

Foundation  
2 Peter 1:1-4

ETS: Peter recalls who he is and reminds them of who they are in Christ

ESS: We need to know who we are and what we have in Christ

OSS: I want people to be strong in their identity in Christ

PQ: Do you know?

UW: Identity

**ME**

We live in the **Age of Identification**

How many use a **PIN** number?

- PIN to login to your computer, smart phone, verify your credit card, etc.
  - In **1829**, the **British Parliament** enacted the reforms of Robert Peel to place more emphasis on printed police records. Due to this new focus, data could be stored in a personal document file and linked back to individuals using a unique numerical value. This would be the precursor to more modern government databases that link to ID cards.

- Building on Robert Peel's reforms, the **Netherlands** started their own decentralized Personal Number (PN) system in **1849**, but only moved on to issue personal ID cards to each citizen in **1940**.
  - By this time, the **United States** had also begun rolling out their **Social Security** number cards, the first batch distributed in **1936**. Other countries followed suit as electronic data processing continued to permeate countries and governments around the world.

## New Forms

- **Finger** identification on smart phones
- **Iris Identification** on smart phones
- **Face** identification
  - **Shenzhen**, China-based gaming giant Tencent has announced it will use a face recognition system to prevent minors in its home country from playing video games late into the night.
  - **Facebook** uses face recognition technology to automatically recognize when Facebook members appear in photos.
  - In **China**, there is a financial services company called Ant Financial that enables customers to pay for meals by scanning their faces.

## You are constantly being **identified**

- In a study conducted by the Safety.com security team, research has found that the average American is filmed by security cameras over 230 times a week, a number that has increased rapidly over the last decade and will continue to do so in the near future.
  - You are filmed about 160 times a week while drive via interstate cameras
  - You are filmed about 40 times at work via security cameras
  - You are filmed about 24 times while out shopping
  - You are filmed about 14 times while in your neighborhood via doorbell cameras

## The **Government** knows your identity

- **Facebook** knows your identity
- **Financial** institutions know your identity

## Do YOU know your identity?

- NOT talking about your name, birthdate, etc.

## Do YOU know your identity?

- Do you know WHO you are?
- DO you know WHAT you have?

It is extremely important that you know YOUR IDENTITY!

- IF you DON'T KNOW your IDENTITY, you will be controlled by the “god of this world”—Satan.
- IF you DON'T KNOW your IDENTITY, you will be pulled into sin
- IF you DON'T KNOW your IDENTITY, you will be controlled by others
- IF you DON'T KNOW your IDENTITY, you will NOT be able to STAND against the peer pressure exerted by this world's system that is under the control of “Spiritual wickedness in high places.”

**GOD**

Turn to **2 Peter**

We often skip over the greetings of these letters, but that is a mistake!

I want you to see that Peter knew his identity!

- He knew WHO he was
- He knew WHAT he was

**1 Peter 1:1-4** “Simeon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ:

Why does he start off this second letter this way?

- **Identifies WHO** is writing the letter

One **qualification** for a book to be in the **New Testament** was (1) it had to be written by an apostle or (2) Written by someone who had apostolic backing.

- **Gospel of Mark:**

- **Peter** is viewed as the primary source.
- **John Mark** is also endorsed by the Apostle Paul

Of course, people wrote books **proclaiming** to be from an **apostle** such as the **Gospel of Thomas**, so there were other things that had to line up such as:

- Was the book written during the time the apostle lived?
  - For example the Gospel of Thomas is believed to have been written around A.D. 250—which is long after the apostles had died.
    - In fact, we didn't know about this “Gospel” until it was discovered in 1945!
- Was the book **consistent theologically** with the other books accepted by the church?
  - For example: the **Gospel of Thomas** “*doesn't report major parts of Jesus' life — his birth, death, and resurrection.*”

- Instead, Thomas contains **114 esoteric** sayings of Jesus, purporting to record the **secrets** Jesus taught to his disciples.”<sup>1</sup>

None of these problems exists in this letter in the New Testament!

**Human Identity:** **Peter** (name)

But there is MORE to your IDENTITY than your Name!

