

# 1 PETER

MINISERIES

The True Story

Identity

## ▶ EPISODE 2: Identity, Pam's Story





## Foundational Principle:

Our born again identity is the most important thing about us.



## Read and Watch:

### Read:

- 1 Peter 1:1-5; 2:9-10

### Watch:



**BibleProject**

[1 Peter Overview<sup>1</sup>](#)

Our culture is experiencing a huge identity crisis. There seems to be unprecedented discord and confusion surrounding the topics of race, gender, politics, and personal rights. Everyday we are bombarded with messages, images, and narratives that challenge our thinking, pull at our emotions, and threaten our sense of well-being.

I totally feel this! Do you? When scrolling through Instagram, I find myself asking questions like, “Am I pretty enough or talented enough or doing enough?” I observe others who freely express strong opinions. Because my Instagram feed tells me that others are **right** about their opinions, I am tempted to question my beliefs, convictions, and purpose. I begin to wonder, “Who am I?” I log off feeling minimized and small, angry and beaten down. If I’m honest, my daily emotions range from anger and judgment to wanting to bury my head in the sand (after all, I hate conflict, why can’t we all just get along?). Once in a while, I feel deep levels of compassion when I have a healthy perspective on my identity. Does this ever happen to you?

How does your social media feed and the messages of our culture affect your self-perception and your sense of identity?

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The fear of rejection has plagued me most of my life. I remember when I was engaged and approaching our wedding date; a random health problem came up, and I became terrified of the outcome. Fearing the worst, this experience triggered a deep anxiety that was foreign to me. I would try to ignore it, until it kept happening again and again. It seemed I had developed a fear of death.


As time went on God in His gentle goodness invited me to look a little more closely at what was truly going on in my heart. I lost my dad when I was ten months old, which created a deep and lasting wound. My mom remarried when I was two and her husband adopted me. Even though I had a father figure in my life, the severed relationship with my birth father at such a young age scared me. My ability to meaningfully attach with someone was broken through this significant loss. **What I thought was anxiety, prompted by a fear of death, was really the feeling that someone wouldn't be there for me when most needed.** It was the fear of being abandoned. And this caused me to question everything about who I was and what was true of me. It was hard for me to feel and experience the love of my adopted father. In retrospect, it's helpful to recognize that my adoptive father had just gotten married and adopted two daughters, and he simply didn't have the inner resources to love me like I needed him to. Even so, this deficit contributed to my inability to form meaningful attachments.

**As I grew up I became more and more aware of the deficits in my life created by this lack of belonging. It impacted how I gave and received love.**

You can probably imagine that when I initially heard about God’s unconditional love, I was incredibly drawn to it. I learned that God would never leave me or abandon me, gave me a new identity as His child, and that He could handle all my fears. It was as if my hungry soul tasted a morsel of delicious food. I craved more! Over time, God brought me into a relationship with Himself that was not dependent on defining my worth by external measures. It was all about what He said was true.

But in the whirlwind of life, with all its many challenges, disappointments, distractions, and myriad other things that bring us down, it’s easy to become paralyzed by the noise. Accusations like, “You are not enough” or “You don’t have what it takes,” seem to reverberate a little louder than what I really believe. When I’m in this headspace, I am tempted to replay the old messages and lose sight of the familiar truth that Jesus loves me and will never leave me. This reality of “living loved” has impacted all my relationships and called me into a vocation where I have the privilege of talking about this love to whomever God places in my life. I want all people to know how loved they are and how transforming the love of God and our new identity in Jesus can be.

I recently bought a T-shirt with the statement “Be Bold, Be Brave, Be Kind” proclaimed across the front. This statement is a tangible reminder to live in such a way that reflects my identity in Christ. I need these reminders and maybe you do, too. That’s why 1 Peter is so great! It reminds us that our identity is forever secure in Christ.



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old messages and lose sight  
of the familiar truth that  
Jesus loves me.**



## The True Story of the Whole World

The True Story of the Whole World tells us we are all made in the image of God. He is our Creator, so we all stand on common ground as humans. In Genesis—the book of beginnings—we learn that God created us, males and females, to cultivate and tend the garden, to marry and have children, and to work with God in our world. Remarkably, we learn right from the beginning that God created humans in His image. There is something innate in every single one of us that reflects God our Creator.

