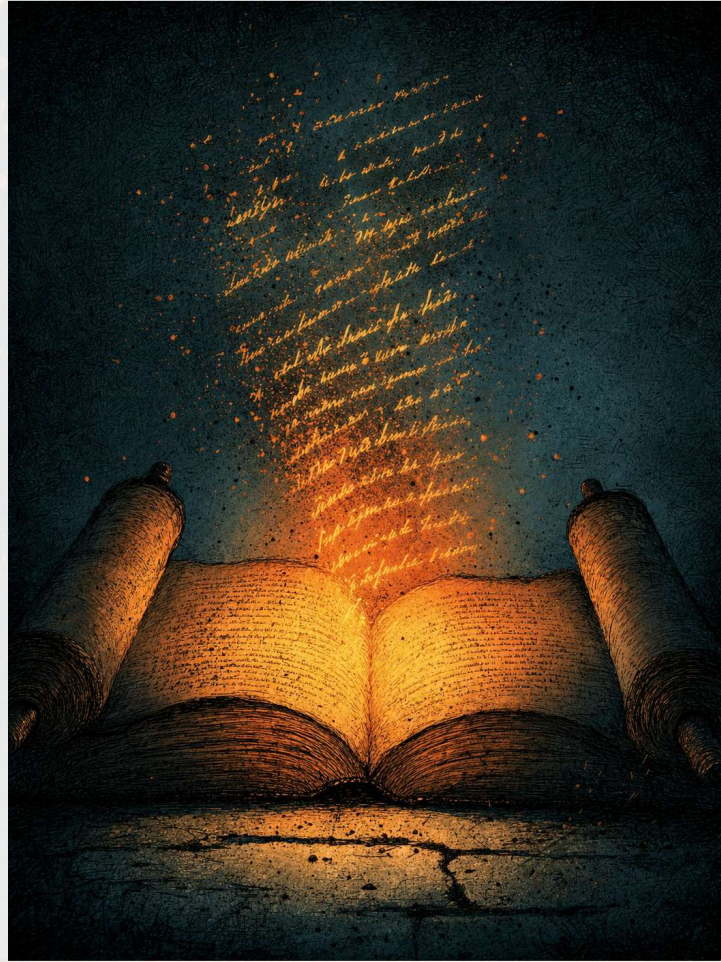


FAITHLABZ

WORDS THAT SHAPED THE FAITH · MONTH 2



Words of Identity

Who God Says You Are

JUNE 2026 · BIBLE STUDY

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Welcome

Someone asks who you are, and watch where your mind runs first.

Your job. What you have built. What you are behind on. The number in your bank account, the title under your name in an email, the thing you did that you are still proud of, or the thing you did that you cannot forgive yourself for. I do it too. I reach for my resume before I even think about it. For a long time I believed that was the answer. That if I could just stack enough done things on the scale, the scale would finally say I mattered.

This study is about a different answer.

In May we walked through Words of Relationship, and we learned whose we are. One flesh. Adopted. Close enough to whisper Abba. That was the ground we needed before we could stand here. Because once you know you belong to Him, the next question arrives on its own. Now that I am His, who am I?

June answers it with thirty words. Thirty Hebrew and Greek words that do not describe what you have accomplished. They describe what God has already decided about you, most of it before you did a single thing to earn it or ruin it.

You were struck like a coin with His image. You were breathed into being mouth to clay. You were chosen first, treasured, pocketed like a king's private hoard. You were born of God, named an heir, called beloved before you were wise or foolish. You were set apart, made a priest, called light by the Light Himself. You were sealed with a mark that is not coming off. And you were given a name in a city called Antioch that gathers up every other word here into one. You belong to Christ.

None of that is on your resume. All of it is truer than your resume.

So here is what I would ask of you for the next month. Read these slowly. Do not rush to the application. You cannot do for God what you do not yet believe about God, and you cannot live out an identity you do not yet trust is yours. Let the words land first. Let yourself be told who you are by the only One with the authority to say.

You are not what you have done.

You are what He has said.

Let us listen to Him say it.



How to Use This Study

This study is built for a group or for one person with a Bible, a pen, and forty-five minutes to an hour.

There are six sessions. Five follow the weeks of June. The sixth brings the whole month together. Each session can stand on its own, so if your group misses a week, you can pick up the next one without getting lost.

Every session has the same shape. You open with a question that surfaces the theme before anyone opens a Bible. You read the Scripture aloud. You walk through a teaching summary that a leader can read straight off the page. You spotlight three or four of the week's Hebrew and Greek words. Then you discuss, cross-reference, reflect alone, and take one concrete practice into the week. Each session closes with a prayer prompt.

A few notes on the words themselves. The original-language terms are given with their Strong's numbers and a pronunciation guide so anyone can say them out loud. Occurrence counts are marked with the word "about" because faithful sources sometimes count slightly differently, and we would rather hedge honestly than assert a number we cannot defend. If you want to dig deeper, the appendix at the back collects all thirty words in one glossary.

One last thing. This is not a test. Nobody is grading the journaling. The questions that feel too personal to answer out loud are often the ones worth sitting with on your own. Bring the doubt with you. Bring the bad week. The whole point of an identity given by God is that you do not have to clean yourself up to receive it.



June at a Glance

The month moves through five movements. Each week builds on the one before it.

Week 1, Made in His Image. The ground floor of identity. Before any role, before any title, you bear the image of God. We start in Genesis, in the dirt, where humanity is struck with God's likeness and breathed into life, and we follow the thread to the new creation you become in Christ.

Week 2, Chosen and Belonging. Faith was never meant to be a solo climb. You were not only saved from something. You were saved into someone. A chosen people, a treasured possession, a household with your name on the lease, a citizenship that does not expire.

Week 3, Sons, Heirs, and Beloved. Family identity, landing on Father's Day, June 21. Child, seed, heir, beloved, firstborn, brother, son. For some of us the word "father" is tender. For others it carries an ache. This week the perfect Father says the word over you that you may have spent your whole life waiting to hear.

Week 4, Set Apart and Sent. Identity becomes vocation. Holy, priest, royal, a kingdom, light, inheritance, temple. You are not only loved. You are commissioned. Set apart for a purpose and sent out carrying the presence of God.

Week 5, Sealed and Named. The capstone. You are sealed with a mark of ownership that will not come off, and you are called by His name. Two words to end the month, and they hold everything that came before.

Across the thirty words, fifteen are Hebrew and fifteen are Greek, and they answer each other on purpose. The Hebrew *tselem* and *demut*, image and likeness, are completed by the Greek *eikon*. The Hebrew *am*, a people, is handed to the Greek *laos*. The Hebrew *qadosh*, holy, is matched by the Greek *hagios*. Old Testament and New, the same God saying the same thing about you in two languages.

By the end, one sentence should feel less like a slogan and more like the truest thing about you.

You belong to Christ.





SESSION 1

Made in His Image

Based on Week 1, June 1 to 7: "Made in His Image"

Key Words: tselem · demut · eikon · neshamah · adam · ktisis · hagios



Overview

Before you held a single role or earned a single title, God struck you like a coin with His own image and breathed you into life mouth to clay. This session goes to the floor underneath your identity, the part of you that no failure can pry up and no resume can improve, and follows the thread from the dust of Genesis to the new creation you become in Christ.

OPENING QUESTION (5 MINUTES)

Go around the room. When a stranger asks “so what do you do,” what is the first thing out of your mouth? Now the harder one: if you were not allowed to mention your job, your family role, or anything you have accomplished, how would you finish the sentence “I am...”?

Let the silence be a little uncomfortable. That discomfort is the whole reason this study exists.

SCRIPTURE READING

Read aloud: Genesis 1:26-27 and Genesis 2:7

Reference passages: Psalm 8:3-5; Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Corinthians 1:2

TEACHING SUMMARY (10 TO 15 MINUTES)

Somebody asks who you are, and watch where your mind runs. Your job. What you have built. What you are behind on. I do it too. I reach for my resume before I even think about it, and I have been a Christian for a long time. So if you have ever stood in a room full of impressive people and quietly run the math on whether you measure up, you are in good company. This is human. It is not a personal failing. It is just the wrong question, answered with the wrong evidence.

Genesis hands us a better answer, and it is older than anything you could put on a resume. “Then God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” Two Hebrew words sit at the center of that sentence. *Tselem*, image, and *demut*, likeness. We tend to hear “image of God” as a soft, abstract compliment. It was not soft to the people who first heard it.

