

Small Group Guide



Leader Notes

- Be prepared to share your own struggles with believing your identity in Christ
- Create a safe space for honest discussion about areas where people still feel captive
- Emphasize grace—we're all learning to live into our new identity
- Consider having communion supplies available if your group tradition allows for it

Opening Prayer

Begin by asking God to open hearts and minds to understand what it means to be truly human—created in His image and reigning with Christ.

Ice Breaker

Question: When you hear someone say "I'm only human," what do they usually mean? How does that compare to the biblical definition of humanity we heard in the sermon?

Key Takeaways

1. We Are New Creations: When we surrender to Christ, we receive a new identity. The old has died, and the new is born. This is a gift we receive by faith, not something we earn.
2. Created to Be Like God: Humans were originally designed to reflect God's character, holiness, and righteousness—to be His representatives on earth (Genesis 1:26-27).
3. Sin Dehumanizes Us: Sin isn't what makes us human; it's what keeps us from being fully human. It distorts our design and breaks our relationship with God and creation.

4. We Rule and Reign with Christ: Through Christ, we are liberated from the dominion of sin and death. We are seated with Christ in heavenly realms—not as a future promise, but as a present reality (Ephesians 2:6).
 5. Power Looks Like Service: True authority in God's kingdom is expressed through servanthood, following Jesus' example (Matthew 20:25-28).
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Discussion Questions

Understanding Our Identity (15-20 minutes)

1. Read Ephesians 4:24. What does it mean to "put on the new self"? Why is it significant that Paul uses the word "human" here?
2. The sermon compared our broken humanity to a rusted, broken-down car. How does this image help us understand the difference between our designed purpose and our current condition?
3. Read Genesis 1:26-27. What does it mean to be created in God's image? How should this shape the way we view ourselves and others?

Living in Freedom (15-20 minutes)

4. The pastor said, "You will never experience freedom until you believe what Christ says about you." What are some things that people struggle to believe about their new identity in Christ?
5. Read Romans 5:17. What does it mean practically that death no longer reigns over us, but we reign in life through Christ?
6. What are some "powers" or things that once ruled over you (sin patterns, shame, past failures, addictions, fear) that Christ has freed you from? How have you experienced this liberation?

Ruling and Reigning (15-20 minutes)

7. The sermon states that when humans malfunction, all of creation suffers. Can you think of examples where human brokenness has affected the world around us?
8. Read Matthew 20:25-28. How does Jesus redefine power and authority? How is this different from the world's understanding?
9. What does it look like practically for Christians to "rule and reign" in their:

- Homes and families?
- Workplaces?
- Communities?
- Treatment of creation/environment?

Personal Application (10-15 minutes)

10. Pastor Jeff emphasized that we begin and make progress in our Christian lives by faith—believing what God says about us before we see or feel it. What is one truth about your identity in Christ that you need to believe by faith this week?
 11. How does understanding that you are "seated with Christ in heavenly realms" change the way you approach challenges, temptations, or difficult circumstances?
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Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge:

Choose one of the following to practice this week:

1. Identity Declaration: Each morning, declare out loud: "I am a new creation in Christ. The old has gone, the new has come. I am seated with Christ and reign in life through Him." Notice how this affects your day.
 2. Servant Leadership: Identify one area where you can exercise Christ-like authority through service rather than control. Practice serving someone who might expect you to "lord it over them."
 3. Creation Care: As someone designed to steward God's creation, do one concrete thing this week to bring life, beauty, or order to your environment (your home, neighborhood, workplace, or natural spaces).
 4. Freedom Inventory: Make a list of areas where you still feel ruled by sin, shame, or fear. Bring these to God in prayer, declaring your freedom in Christ over each one.
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Closing Reflection

Read together Ephesians 2:6-7: *"And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages He might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus."*

Reflection Question: How does this truth—that you are already seated with Christ—change your perspective on your current circumstances?

Closing Prayer

Pray together:

- Thanking God for our new identity in Christ
 - Asking for faith to believe what God says about us
 - Requesting wisdom to rule and reign as servant-leaders
 - Inviting the Holy Spirit to transform our thinking and behavior to align with who God says we are
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For Next Week

Encourage group members to journal about moments when they felt tempted to believe the old identity rather than their new identity in Christ. What helped them return to truth?