Psalm 139, also part of the Old Testament, reminds us that God formed our inward parts. We are fearfully and wonderfully made, and God is intimately involved in every detail of our lives. As followers of Jesus Christ we reflect God’s image in both our similarities and our differences. These truths are all part of our God-given identity. **The more rooted and grounded we are in how God sees us, the more confident we become in our faith.**

In Exodus 19:1-6, God delivers the nation of Israel from slavery in Egypt and, based only on His love for them, He gives them a whole new identity. He describes them as His treasured possession, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. He has chosen them to reflect His light and to lead others to God. These are some of the very same words Peter uses to describe our born again identity and the identity of this group of sojourners, and you and me, to the True Story of the Whole World. Peter also introduces the key to our identity: God causes us to be born again to a living hope. The phrase “born again” might be new to you, so our next step is to take a closer look at how this new birth reinforces our hope.



All the way through 1 Peter we learn about this born again identity, which transforms all of who we are, our behaviors, and our very purpose. This transformed reality is counter to our culture because a “born again” identity comes not from gender, culture, status, education, or profession but rather from the secure love God has for us. Isn’t that something? **Our identity is not something we achieve, it’s something we are given.** As you and I receive our new true identity from God, it can’t help but change us!

The more we grow into this identity and understand the depths of how loved we are, the more able we are to love God, ourselves, and others—especially those whose opinions and lifestyle are different from ours. We begin to live in freedom even though we’re tempted to find meaning and identity in our career, our looks, our relationships, our financial status, or our social media feeds.

Where do you think most people find their value? Is it based on the very subjective list above or the fact that they unconditionally matter to God? Probably not the latter. But here’s the good news—God uniquely designed each of us and our identity is rooted in His love for us. Peter tells his audience that we matter to God and that He created us for a relationship with Him.

So, where do **you** find your identity? Maybe you’re not sure and that’s ok. We invite you to keep exploring this “born again” identity with us.



**What does it mean to be born again?**

## 1 PETER MINISERIES

Peter encourages the recipients of his letter with the amazing truth that they have been born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The phrase “born again” is key to understanding our true identity and Christ’s resurrection is the centerpiece of our hope. Even if you’ve been a follower of Jesus for some time, you probably have questions about what it means to be born again. Don’t worry, you’re in good company! Early in Jesus’ ministry, a conversation took place between Jesus and a religious leader who was perplexed by the seeming impossibility of being born again. He asked Jesus some really great questions.

“After dark one evening, he came to speak with Jesus. ‘Rabbi,’ he said, ‘we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you.’ Jesus replied, ‘I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God.’ ‘What do you mean?’ exclaimed Nicodemus. ‘How can an old man go back into his mother’s womb and be born again?’ Jesus replied, ‘I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. So don’t be surprised when I say, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can’t tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can’t explain how people are born of the Spirit” (JOHN 3:1-8, NLT)

**As you read this conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus, Jesus makes it clear that being born again is a mysterious transformation that takes place through God’s Spirit.**

How vast and how wide is God’s love for us. He is not only our Creator but our good and loving Father. Those who have been **born again** are actually called “children of God.” Let’s take a look at this in Ephesians 1:4-6.

Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son (NLT)

Isn't that an amazing invitation? You and I are mysteriously born again and then adopted into God's family—a family He knew about even before time began! God changes our identity and calls us His children. Let's celebrate that together as we read what another one of Jesus' friends wrote in 1 John 3:1-2.

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. (ESV)



### How does knowing you're a child of God affect your identity?

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### Let's take a look at one or two phrases that describe our new identity in 1 Peter 1:3-9

For example, 1 Peter 1:4 tells us that we've been given an inheritance that will last forever. Or, in verses 6-9 Peter explains how Jesus is the source of our hope even in the face of hard times and trials (we'll explore this aspect of our identity in suffering in episode 4).

- What else do **you** notice?

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# Shrink & Think

This “shrink and think” exercise is to help you summarize what you’ve learned about God, yourself, and others from this episode.

The worksheet is shaped like an hourglass with an orange border. It is divided into four sections:

- 1. Factual Insights**  
*This step helps you to look at the big picture and the facts in this episode*  
From this lesson, what do you learn about
  - The identity of God
  - Your identity in relation to God
  - The identity of others?

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- 2. Revealing Relevance**  
*This step helps you to pinpoint what in the lesson has been most revealing or relevant for you*  
Why does what you learned about identity matter?  

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- 3. Summary Statement (10-12 words)**  
*This steps helps you shrink your observations into a short, shareable sentence or summary*  
Combine the factual insights about *identity* into a one sentence summary.  

