

The Walking Worthy Series

Volume 1:
Walking Worthy As a Son of God

by Norm Wakefield



WALKING WORTHY AS A SON OF GOD by Norm Wakefield.
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To Coast Community Church

*who in love and faith launched The Spirit of Elijah Ministries and in whom
the seeds of this series were planted.*

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INTRODUCTION TO THE WALKING WORTHY SERIES

It is the highest of all privileges to be called by God to be His child!

We have been called by His name, given the Spirit of His Son, and called to other relationships in life to express our relationship with God. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesians, “Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the *calling* with which you have been called” (Ephesians 4:1). The *calling* of which the apostle wrote was a *calling* into a relationship with God by the power of the Holy Spirit. Consequently, every aspect of a man’s life will be affected.

As a man relates to God, he expresses that relationship through other *callings* in life. Biblically, a *calling* is an irrevocable act of God that establishes a special relationship with responsibilities, privileges, and promises that provide hope for the future. Paul informed the Romans that, “the gifts and the *calling* of God are irrevocable (Rom. 11:29).”

What acts of God establish a relationship that cannot be revoked? Birth establishes a relationship between parents and children, which obviously can’t be changed. Marriage, according to Jesus, is an act of God, which is not to be separated by man (Mark 10:9). Since our *calling* as sons of God is irrevocable, then our relationships with brothers and sisters in Christ are established for eternity, and thus the gifts God gives by His Spirit for blessing His Body are also enduring.

Since God has called us to these earthly relationships to express our relationship with Him, it is important that we walk worthy of our *calling* as sons, husbands, fathers, and members of the body of Christ. In this series, we won’t treat a man’s work as a *calling* because it doesn’t fit the definition as a *calling* from God. However, the responsibility to provide for his family is one of the biblical responsibilities of a man’s *callings* as husband and father. Since work is such an important aspect of a man’s life, an entire volume will also be devoted to how a man can walk worthy of the Lord as a provider.

Walking Worthy As a Son of God focuses our attention on our identity in Christ. You’ll learn four identity principles as they relate to relationships with others and then as they pertain to your relationship with God as His son. In this first lesson, we will begin attempting to grasp and apply these identity principles.

INTRODUCTION TO WALKING WORTHY AS A SON OF GOD

Why do men do what they do? What motivates a man to work fourteen hours a day for seven days each week? Why does a husband do things at work that he wouldn't do at home? What influences a man to compromise his virginity or purity? On a positive note, why are you driving a certain kind of car? What lies behind a man's choice of the church he attends? Why do we obey God's Word?

The answers to all of these questions and many more like them are found by understanding four fundamental identity principles. A godly man needs to have a working knowledge of these principles if he is going to navigate his family through the treacherous waters of an anti-Christ culture. Overcoming sin and temptation, successfully passing on a spiritual legacy to future generations, and living a Spirit-filled life all depend on your knowing who you are. Therefore your identity in Christ must be secured and subsequently applied for you to walk worthy as a son of your Heavenly Father.

In each of the *Walking Worthy* books, you'll work with these identity principles. You will be introduced to these identity principles from two perspectives in this series. First, you will gain an understanding of each principle as you see it in the life of Christ and in the world around you. Regardless of the culture in which you live, the principles are the same although the details may be different. Second, the focus will be on how the principle is applied to your life in relationship with Jesus Christ.

Here's what you can expect in this series of lessons. Each lesson will normally have a reading assignment and life examples. Suggestions for practicing what you learn, Scripture memory, a small group interaction plan, and prayer suggestions will help make the lessons practical—encouraging you to be not only a hearer of the Word of God but also a faithful doer of His Word.

During the first lesson, you'll do the assignment and group discussion together. However, in the following lessons it will be important for you to read the brief lesson and practice the application prior to the group discussion so you will have something to share in your next group meeting. Much of what you will glean from this series will be from other men. As God works in each of your lives, you will share it with each other, take notes, and make application to your lives.

The goal of this series is not primarily to impart new information. The goal is to encourage the application of truth to your life, resulting in a life change for the glory of God.

LISTEN TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

As you begin this series, please pause and ask the Holy Spirit to speak to your hearts about how you might encourage one another and learn from each other as you go through this series. Write below what you hear during this time of meditation.

OVERVIEW OF VOLUME ONE

Volume One, *Walking Worthy As a Son of God*, focuses attention on your identity in Christ by concentrating on four identity principles. You will learn the four identity principles as they relate to relationships with others in the world, and then as they pertain to your relationship with God as His son. Each principle will be developed in two lessons making a total of eight lessons for the whole volume.