In the ancient world a king could not stand in every city of his empire. So he would set up a *tselem*, a statue of himself, out in the distant provinces, so that anyone walking past knew whose land this was and whose authority ran here. Genesis takes that loaded political word and does something staggering with it. God says He filled the whole earth with His *tselem*, His image. And it was not carved from stone or cast in bronze. It was people. It was you. You were struck like a coin, His face pressed into you, before you produced one single thing.

Then look at how He made the first human. He did not speak us up from a distance the way He spoke the stars. He got down in the dirt. “Then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.” That word for breath is *neshamah*. And your body already knows what that word costs. You cannot breathe into someone from across a room. You have to be close enough to touch. Mouth to clay. Your very first breath was His, given that close. The distance you have been feeling was never on His end.

Here is the ache, though, and we should be honest about it. The image got cracked. Genesis 3 happens. We do not reflect God the way we were made to. So the question becomes whether the broken image gets scrapped. The New Testament answers in Greek. The word is *eikon*, and Paul says Jesus is “the image of the invisible God,” the perfect *eikon*. And then he says the Father has decided that you will be “conformed to the image of his Son.” The cracked image was not thrown away. It was given a face, and you are being slowly shaped back into that same likeness, “from one degree of glory to another.”

Paul has one more word for what that makes you. Not a renovation. For years I tried to renovate the old me, sand him down, repaint him, make him presentable enough to bring to church. Paul says God did not renovate. “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.” *Kaine ktisis*. New construction. The old labels are not refurbished. They are demolished, and something new stands where they stood.

So you can stop auditioning. The thing that makes you matter was set before you did anything to deserve it, and it is being remade in you no matter how slow it feels. You do not earn the image. You carry it. You are not a patched-up version of who you were. You are dust that God chose to crown, and that is why Paul can write to an arguing, immature, ordinary church in Corinth and call them “saints,” *hagios*, holy ones, on page one, before they fix a single thing. The title is a starting line, not a trophy.

You are not your resume. You were struck with the face of God, breathed full of His own air, and you are being remade into the likeness of His Son. That is the floor. Nothing you do today can lower it.

WORD STUDY SPOTLIGHT

תְּסֵלֶם tselem

tselem (TSEH-lem) | Strong's H6754

Appears: about 17 times in the Old Testament

Meaning: A representative image, a carved likeness; humanity made as God's image and appointed representative on the earth.

Key verse: *Genesis 1:27*

In the ancient world a king set up a tselem in distant provinces to mark whose authority ruled there. God filled the earth with His image, and it was people.

דִּמוּת demut

demut (deh-MOOTH) | Strong's H1823

Appears: about 25 times in the Old Testament

Meaning: Likeness, resemblance, pattern; the way humanity is made to resemble God.

| Key verse: *Genesis 1:26*

Paired with tselem. Image is the standing; likeness is the resemblance. You were made to look like Him in the world.

εἰκών eikon

eikon (ay-KONE) | Strong's G1504

Appears: about 23 times in the New Testament

Meaning: Image, exact representation; Christ is the eikon of God, and you are being remade into that same image.

| Key verse: *Romans 8:29*

The image cracked in Eden was not scrapped. It was given a face. This is the source of the English word "icon."

נְשָׁמָה neshamah

neshamah (nesh-aw-MAW) | Strong's H5397

Appears: about 24 times in the Old Testament

Meaning: Breath, the breath of life God breathed into the human; the divine spark of life, conscience, and dignity.

| Key verse: *Genesis 2:7*

You cannot breathe into someone from across a room. The word itself proves how close God had to be to start you.

אָדָם adam

adam (aw-DAWM) | Strong's H120

Appears: hundreds of times in the Old Testament

Meaning: Humanity, mankind, the human being; the first man and the whole race in him.

| Key verse: *Genesis 2:7*

Tied to adamah, the ground. You are dust God chose to crown, earth He decided to fill with His own breath.

κτίσις ktisis

ktisis (KTEE-sis) | Strong's G2937

Appears: about 19 times in the New Testament

Meaning: Creation, creature, the act of creating; in Christ you are a kaine ktisis, a brand-new creation.

Key verse: 2 Corinthians 5:17

Not a renovation of the old self. A demolition and a rebuild. You are new construction.

ἅγιος hagios

hagios (HAG-ee-os) | Strong's G40

Appears: about 233 times in the New Testament

Meaning: Holy, set apart, a saint; a holy one belonging to God.

Key verse: 1 Corinthians 1:2

Paul calls an arguing, immature church “saints” on page one, before they fix a single thing. The title is a starting line, not a trophy.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (20 TO 25 MINUTES)

OBSERVATION (WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?)

1. In Genesis 1:26-27, how many times does the text repeat the word “image” or “likeness”? What does that repetition tell you about how much weight the author wanted it to carry?
2. In Genesis 2:7, what two ingredients make up the first human, and which one does God add personally and directly?

INTERPRETATION (WHAT DOES IT MEAN?)

3. If a tselem was a statue a king set up to represent his rule in places he could not physically stand, what is Genesis claiming about why human beings exist and what they are for?
4. Paul says we are being “conformed to the image” of Christ over time (Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18). How is that different from being declared a “new creation” all at once in 2 Corinthians 5:17? How can both be true?
5. Paul calls the Corinthians “saints” before they have cleaned up their behavior. What does that say about whether holiness is a starting point or a finish line?

APPLICATION (WHAT DO I DO?)

6. What is one label or accomplishment you have been quietly leaning on to answer the question “who am I”? What would change if you let “I bear the image of God” sit underneath it?

7. Think of one person you find hard to respect right now. What would it look like to treat them this week as someone who also carries the tselem of God?

8. Where in your life are you trying to renovate the old you instead of trusting that God has made you new? Name it.

CROSS-REFERENCES

Genesis 9:6: The image of God is the reason human life is sacred. The doctrine has teeth; it grounds the value of every person, including the ones you find difficult.

Colossians 3:9-10: The new self “is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.” Sanctification is the image being restored, not replaced.

James 3:9: We bless God and curse people “who are made in the likeness of God.” James says you cannot do both. How you talk about people is a theology of the image.

PERSONAL REFLECTION (SOLO JOURNALING)

1. Write down the first three things you reached for when you tried to finish “I am...” in the opening question. Then write underneath them: “Before any of this, I was struck with the image of God.” Which sentence do you actually believe more, and why?

2. Genesis says your first breath was God’s, given mouth to clay. Where have you been feeling distance from God lately? Whose end of the room is that distance really on?

3. What is one old label you keep wearing that Christ has already demolished? Write it down, then draw a line through it.

WEEKLY PRACTICE

THIS WEEK’S PRACTICE

Each morning this week, before you check your phone, say one sentence out loud: “Before I do anything today, I already bear the image of God.” Then take three slow breaths and let each one be a small thank-you for the breath that was His first.

