

Discovering Our Identity in Christ

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Understanding who we are in Christ helps us live as the people God created us to be. Not knowing our identity in Christ makes us vulnerable to lies that steal our joy, rob our hope, and lead us away from intimacy with the Lord.

God Says I Am:

More than a conqueror

A child of God

Accepted in the Beloved

His workmanship

A new creation

Wonderfully made

A stranger and alien

A child of light

Calm and balanced

Part of His family

Joyful in Him

Where He Says It

Romans 8:37

John 1:12

Ephesians 1:5-6

Ephesians 2:10

2 Corinthians 5:17

Psalms 139:14

1 Peter 2:11

1 Thessalonians 5:5

2 Timothy 1:7

Ephesians 4:12

Nehemiah 8:10

The World Says:

"My circumstances are too hard."

"I need to find myself."

"I have to be successful."

"I'll never measure up."

"My past defines me."

"I'm defective."

"I have to fit in."

"I'm a failure."

"I'm a hot mess."

"I don't belong anywhere."

"I'm weak and defeated."



Illustration from *Core Healing from Trauma* by Marti Wibbels (available on Amazon at <https://amzn.to/2RLrgD1>).
Graphic art by Monica O'Connor <https://www.agencyco.co>.

Plan for Life, Not Suicide

If you're having suicidal thoughts, you're not alone. According to an April 2019 citation from the National Institute of Mental Health, "Suicide was the tenth leading cause of death overall in the United States, claiming the lives of over 47,000 people. Suicide was the second leading cause of death among individuals between the ages of 10 and 34, and the fourth leading cause of death among individuals between the ages of 35 and 54."

September 9, 2019, on the eve of World Suicide Prevention Day, husband, father, pastor, and mental health advocate Jarrod Wilson committed suicide. The LA Times wrote, "On Monday afternoon, Jarrod Wilson, a pastor at a Riverside megachurch and the founder of a mental health advocacy group, took to Twitter. 'Loving Jesus doesn't always cure suicidal thoughts,' Wilson wrote. 'Loving Jesus doesn't always cure depression. Loving Jesus doesn't always cure PTSD. Loving Jesus doesn't always cure anxiety. But that doesn't mean Jesus doesn't offer us companionship and comfort. He ALWAYS does that.' That night, Wilson, 30, killed himself, according to Harvest Christian Fellowship, where he was an associate pastor."

Dr. Gregory Eells, 52, also ended his life by suicide on September 9th. Dr. Eells was the current executive director of counseling and psychological services at the University of Pennsylvania and previously served in a similar position for over a decade at Cornell University.

If you're thinking about suicide, you can find help 24/7 at the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at: 1-800-273-8255**, or from anywhere in the United States, text **connect to 741741**.

Veterans can call the Veterans Crisis Line at 800-273-8255.

What else can you do when you have suicidal thoughts?

1. **Doubt suicidal thoughts**—you don't have to keep thinking thoughts of self-harm! **Speak Truth** to yourself instead, such as "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1).
2. **Do something proactive** rather than allowing suicidal thoughts to decide your fate. You might google to find "Bible verses for hope," or spend time digging into your Bible to understand the hope God promises—we can "take hold of the hope offered to us [and be] greatly encouraged. We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure..." (Hebrews 6:18-19, NIV).
3. Today, **write down the names of three individuals you can call for help** when needed—such as a pastor, a Bible study teacher, a friend.
4. **Go somewhere safe** where there are people—a mall, church, restaurant, etc.
5. **Stay with a family member or good friend**.
6. **If you're exhausted, rest**. Often depression becomes overwhelming because of fatigue and time pressure.
7. **Consider Moses (Numbers 11:10-18) and Elijah (1Kings 19:1-8)**. Notice that God didn't condemn their struggles and provided for their legitimate needs—for help, healthy food, rest, etc.

If you cannot stop racing thoughts of self-destruction, call 911 or go to an emergency room. Or, make an emergency appointment with a licensed mental health counselor (many are listed at the South Florida Association of Christian Counselors at sfacconline.org). **YOU ARE WORTH GETTING THE HELP YOU NEED!**

There IS hope and healing for emotional challenges like anxiety, depression, and PTSD! Please check out my new book, *Core Healing from Trauma* (available on Amazon at <https://amzn.to/2RLrgD1>), to learn how you can move forward in life!