**Spiritual Identity:** “a servant of Jesus Christ”

- **Servant** = “devoted to another to the *disregard* of one's own interests”

Peter identified himself as one who was **fully devoted** to Christ—even if it meant knowing he was going to die for his devotion!

- **2 Peter 1:14** “I know that I will soon lay aside my tent, as our Lord Jesus Christ has indeed made clear to me.”
  - Peter knew his **devotion** to Christ was going to **result in his death!**
    - Peter was a **Servant!** = “devoted to another to the *disregard* of one's own interests”

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<sup>1</sup> <https://crossexamined.org/why-the-gospel-of-thomas-isnt-in-the-bible/>

Is that part of your **IDENTITY**?

- Are you “**Devoted**” to Christ even to the “**disregard of your own interests**”?
  - Are you willing to **lay aside** personal fear to share Christ with others?
  - Are you willing to **sacrifice** time, energy and resources for the cause of Christ?
  - Are you willing to sacrifice **pleasure** for the cause of Christ?

Do you see yourself as “**a servant of Jesus Christ**”?

“**Servant of Christ Jesus**” used often as an **identification**

- **Romans 1:1** “**Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus**”
- **Galatians 1:1** “**Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus**”
- **Philippians 1:1**: “**Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus**”
- **Colossians 1:1** “**Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus**”
- **Titus 1:1-2** “**Paul, a servant of God**”
- **James 1:1** “**James, a servant of God**”
- **Jude 1:1** “**Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ**”

**Peter, Paul, James and Jude** constantly referred to themselves as “**servants of Christ**”!

- Is “**a servant of Christ**” part of your **IDENTITY**?

What does it look like to be “a servant of Jesus Christ”?

- To be a **servant of Christ** means ...
  - To **keep His commandments**
  - To **use your time, abilities** and resources to serve Him
  - To **share the Good News** of His death, burial and resurrection
  - To be **faithful**
  - To **put Christ** above all
  - To **fellowship** with **Him** in Prayer
  - To **fellowship** with **His people** by worshipping with them
  - To **take a stand** for Him

**2<sup>nd</sup> Identifier:** **2 Peter 1:1** “Simeon Peter, a servant *and* an apostle of Jesus Christ”

Do you see yourself as “an apostle”?

WHO are “Apostles”?

- **Denominations** use that term

What does “Apostle” mean?

- Was it limited to just the 12 personally called by Christ?
- Were people known as apostles after Christ?
- Why don't WE use the term?

Apostle: “delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders”

- Specifically applied to the twelve apostles of Christ
  - **Romans 1:1** “Paul... called as an apostle *and set apart* for the gospel of God”
  - **Galatians 1:1** “Paul.... called as an apostle *and set apart* for the gospel of God:
  - **Ephesians 1:1** “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus *by God’s will*”
  - **1 Timothy 1:1** Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus *by the command of God* our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope:”
  - **2 Timothy 1:1** Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus *by God’s will*, for the sake of the promise of life in Christ Jesus:
  - **Titus 1:1-2** “Paul... an apostle of Jesus Christ, *for the faith of God’s elect and their knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness*

Apostle: “delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders”

- The word “**Apostle**” was also applied to others such as **Barnabas, Timothy** and **Silvanus**.

Two groups of Apostles:

- **Group 1:** Those **personally commissioned** by Christ
  - We could call the 12 the “**capital ‘A’** Apostles

- **Group 2:** Those who are “sent out” to proclaim the Gospel
  - We could call the rest the “small ‘a’ Apostles

Should you **identify** as an **apostle of Jesus Christ**?

- **No**, you are NOT a “**Capital ‘A’**” Apostle like the **12** so to call yourself an “**Apostle**” would be **confusing** to many.
  - However, **YOU** are a **small ‘a’ apostle** because **Christ has sent you** to go in to all the world and preach the Gospel. (Mark 16:15, et al.)

If you thought of **yourself** as a “**small ‘a’**” **apostle** how would that **identity affect** you?

- If you thought of **yourself** as a **combination** of one who **serves** at the **behest** of Christ (**i.e. a “Servant of Christ**) **AND is sent by Christ**, *would that change how you live your life?*

Why is **Identity** important?