LESSON 1: IDENTITY PRINCIPLE ONE—IDENTITY HAS TO DO WITH WHOM YOU WANT TO BELONG OR CONNECT

LESSON 2: IDENTITY PRINCIPLE ONE IN CHRIST—I BELONG TO CHRIST AND HIS SPIRIT MUST FILL AND DRIVE ME SO I LIVE AS AN EXPRESSION OF THAT CONNECTION

LESSON 3: IDENTITY PRINCIPLE TWO—IDENTITY HAS TO DO WITH POWER

LESSON 4: IDENTITY PRINCIPLE TWO IN CHRIST—THE HOLY SPIRIT DWELLING WITHIN US IS OUR POWER

LESSON 5: IDENTITY PRINCIPLE THREE—THE SOURCE OF POWER SHAPES ONE’S LIFE

LESSON 6: IDENTITY PRINCIPLE THREE IN CHRIST—THE HOLY SPIRIT TRANSFORMS US INTO THE IMAGE OF JESUS CHRIST

LESSON 7: IDENTITY PRINCIPLE FOUR—FATHERS DIRECT THE IDENTITY COURSE OF THEIR CHILDREN BY WHAT THEY DO OR DON’T DO

LESSON 8: IDENTITY PRINCIPLE FOUR IN CHRIST—THE HEAVENLY FATHER DIRECTS THE IDENTITY COURSE OF HIS CHILDREN THROUGH A RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS SON, JESUS CHRIST

Lesson 1

IDENTITY PRINCIPLE ONE

One may belong to a club, to a husband, a wife, a church, a business group, a political party, or to parents, just to name a few possibilities to which one might belong. It's all a matter of one's identity. We each belonged first to our fathers, which is illustrated in most cultures by last names. Biblically speaking, sons and daughters specifically belonged to the fathers. (No offense or disregard intended here to the mothers.) It was God who gave Adam the commandment to be fruitful and multiply before Eve was created. Eve was given to Adam for the fulfillment of God's plan. Consequently, as you read the Bible, you find genealogies presenting records of fathers and sons or daughters, thus illustrating this point. But in general, most of us acknowledge that the children belong to both parents, which is also correct. In the Bible we see this identity principle illustrated in numerous verses.

For instance, Jesus' identity is entirely described by his relationship with God, His Father. Christians are known as "sons of God" (I John 3:1). Peter declared Jesus' identity as "the son of the living God" and Jesus identified Peter as the son of Jona (literally, Jona is the one who has gone before you, Simon).

Matthew 16:15-17 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" And Simon Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven."

QUESTIONS FOR GAINING INSIGHT

What was Jesus' identity?

Who did Jesus belong to?

Who did Jesus recognize as Peter's source of identity?

If Jesus were describing your identity, how would he say it?

PRINCIPLE ONE: IDENTITY HAS TO DO WITH THE ONE(S) TO WHOM YOU BELONG

The idea of belonging is illustrated by the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Corinthians. In 1 Corinthians 3:23 he wrote, "And you belong to Christ; and Christ belongs to God." In other words, your identity is in Christ and Jesus' identity is in His Father.

It can also be said that children belong to their parents. And perhaps the belonging idea is best illustrated in adoption. The adopting parents must secure a legal right of ownership. Normally, however, God gives children to their parents, and their identities are wrapped up in who they are—in the early years. As long as parents give their children reasons for belonging to them or for identifying with them, the children will seek to imitate them and follow their lead. This requires the hearts of the parents to be turned to their children. But if parents do not understand this principle and become too occupied with their careers, ministries, recreations, or other responsibilities, the children will look for someone else with whom to identify—someone who will want them and give them good reasons to belong to them.

God has made His human creatures with a longing to belong. Each of us

wants to know that we are wanted, needed, and valued by God and others. From one perspective, we're born spiritually and emotionally empty with a need to be filled. In my opinion, God provided fathers to children to be a forerunner of God's ultimate filling of that need in Himself. We'll learn more about this in the fourth principle.

WITH WHOM DO YOU WANT TO IDENTIFY?

That's the question that subconsciously drives all your choices. When a child discovers that his parents are too busy and they don't provide hope and purpose for life, then the child usually looks to his peers. For instance, let's imagine a twelve year-old boy in his Sunday School class. He notices two other boys who get the attention of the girls in his class (as well as the teacher) as they act silly, disrespectful, and flirt. Without thinking why, he reasons if he can only become friends with (belong to or connect with) those two boys, he'll be as popular as they are with the girls. So, he begins to act like them. He notices what kind of music, TV, movies, and recreation they enjoy and wants to become familiar with them so he can "relate" to the boys.