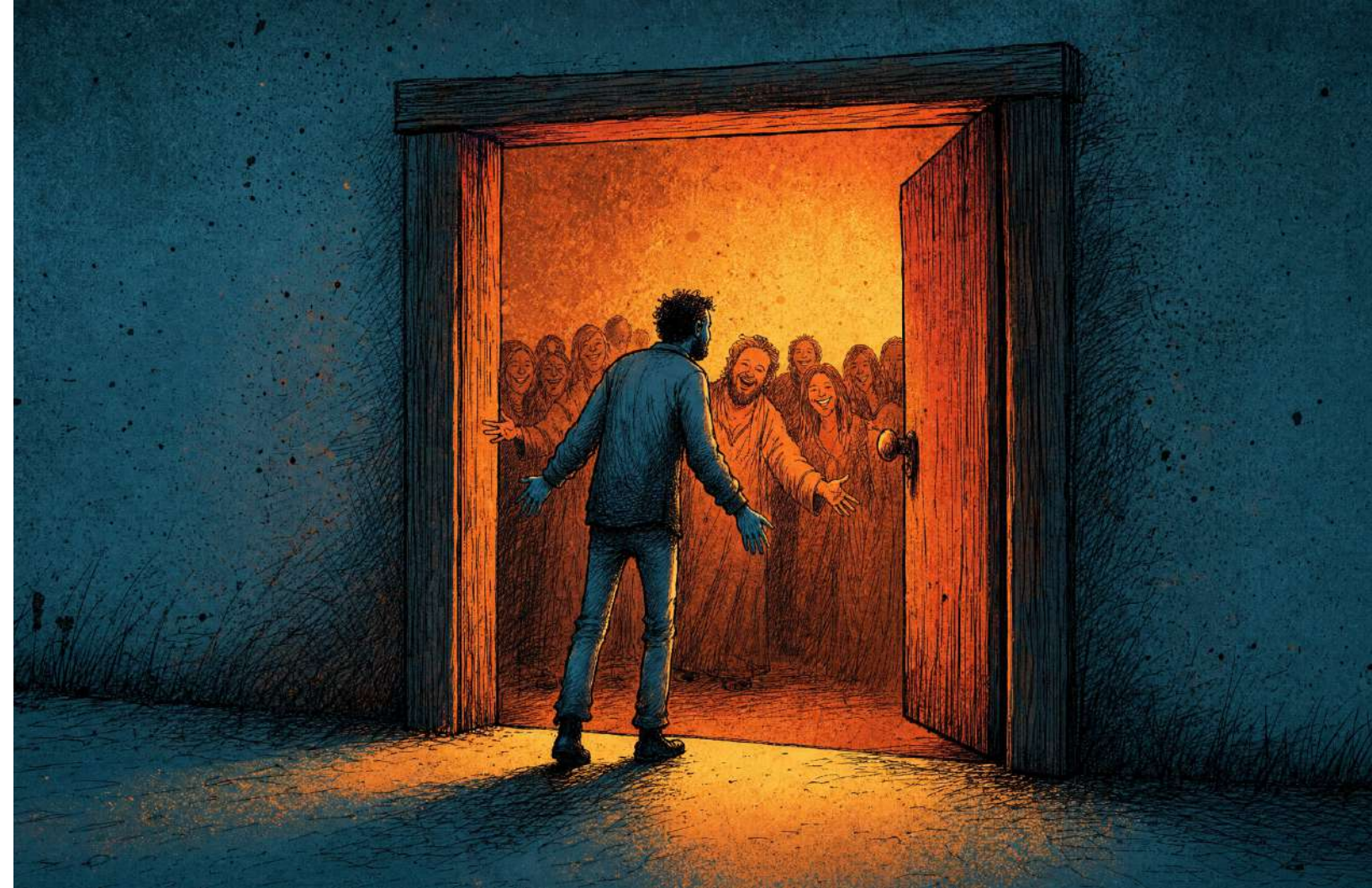
How to do it: Put a sticky note where your phone charges, or set a one-word alarm label. The point is to let the identity land before the day’s demands start writing a different one over it.

CLOSING PRAYER PROMPT

AS YOU CLOSE, PRAY ABOUT:

- Thanking God that your worth was set before you did anything to earn it
- The places you have been auditioning for a value you already have
- One person you will choose to see as an image-bearer this week, especially one who is hard to love





SESSION 2

Chosen and Belonging

Based on Week 2, June 8 to 14: "Chosen and Belonging"

Key Words: eklektos · segullah · am · laos · oikeios · ger · politeuma



Overview

Faith was never meant to be a solo climb. This session sits with the part of us that has spent a lifetime trying to get picked, and shows that God chose first, treasured on purpose, and moved you from the edge of the room into the household. You were not only saved from something. You were saved into someone.

OPENING QUESTION (5 MINUTES)

Think back to being a kid waiting to get picked for a team, or the grown-up version: waiting to hear back, waiting for the invite, waiting to find out if you made the cut. What does that waiting feel like in your body? Now flip it. When is a time someone chose you before you had done anything to earn it?

SCRIPTURE READING

Read aloud: 1 Peter 2:9-10 and Ephesians 2:19

Reference passages: Exodus 19:5; Deuteronomy 7:6-8; Malachi 3:17; Hosea 2:23; Philippians 3:20

TEACHING SUMMARY (10 TO 15 MINUTES)

I spent a long time trying to get picked. Picked for the team, picked by the people I admired, picked, finally, by God if I behaved well enough for long enough. I read the Christian life like a tryout, and I assumed God was up in the bleachers with a clipboard, deciding whether I made the roster. If that is the God you have been performing for, I want to tell you what the words actually say, because they turn the whole timeline around.

Peter writes to a scattered crowd of ordinary believers and stacks four titles on them in one breath. “You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession.” The word under “chosen” is *eklektos*. It means selected, picked out, set apart by a deliberate choice. And here is the timeline the gospel insists on. He chose first. Before you cleaned up. Before you behaved. Paul says it plainly in Ephesians, that God chose us “before the foundation of the world.” You did not earn the pick. You woke up already chosen.

The Old Testament has an even warmer word for it. *Segullah*. When God tells Israel at Sinai, “you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples,” that word treasured is *segullah*. It is not inventory. It is not one more item on an endless list of things God owns. *Segullah* is the personal treasure a king slips into his own pocket and keeps on his person. Out of everything He owns, and Exodus is quick to add that the whole earth is His, He points at His people and says, that one is mine. In Malachi He says it again about the day He acts: “they shall be mine, says the LORD of hosts, in the day when I make up my treasured possession.” He pockets you. He keeps you close.

And He does not keep you alone. I used to read faith as just me and God and a long ladder, a private project. But Scripture keeps making the word plural. The Hebrew is *am*, a people. In Hosea, God takes a child whose name literally means Not-My-People and renames him My-People. “I will say to Not My People, You are my people.” The Greek picks up the same word as *laos*, the term once reserved for Israel alone, and Peter hands it to a mixed crowd of believers, many of them not even Jewish. The fence came down. The words are yours now.

So what does that make you in the room? Paul answers in Ephesians, and he answers it for everyone who has ever walked into a gathering certain they did not belong. “You are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.” That word for household member is *oikeios*. You are not a guest being tolerated until it gets awkward. You are family. In the household of God you do not knock and wait to be let in. You have a key. You open the fridge.

Remember what you were before that, though, because it makes the welcome land. The Hebrew *ger* is the resident foreigner, the outsider who lives among a people but does not quite belong, the one without the inside jokes. God writes whole laws around the *ger*, commanding His people to love the stranger “for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” That was us. Before grace we were the foreigner standing at the edge. Then He moved us in.

And the citizenship He gives does not run out. Paul wrote to Philippi, a proud Roman colony where citizenship was the thing everyone wore on their chest, and told them their real passport was stamped somewhere else. “Our citizenship is in heaven.” The Greek is *politeuma*, your true commonwealth, your homeland. You can love your country and still know it is not your permanent address.

So you can stop auditioning for a spot you already have. You were chosen before you behaved, treasured like something a king keeps in his pocket, named into a people, moved from the edge of the room to the center of the household, and given a citizenship that does not expire. You do not have to earn your way in. You get to live like someone who already belongs, because you do.

WORD STUDY SPOTLIGHT

ἐκλεκτός *eklektos*

eklektos (ek-lek-TOS) | Strong's G1588

Appears: about 22 times in the New Testament

Meaning: Chosen, selected, picked out; God's deliberate choice of a people for Himself.

| *Key verse:* 1 Peter 2:9

From *eklego*, to choose out. The gospel turns the timeline around. He chose first, while you were not behaving at all.

הַסֵּגֻלָּה segullah

segullah (seg-oo-LAW) | Strong's H5459

Appears: about 8 times in the Old Testament

Meaning: A personal treasure, prized property a king keeps close; God's name for the people He treasures.

| *Key verse: Exodus 19:5*

Not God's inventory. The treasure a king slips into his own pocket and keeps on his person.

אִם am

am (AHM) | Strong's H5971

Appears: very frequently in the Old Testament

Meaning: A people, a nation, kin bound together as one.

| *Key verse: Hosea 2:23*

In Hosea, God takes a child named Not-My-People and renames him My-People. Belonging is something He declares over you.

λαός laos

laos (lah-OS) | Strong's G2992

Appears: about 142 times in the New Testament

Meaning: A people, the people of God.

| *Key verse: 1 Peter 2:9*

The word once reserved for Israel, now handed to a mixed crowd of believers. The fence came down. Source of the English "laity."

οἰκεῖος oikeios

oikeios (oy-KAY-os) | Strong's G3609

Appears: about 3 times in the New Testament

Meaning: Belonging to a household, a family member; you are part of the household of God, not a guest passing through.

| *Key verse: Ephesians 2:19*

From oikos, house. In the household of God you do not knock. You have a key.