- **Peter** is going to say a lot about living in the “**end times**” in this short letter.
- Peter is going to be **candid** about **persecution**
  - **Reality:** *You need to know **WHO** you are and **WHOSE** you are as you face the time of the end.*

**Know WHO You Are!**

Peter **KNOWS** who he is

- He knows his **spiritual position**: **Servant**
- He knows his **mission**: **Apostle**

Peter **knows** who he is addressing...

**2 Peter 1:1b** “To those who have received a faith equal to ours through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.”

This short letter is **NOT** written to **unbelievers**, but to **believers**—just like his **last letter** was.

- From **2 Peter 3:1** we know that this letter was written to the **same group** of people the 1<sup>st</sup> letter was written to.
  - Written to **believers** in the **Roman Province of Asia Minor**

Notice how he describes believers: “To those who have received a faith equal to ours...”

- **Comfort**: Your **salvation** (i.e., **the faith you have received**), is **EQUAL** to the Apostles!
  - There are **NOT levels** of believers—all have received the **SAME** salvation!

- **Challenge:** You cannot say “I’m not a “Capital ‘A’” person (Apostle) therefore, I’m not expected to live up the same expectation!”
  - **NO!** You have Received *the same faith* as the “**Capital ‘A’**” Apostles!

This REALITY should be both a **COMFORT** and a **CHALLENGE** to us!

**Identity:** You **have** “**received the same faith**” as the **Apostles**—your SALVATION is the SAME as the Apostles.

### WHY and HOW?

- Because YOUR SALVATION and THE APOSTLE’S SALVATION is all “**through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.**”
  - We are ALL SAVED the Same Way!

### **Identity Series: WE are all SAINTS!**

- The **Roman Catholic Church** has created this class of “**religious people**” called “**SAINTS**”
  - They have four phases before a person can be “**Canonized**” as a Saint
    - 1) Be known as a “**Servant of God**”
    - 2) The Positio (or case) is created to document the person’s **Heroic Virtue** and they are voted to become **Venerable**.

- 3) Evidence of a **first miracle** is **investigated** and **verified**, and they are declared Blessed.
- 4) After a **second miracle** is proven, the person is named a **Saint** and is canonized by the Pope.

Is this found in the Scriptures? NO!

What does this type of process denote: There are **CLASSES** of Christians!

What does this system do?

- Creates **LEVELS** of **Identity** amongst believers!

Scripture **KNOWS NOTHING** of Classes of believers!

- Believers are referred to as “**Saints**” throughout the New Testament

YOU have received the SAME SALVATION as the APOSTLE because the BASIS of your SALVATION is the SAME: “**through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.**”

**Know WHO You Are!**

**KNOW WHAT You Have**

**2 Peter 1:2** May grace and peace be multiplied to you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.”

- “**grace and peace**” = given at moment of salvation
  - **Grace** = You received what you did not EARN!
    - Received a new **position**: Adopted
    - Received a new **name**: A child of God
    - Received a new **relationship**: Reconciled
    - Received a new **ability**: To say “no” to sin!
    - Received a new **country**: Citizenship is in heaven
    - Received a new **family**: The Family of God
- “**grace and peace**” = given at moment of salvation
  - **Peace**-a state of **harmony** with God
    - **God** is now your Father
    - **Christ** is now your brother
    - The **Holy Spirit** is now your advocate, guide and comforter

Peter’s desire is “**May grace and peace be multiplied to you**”

- Why this desire?
  - We can **lose** the **enjoyment** of God’s peace and grace!

HOW can we **lose** the **enjoyment** of God’s **peace and grace**?

- By **focusing** on the **hostility**, the **troubles** of this life, etc.

- By *not increasing* in your knowledge of God and of Jesus!

May grace and peace be multiplied to you (HOW?) through the **knowledge** of God and of Jesus our Lord.”

HOW do you “increase in your knowledge of God and of Jesus”?

- **Reading** and studying the Bible
- **Application** of God’s Word in life
- **Living** by faith
- **Learning** from other believers/observing their walk with God or even their failures
- **Learning** from your own failures and walk with God

Enjoying God’s grace and peace are NOT going to be experienced if ...

- You are **NOT walking** with Him!
- You are **NOT learning** from His Word
- You are **NOT applying** His Word
- You are **NOT learning** from your past sins

## **KNOW WHAT You Have**

You have “**Grace and Peace**” BUT you have more....

