No one is immune to this demonic stratagem**
Matthew 16.23, John 9

It affects believers (churchianity) and unbelievers (unchurched)

4. **Demonic is dismissed as whacky, dangerous or anachronistic**
5. **Customs, forms, Methods and Programmes are more important than people**
dead religious works become formulas and ignore Jesus and the Holy Spirit
God did powerful things through Paul, things quite out of the ordinary. The word got around and people started taking pieces of clothing—handkerchiefs and scarves and the like—that had touched Paul's skin and then touching the sick with them. The touch did it—they were healed and whole. Some itinerant Jewish exorcists who happened to be in town at the time tried their hand at what they assumed to be Paul's "game." They pronounced the name of the Master Jesus over victims of evil spirits, saying, "I command you by the Jesus preached by Paul!" The seven sons of a certain Sceva, a Jewish high priest, were trying to do this on a man when the evil spirit talked back: "I know Jesus and I've heard of Paul, but who are you?" Then the possessed man went berserk jumped the exorcists, beat them up, and tore off their clothes. Naked and bloody, they got away as best they could. Acts 19.11-16 (MSG)

The world is full of so-called prayer warriors who are prayer-ignorant. They're full of formulas and programs and advice, peddling techniques for getting what you want from God. Don't fall for that nonsense. Matthew 6.7 (MSG)

6. **Fear of change, man, power of God, demonic activity**
7. **False Humility**
8. **Quick Fixism — not repentance and obedience**
Previous to Philip's arrival, a certain Simon had practiced magic in the city, posing as a famous man and dazzling all the Samaritans with his wizardry. He had them all, from little children to old men, eating out of his hand. They all thought he had supernatural powers, and called him "the Great Wizard." He had been around a long time and everyone was more or less in awe of him. But when Philip came to town announcing the news of God's kingdom and proclaiming the name of Jesus Christ, they forgot Simon and were baptized, becoming believers right and left! Even Simon himself believed and



was baptized. From that moment he was like Philip's shadow, so fascinated with all the God-signs and miracles that he wouldn't leave Philip's side... .. When Simon saw that the apostles by merely laying on hands conferred the Spirit, he pulled out his money, excited, and said, "Sell me your secret! Show me how you did that! How much do you want? Name your price!" Peter said, "To hell with your money! And you along with it. Why, that's unthinkable—trying to buy God's gift! You'll never be part of what God is doing by striking bargains and offering bribes. Change your ways—and now! Ask the Master to forgive you for trying to use God to make money. I can see this is an old habit with you; you reek with money-lust."

Acts 8.9-13, 18-23 (MSG)

9. Spiritual Insensitivity or Dulness

rule breaking is more important than any restoration — denying the transforming power of God is anathema to faith

10. Activism & Polemical Theology

right theology is more important than mission and ministry

"You're hopeless, you religion scholars and Pharisees! Frauds! You keep meticulous account books, tithing on every nickel and dime you get, but on the meat of God's Law, things like fairness and compassion and commitment—the absolute basics!—you carelessly take it or leave it. Careful bookkeeping is commendable, but the basics are required. Do you have any idea how silly you look, writing a life story that's wrong from start to finish, nitpicking over commas and semicolons?"

Matthew 23.23-24 (MSG)

Even a God ordained activity can become a powerless form when divorced from the state of our heart toward God

The multitude of your sacrifices— what are they to me? says the LORD. I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats. When you come to appear before me, who has asked this of you, this trampling of my courts? Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations— I cannot bear your evil assemblies. Your New Moon festivals and your appointed feasts my soul hates. They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide my eyes from you; even if you offer many prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood;

Isaiah 1.11-15



HANDOUT 1- RECOGNISE THE PHARISEE OR CRITICAL SPIRIT

1. ARE YOU BEREAN OR PHARISEE?

As soon as it was night, the brothers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. Many of the Jews believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men. Acts 17.10-12

- Beareans:**
- hearts display spiritual hunger, eagerness and hope
 - open to the work of the Spirit BUT SENSIBLE
 - know the Scriptures but not closed or hard-hearted or stiff-necked — looking to confirm and affirm Paul not to discredit him
 - desire for truth — not self-justification but genuine testing
 - no cynicism or apathy

Many say that they seek the truth but most want their flavour of the truth.

Pharisee:

- sniping from the sidelines — no participation BUT pointing out all the failures — "I'll let them fall over and then pick up the pieces — having been proved right."
- identity comes from fault-finding in others — they do not encourage

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices— mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law— justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practised the latter, without neglecting the former. You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.

Matthew 23.23-24

Need to dismantle the pharisaical spirit to see the deception of criticism and religious pride

"Be careful," Jesus warned them. "Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod."

Mark 8.15

claim exclusivity over the truth

God is seen in the renewals of the past but not of today

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous. ³⁰And you say, 'If we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.'

