



OUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST, Part Two

Thermostats and Thermometers

February 15, 2020

1 PREPARING

A. THE SOURCE

Romans 12:5 (NIV) • “So in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.”

2 Corinthians 1:21 (NIV) • “Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us.”

Galatians 3:26 (NIV) • “So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith.”

Galatians 3:28 (NIV) • “There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Luke 10:1, 2 (NIV) • “After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.’ ”

Acts 13:2, 3 (NIV) • “While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.”

Luke 22:31, 32 (NIV) • “Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.”

(See additional passages in student lesson.)

B. WHAT’S TO BE SAID ABOUT “OUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST”

Resting fully in our identity “in Christ” we ask the question “How does being a child of God affect the way we see others—believers and unbelievers?” Teens experience an internal struggle between being preoccupied with becoming a significant individual and being a Christian with values that call for service to others. The goal of becoming assertive as a witness to others is reached when they practice team boldness. Being “the salt of the earth” and “the light of the world,” not to mention “the aroma of Christ” and a “cup of cool water,” is all part of being a child of God. If we believe in our infinite worth to God, then we have to realize the infinite worth to God of those around us as well.

The focus of this lesson is the responsibility of kingdom citizens to be proactive in their relationships with others. Kindness, compassion, and service are part of the family (or kingdom) tradition. The Bible is filled with “one another” passages that connect kingdom citizens together and to the world in specific ways. Being anchored in our identity in Christ actually helps us begin and build friendships that last. In a

discussion of how to be influential, we will also address the tides that tend to pull our identity one way or another when we are around others.

C. WHERE WE'RE GOING WITH "OUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST"

As a result of this lesson we would like the students to be able to:

1. Develop a clear sense of the relationship between being *in* Christ and being *with* others.
2. Recognize their strengths and weaknesses in their relationships with others.
3. Fortify their resolve to live with certainty a life that goes against the flow of popular culture.

D. MATERIALS NEEDED:

Beginning • (Activity A) Salt and sugar in two (or more) saltshakers; (Activity B) some form of thermostat and thermometer (optional: source of heating or cooling).

Connecting • Paper and pens/pencils; student lessons; Bibles.

Applying • Paper and pens/pencils.

2 BRIDGING

A. WHERE WE'VE BEEN

Allow 10 minutes at the beginning of class for students to:

1. Share anything that was meaningful to them in this lesson.
2. Engage in a discussion about the topic of the lesson in connection to the belief highlighted this week.
3. Say the Bible memory text either individually or in a group.

B. OTHER SABBATH SCHOOL COMPONENTS

- >> Song service
- >> Mission emphasis (find a link for Adventist *Mission* for youth and adults at www.realtimefaith.net)
- >> Service project reports

3 BEGINNING

NOTE TO TEACHER: Put together your own program with options from the categories below—Beginning, Connecting, Applying, and Closing. Please keep in mind, however, that the students need to have an opportunity to be interactive (participate actively *and* with one another) and to study from the Word.

A. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • You will need at least two identical clear glass saltshakers. Empty one of the saltshakers and replace the salt with pure white sugar. Students will attempt to differentiate between the two from a distance. (As a rule they guess correctly half the time.)

Get set • Holding a shaker in each hand, stand as far back from the seated students as you can.

Go • Say: I want to test your vision and your judgment. I'm holding two saltshakers. First of all, how do you know this is salt? (We don't know for sure. It could be sugar.) As a matter of fact, one of these saltshakers doesn't contain salt; it contains sugar. Can you tell from where you are sitting which one is salt and which one is sugar?

Hold up the left hand and then ask: **How many of you think this one is the salt? If you do, move to this side of the classroom. Those of you who think this one is the salt** (Hold up the right hand), **move to the other side of the classroom.** Move among the students (or have assistants help you), sprinkling a little of their choice in their hands. **Say: Don't taste it until I tell you!** Have them taste their samples all at the same time. Find out who was right and who was wrong.

This can be repeated with you standing a few steps closer to them each time. (Adapt for a large group.)

Debriefing • Ask: How is this exercise like our relationships with others? (Everything looks OK on the outside—most of the time; you can start to tell differences if you look closely; the only way you can truly tell is if you taste it.) **Say:** Our lesson today is about how we, as certified children of God, relate to people around us in a positive, proactive way.

B. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • You need a thermostat and a thermometer, and optionally a portable means of heating and cooling. Many classrooms will have both devices together on the wall, where the temperature is controlled. You will discuss the function of both the thermostat and the thermometer and relate them to the way being a child of God enables us to affect change around us.

Get set • If possible, demonstrate by turning the thermostat on the heating device way up, or by placing a thermometer in cold water. (A student can be a “heating device” if you take their temperature with an oral thermometer.) In some manner demonstrate the difference between the two devices.

Go • Ask: Does anyone know the difference between a thermostat and a thermometer? (A thermometer just tells us how hot or how cold something is. A thermostat works to increase or decrease the temperature.) **What happens to this room if the thermometer reads 72 degrees Fahrenheit (22 degrees Celsius)?** (Nothing) **If the thermometer reads 41 degrees Fahrenheit (5 degrees Celsius), what happens then?** (Nothing—all the thermometer does is reflect the temperature) **What happens when I set the thermostat to 82 degrees Fahrenheit (28 degrees Celsius)?** (The heater will kick in and warm the room until it gets to that temperature.)

Debriefing • Ask: How does the difference between a thermostat and a thermometer relate to being a child of God? (As children of God, we want to set the temperature, not just to reflect the temperature around us.) **Can you think of times in your life when you have been both? How did that work? Have you ever witnessed someone who functions as a thermostat? What Bible characters were clearly thermostats? thermometers? How can you tell?**

Ask: How is it possible to be an outgoing visible leader and still be a thermometer instead of a thermostat? How can the opposite be said about those who are not always up front or outspoken? How can they also set the temperature without even having to be dramatic? Give an example.

C. BEGINNING ILLUSTRATION

In your own words, tell the following story:

Peer Pressure. A few years ago psychologist Ruth W. Berenda and her associates carried out an interesting experiment with teenagers to show how a person handled group pressure. The plan was simple. They brought groups of 10 adolescents into a room for a test. Subsequently each group of 10 was instructed to raise their hands when the teacher pointed to the longest line on three separate charts. What one person in the group did not know was that the nine others in the room had been instructed ahead of time to vote for the second-longest line.

Regardless of the instructions they heard, once they were all together in the group, the nine were not to vote for the longest line but, rather, for the next-to-the-longest line.

The desire of the psychologists was to determine how one person reacted when completely surrounded by a large number of people who obviously stood against what was true.

The experiment began with nine teenagers voting for the wrong line. The other one would typically glance around, frown in confusion, and slip their hand up with the group. The instructions were repeated, and the next card was raised.

Time after time the self-conscious tenth teen would sit there saying a short line was longer than a long line, simply because they lacked the courage to challenge the group. This remarkable conformity occurred in about 75 percent of the cases and was true of small children and high school students as well.—Charles R. Swindoll, *Tales of the Tardy Oxcart* (Nashville: W Publishing Group, 1998), p. 434.

Ask: To what degree do you think this represents most young people? Why?

If you did not use Beginning Activity B above, explain the concept of thermostats and thermometers.

D. BEGINNING ILLUSTRATION

In your own words, tell the following story:

Redwood Roots. The huge redwood trees in California are considered the largest things on earth and the tallest trees in the world. Some of them are 300 feet high and more than 2,500 years old. One would think that trees so large would have a tremendous root system reaching down hundreds of feet into the earth. The redwoods actually have a very shallow system of roots, but they all intertwine. They are locked to each other. When the storms come or the winds blow, the redwoods stand. They are locked to each other, and they don't stand alone, for all the trees support and protect each other.—Robert J. Morgan, *Stories, Illustrations & Quotes* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2000), p. 129.

Ask: How is a redwood forest like the Christian church? What are the strengths and weaknesses in the nature of the root system of the forest? How does this illustrate the church's relationship to God?

Say: We are focusing today on how we relate to one another as children of God.

4 CONNECTING

A. CONNECTING TO THE KINGDOM

Have the students find and read **Matthew 5:13, 14**. **Ask:** Do you think Jesus was addressing those statements to one person, or to many people? (He was talking to a lot of people at the time, so we can assume that the "you" is plural.) **Say:** Even though just one person could take these words as addressing them personally, in the context in which they were said by Jesus they might have sounded like this: "When all of you come together for good, you are salt or light."

Say: Let's find and read **Luke 10:1, 2**. Read aloud. **Ask:** Why do you think Jesus called people to exert an influence on the world in teams? (God knows us. He made us to matter to each other.)