גֵר ger

ger (GARE) | Strong's H1616

Appears: about 92 times in the Old Testament

Meaning: Sojourner, resident foreigner, the outsider who lives among a people but does not quite belong.

Key verse: *Leviticus 19:34*

The one without the inside jokes. That was us before grace, standing at the edge. Then He moved us in.

πολίτευμα politeuma

politeuma (po-LEE-tew-mah) | Strong's G4175

Appears: 1 time in the New Testament (Philippians 3:20)

Meaning: Commonwealth, citizenship, the homeland one belongs to; your true citizenship is in heaven.

Key verse: *Philippians 3:20*

Written to a proud Roman colony. Your real passport is stamped somewhere that does not expire.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (20 TO 25 MINUTES)

OBSERVATION (WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?)

1. List the four titles Peter gives believers in 1 Peter 2:9. Which of them surprises you most when you realize it is addressed to ordinary people like you?
2. In Ephesians 2:19, what two words describe what you used to be, and what two describe what you are now?

INTERPRETATION (WHAT DOES IT MEAN?)

3. If segullah is the treasure a king keeps in his own pocket rather than in a vault with everything else he owns, what does it change to hear God call His people that?
4. In Hosea, God renames "Not My People" as "My People." What does that tell you about whether belonging to God is something we achieve or something He declares?
5. Paul tells Philippian citizens of Rome that their real citizenship is in heaven. How do you hold loving your earthly home and knowing it is not your permanent one at the same time, without resenting either?

APPLICATION (WHAT DO I DO?)

6. Where do you still live like you are auditioning for a spot in God's family rather than already holding one? What would change on Monday if you believed you were chosen first?
7. Ephesians says you are oikos, household. Is there a Christian community where you have been acting like a guest instead of family? What is one way to "open the fridge" this week?

8. You were once the ger, the outsider who got pulled in. Who is on the edge of your circle right now, and how could you pull them in the way you were pulled in?

CROSS-REFERENCES

Deuteronomy 7:7-8: God did not choose Israel because they were impressive or numerous. He chose them simply because He loved them. The reason for the pick is in Him, not in you.

John 15:16: “You did not choose me, but I chose you.” Jesus puts the order of the relationship beyond dispute.

Hebrews 11:13-16: The faithful confessed they were “strangers and exiles on the earth,” people looking for a homeland. The ache of not-quite-belonging here is itself a clue that you were made for the politeuma that is coming.

PERSONAL REFLECTION (SOLO JOURNALING)

1. Write the sentence you have been living by: “I hope I am good enough.” Now write the true one underneath it: “I was chosen first.” Which one has been running your week?
 2. Picture God pocketing you the way Malachi describes, keeping you close as His treasured possession. What part of you resists believing He would do that?
 3. Name a season when you were the outsider, the ger. How did it feel, and who, if anyone, pulled you in? How might that memory shape the way you treat the people on the edges around you now?
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WEEKLY PRACTICE

THIS WEEK'S PRACTICE

Find one person who is on the edge of your church family or your circle, someone newer, quieter, or easy to overlook, and pull them in. Sit with them. Learn one real thing about them. Make sure they leave knowing they belong.

How to do it: You do not need an event. A text, a saved seat, ten extra minutes of conversation after the gathering. You were pulled in from the edge once. Do for someone else what was done for you.

CLOSING PRAYER PROMPT

AS YOU CLOSE, PRAY ABOUT:

- Thanking God that He chose you first, before you behaved
- Letting go of the audition mindset you have carried into your relationship with Him

- One person on the edges you will move toward this week





SESSION 3

Sons, Heirs, and Beloved

Based on Week 3, June 15 to 21: "Sons, Heirs, and Beloved"

This session lands on Father's Day, June 21

Key Words: teknon · zera · kleronomos · yedid · bechor · adelphos · huiois



Overview

This week the identity gets personal in the most literal way. Not a category, not a title, but family. Child, heir, beloved, firstborn, brother, son. This session lands on Father's Day, which for some is a day of gratitude and for others a day of ache, and it lets the perfect Father say over you the word you may have spent your whole life waiting to hear.

A note for leaders: handle this session gently. Father's Day surfaces grief for people who lost a dad, never had one, or had one who wounded them. Do not rush past that. Make room for it.

OPENING QUESTION (5 MINUTES)

What is one word you wish you had heard more from a parent or a person who was supposed to be in your corner? You do not have to share why. Just the word.

If your group is close, this can go deep fast. If it is newer, keep it light and let people pass. Either is fine.

SCRIPTURE READING

Read aloud: Galatians 4:4-7 and 1 John 3:1-2

Reference passages: Romans 8:14-17; Deuteronomy 33:12; Exodus 4:22; Hebrews 2:11; Galatians 3:29

TEACHING SUMMARY (10 TO 15 MINUTES)

Father's Day is tender, and I am not going to pretend otherwise. For some of you it is a day of gratitude, a phone call you are glad to make. For others it is the ache of a dad you never had, or never had well, and the cards in the store aisle feel like a language you do not speak. Wherever you are this morning, I want you to hold your story and the words we are about to study at the same time, because this week the Bible does not give us a category to file ourselves under. It gives us a family to belong to.

Back in May we learned to whisper Abba, Father. This week the Father answers back, and He uses a whole cluster of words to do it.

Start with the gentlest one. *Teknon*. It means child, and John reaches for it on purpose. "See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are." There was a colder, more legal word available. John skips it and picks *teknon*, which comes from the verb for giving birth. It does not just mean you have a legal standing. It means you came from Him, that there is family resemblance in your bones. And notice where the sentence lands. Not "we hope to be." Not "we will be someday." "And so we are." Present tense. A fact about you right now.

Then Paul raises the stakes with a courtroom word. *Huios*, son, full standing. In Galatians he writes, “So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.” Hear the contrast he is making. A slave works for a master, hoping the wages clear. A son belongs to a father, knowing the estate is already his. Paul says God reached into the slave’s quarters and made you family, and the proof is that “God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” The standing is not on probation. It is settled.

And if a son, then an heir. The Greek is *kleronomos*. In May we studied *kleronomia*, the inheritance, the thing that gets handed down. This week we say the quiet part out loud. There is an heir, and the heir is you. Not a distant cousin who might get a line in the will. Paul says you are a “fellow heir with Christ,” named in the Father’s own hand. This was the promise running through all those genealogies you skim, the seed, *zera*, running down through history toward a person, and Paul says if you belong to Christ you are “Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.” The promise was running toward you the whole time.

But there is a word here for the people who can collect every approval and still go to bed unsure they are loved. *Yedid*. Beloved. When God named Solomon, He sent word through the prophet Nathan to call him Jedidiah, “beloved of the LORD.” Before that boy did one wise or foolish thing, the first word over him was beloved. Approval is for what you do. Beloved is for who you are. And it is not earned. It is given, the way the Father tore the sky open at the Jordan and said over Jesus, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,” before Jesus had preached a sermon or healed a single person.

One more, for anyone who suspects Jesus merely tolerates them. The word for brother is *adelphos*, and it literally means from the same womb. Same family, same blood. Hebrews says the Son of God “is not ashamed to call them brothers.” Sit with the not-ashamed part. Most of us assume Jesus helps us out from a polite distance. Scripture says He claims you in public, as kin.

So here is the gift, and I want to say it slowly. You are not hired help. You are not a project God is grudgingly improving. You are a child, born of Him, with family resemblance in your bones. You are a son, a daughter, with full standing and an inheritance already in your name. You are beloved before you were wise or foolish. And the firstborn, Christ Himself, the true *bechor*, is not ashamed to call you His own.

If your earthly father story is hard, do not rush past it today. Sit with Galatians 4. Let the perfect Father say the word you needed all along. You are Mine.

WORD STUDY SPOTLIGHT

τέκνον *teknon*

teknon (TEK-non) | Strong’s G5043

Appears: about 99 times in the New Testament

Meaning: A child, one born of someone; believers are born of God and called His children.

Key verse: 1 John 3:1

From *tikto*, to give birth. John chose the word that means family resemblance, not just legal rank. “And so we are.” Present tense.

זֵרָא zera

zera (ZEH-rah) | Strong's H2233

Appears: about 229 times in the Old Testament

Meaning: Seed, offspring, descendants; the line that carries a promise forward.

| *Key verse: Genesis 3:15*

The promised seed ran through history toward one person. Paul says if you are Christ's, you are Abraham's offspring, an heir of that promise.