**2 Peter 1:3** His divine power has given us (Believers)

- (WHAT?) *everything* required for
  - (WHAT?) life and godliness
    - (HOW?) through the knowledge of him who called us
      - (HOW?) by his own glory and goodness.

WHAT do you have?

- “*everything* required for life and godliness”

HOW DID you receive what you have?

- “His divine power has given us *everything* required for life and godliness”

HOW does God’s “divine power” give us *everything* required for life and godliness”?

- through the knowledge of him who called us...”

WHERE do we get this “knowledge of Him who called us”?

- **Romans 1** (General Revelation through creation is given to ALL people—including unbelievers
  - Creation reveals: “**God’s eternal power & Divine nature**” (Ro. 1:20)

**BUT** Believers get MORE KNOWLEDGE “through the knowledge of him who called us”

- WHO is the “him who called us”? GOD!

HOW has God revealed to us the “knowledge of Himself”?

- **Through Scripture!**
  - **2 Peter 1:20-21** “Above all, you know this: No prophecy of Scripture comes from the prophet’s own interpretation, <sup>21</sup> because no prophecy ever came by the will of man; instead, men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”
  - **2 Peter 3:15-16** “Also, regard the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our dear brother Paul has written to you according to the wisdom given to him. <sup>16</sup> He speaks about these things in all his letters. There are some things hard to understand in them. The untaught and unstable will twist them to their own destruction, as they also do with *the rest of the Scriptures.*” (SCRIPTURE)
    - Since Peter and Paul were both likely killed under Nero, when Peter wrote this verse **most, if not all of Paul’s letters, would be in circulation!**
      - Paul’s letters make up about **2/3rds of the New Testament!**

Can’t an unbeliever read Scripture? Yes!

How does a believer get “knowledge of God” any differently than an unbeliever who reads Scripture?

- **1 Corinthians 2:12-15** “Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who comes from God, so that we may understand what has been freely given to us by God. 13 We also speak these things, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual things to spiritual people. 14 But the person without the Spirit does not receive what comes from God’s Spirit, because it is foolishness to him; he is not able to understand it since it is evaluated spiritually. 15 The spiritual person, however, can evaluate everything, and yet he himself cannot be evaluated by anyone.”
  - Since all Scripture is “inspired by God” only those who have the “Spirit of God” can receive and understand the Scriptures.

**Believer:** You have the ability to “*receive and understand the Scriptures*” because you have the **Holy Spirit** in you!

HOW can we trust the Scriptures?

- Product of “His divine power has given us *everything* required for life and godliness...”
  - **2 Peter 1:21** “because no prophecy ever came by the will of man; instead, men spoke from

God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”

- **2 Peter 1:16** ‘For we did not follow cleverly contrived myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; instead, we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.’”

### The **Sufficiency of Scripture!**

- Is Scripture enough?

You may have heard of **Critical Race Theory**

- One **argument** is that we need to *adopt* **Critical Race Theory** as a **tool** to teach us about injustice in our country stemming from racism.

The **big question** facing the SBC convention was: Is Scripture sufficient to teach us what we need to know or do we need *more than* Scripture to understand **racial inequality**?

At the annual meeting of the SBC, the messengers **adopted** this **resolution**:

WHEREAS, “All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17); and

WHEREAS, The **Baptist Faith and Message 2000** states, “All Scripture is totally true and trustworthy” (Article I); and

WHEREAS, “God created man in his own image” (Genesis 1:27); and

WHEREAS, “From one man [God] has made every nationality to live over the whole earth” (Acts 17:26); and

WHEREAS, In his prophetic vision John saw “a vast multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language, which no one could number, standing before the throne and before the Lamb” (Revelation 7:9-10); and

WHEREAS, “Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, in this way death spread to all people, because all sinned” (Romans 5:12); and

WHEREAS, “Through faith [we] are all sons of God in Christ Jesus ... There is no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male and female; since you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:26-28); and

