

Identity Theft

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2 Corinthians 2:11 Expanded Bible

I did this so that Satan would not win anything from [outwit; take advantage of] us, because we know very well [are not ignorant of] what Satan's plans [schemes; intentions] are.

INTRO.

In today's world, we all understand the danger of identity theft ... People go to great lengths to protect themselves from scams by monitoring their credit, - safeguarding passwords, and staying alert against fraud ... The idea of someone stealing our personal information is unsettling ... But what if I told you there's an even greater threat – one far more dangerous than a stolen credit card - or a hacked social security number? ... A threat so severe that, if you fall victim to it, - you may never fully recover? ... This threat is spiritual identity theft - - the enemy's relentless attack against your identity in Christ.

The devil's primary strategy isn't just to tempt you into sin or fill your life with fear and doubt ... While deception plays a role, - his greatest weapon against believers is stealing, - distorting, and destroying their true identity in Christ ... If he can make you forget who you really are, - he can keep you from walking in the fullness of God's purpose for your life

TRANS.

So, this morning, let's expose this strategy of the enemy ... Let's uncover how he works to steal our identity and, more importantly, how we can stand firm and reclaim what is rightfully ours in Christ.

This satanic Weapon Manifests itself in the Form of a Question

The Serpent to Eve – Identity Thief in the Garden

Genesis 3:1,5 (NLT)

"The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the Lord God had made ... One day he asked the woman, - - **‘Did God really say** - you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?’... 5 **‘God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, - - and you will be like God,** - - knowing both good and evil.’"

From the very beginning, - the enemy’s strategy has been rooted in deception - and it all starts with a question ... The serpent’s goal wasn’t just to tempt Eve with a piece of fruit; - - it was to plant a seed of doubt ... He questioned God’s Word: “Did God really say?” ... He questioned Eve’s identity by implying she wasn’t already fully created in God’s image ... He convinced them both they were lacking: Suggesting they needed something more - to “be like God,” - when in reality, - they were already made in His likeness ... And what was the result? ... They lost their authority ... The dominion God gave them was forfeited ... They lost their destiny ... Their purpose and place in the garden were taken away ... They lost their identity ... They went from walking in confidence with God - to hiding from Him in shame.

This same demonic strategy is at work today ... The enemy still whispers, “Did God really say you are forgiven? ... Did God really call you? ... Are you really chosen, - loved, - and redeemed?” ... If he can make you question your identity, - - he can keep you from walking in the power and purpose God intended for you.

The Devil to Jesus – Identity Theft in the Wilderness

Matthew 4:3 (NLT)

"During that time the devil came and said to Him, - - ‘If you are the Son of God, - - tell these stones to become loaves of bread.’"

Now, let’s fast forward from the Garden to the wilderness ... Jesus had been fasting for 40 days, and right on cue, - - the devil shows up - - armed with the same old tactic: identity theft ... The enemy’s first attack was not on Jesus’ physical hunger - but on His identity ... "If you are the Son of God - - turn these stones into bread." ... But here’s what’s interesting - - satan already knew exactly who Jesus was ... The real question was: Did Jesus know who He really was?

Satan's goal was to plant a seed of doubt, - just as he did with Eve ... He wanted Jesus to feel the need to prove His identity ... But unlike Adam and Eve, - Jesus didn't fall for it ... Jesus was secure in who He was ... He didn't need the enemy's validation ... He didn't argue ... He didn't defend Himself ... He simply responded with God's Word ... Most importantly, Jesus refused to prove His identity to Satan.

Now catch this revelational nugget ... Those who are truly secure in their identity in Christ - - don't need to prove it to anyone ... Not to the world ... Not to the enemy ... Not even to themselves ... We need to walk in the same confidence that Jesus did ... He knew He was the Son of the living God ... Do you? ... He was the First born of many brethren ... You are part of "the many!" ... Are you secure in your identity?

The Thief is Still Active Today – Intent Identity Thief

John 10:10 New Living Translation

The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy ... My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.

It's concerning that many interpret this verse as if the devil's primary goal is to steal material possessions - - our money, homes, or careers ... But let's be real and no longer ignorant ... What would satan actually do with your car or your bank account? ... He doesn't care about your stuff ... This kind of thinking comes from a carnal mindset – which the enemy is banking on ... We need to view this from a spiritual perspective.

The Real Target: Your Identity in Christ

The enemy's greatest heist isn't about stealing your possessions ... It's about stealing your identity – who the Holy Spirit actually recreated you to be in Christ – that Kainos being ... He wants to plant doubt in your mind about the truth of God's Word ... He wants to define you – by your failures – by your past mistakes – and by your personal pains ... He wants to shape your identity through negative influences and the words of others ... His ultimate goal is to make you

believe you are far less than what you have been recreated to be – and what God has called you to do.