κληρονόμος kleronomos

kleronomos (klay-ro-NO-mos) | Strong's G2818

Appears: about 15 times in the New Testament

Meaning: An heir, one who receives an inheritance; a fellow heir with Christ.

| *Key verse: Romans 8:17*

The person behind May's kleronomia. Not a distant cousin in the will. Named in the Father's own hand.

יְדִיד yedid

yedid (yeh-DEED) | Strong's H3039

Appears: about 9 times in the Old Testament

Meaning: Beloved, dearly loved one; the name God sent for Solomon, Jedidiah, "beloved of the LORD."

| *Key verse: Deuteronomy 33:12*

Approval is for what you do. Beloved is for who you are. The first word over Solomon, before he did anything.

בְּכוֹר bechor

bechor (beh-KORE) | Strong's H1060

Appears: about 120 times in the Old Testament

Meaning: Firstborn; the one holding the rank, double portion, and headship of the firstborn.

| *Key verse: Exodus 4:22*

Christ is the true firstborn. Joined to Him, His standing as Son is shared with you.

ἀδελφός adelphos

adelphos (ad-el-FOS) | Strong's G80

Appears: about 343 times in the New Testament

Meaning: Brother, sibling, kin from the same womb.

| *Key verse: Hebrews 2:11*

Jesus "is not ashamed to call them brothers." Not help from a polite distance. He claims you in public, as family.

υἱός huios

huios (hwee-OS) | Strong's G5207

Appears: about 377 times in the New Testament

Meaning: Son; one who holds the full standing of a son, with the Father's name, access, and inheritance.

Key verse: *Galatians 4:7*

The opposite of *doulos*, slave. No longer working for wages, but family by the Father's decision. The standing is settled, not on probation.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (20 TO 25 MINUTES)

OBSERVATION (WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?)

1. In Galatians 4:7, what does Paul say you are “no longer,” and what does he say you now are? What is the proof he points to in verse 6?
2. In 1 John 3:1, what tense does John use when he says we are children of God? Why might that tense matter?

INTERPRETATION (WHAT DOES IT MEAN?)

3. *Teknon* stresses birth and resemblance; *huios* stresses standing and inheritance. Why do we need both words to understand what it means to belong to God?
4. God named Solomon “beloved” before Solomon had done anything wise or foolish. What does that say about the difference between God's love and human approval?
5. Hebrews says Jesus “is not ashamed” to call you a brother or sister. Why is the not-ashamed part the surprising part, and what does it answer in us?

APPLICATION (WHAT DO I DO?)

6. Where in your life are you still living like hired help, working for wages and hoping they clear, instead of like an heir who already knows the estate is coming?
7. If Father's Day carries an ache for you, what would it look like to bring that ache honestly to the perfect Father this week rather than pushing past it?
8. Who in your life needs to hear that they are not tolerated but claimed? How could you be the one who says it?

CROSS-REFERENCES

Romans 8:14-17: The Spirit Himself testifies that you are a child of God, and children are heirs. The assurance is not based on your feelings but on the Spirit's witness.

Matthew 3:17: The Father calls Jesus “beloved” before His public ministry begins. Belovedness precedes performance, even for the Son.

Galatians 3:29: If you are Christ’s, you are Abraham’s offspring, the zera, heirs of a promise older than you. The genealogies were running toward you the whole time.

PERSONAL REFLECTION (SOLO JOURNALING)

1. Write down the word you wished you had heard more from a parent or a mentor. Now read Galatians 4:6-7 and write what the perfect Father actually says over you. Sit with the gap, and the gift.
2. Where have you been relating to God as a slave hoping for wages instead of a son or daughter who already holds the inheritance? Be specific about the day-to-day evidence.
3. Read Deuteronomy 33:12 and make “the beloved of the LORD dwells in safety” the last sentence you read before sleep tonight. Write down what changes when “beloved” is the first word over you instead of “useful” or “good enough.”

WEEKLY PRACTICE

THIS WEEK’S PRACTICE

Once a day this week, say out loud the sentence the Father says in Galatians 4: “I am no longer a slave, but a son” (or a daughter). If the words catch in your throat because of your own father story, let them catch. Say them anyway. They are true regardless of who first taught you the word “father.”

How to do it: Pair it with a daily anchor you already have, the first coffee, the commute, the walk to the car. Repetition is how a new identity moves from the head to the bones.

CLOSING PRAYER PROMPT

AS YOU CLOSE, PRAY ABOUT:

- Thanking the Father that you are His child right now, present tense, not someday
- Bringing any grief or longing tied to fathers honestly into His presence
- Believing the word “beloved” over yourself before you have earned it

If anyone in the group is carrying real pain around Father’s Day, consider praying for them by name, gently, if they are willing.





SESSION 4

Set Apart and Sent

Based on Week 4, June 22 to 28: “Set Apart and Sent”

Key Words: qadosh · kohen · basileios · mamlakah · phos · nachalah · naos



Overview

Identity is not the finish line. It is the launch pad. This session turns the corner from who you are to what you are for. Holy, priest, royal, light, temple. You are not only loved and claimed. You are set apart for a purpose and sent out carrying the presence of God into rooms that have never felt it.

OPENING QUESTION (5 MINUTES)

Have you ever been handed a responsibility you were sure you were not qualified for? What did it feel like to be trusted with something before you felt ready? Hold that feeling. This week is about being trusted with something holy before you feel holy enough for it.

SCRIPTURE READING

Read aloud: 1 Peter 2:9 and Matthew 5:14-16

Reference passages: Exodus 19:5-6; Leviticus 20:26; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 1:18; Isaiah 49:6

TEACHING SUMMARY (10 TO 15 MINUTES)

The word holy used to make me tired. If you grew up in church, you might know the feeling. Holy sounded like a performance review I was always failing, a bar set just high enough that I would never clear it, a word for the people in the front row who had it together. So I want to start by taking the exhaustion off the table, because the actual word does not mean what we think it means.

The Hebrew is *qadosh*. It does not mean morally flawless on your own steam. At its root it means set apart, cut away from common use for a special purpose. The temple cups were *qadosh*, not because they were better cups, but because they were pulled out of the kitchen drawer and reserved for one thing. When Leviticus records God saying “you shall be holy to me, for I the LORD am holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine,” holiness is not first about your behavior. It is about His claim. He set you aside. Behavior follows the setting apart; it does not earn it. The Greek says the same thing with *hagios*, the word that called the messy Corinthians saints on page one.

Now hear what He set you apart for, because it is staggering. At Sinai God told Israel, “you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” That word kingdom is *mamlakah*, and the phrase for priests is built on *kohen*, the priest. Peter takes that exact Sinai language and lays it on ordinary believers. “You are a royal priesthood.” The Greek for royal is *basileios*. Stop and feel the weight of it. In the old covenant the priesthood was a narrow door. One tribe. Mediators who went in so the people could stay out. Peter says the door is now wide open. You are the *kohen* now. You do not need someone to go in to God on your behalf. You go in. And you carry others in with you.

That is what a priest does, by the way. A priest stands in the gap. A priest carries people to God and carries God to people. So when you pray for the coworker who does not know how to pray for himself, that is priesthood. When you sit with the friend in the hospital and you are the only Scripture in the room, that is priesthood. You were ordained for it the day you were set apart.

Jesus says it another way, and it is almost too simple. “You are the light of the world.” The Greek is *phos*. Notice He does not say try to be light, or generate some light if you can manage it. He says you are light, the same way the sun is light, by nature now, because of who lives in you. And He gives the one instruction that matters: do not hide it. “Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father.” The light was never for you to admire in private. Israel was always meant to be “a light for the nations.” Now that job is yours.

And here is the part that makes the whole thing make sense. How can ordinary people carry the presence of God into ordinary rooms? Because the presence moved. Under the old covenant God dwelt in the temple, the *naos*, the inner sanctuary where only the priest could go on the holiest day. Paul writes to the Corinthians, of all people, “do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you.” *Naos*. The same word. The sanctuary relocated. It is not a building you visit on Sunday. It is you, carried into every room you enter Monday through Saturday. You are not going to where God is. You are bringing where God is.

So you are not benched. You are commissioned. You are set apart, which means He claimed you before you cleaned up. You are a priest, which means you have access you never have to beg for and a job carrying others in. You are royal, an heir of the kingdom, your true inheritance, your *nachalah*, already secured. You are light by nature, not by effort. And you are the temple now, the place God chose to live.

