

DAY ONE: Identity Read Colossians 1:9-14

We spend much of our lives defining who we are: the neighborhoods in which we live, the cars we drive, the clothes we wear, our friends, and our accomplishments can all be used to give us identity. We use all of these—and more—to form our identity and security. This is wrong thinking. Right thinking is *as Jesus followers, our identity and security is to be found only in him.*

The apostle Paul, a first-century church planter who wrote much of the New Testament, details part of this identity in Colossians 1: *...bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God...giving joyful thanks to the Father...sharing in the inheritance of his holy people...brought into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins* (Colossians 1:9-14). **As a Jesus follower, this is who you are!**

The reality is: we'll move in and out of neighborhoods and schools, trade in old cars, outgrow our clothes, see friends come and go, and dust old trophies. But our identity and security in Christ is sure and never changing.

Today, meditate on Colossians 1:9-14 (try reading it in a different translation) and thank God for your identity in Christ.

DAY TWO: Thinking Read Romans 12:1-2

Did you catch that? Paul gives us the secret to changing the decisions we make. He doesn't want us to copy the way the world makes decisions. He says that we become who God wants us to be by changing *the way that we think*. Paul says that if we want to change our behavior, if we want to make better decisions, then we have to start by changing our thinking. But Paul wasn't the first one to say this. Jesus actually taught the exact same thing. When He came to Earth, Jesus' first message to everyone was, *Repent* (Matthew 4:17). And to repent means to "change the way you think."

It's interesting that Jesus didn't start by telling everyone to act differently, even though actions are important. He started by addressing our minds. Because Jesus knew that our decisions would never get better unless we started thinking better.

Today, memorize Romans 12:1-2 as you ask God to change your thinking so you can make good decisions which over time will lead to a better life. **Right Decisions = Right Living.**

DAY THREE: Heart Read 1 Samuel 15:1-23

King Saul was given the task of taking care of some unfinished business: completely wiping out the Amalekites. Samuel's instructions to *totally destroy all that belongs to them* (1 Samuel 15:3) may seem harsh, but this was God's fulfillment of justice on a people who inflicted incredible injustice on his people. Saul's job was simple and clear: don't leave anything or anyone behind.

Saul successfully began his mission by defeating the Amalekites. But somewhere in the course of his conquest he suffered a change of heart—he wrongly thought it might be a good idea to spare the best of the livestock and the Amalekite King, Agag. His excuse for this change of heart: he wanted to use the livestock for sacrifices (1 Samuel 15:15).

Samuel's rebuke is powerful: *to obey is better than sacrifice* (1 Samuel 15:22b). In other words: God wants your obedient heart more than he wants religious activity.

Living *for God* [religious activity] without having a relationship *with God* is a dangerous reality we can easily fall prey to. Attending church services, giving gifts of gratitude, and serving are all good things, but God doesn't need our sacrifices. God really wants our hearts! True worship starts in the heart.

Reflect on the song "The Heart of Worship," performed by Sonic Flood, and consider ways you may have wrongly been thinking your religious activity above simply giving God your whole heart. Ask God to strip away any ideas of religious activity and to help you grow in real relationship with him.

DAY FOUR: Developing a Pattern Read Psalm 1:1-3

In the morning, LORD, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait expectantly. Psalm 5:3

Psalms is a book filled with rich poetic words—each chapter is a window into someone else's private prayer life. This collection of songs and poems comes from individuals who embraced the idea we at Breakaway call The Chair. Imagine if men and women didn't take the time to engage with God on a personal level, expressing their hearts to him with honesty and boldness and praise. Perhaps we wouldn't have the Psalms to read, learn from, and enjoy.

The Chair is like The Row and The Circle in that each one involves a pattern of consistency. However, though The Row and The Circle are equally important, they can only go so far. The Chair is the one space where you can *meditate on [God's Word] day and night* (Psalm 1:2) and where you can lay your very personal requests before the Lord (Psalm 5:3).

Just like the Psalmists formed a habit of meeting with God over time, decide a time and a place where you can regularly meditate on God's Word and lay your personal requests before him.