Matthew 23.29-30

- the critical spirit feeds on negativity and produces unbelief, suspicion and fear

Pharisaism leads from deception to death — religious pride prevents truth taking root in the heart and setting us free.



2. PHARISEE ROBES

- a. **ROBE**
- the thing that "covers up"
 - selective transparency
 - "I will be open and deal with the 'stuff' or share my experience when it makes me look more holy — or at least less bad!"

I will not display my weaknesses to anyone — but Paul rejoiced in his weaknesses

- How I look to other people is more important than obedience to the Scriptures—FEAR OF MAN



- b. CORDS & SASHES**
 - proclaiming my position
 - I seek leadership and for others to recognise my maturity
 - I value the way things are done at the expense of what is done — e.g. good liturgy/music rather than heartfelt worship
 - I value who I know — my networking is important to me — I will drop names
 - I value where I come from — my inheritance

- c. NECKLACES**
 - self-adornment — "I've got the badge"
 - pride — look at me, what I know, who I am
 - elitism — "come join my group — you must go to to get it and bring it back"

- d. CLOTH SHOES**
 - hard soles not required — religious feet do not go to hard places
 - I'll do one off projects not a lifestyle of service
 - I'll only do the high profile stuff— I yearn for attention and recognition

- e. FINE CLOTH UNDERGARMENT**
 - repeatedly washed
 - clean outside not inside — white washed sepulchres
 - I'll do my church stuff but don't ask me to do anything in the community
 - wrong heart — legalism not freedom
 - I'm already clean — I've shed all my baggage
 - refusal to receive correction or come to repentance

The religious mindset obstructs spirit-led change and well intentioned people end up opposing the Lord. They do not intend to be obstructionist but they are deceived by pride as they lean in their own understanding.

Religious pride will convince us that we are Kingdom minded as we criticise or ignore the new move of the Spirit.

Remember the Pharisees believed in the imminent messiah, the resurrection, the word as truth and were devout in their holiness BUT they killed Jesus and imprisoned Paul.

They figured He'd be like them and do it their way.

Let's root this out and let's start with our own hearts.



WORKSHEET 1: RECOGNISING THE RELIGIOUS SPIRIT

We lose:

Love
Joy
Spiritual hunger and thirst
Radical obedience
Anointing
Abundant fruit
Spiritual alertness
Dependence on the Spirit
Hatred of sin
Gratitude for salvation
Faith
Peace / Assurance
Humility
Submission under God's Word
Teachability
Compassion for the Lost
Fear of God
Transparency

We gain:

Hardness of heart
Duty / martyrdom
self-satisfaction
comfort & convenience
striving
meagre harvest
spiritual stupor
dependence on self/structure/method
compromise
grumbling
information / intellectualism
anxiety / fear
religious pride
Tradition and human wisdom
stiff necked
concerned for self
Fear of man
Secrecy

IMAGES TO RECOGNISE

1. NATURAL MAN /WOMAN

I see others faults but not from God's perspective
I often feel overwhelmed and so withdraw from responsibility
I cannot hear God's voice (that is what I believe and to think otherwise is wrong/dangerous) and so I don't try

2. ANAEMIC MAN / WOMAN

I'm a victim of circumstances
I live in defeat
I'm trapped in excuses and cannot get free
I don't bother to try to change in these areas
I need help and affirmation all the time

3. PROFESSIONAL REPENTER

Words but no fruit
I understand but I don't try to walk out of it
Because I understand then I should lead

4. MODEL MAN / WOMAN

I try to conform to my heroes
I want a higher profile so I say what I think the leader wants to hear
I am threatened by those gifted like me
I don't want others to know my faults



QUESTIONS TO ASK

What is my spiritual inheritance? (parents, family—even school)

Did it bring me to faith or did I find Jesus somewhere else?

Have I rebelled against religion?

Was I raised with a knowledge of Jesus but not introduced to the supernatural as a normal part of Christian living?

Do I think that some things matter more to God than others? — What do I expect from others in these areas?

Do I ask God what needs to change in me or do I change what I want to change? Church leaders this is the same for your church and ministries

Do I feel pleased with myself when I and a failure when I don't?

Have I settled with living with a vague sense of condemnation?

Do I enjoy prayer or is it just a duty? Do I act rather than pray?

Do I enjoy spending time praying with people rather than with the Lord?

Am I uncomfortable with asking the Lord to speak and would rather apply my "wisdom"?

Have I been disappointed in prayer and so allowed my experience to define my understanding of Scripture and so of God?

Do I seek a quick fix rather than repentance and humble obedience?

Acts 8.9-13; 18-23

Do I assume my heart is right because I have good intentions?

Do I live in the power of God consistently or do I need to consciously seek this experience?