You do not have to feel qualified. You get to be sent.

WORD STUDY SPOTLIGHT

קֹדֶשׁ *qadosh*

qadosh (kaw-DOSHE) | Strong's H6918

Appears: about 116 times in the Old Testament

Meaning: Holy, set apart, consecrated; cut away from common use and reserved for God.

| *Key verse: Leviticus 20:26*

Not first about being flawless. About being claimed. The temple cups were holy because they were pulled out of the drawer for one purpose.

כֹּהֵן kohen

kohen (ko-HANE) | Strong's H3548

Appears: about 750 times in the Old Testament

Meaning: Priest; one who stands in the gap, carrying people to God and God to people.

| *Key verse: Exodus 19:6*

Under the old covenant a narrow door, one tribe. Peter throws it wide. You are the priest now. You go in, and you carry others with you.

βασίλειος basileios

basileios (bas-IL-ay-os) | Strong's G934

Appears: 2 times in the New Testament

Meaning: Royal, kingly, belonging to the king.

| *Key verse: 1 Peter 2:9*

“A royal priesthood.” The dignity of the King Himself is attached to His people. You serve from honor, not for it.

מַמְלָכָה mamlakah

mamlakah (mam-law-KAW) | Strong's H4467

Appears: about 117 times in the Old Testament

Meaning: Kingdom, dominion, royal rule.

| *Key verse: Exodus 19:6*

“A kingdom of priests.” At Sinai God claimed a whole people as His domain, the exact language Peter later lays on the church.

φῶς phos

phos (foce) | Strong's G5457

Appears: about 73 times in the New Testament

Meaning: Light; in Christ, what you are by nature, meant to be seen, not hidden.

| *Key verse: Matthew 5:14*

Jesus does not say try to make light. He says you are light. The only instruction is not to hide it. The source of the English “phosphorus” and “photo.”

נַחֲלָה nachalah

nachalah (nakh-al-AW) | Strong's H5159

Appears: about 223 times in the Old Testament

Meaning: Inheritance, heritage, an allotted and secured possession.

| *Key verse: Ephesians 1:18 (concept)*

Israel's portion in the land becomes a picture of your secured portion in Christ. Being sent flows from an inheritance already guaranteed.

ναός naos

naos (nah-OS) | Strong's G3485

Appears: about 45 times in the New Testament

Meaning: Temple, inner sanctuary, the dwelling place of God; now, your own body indwelt by the Spirit.

| *Key verse: 1 Corinthians 6:19*

The holiest room, once entered by one priest on one day. Paul says the sanctuary relocated. You carry the presence into every room you walk into.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (20 TO 25 MINUTES)

OBSERVATION (WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?)

1. In 1 Peter 2:9, Peter borrows language straight from Exodus 19:6. What titles does he give believers, and where did each one originally point in the Old Testament?
2. In Matthew 5:14-16, what does Jesus tell us we are, and what is the single command He attaches to it?

INTERPRETATION (WHAT DOES IT MEAN?)

3. If qadosh means set apart for a purpose rather than morally perfect on your own, how does that change the way you hear the command "be holy"?
4. The old covenant priesthood was limited to one tribe and stood between God and the people. What does it mean that every believer is now a kohen with direct access? What responsibility comes with that access?
5. Paul calls your body a naos, a temple, the place God lives. How is that different from thinking of church as the place you go to find God?

APPLICATION (WHAT DO I DO?)

6. A priest carries people to God in prayer and carries God to people in presence. Name one person you are positioned to carry into God's presence this week. What would it look like to actually do it?

7. Jesus says do not hide the light. Where have you been dimming yours, out of fear, fatigue, or wanting to fit in? What is one specific place you could let it shine this week?

8. If your body is the temple God chose to dwell in, does that change anything about how you treat it, what you feed it, what you expose it to? Be honest and specific.

CROSS-REFERENCES

Exodus 19:5-6: The original “kingdom of priests” promise. Peter does not invent a new title for the church. He hands us Israel’s calling, now opened to all who are in Christ.

Isaiah 49:6: God’s servant is made “a light for the nations,” that salvation may reach the ends of the earth. The light was always meant to travel outward, never to stay home.

Ephesians 1:18: Paul prays that we would know “the riches of his glorious inheritance,” the nachalah secured for us. Being sent is not a burden laid on the unequipped. It flows from an inheritance already guaranteed.

PERSONAL REFLECTION (SOLO JOURNALING)

1. Write down what the word “holy” has meant to you until now. Then write the real meaning: set apart, claimed, reserved for a purpose. Which definition have you been living under, and what would change if you traded one for the other?

2. You are a priest with the job of standing in the gap. Write the names of three people you could carry to God this week. Then actually pray for them, by name, right now.

3. Paul says your body is the temple where God lives. Where in your life are you treating the temple like common property? What is one boundary or one act of care the indwelling presence might be asking of you?

WEEKLY PRACTICE

THIS WEEK’S PRACTICE

Be a priest for someone who cannot pray for themselves right now. Pick one person, tell them you are praying for them this week (do not just do it silently), and then follow through every day. You are not performing a religious duty. You are standing in a gap you were ordained to stand in.

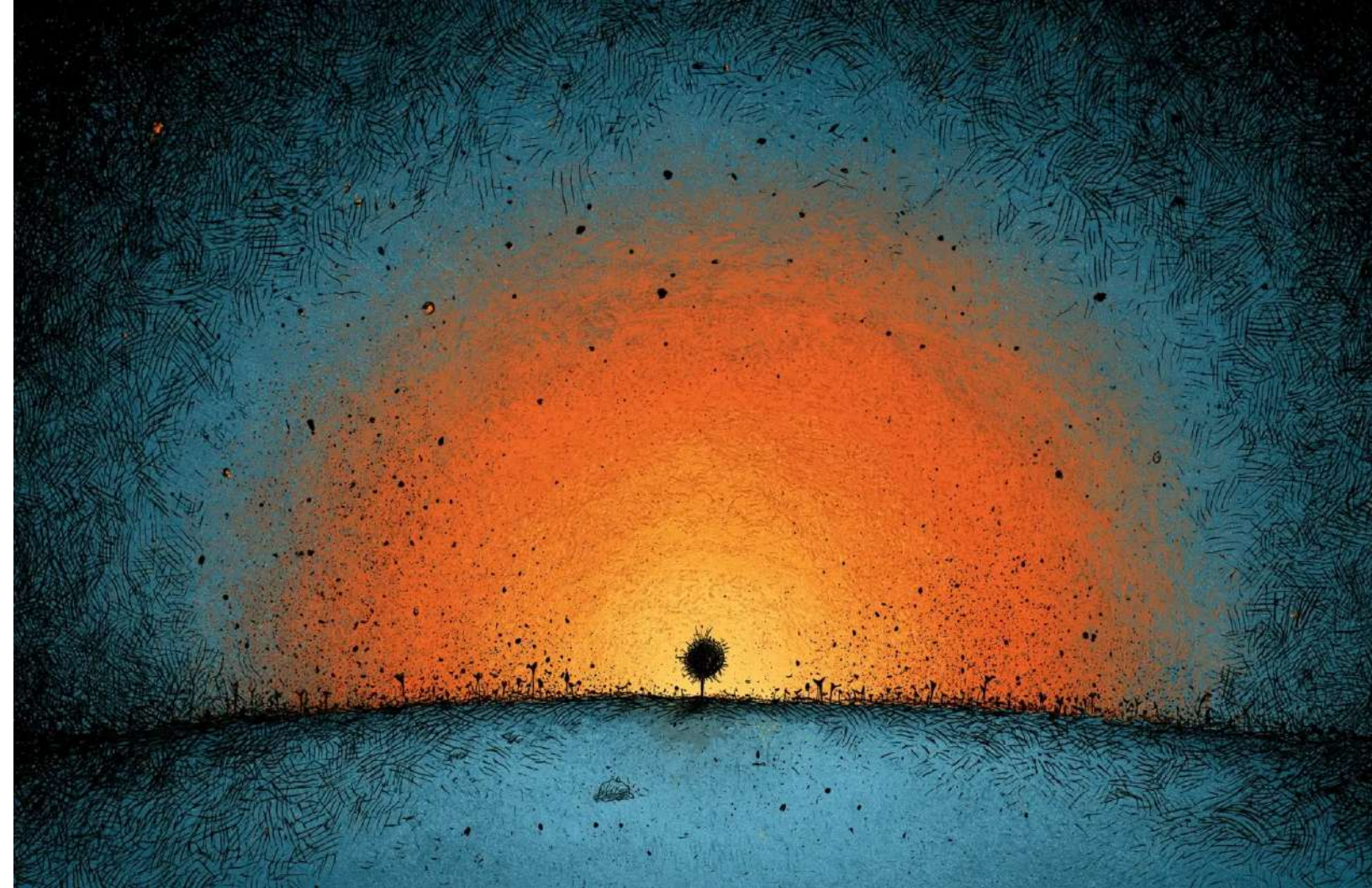
How to do it: Send the text today. “I am praying for you every day this week. Anything specific you want me to bring to God for you?” Then keep the promise. That is priesthood in a sentence.

