

BODY OF PROOF: WEEK ONE

OUR FULLNESS IN CHRIST THAT FREES US TO BE HIS BODY

The way of the world is based on our sense of being 'lost.' People feel alienated and alone because they're separated from God. This independence from God, creates a sense of lack that totally shapes the way the world lives. Each person has to protect himself, provide for themselves, look out for herself, develop and maintain relationships as best they can. It's what we do to survive.

Relationships with one another are driven by our need to fill our emptiness. We look for connection, companionship, acceptance to meet our relational and emotional needs. This often causes us to have 'hidden agendas' as we try to develop relationships with others. We long for others to affirm our value, hold high opinion of who we are (identity), so we feel secure in our relationship with them.

However, once we completely surrender our lives to Jesus, God puts his Holy Spirit within us, and now we no longer have to live lost, independent, and lacking. **We have received "fullness in Christ."** [Ephesians 1.3, Colossians 2.9-10, 2 Peter 1.3] But if we don't understand fullness in Christ, we can still function out of the old world's system even though we are a new creation. We can be so steeped in the habits of living from lack that it requires a powerful shift in our thinking. That's why Scripture places so much emphasis on the 'renewal of our minds' [Romans 12.2; Ephesians 4.22-24; 1 Corinthians 2.12]

Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have you ever found yourself feeling either elated or deflated by peoples even small opinions of you? Why did it matter so much?• Have you ever felt your value or identity was at the mercy of how people around you felt about you?
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So, what does it mean to have fullness in Christ and how does this change how we think and live?

First, we are 'in Christ' [Ephesians 1.1-12], which means we don't strive to experience intimacy with God and others; we live out of, from the intimacy we already have with God. From the moment of our surrender to Jesus, we are fully bare, fully washed and fully received into perfect intimacy with God. Our position at salvation becomes "in Christ." We are already one with Jesus. We can never achieve any higher standing than that! This sets in us a deep sense of security in God's love for us. We don't have to rely on our efforts to feel secure, we no longer are caught in the performance-trap. We do not obey God to get closer to God, rather we obey God because we love God, and the Holy Spirit leads us unto obedience.

Our identity and value are secure In Christ. Our worth and identity do not change from our good days to our bad days!

Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do you feel secure in your intimacy with God at all times? Or do you feel there is an element of it being performance based? (Repentance may be needed if you have agreed with the lie that you must achieve something more than the cross to be fully intimate with God.)• If you were secure in your unchanging God-given identity and value, would it change what you need from people in those areas? How would it bring you more freedom?
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Second, to help us continually live in this sense of being secure in the love of God, God "seals us" with his Holy Spirit [Ephesians 1.13-14]. A letter that is sealed (and stamped) is guaranteed delivery. The Holy Spirit guarantees that you will ultimately be delivered, kept in the loving arms of your Heavenly Father. Of course, the Holy Spirit only comes into lives that are completely surrendered. But once surrendered, the Holy Spirit comes and lives within us!

And the first and most important work of the Holy Spirit is always to reveal the beauty of Jesus to us [John 15.26-27; John 16.13-14]. Because the Holy Spirit always desires to reveal the beauty of Jesus even in the most challenging circumstances, we can be guaranteed the joy that comes with that sense of beauty. This life of beholding and reflecting the beauty of Jesus is the way we inwardly experience what Scripture calls 'resurrection life' [Ephesians 2.4-6; Romans 5.17, 6.4].

This resurrection life instills in us a sense of confidence and victory. The more we see Jesus, the more we know Jesus, the more we rejoice in Him! He is enough. We are full in Him! We do not need to chase the things of this world or work to achieve something even for Him. We are full of joy, peace, purpose, love, comfort, and victory in Jesus because of who He is and our position in Him (not because of something we have done).

Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where have you seen the beauty of Jesus in your life recently? (If you are without hope, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal God to you in your present situation.) • Do you feel fear that if you believe Jesus is enough that you won't accomplish enough? (Do you trust the Holy Spirit to lead you when He has something for you to do, that you do not have to be self-driven?)
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Because we know that we are intimate with Christ, that our identity is loved by God, and that the Holy Spirit is in us to guarantee our relationship with the Father, we can safely discover what it means to be members of Christ's body.

Final Take-Home Thoughts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you confident that your value and identity are unchanging In Christ? • Are you confident it is the Holy Spirit's job to lead you and that you do not have to achieve something on your own? • Are you convinced seeing the active, never changing beauty of Jesus will be enough to satisfy you all the days of your life?
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Prayer Tips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow the Holy Spirit to show you where your mind needs to be renewed. If a lie is highlighted, repent for your agreement with the lie. Reject the lie. Then ask the Holy Spirit to give you clarity of the truth. Receive the truth. Write down the truth, find time to meditate on it, add it into your prayer life daily.
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Share With The Lost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those who are alienated from God will inevitably feel the pressure and weight of securing their identity and value. When someone alludes to this in conversation respond with "I have found such freedom knowing in Jesus my identity and value are secure and unchanging, even on my worst days/weeks/years!"
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