

# PRESENT TRUTH

A Teaching Letter of Lifestream Teaching Ministries

*For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. (2 Peter 1:12 NKJV)*

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## Identity Required

### Introduction

Over the past year I have done a lot of teaching about our identity—who we are; our placement—where we are; and our function—what we do. I thought that it might be good to devote a Teaching Letter to these issues.

These three areas are the personal foundation upon which our growth, our maturing in the Lord is built. All three of these foundation stones are provided by grace but are entered into by faith. As we mature we move from a legal position in these areas to an experiential position, from theory to practice. It is important that we understand how the Lord brings these into a functional reality in our lives. There is a progression through these as we grow, but it begins with “identity”.

### Identity

In the Old Covenant God repeatedly told the children of Israel, “you are my people, I am your God.” In the New Covenant we are told by God that “you are my children, I am your Father.” The identity of the people of God changed between the Old and New Covenants. We are now heirs and joint-heirs with Christ. [See issue [“A son is a son”](#)]

It is mind-boggling to us when this revelation comes. We are truly sons and daughters of God and are loved as His children. However, we tend to settle into this realization and soak in His love without any thought of what it actually means to be a son of God.

There are two aspects of Identity, not just one. There is a vertical relationship with the Lord for we truly are children of God. There is also a horizontal relationship with others for we truly are the Body of Christ. We tend to forget that our identity is defined by our relationship with the Lord **and** our relationship with the rest of His Body. [I Cor. 12:12-27]

We cannot be secure in who we are until we understand and walk in both the vertical and horizontal relationships. We cannot say “I am not a part of the Body.” [I Cor. 12:15-16] We cannot say to a brother or sister, “I have no need of you.” [I Cor. 12:21] That is not who we are.

As we learn to develop our identity in our horizontal relationships it naturally leads to the next step in our growth process, placement. The Lord places us in our relationships in His Body as it pleases Him.

## Placement

As we begin to operate in our horizontal relationships there naturally develops differing levels of “closeness” with different brothers and sisters. We see the same varying levels of intimacy with others in the life of Jesus. He had a ministry relationship with multitudes. He had a discipleship relationship with the Twelve. He had a deeper relationship with three, Peter, James, and John. He had an even closer relationship with one, John. It is the same with us. As we involve ourselves with others there will naturally develop differing depths of relationships with various brothers and sisters. This is as it should be.

These are the relationships in which the Lord has placed us. We relate to each other based on the level of “knitting together” that the Lord does between us. These become the joints through which the life of the Body flows to us and we become the conduit through which life flows back to our relationships. As we become secure in our placement with others we grow into the next phase of our development in maturity, our function.

## Function

We tend to think of function as ministry but that is not a correct understanding. Function is what we do in the Lord, our calling, and it encompasses much more than what we traditionally think of as “ministry”. Some of the current emphasis on “grace” has obscured the idea that there is “work” that has been appointed to us that God intends for us to accomplish. [*Eph. 2:10*]

This is work that He has established for us, **not** work that we have decided to do because it seems the thing to do, or because we desire through our ambition to “do something for the Lord”, or because we want to be in the ministry. Work activity that comes from our old nature is powered by our own strength and will, without fail, burn itself out as a dead work because it is outside the purpose of God for us and is not within our function as ordained by Him.

Our function also includes where we are to function. Paul clearly understood his function and he clearly understood that he was to function within the “sphere” that God had given him.

But we will not boast beyond our measure, but within the measure of the sphere which God apportioned to us as a measure, to reach even as far as you. For we are not overextending ourselves, as if we did not reach to you, for we were the first to come even as far as you in the gospel of Christ; not boasting beyond our measure, that is, in other men's labors, but with the hope that as your faith grows, we will be, within our sphere, enlarged even more by you, so as to preach the gospel even to the regions beyond you, and not to boast in what has been accomplished in the sphere of another. (2 Corinthians 10:13-16 NASB)

What we are to do, our work, our function has been ordained of God [*Eph. 2:10*]. Where we do what we do has been apportioned to us by God [*2 Cor. 10:13*]. We can't fully enter into our function until we have become secure in our identity and in our placement. We have to grow into our work. This is necessary because all work that has been ordained by God has come forth from His own heart. We must grow into an understanding and appreciation of the Father's heart in order for the work that we do to reflect His character and nature.

A child is not employed. He may do chores around the house but he doesn't go to work. However, when the child grows up, he does get a job. He goes to work. This is a natural picture of a spiritual truth. We must grow up before we can go to work.

## Application

Are we helping or hindering the work of the Holy Spirit to accomplish the laying of these three foundation stones in our lives? Do we associate with others that are seeking to mature in the Lord? Are we laying the same foundation over and over and not moving on to the next step? Can we identify where we are in the maturing process? Is there anything that we can do or not do that will help us move on with the Lord?

Answer these questions honestly to yourself and ask the Lord what you need to do, if anything.

Remember that the goal is to grow up in Him in all things.

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For comments or questions contact Art Nelson at this address:

[artnelson@lifestreamteaching.com](mailto:artnelson@lifestreamteaching.com)