CLOSING PRAYER PROMPT

AS YOU CLOSE, PRAY ABOUT:

- Thanking God that holiness is His claim on you before it is a demand on you
- The specific place you have been hiding your light, and the courage to stop
- The person you will carry into God's presence as a priest this week





SESSION 5

Sealed and Named

Based on Week 5, June 29 to 30: “Sealed and Named”

Key Words: chotam · christianos



Overview

Two words to close the month, and they hold everything that came before. You are sealed, marked with God's own signet as His permanent possession, and you are named, called by His name in a city called Antioch. This is the capstone. Every image, every choice, every title from the last four weeks gets gathered up and pressed into one final sentence: you belong to Christ.

OPENING QUESTION (5 MINUTES)

Is there something you own that has your name on it, engraved, monogrammed, written in marker on the tag? Why did you mark it? What does a name on a thing say about who it belongs to?

SCRIPTURE READING

Read aloud: Ephesians 1:13-14 and Acts 11:19-26

Reference passages: 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Haggai 2:23; Song of Solomon 8:6; Acts 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16

TEACHING SUMMARY (10 TO 15 MINUTES)

I have spent whole seasons of my life unsure I would make it to the end. Not unsure about God. Unsure about me. Whether I would hold on, whether my faith would last, whether the version of me that believes on a good Tuesday would still be standing a year from now. If you have ever lain awake doing that particular math, this last week is for you, because it answers the question with a word you do not get to vote on.

Paul writes to the Ephesians, "In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit." Sealed. The Greek points back to a Hebrew picture: *chotam*, a seal, a signet. In the ancient world a king carried a signet ring, and when he pressed it into hot wax on a document, that mark meant two things at once. This is mine, and this is authentic, and no one may break it but me. A sealed scroll could not be opened by just anyone. The seal was authority and ownership pressed into one small mark.

Now hear what Paul says the seal is. Not a sticker. Not a stamp. The Holy Spirit Himself. God did not mark you with wax. He pressed His own Spirit into you as the guarantee, and the word he uses for guarantee is the ancient word for a down payment, the first installment that legally secures the rest. So when you ask whether you will make it to the end, the answer is not about the strength of your grip. It is about the strength of His seal. God values His treasured possession enough to leave His own mark on it, and He is not in the habit of breaking His own seal. Haggai records God saying of His servant, "I will make you like a signet ring, for I have chosen you." You are not clinging to Him by your fingernails. You are sealed.

And then, the name. Here is one of my favorite small facts in the whole book of Acts. For years the followers of Jesus did not have a name for themselves. They were a movement, a people of “the Way.” Then the gospel reached a city called Antioch, and something happened there that had not happened anywhere else. Acts says it plainly, almost in passing: “in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.” *Christianos*. It means, simply, belonging to Christ. Christ’s ones. Christ’s people.

What I love is that the believers most likely did not coin it themselves. The outside world looked at this group, watched how they lived, watched who they loved and how they suffered and what they would not stop talking about, and the world needed a word for it. And the only word that fit was His name. They were so obviously His that the city named them after Him.

That is the whole month in one word. Every other word we studied feeds into this one. You bear His image. You were chosen as His treasure. You are His child, His heir, His beloved. You are set apart, made a priest, called light, made a temple where He lives. And the seal on all of it, the name over all of it, is Christ’s. *Christianos*. Belonging to Christ.

So here is where the month lands. You do not have to wonder whether you will hold on, because you have been sealed by the One who holds you. You do not have to manufacture an identity, because you have already been named. The name is not a label you achieved. It is a fact about whose you are. And it is meant to be visible, the way it was in Antioch, where a watching world took one look and could only describe these people by reaching for the name of their King.

You are not unmarked. You are not nameless. You are sealed, and you are His. You belong to Christ.

WORD STUDY SPOTLIGHT

σφραγις *chotam*

chotam (kho-TAWM) | Strong’s H2368

Appears: about 14 times in the Old Testament

Meaning: A seal, a signet, the mark of ownership and authority pressed into wax or clay; a signet ring.

| *Key verse:* Haggai 2:23 (see also Song of Solomon 8:6)

A king’s seal meant two things at once: this is mine, and this is authentic, sealed shut, not to be broken by anyone but him. The picture behind Paul’s “sealed with the Spirit.”

Χριστιανός *christianos*

christianos (khris-tee-an-OS) | Strong’s G5546

Appears: 3 times in the New Testament (Acts 11:26; Acts 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16)

Meaning: A Christian, one belonging to Christ; Christ’s own person.

| *Key verse:* Acts 11:26

First used in Antioch, a word for people so obviously His. The name simply means belonging to Christ. It gathers every other word of the month into one.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (20 TO 25 MINUTES)

OBSERVATION (WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?)

1. In Ephesians 1:13-14, what were the believers sealed with, and what does Paul call that seal in relation to their future inheritance?
2. In Acts 11:26, where were disciples first called Christians, and what had been happening in that city beforehand (look at verses 19-26)?

INTERPRETATION (WHAT DOES IT MEAN?)

3. A king's seal meant both ownership and a guarantee that the contents were authentic and would not be broken into. How does that picture speak to the fear of whether your faith will last to the end?
4. The name "Christian" was very likely given by outsiders, not chosen by the believers themselves. What does it say about a church when the surrounding world can only describe it by reaching for the name of Jesus?
5. Look back across the whole month. How does "belonging to Christ" gather up image, chosenness, sonship, and being sent into one identity? Which of those words has meant the most to you this month?

APPLICATION (WHAT DO I DO?)

6. If your security rests on God's seal rather than your grip, what fear can you set down this week? Name it out loud.
7. The Antioch believers were named for Christ because of how visibly they lived His life. If an outsider watched your week, what word would they reach for to describe you? What would you want it to be?
8. You have spent a month being told who you are. What is one old, false identity you are ready to stop answering to, now that you know your real name?

CROSS-REFERENCES

2 Corinthians 1:21-22: God "has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee." The seal and the down payment again, doubling down on the security of the believer.

Song of Solomon 8:6: "Set me as a seal upon your heart." The language of the seal is the language of covenant love that will not let go.

1 Peter 4:16: "If anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name." The name that began as an outsider's label becomes a badge worth suffering under.

PERSONAL REFLECTION (SOLO JOURNALING)

1. Write down the fear you carry about whether your faith will last. Then read Ephesians 1:13-14 and write the truth over it: you are sealed by the Spirit, and the seal is His to keep, not yours to maintain. Which one have you been believing?
2. The name Christian means, simply, belonging to Christ. Write your own name, and beside it write "belongs to Christ." Sit with both being true at once.
3. Look back over the thirty words of June. Write the one that landed hardest, and why. Let that be the word you carry into July.

WEEKLY PRACTICE

THIS WEEK'S PRACTICE

This week, live like someone who is already sealed. When the old fear shows up, the one that says you have to perform to stay in, answer it out loud with one sentence: "I am sealed with the Spirit. I belong to Christ." Let the name do the work your striving used to do.