Say: Close your eyes and think of the five most important things in your life. (You could also do this with paper and pencil.) **Ask:** How many of you had friends in the top five? Have them raise their hands. **Say:** The way you value friendships is not a weakness that comes from being human, but a quality that comes from being in a family that values relationships. We already read how Jesus sent people in pairs to witness for Him. Let's also find and read **Romans 12:5** and then **John 13:35**. Have students read the verses aloud.

Say: The "one another" experience is probably the most prominent part of having our identity in Christ. When we are "in Christ" we are part of a body. And we saw in **Luke 10:1, 2** that Jesus' game plan is to use us together to reach still others.

Ask: What do you think are the advantages of sharing the gospel in teams? What might be the disadvantages?

B. CONNECTING TO THE LESSON ILLUSTRATION

Have two student volunteers read the two anecdotes in the student lesson.

Ask: Can you describe what makes a person a thermostat and what makes a person a thermometer? Do you agree or disagree with the labels that were placed on the illustrations we just read? Why or why not?

Ask: Can you think of a time in your life when a friend's influence helped you choose wisely? Ask for examples to be shared. **Say:** Friends have extraordinary power. For good or evil, our friends will have a lot to do with our eternal destiny. Why? Why do you think gangs are so prevalent and so powerful?

Say: God made us to connect under common causes. It just so happens that many are united without God or His cause. Every group or team is made up of individuals, and the strength of the group has a lot to do with the courage of individuals. Knowing who you are in Christ generates a boldness that has the power to multiply in groups. So often it takes one to be proactive. Someone has to be the thermostat!

Ask students to think of people in your church that they think are thermostats. Ask them to share with another person who they chose and an experience that supports their choice.

Ask: What are some biblical examples of someone being the light/salt/thermostat? What qualities did they exhibit? What were the risks involved in their scenario?

Have the students find and read **Luke 22:31, 32**. Have them notice how Jesus was able to tell the truth to Peter, while still encouraging him to do great things.

Ask: If God were asking you to be a thermostat in one specific area of your life, what would He be asking you to do? Do you have friends who can tell you the truth no matter what your response might be? Point out that we are not talking about such truths as "those shoes look awful with that outfit," but about important areas of life, such as our choices about relationships with others in our peer groups, the

way we treat our bodies, our relationship with parents, and our time with God.

Say: A good way to check your sense of identity is to test whether you are willing to tell the truth to a friend. Think of it this way: If your friend was living dangerously close to the edge of a cliff, would you say, "You can get a few inches closer to the edge if you're careful," or would you say, "Get as far away from the cliff as you can!"

C. CONNECTING TO LIFE

Pose the following scenario:

Kyle's friends are Christians and attend the same church as he does. They know they generally believe the same thing about God. No one really talks openly about their personal relationship with God, however, and the thought of expressing his desire to pray and study and share his faith more openly makes Kyle feel very uneasy. Kyle wants to grow, and he suspects his friends may want to as well. But where does he start? What would be the best way to be a thermostat in this situation? A bold announcement in front of everyone? An initial contact with one or two? Quietly be an example and let others ask?

Ask: How common do you think it is that young people want to express their desire to walk with Christ daily but are afraid that they might appear "holier than thou" to others?

Have the students look over the verses in Wednesday's section of their lessons. (Or list the verses on the board.) **Ask:** Which verses speak to the problems we face in our friendships the most? Encourage them to share their opinions.

Activity • Have the students write a note of encouragement to an anonymous friend, using a passage from this week's lesson. They should share the advice they think would help their friend grow and experience the joy of being in God's kingdom. Here's an example one teen wrote:

"Dear Friend,

"When you speak, people listen. I think you are a great leader. My prayer for you is that your words would build people up instead of tear them down as it says in Ephesians 4:29. This would make you so happy, as well as make a difference for others."

Collect the anonymous messages the students have written. Read the messages out loud so they can hear what they would wish for in each other.

Ask: What was difficult about this exercise? In what way were you surprised by the challenges and encouragement?

5 APPLYING

A. APPLICATION ACTIVITY

Have students divide into groups to develop a group covenant or agreement.

Ask: If teens were to be proactive agents of influence in three to five areas of life, what three would make the most change in our world? Using the good advice that was written in the notes (see previous activity) from others and the advice from Scripture, help the students make three to five rules for themselves as a group that could help them accomplish great things for the kingdom.