The Real Goal: Killing Your Calling

The devil's next move is to kill your destiny ... He wants to make you insecure about your calling ... He whispers, "God could never use someone like you." ... He wants to bury your God-given dreams and steer you away from your divine purpose.

The Real Agenda: Destroying Your Relationship with God

If the enemy can't outright steal your identity – or kill your calling – his last effort is to destroy your intimacy with God ... He seeks to pervert your understanding of who God really is ... He wants to convince you that you can't have a deep, intimate relationship with a spirit-being like the Trinity.

How Does the Thief Actually Do This?

He lies by any means possible ... He tells you that you have no value – but Jesus' blood proves you're priceless ... He tells you that you're a mere human being ... But in Christ – you are a Kainos being – a new creation – recreated in the image of Christ ... He tells you that you have no future ... But God's plan is to give you a rich and satisfying life ... He tells you that your past defines you ... But in Christ – your past has been erased ... If the enemy can convince you that you're just your mistakes - just your struggles - and just your failures - - then he has won ... And you will never achieve your potential – nor ever achieve a rich, satisfying life.

But Here's the Truth

Jesus came to restore what the thief has stolen ... He came to give you a rich and satisfying life ... Your identity is not connected to your past ... It's not connected with your emotional traumas ... Nor to your present struggles ... Your identity is found in Christ – and Christ alone ... Your spirit has been melded with His spirit and you are one with HIM ... You have been recreated in His image and are now a new Kainos being ... When you continually walk in the truth – allowing the Holy Spirit to renew your mind – you will become more than a conqueror.

How to Protect Yourself from Identity Thief

Like protecting against financial identity theft – we must guard against spiritual identity theft ... Here's a few practical things we can all do:

Know the Word

Luke 4:3-4 New Living Translation

Then the devil said to him, - - “If you are the Son of God, - - tell this stone to become a loaf of bread.” ... 4 But Jesus told him, - “No! ... The Scriptures say, ‘People do not live by bread alone.

Here – Jesus defeated Satan by speaking Scripture ... You need to know what God says about you ... Always remember – you don't need to prove to anyone – who you really are.

Renew Your Mind Daily

Psalms 119:11 Living Bible

I have thought much about your words - and stored them in my heart - so that they would hold me back from sin.

Stay in the Word so that the Word will stay in you – and be available in your time of need ... Meditate upon the Word – in order for the Word to do a transforming work in your heart

Exercise your Authority

Luke 10:19 New Living Translation

Look, I have given you authority over all the power of the enemy, and you can walk among snakes and scorpions and crush them ... Nothing will injure you.

This is where many believers fall short ... It's not enough to simply know you have authority – you must exercise it ... You will always speak and act based on what you truly believe ... If you

don't believe in your God-given authority – you won't walk in it ... And if you don't walk in it – the enemy will take full advantage ... Exercising your authority through your words and actions is crucial in defeating the enemy ... When the enemy whispers his lies – speak the truth of God's Word ... When fear tries to take hold – stand firm in faith ... When doubts creeps in, declare who you are in Christ ... If you want to keep the enemy from stealing your identity – you must actively exercise your authority in every situation you face ... Authority unused is authority lost ... But when you walk in the authority Jesus has given you – the enemy has no choice but to flee.

Conclusion: Take Back Your Identity

We are warned in Scripture not to be ignorant of the enemy's schemes ... Yet, let's be honest – when was the last time you considered spiritual identity theft? ... Did you even realize it was possible? ... So many believers today are living in defeat because their identity has been stolen ... They have allowed the enemy to convince them they are worthless ... They have believed the lie that they are just ordinary human beings ... They have been deceived into thinking they can never fully walk in their true identity this side of heaven ... But it's time to break free ... It's time to stop believing the lies ... It's time to stop questioning your worth ... It's time to reject the false identity the enemy has tried to place on you.

The Question is: What Will You Do?

Will you make a decision today to guard your heart against spiritual identity theft?

Will you declare the truth of God's Word when the enemy's lies try to invade your mind?

Will you walk in your God-given authority as a new creation in Christ?

Will you rise up, stand boldly, and proclaim your true identity so that the world sees who you really are?

The enemy has been exposed ... His scheme has been revealed ... Now it's time to take back what is rightfully yours! ... Walk in the fullness of who God created you to be – a child of the Most High, redeemed, empowered, and victorious in Christ!