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- 4. Apply It**  
*This last step helps you to apply what you’ve learned*
  - What mindset does 1st Peter encourage about identity?
  - What actions could result from knowing Christ secures your future?
  - What is one way you will put your new identity into practice as a result of what you’ve learned?

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## Final Reflection

As you consider what you've learned about God, yourself, and others in this lesson, where do you see elements of IDENTITY in the True Story connecting with your own story?

- What part do you play in embracing your new identity?
- What is the result or the reward of living out your new identity?

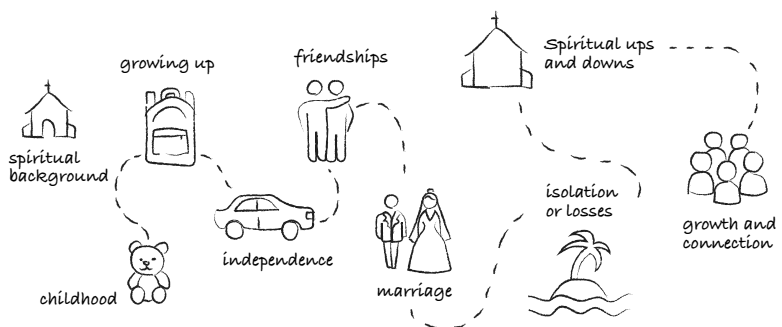


## Your Own Journey

In the last lesson, you started mapping out your own journey, your own story.



What would you add to your story map based on your experience exploring identity?



Do you know anyone who seems to be confused about and may be searching for their true identity? Maybe that person is you. If so, let's keep the conversation going.

# Going Deeper:



## Theme Verses in 1 Peter on Identity

- Chapter 1—verses 3-5, 22-23
  - Chapter 2—verses 9-10, 21-25
  - Chapter 3—verses 8-12, 13-16
  - Chapter 4—verses 12-14
  - Chapter 5—verses 6-11
- Read 1 Peter each day and note how Peter addresses our born again identity. The website [www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org)<sup>2</sup> is a great resource for looking up the original meaning of Bible words.
  - A helpful resource to guide you into meaningful gospel conversations: [\*You Gotta Ask: How to Have Meaningful Conversations With Anyone Using Compelling Questions\*](#)<sup>3</sup>



- Check out Jennie Allen's three-part interview with Jamie Winship that focuses on our identity, how identity informs our calling, and how fear keeps us stuck.
  - ["Conflict Zones, the CIA, and Listening to God with Jamie Winship," \*Made for This Podcast with Jennie Allen\*](#)<sup>4</sup>
  - ["How to Stop Fear From Running Your Life," \*Made For This with Jennie Allen\*](#)<sup>5</sup>
  - ["Finding Freedom From Fear with Jamie Winship," \*Made For This with Jennie Allen.\*](#)<sup>6</sup>
- Jamie Winship in his book *Living Fearless: Exchanging the Lies of the World for the Liberating Truth of God*, provides a simple and empowering approach to understanding and living out our new identity.<sup>7</sup>

## Endnotes:

1. “New Family Identity,” BibleProject, accessed October 12, 2022, <https://bibleproject.com/bible-studies/reflections/new-family-identity/>.
2. Blue Letter Bible, accessed October 12, 2022, [www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org).
3. Jon Strain and Pam Strain, *You Gotta Ask: How to Have Meaningful Conversations With Anyone Using Compelling Questions* (Boise, ID: You Gotta Ask, Inc., 2021).
4. Jennie Allen, “Conflict Zones, the CIA, and Listening to God with Jamie Winship,” *Made For This with Jennie Allen Podcast*, accessed January 4, 2023, <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/made-for-this-with-jennie-allen/id1466667116?i=1000584893686>.
5. Jennie Allen, “How to Stop Fear From Running Your Life with Jamie Winship,” *Made For This with Jennie Allen*, accessed January 4, 2023, <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/made-for-this-with-jennie-allen/id1466667116?i=1000585733327>.
6. Jennie Allen, “Finding Freedom From Fear with Jamie Winship,” *Made For This Podcast with Jennie Allen*, accessed January 4, 2023, <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/made-for-this-with-jennie-allen/id1466667116?i=1000586542104>.
7. Winship, Jamie, *Living Fearless: Exchanging the Lies of the World for the Liberating Truth of God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 2022.