Example: "As members of God's kingdom we will . . ."

Help them not to be too general. Instead of "As members of God's kingdom we will *love others*," suggest that they think of some specific loving acts they can do for a specific group of people.

Have the groups share their team covenants with the rest of the class.

Debriefing • Ask: Did you hear any themes being repeated in the various covenants? What kinds of themes were repeated? How do you think a group of young people could

remember to keep these covenants? What kinds of things would they need to do to remember and foster their commitment to the covenant they make?

B. APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Consider the following comparisons to life in the kingdom of God. Discuss the ways the comparisons are different and how they are the same. Thermostat instead of thermometer; river instead of reservoir; gladiator instead of spectator.
2. In what way is being a citizen in God's kingdom a "team sport" as opposed to an "individual sport"? How is it the other way around?
3. In what passages of Scripture do we see God warning about the negative power of group identity? How do you see God using "group identity" as a secret weapon?
4. How can earliteens strengthen their sense of community on a weekly basis, besides Sabbath school?
5. Agree/Disagree: Our world tends to force people into becoming outstanding individuals instead of longstanding comrades. (How? Why? In what way?)
6. Someone said, "We rarely grow spiritually in isolation." How is this true? How might it be untrue?
7. How does the message of our identity in Christ affect such issues as equality, racism, hatred?

6 CLOSING

SUMMARY

In your own words, conclude with the following ideas:

God knows details about each of us that we can't even imagine. Each person is unique, yet as God's children we are not the "only child" in the family. We are bound together as brothers and sisters and also for a purpose. We have a work to do together, a work that can be done only when we are together. Sometimes it takes one or two

to stand up first, to say the words we all want to say, to be a thermostat instead of a thermom-

eter, a river instead of a reservoir, a gladiator instead of a spectator.



STUDENT LESSON

OUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST, Part Two

Thermostats and Thermometers

February 15, 2020

Sabbath FOR STUDY

- » **Memory Text:** “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34, 35, NKJV).
- » **Our Beliefs, no. 12, The Church:** “The church is the community of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. . . . The church is God’s family; adopted by Him as children, its members live on the basis of the new covenant.”
- » Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 136, 137

THERMOSTATS AND THERMOMETERS

Thermometer. Have you ever heard of Bob Hayes, the man who was named “World’s Fastest Human”? He was a hero of the 1964 Olympics, bringing home the gold medal in the 100-meter run, and being clocked at an incredible 8.6 seconds in the final 110 yards of the 400-meter relay run. After the Olympics he became an all-pro wide receiver for the Dallas Cowboys football team in the United States. His college coach said that if there had ever been a young man he wished was his, it was Bob Hayes.

Then, in April 1979, Bob was convicted of selling narcotics to an undercover agent. He received

two five-year prison sentences. He went from the pinnacle of success to prison. According to Hayes and those who cared most about him, his downfall was caused by his inability to choose good friends. The people he hung out with gave him bad advice and got him into trouble. As a rule, we usually reflect the thoughts and lifestyles of the people we spend the most time with.—*From*

Sermonnotes.com published online by Alderson Press.

Whom are you spending time with?

Thermostat. Charles Osgood told the story of two women who lived in a convalescent center. Each had suffered an incapacitating stroke. Margaret’s stroke left her left side restricted, while Ruth’s stroke damaged her right side. Both of these women were accomplished pianists but had given up hope of ever playing again. The director of the center sat them down at a piano and encouraged them to play solo pieces together. They did, and a beautiful friendship developed. What a picture of the church’s need to work together! What one member cannot do alone, perhaps two or more could do together—in harmony.

How do your strengths and weaknesses relate to the body of Christ?

Sunday RESPONDING

- » Read Hebrews 3:13, 14.
- » Ken’s best friend, Mark, thinks he is in love. While Ken is happy, he is concerned that Mark is becoming consumed with his new

girlfriend. Mark is failing classes. He is not getting along with his parents either. Ken watches as his best friend changes, and he doesn't want to say anything because he doesn't want to seem jealous. He doesn't want to drive Mark further away, but he feels it is his responsibility to remind Mark of his other friendships. As time goes by they grow further and further apart. What do you think Ken should do? What would you say—knowing that *how* you say something is as important as *what* you say?