WHEREAS, “God ... has reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:18); and WHEREAS, The Baptist Faith and Message 2000 states, “Christians should oppose racism” (Article XV); now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Nashville, Tennessee, June 15–16, 2021, affirm the sufficiency of Scripture on race and racial reconciliation; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we reaffirm our agreement with historic, biblically-faithful Southern Baptist condemnations of racism in all forms; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we reject any theory or worldview that finds the ultimate identity of human beings in ethnicity or in any other group dynamic; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we reject any theory or worldview that sees the primary problem of humanity as anything other than sin against God and the ultimate solution as anything other than redemption found only in Christ; and be it further

RESOLVED, We, therefore, reject any theory or worldview that denies that racism, oppression, or discrimination is rooted, ultimately, in anything other than sin; and be it further

RESOLVED, That, understanding we live in a fallen world, we reaffirm the 1995 Resolution On Racial Reconciliation On The 150th Anniversary Of The Southern Baptist Convention, which includes, “That we apologize to all African-Americans for condoning and/or perpetuating individual and systemic racism in our

lifetime; and we genuinely repent of racism of which we have been guilty, whether consciously (Psalm 19:13) or unconsciously (Leviticus 4:27),” applying this disposition to every instance of racism; and be it finally

**RESOLVED**, We affirm that our reconciliation in Christ gives us the opportunity and responsibility to pursue reconciliation with others so that we can display and share the hope of the gospel with the world.

According to the **resolution**, the **Scriptures** give us *everything* required for life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

I agree with noted *black Pastor Tony Evans* (*the only reason I mention the melanin in his skin is because it is pertinent to the topic*), who stated: *‘I have long taught that racism, and its ongoing repercussions, are real and should be addressed intentionally, appropriately and based on the authority of God’s word.’*

## **KNOW WHAT You Have**

Believers you have...

- “**the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.**”
- Given to you through **Natural Revelation** AND the written **Scriptures**

- The HOLY Spirit, who is the **COMMON AUTHOR** of Scripture, who gives you understanding of God's Word.
  - You have *“everything required for life and godliness”*

**2 Peter 1:4** *By these he has given us*

- (WHAT?) *very great and precious promises,*
  - (WHY?) *so that through them you may share in*
    - (WHAT?) *the divine nature,*
      - (RESULT) *escaping the corruption that is in the world because of evil desire.”*

*WHAT does “THESE” refer to?*

- His *“divine power...through the knowledge of him who called us”* through *“These”* He has given us *very great and precious promises...”*

**Know WHAT you have!**

- You have *“very great and precious promises”*

*Promises of what?*

- **PROMISE:** *“His divine power has given us everything required for life!*
- **PROMISE:** *“His divine power has given us everything required for godliness!*
- **PROMISE:** *Scripture is sufficient*

- **PROMISE:** All believers have “received a faith equal to” the Apostles!
- **PROMISE:** “Grace and Peace”
- **PROMISE:** You are “called us by his own glory and goodness”
  - Your SALVATION *does not depend upon you!*
- **PROMISE:** You can “share in the divine nature”
  - You have the POWER through Christ to say “NO” to “the corruption that is in the world...”

Believer ...

- KNOW WHO YOU ARE!
- KNOW WHAT YOU HAVE!

You need to know these things if you are going to

- “escape the corruption that is in the world because of evil desire.”

**YOU**

Movie: “Bourne Identity”

- Jason Bourne doesn’t know who he is
  - He doesn’t know why he can do what he can do
  - He doesn’t know why he can sense what he senses
  - He doesn’t know how he can do what he does

When Niki says “Scariest scenario...He knows who he is...”

The LAST THING the “god of this world” Satan wants you to know is:

- WHO you are in Christ!
- WHAT you have in Christ!

The “god of this world” (Satan) wants you to think your IDENTITY is simply..

- Your name
- Your family tree
- Your occupation
- WHO people say you are

It is EXTREMELY IMPORTANT that you KNOW your Identity!

- Believers who DON'T KNOW their IDENTITY are controlled by FEAR
- Believers who DON'T KNOW their IDENTITY are controlled by PEER PRESSURE
- Believers who DON'T KNOW their IDENTITY are controlled by SINFUL DESIRES

DON'T be that kind of BELIEVER!

- KNOW WHO YOU ARE
- KNOW WHAT YOU HAVE!

**PQ: DO YOU KNOW?**