

I Am a Citizen of Heaven

Lesson 5 of the series: "Identity"

A. I am a citizen of the kingdom of heaven, and this earth is not my permanent home!

"But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior." Philippians 3:20 (NLT)

"For this world is not our permanent home; we are looking forward to a home yet to come." Hebrews 13:14 (NLT)

Citizen - a person who legally belongs to a country and has the rights and protection of that country. Citizens adopt the culture and practices of the country to which they belong.

Note: I did nothing to earn my citizenship in heaven!

"For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son." Colossians 1:13 (NLT)

Because I am a citizen of the kingdom of heaven, and this earth is not my home...

1. I live by faith!

"Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." Hebrew 11:1 (NIV)

"It was by faith that Abraham obeyed when God called him to leave home and go to another land that God would give him as his inheritance. He went without knowing where he was going. And even when he reached the land God promised him, he lived there by faith—for he was like a foreigner, living in tents. And so did Isaac and Jacob, who inherited the same promise. Abraham was confidently looking forward to a city with eternal foundations, a city designed and built by God." Hebrews 11: 8-10 (NLT)

2. I don't allow the pleasures of this world to capture my affections!

Dear friends, I warn you as "temporary residents and foreigners" to keep away from worldly desires that wage war against your very souls. 1 Peter 2:11 (NLT)

Note: I must allow the realities of heaven to overshadow the realities of earth!

Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God's right hand. Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God. Colossians 3:1-3 (NLT)

3. I store up treasure in heaven!

"Don't store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be. Matthew 6:19-21 (NLT)

"Remember that the Lord will reward each one of us for the good we do." Ephesians 6:8 (NLT)

"Sell your possessions and give to those in need. This will store up treasure for you in heaven! And the purses of heaven never get old or develop holes. Your treasure will be safe; no thief can steal it and no moth can destroy it." Luke 12:33 (NLT)

4. I am an ambassador of the kingdom of heaven!

So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" 2 Corinthians 5:20 (NLT)

"I am in chains now, still preaching this message as God's ambassador. So pray that I will keep on speaking boldly for him, as I should." Ephesians 6:20 (NLT)

5. I am not surprised when I go through difficulties!

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Dear friends, don't be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you. Instead, be very glad—for these trials make you partners with Christ in his suffering, so that you will have the wonderful joy of seeing his glory when it is revealed to all the world.¹ Peter 4:12-13 (NLT)

We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed. We are perplexed, but not driven to despair. We are hunted down, but never abandoned by God. We get knocked down, but we are not destroyed. Through suffering, our bodies continue to share in the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be seen in our bodies. Yes, we live under constant danger of death because we serve Jesus, so that the life of Jesus will be evident in our dying bodies. So we live in the face of death, but this has resulted in eternal life for you... That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day. For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! So we don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever. 2 Corinthians 4:7-12,16-18 (NLT)

Lie – If I get everything I desire in this world I will be satisfied!

Truth –This world is passing away, and true satisfaction only comes from doing the will of God!

“Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever.” 1 John 2:15-17 (NLT)

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Connect Group Discussion Questions

1. How does your faith cause you to live differently than those who have no faith?
2. Read 1 Peter 2:11. Do you feel the pleasures of this world waging war with your soul? How do you keep yourself from falling into the trap of "keeping up with the Joneses"?
3. Read Ephesians 6:8. Do you believe we are rewarded in heaven for the good we do on earth? What do you think those rewards could be?
4. What is the role of an ambassador? What does it look like to be an ambassador of heaven?
5. Why do we go through difficulties in this world? What are some ways people cope with difficult circumstances? What should our response be when going through difficult times?
6. How can we keep the reality of heaven in our hearts while living here on earth?

Quotes to Ponder:

"If you are a Christian, you are not a citizen of this world trying to get to heaven; you are a citizen of heaven making your way through this world. " Vance Havner

"He who dies with the most toys wins." Malcolm Forbes (flamboyant millionaire)

"The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil." -Jesus

"I do not want merely to possess a faith, I want a faith that possesses me." ~ Charles Kingsley (English Clergyman)