Monday
BIBLE ANSWERS
ON THE CHURCH

- » Read Matthew 18:18; Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:9.
- » We are adopted sons and daughters of God. He loves His church, and when we have His Spirit in us, we will love others. He has given us gifts to use in helping others with their daily struggles as well as to tell others about Him. The church working together has a great responsibility in telling others of His soon coming.
- » How do you see yourself working as part of the church team in helping and telling others about Jesus?

- » Fill in the blanks using the words from the word bank.

accomplished	all	be	church
fellowship	given	Ephesians	God
8-11	Jesus	known	least
make	now	of	preach
purpose	see	through	wisdom
eternal	grace	made	3
NKJV			

"To me, who am less than the _____ of all the saints, this

_____ was _____,
 that I should _____ among the
 Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,
 and to _____
 _____ what is the _____
 of the mystery, which from the beginning
 of the ages has been hidden in God who
 created all things _____ Jesus
 Christ; to the intent that _____ the
 manifold _____
 _____ might _____
 _____ by the
 _____ to the principalities and
 powers in the heavenly places, according to
 the _____ which
 He _____ in Christ _____
 our Lord" (_____:____, ____).

Tuesday
REFLECTING

- » Read Romans 12:10-13.
- » One teen said, "Why can't I just keep my relationship between God and me? It's personal." There is a difference between personal and private! There aren't any Bible passages that say, "Just believe and be quiet. Everyone will get there sooner or later." No, quite the opposite is true. God has made us to work together. We work best in teams, because our weaknesses get strengthened by others' strengths, and our strengths help other people who have weaknesses. We are not whole unless we are united.
- » Have you considered what God may be asking you to bring to the table? Are you wondering how to be someone who sets the temperature and doesn't just record it? The answer to our quest for boldness in Christ is in community. We are braver together than we are alone. We are smarter as a team than we are as individuals. Each new member that we add to the family makes us more loving

and compassionate, because each new member has a unique experience with God's grace. Each person is expected to participate. Each person is needed, but the whole is more effective than the individual parts. Why do you think Christ sent the disciples out in twos? Because when one is weak, the other can be strong.

Wednesday BIBLE INSIGHTS

- » Read the texts and match each one with a description. Some descriptions correspond to more than one text.

- _____ Romans 12:10-13
- _____ Romans 15:7
- _____ Ephesians 4:32
- _____ Hebrews 3:13, 14
- _____ 1 John 1:5-7
- _____ 1 John 4:11, 12
- _____ John 13:34, 35
- _____ Luke 10:1, 2
- _____ Luke 22:31, 32
- _____ Acts 13:2, 3
- _____ Romans 12:5
- _____ 1 Corinthians 1:11, 12
- _____ 2 Corinthians 1:21
- _____ Galatians 3:26-28

- A. Brotherly love
- B. Kind, compassionate, and forgiving
- C. Encourage one another
- D. Fellowship and loving one another
- E. Harvest and laborers
- F. Sift as wheat
- G. One body and perfectly joined, united
- H. All sons of God

Thursday CONNECTING

- » Read 1 John 1:5-7.
- » Review the memory text.
- » Everyone is hearing voices! No, it's not that we are all crazy. But we tend to become what we listen to. If you think that God listens to your prayers only when you behave properly, then you are not listening to God. If you think that the only way to really "be someone" is to get noticed, then you are not listening to God. If what others think about you is what will make or break you, then you are listening to someone other than God.
- » God has spoken, and He has declared you not just valuable but precious. He has announced publicly your honored position as His child. Your future is sure if your desire is to be counted as His child. Be counted, along with the many others who are signing up for the kingdom of God. Those who truly sense the surge of joy are those who step out and become agents of change around them. Thermostats, and not just thermometers! It's not always easy, but it makes all the difference. What about you?

Friday APPLYING

- » Read 1 John 4:11, 12.
- » Choose the three friends you love and respect the most. Answer the following questions about them.

» How are you like them in the following areas?

Lifestyle: _____

Beliefs: _____

Personality: _____

» In what ways are you different?

Lifestyle: _____

Beliefs: _____

Personality: _____

» How do you help each other grow closer to God?

» In what ways do you get in each other's way in your walk with God?

» What are some goals you want to set for these particular friendships?

» How do you want to pray for your friends specifically?

» What things do you want to pray about for them this week?

» What do you want to thank them for (by letter, email, or in person) for the way they inspire you to be what God has designed you to be?

