

A New Identity

Lesson 2 - Saints



The Big Picture

Once, while preaching a series on our new identity in Christ, a guy who attends our church stopped me and said, “God can call me His son if He wants to, and He can call my wife His daughter, but one thing’s for sure, my wife ain’t a saint and neither am I. So if God calls either one of us saints, we need a very thorough explanation of what that whole thing is all about.” I could understand this man’s dilemma, and I bet you can too.

We’ve all seen pictures of saints. They look blushing beautiful in their long, flowing robes, shining halos, and cherub-like smiles. And not only do they look a bit unusual, but if you have ever taken the time to read the stories of their lives, you know that their lives could hardly be called mainstream. Many of the famous saints took poverty oaths. Many of them endured horrendous hardships, having lived in unspeakable conditions in order to try to honor God.

But Paul, interestingly, doesn’t apologize for calling all Christians saints. In fact, he uses the term interchangeably with words that refer to all believers. I’m convinced that if the apostle Paul were here in the flesh today he would address all Christians by saying, “I, Paul, a bond servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, greet you, the saints of God.” And we would all blush.



A Wide Angle View

1) What images come to mind when you hear the word ‘saint’?

2) Picture somebody you know who qualifies as a saint. Why do they fit the description?



A Biblical Portrait

Ephesians 1:1, 18; 2:19; 3:8; 4:11-13; 5:3; 6:18

3) What do you learn about Paul’s view of sainthood in these passages?



Sharpening the Focus

Read Snapshot “Your Position As A Saint”

Your Position as A Saint

The Bible teaches that all true believers are saints positionally. Now, let me explain what that means. The moment you trust Christ, confess your sin, and repent of it, something dramatically happens to your spiritual position. The Bible says you were dead. That’s rather graphic, isn’t it? But now your position has changed from a dead, lifeless corpse to one that is fully alive. Your geographic position, figuratively speaking, changed. You were far off, but now you’re bought near. You were strangers, and now you’re sons and daughters. You were aliens, and now you’re citizens. You were lost and now you’re found. These expressions and a host of others like them denote that at the moment of your conversion, your position before God changed. You have been set apart. You’re a saint positionally.

4) If someone called you a saint, how would you respond?

Why do we have a hard time seeing ourselves as saints?

The term “saint” means to be set apart. What does it mean in your life to be set apart for God?

5) What can you do to express your appreciation to God for making you a saint?

Read Snapshot “The Life of A Saint”

The Life of a Saint

I know people who forecast all kinds of nightmares when they think about bringing their behavior into conformity with the Word of God. But, do you know what? It’s really not like that. God doesn’t want a whole bunch of people who all look alike. He wants your unique personality to be developed, explored, matured, refined, liberated, trained, and then plugged into useful service. He wants every ounce of potential that HE’s put in you to be actualized. He wants fulfillment to spill over in your soul. He wants to satisfy you. And so He says, “I’ll give you the power of My Holy Spirit. I’ll give you the guidance from My Word. I’ll give you the encouragement and accountability of brothers and sisters. Just have your goal to be live as the Holy Spirit directs you, in alignment with your position in Christ. You are a saint positionally, now act accordingly as you are growing up in Christ.

6) What are some of the attitudes and actions that should mark our lives as God’s saints?

- In our homes
- In the marketplace
- In our neighborhood
- In our interactions with seekers

7) How should we respond when we fall short of God’s desire and standards for us as saints?

How should we respond to others when they fall short?



Putting Yourself in the Picture

A Challenge for Growth

Take time this week to identify one area in your life that does not reflect your status and position as a saint. Once you have identified this area, walk through the process below:

1. Confess your struggles in this area to Jesus and seek forgiveness (read 1 John 1:9)
2. Pray for the power of the Spirit to fill and strengthen you in this area
3. Set specific goals which will help you resist failing into this area of sin in the future.

4. Ask another follower of Christ to pray for you and keep you accountable in this new area of growth.
5. Acknowledge that your position as a saint is not based on how good you live your life day by day; it is based on the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Ask God to give you strength to keep growing into this new identity.

A Commitment to Journaling

Take time in the coming week to journal and write your prayers. This may be new for you, but stive it your best shot. Just put your heartfelt thoughts and feelings on paper. Focus specifically on your position as a saint. See if you can spend more time thanking God for making you a saint than you do focusing on how you fall short of ‘sainthood.’” The more you thank God for your status and position as a saint, the more you will experience a desire to live out this new identity.