What is the typical response of parents when they notice a change of behavior in their child and an interest in things of which they do not approve? If they don't know why he's doing it, they may lecture their son about the surface issues (kinds of entertainment and choice of friends) and miss the heart of the issue—his longing to connect with someone who can offer him significance and hope which his parents haven't offered. It's a matter of identity. With whom does the child want to identify most? His parents? Or the two boys?

LIFE EXAMPLE

Karen, a sixteen year-old girl, wanted to connect with a clique in her school composed of the most popular kids in the school. Mark, a boy in the group, caught her attention. She reasoned that if she could become his girlfriend, it would elevate her social position and move her inside the important group. So she flirted with Mark, hoping to "belong" or "connect" with him. Mark finally noticed her and asked her out on a date, which was followed by other dates. Within a few weeks, Karen and Mark were a couple and identified with each other. Karen had achieved her goal of becoming popular by connecting or belonging to Mark.

Jason entered his new job at the company with fear and trembling. He didn't know anyone in the company, and his new responsibilities included

some skills he was going to have to develop. As he got to know his work associates, he discovered the men who were the most successful had gained favor with their boss. Jason concluded that if he could connect with those successful men, he might advance more quickly and farther than if he didn't connect with them. After some initial observations, Jason realized that to belong to this group of advancing business men, he would have to work long hours, attend weekly dinner and entertainment events, drink socially, and develop a repertoire of crude jokes and dirty language. So that is what he did.

Can you relate to this? How would these examples be different in your culture? Consider your elementary and early teen years. With whom did you wish to identify, and did it not have to do with a sense of acceptance, significance, and belonging? A particular peer group? A boyfriend or girlfriend? A sport or athletic star? A club such as a fraternity or a sorority? With whom are you seeking to identify now? How is this having an effect on what you do at work? At home? At church?

PERSONAL APPLICATION

Take a few minutes and ask the Holy Spirit to show you with whom you wished to connect when you were between the ages of 14 and 16. Note who comes to mind. It may be a specific friend or group.

IDENTITY SOURCE

Next ask the Holy Spirit to show you with whom you wish to identify now and the effect each is having on your life.

IDENTITY SOURCE

Each of us is a sum of the people we have met, the books we've read, the music, TV, and movies to which we've been exposed, and the impact of our culture. List some of the most influential books, movies, TV shows, or music which have contributed to your identity.

Books	Movies	Music	TV
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Consider making this a topic of discussion in your family devotion time. Ask these same questions of each member of the family, and then have each one write down a list of all the people or groups to whom or which each wanted to belong.

GROUP INTERACTION

There's much to be gained from God's men growing and sharing together. As you share what is on your list, you will see that you were not the only one who experienced the reality of identity principle number one. In fact, you may be surprised how similar your experiences were and are. Share with each other what you wrote down and then write what you learned from this first lesson about your identity.

REMEMBER

The important point to remember is that **identity has to do with whom you wish to belong or connect**. There's a lot more to understand, and in the following lessons we'll build on this first principle. Until then, ask the Lord to give you and your family a deeper understanding of your own identity.

Lesson 2

IDENTITY PRINCIPLE ONE IN CHRIST

WE BELONG TO JESUS CHRIST

The memory verses at the end of this lesson state explicitly that everyone who is truly a child of God belongs to Jesus Christ. We've been given to Jesus by God, the Father. The transaction occurred when we were baptized by the Holy Spirit into Jesus. The descriptive rather than the prescriptive aspect of these verses encourages believers. They don't teach us that we are to *try* to belong to Jesus. Believers in Christ *do belong* to Jesus. Their faith and its fruit are evidences of the fact. Not only do our souls belong to Jesus, but our bodies do also. He bought us with His blood so that He might redeem us and express His life in us for His glory and that of our Father.

Rom. 8:9 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, **he does not belong to Him.**

The presence of the Holy Spirit in our hearts and His fruit in our lives indicate to whom we belong. Without the Spirit of Christ, no one belongs to Jesus. We can know therefore that we are identified with Jesus if we can identify the Holy Spirit within! This is how we know who is truly a Christian. Jesus warned that many people would say they are believers and know the Lord, however, not everyone who says they have accepted Jesus as their savior is truly born again. It is foundational to understand what it means to be a Christian. It's not determined by one's accepting certain facts about Jesus, joining a church, water baptism, service in the ministry, or partaking of communion, but it is by the implanting of the Life of God (the Holy Spirit) in the heart of the person. Without the presence of the Holy Spirit mani-