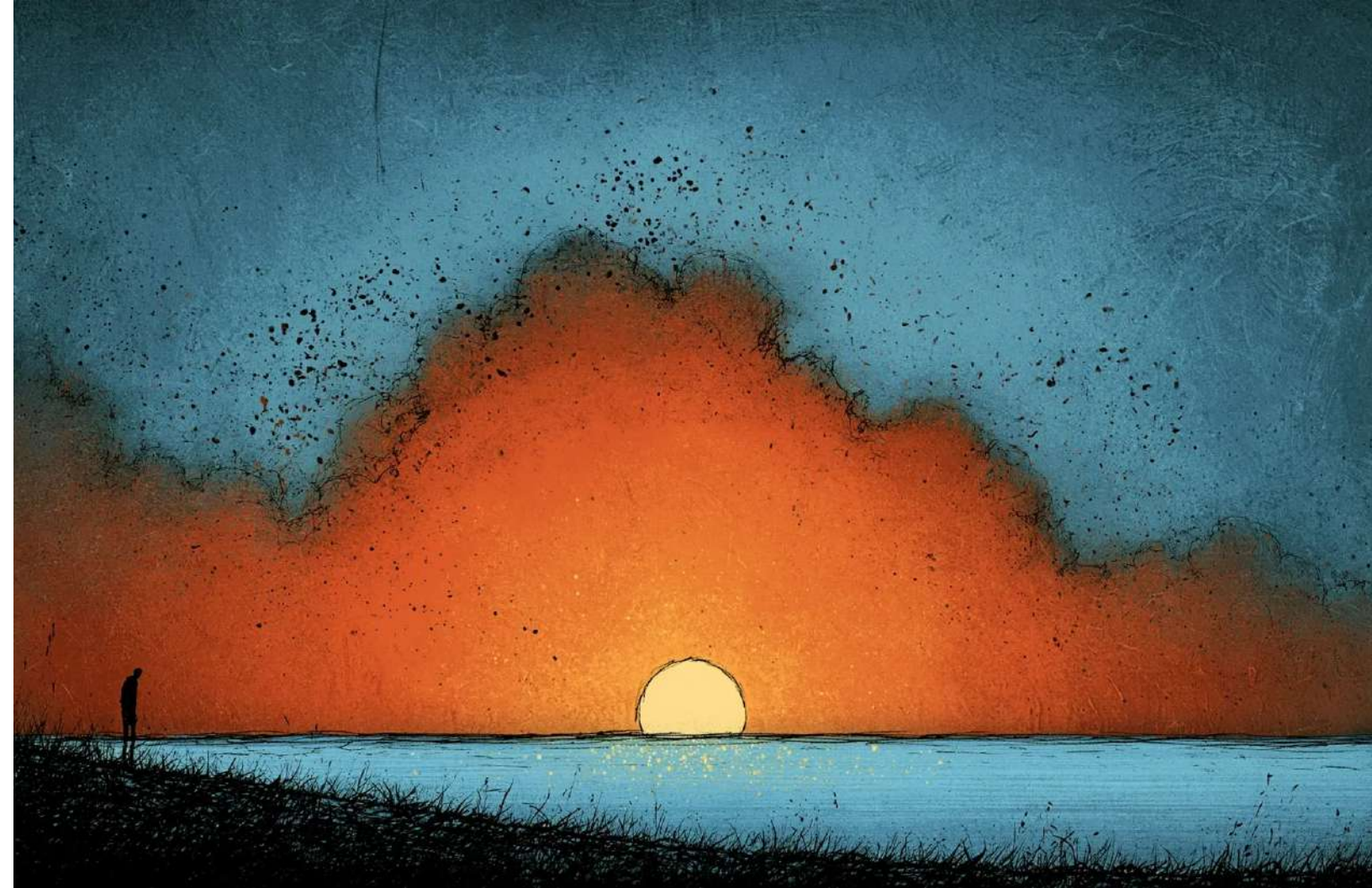
How to do it: Write the sentence on your hand, your mirror, your phone lock screen. Say it the moment the anxiety rises. You are not talking yourself into something. You are reminding yourself of a mark that is already there.

CLOSING PRAYER PROMPT

AS YOU CLOSE, PRAY ABOUT:

- Thanking God that your security rests on His seal, not your grip
- Living so visibly His that the world would reach for His name to describe you
- Carrying one word from this month into the rest of your year





SESSION 6

Bringing It Together

June Integration Session

All 30 words · One staircase · Image, Belonging, Family, Vocation, Seal



Overview

This month asked one question in thirty different ways: who does God say you are? The weeks were not five separate topics. They were one staircase. Image became belonging, belonging became family, family became vocation, and all of it got sealed and named. This session walks back down the staircase to see the whole shape at once, so the month becomes one settled conviction instead of thirty nice ideas.

OPENING QUESTION

Cast your mind back over the whole month. Without looking at your notes, which single word do you still remember, and why do you think that one stuck when the others faded?

THE THREAD

When we started, I told you I reach for my resume the second someone asks who I am. A month later, I want to show you what we actually built, because it is a staircase, and every step needed the one beneath it.

We started on the ground floor. **Image.** Before any role, before any failure, you were struck like a coin with the *tselem* of God and breathed into life by His own *neshamah*, mouth to clay. That was the floor we had to pour first, because you cannot build an identity on what you do until you have settled what you are. And what you are, underneath everything, is an image-bearer being remade into the *eikon* of Christ, a brand-new *ktisis*. Nothing you did earned that floor. Nothing you do can crack it.

Then we took the first step up. **Belonging.** An image was never meant to stand alone in an empty room. So God chose you, *eklektos*, before you behaved, and pocketed you like a king's private treasure, *segullah*. He took people who were strangers, *ger*, outsiders at the edge, and made them *oikeios*, household members with a key. The floor of image became the room of belonging. You are not just made by Him. You are kept by Him, with a people, with a citizenship that does not expire.

The next step made the belonging personal. **Family.** Household is warm, but family is warmer. He did not just take you in as staff. He made you *teknon*, a child born of Him, and *huios*, a son with full standing and an inheritance already in your name. He named you *yedid*, beloved, before you were wise or foolish, the same word the Father spoke over Jesus at the Jordan. And the firstborn Himself, the *bechor*, is not ashamed to call you *adelphos*, brother, kin from the same family. The room of belonging became a dinner table with your seat at it.

Then the staircase turned outward. **Sent.** A loved child eventually learns the house has a purpose. So God set you apart, *qadosh*, not because you were flawless but because He claimed you, and He made you a *kohen*, a priest with access you never have to beg for and a job carrying others in. He called you *phos*, light, by nature now, and told you the one thing that matters: do not hide it. And He moved the sanctuary itself, the *naos*, out of the building and into you. The table became a commission. You are not benched. You are carried out into rooms that have never felt His presence, carrying it in your own chest.

And at the top of the stairs, two words gathered all of it up. **Sealed and named.** You were pressed with His signet, *chotam*, the Holy Spirit Himself as the guarantee, so the question of whether you will last belongs to His seal and not to your grip. And in a city called Antioch, a watching world looked at people who lived like all of this was true and could only describe them with one word. *Christianos*. Belonging to Christ.

That is the thread. Image, belonging, family, vocation, seal. Every step rested on the one below it, and every step was given, not earned. You did not climb this staircase by performing. You woke up already standing on it.

So here is the month in a sentence, the same sentence we have been walking toward since the welcome page. You are not what you have done. You are what He has said. And what He has said, in fifteen Hebrew words and fifteen Greek ones, comes down to this. *You belong to Christ.*

Now go live like someone who believes it.

KEY WORDS FROM THIS MONTH

Made in His Image (Week 1)

tselem, image; *demut*, likeness; *eikon*, image (Christ and us remade); *neshamah*, breath of life; *adam*, humanity from the ground; *ktisis*, new creation; *hagios*, holy one, saint

Chosen and Belonging (Week 2)

eklektos, chosen; *segullah*, treasured possession; *am*, a people; *laos*, a people (Greek); *oikeios*, household member; *ger*, sojourner, outsider; *politeuma*, citizenship, commonwealth

Sons, Heirs, and Beloved (Week 3)

teknon, child; *zera*, seed, offspring; *kleronomos*, heir; *yedid*, beloved; *bechor*, firstborn; *adelphos*, brother; *huios*, son

Set Apart and Sent (Week 4)

qadosh, holy, set apart; *kohen*, priest; *basileios*, royal; *mamlakah*, kingdom; *phos*, light; *nachalah*, inheritance; *naos*, temple

Sealed and Named (Week 5)

chotam, seal, signet; *christianos*, Christian, belonging to Christ

INTEGRATION QUESTIONS

1. Week 1 said you bear God's image; Week 2 said you belong to a chosen people. Why does the image have to come before the belonging? What goes wrong if we try to find our worth in the group before we have settled it in God?
2. Week 2 made you a household member; Week 3 made you a child and heir. What is the difference between belonging to a group and belonging to a family, and which one has been harder for you to believe?

3. Week 3 established you as a beloved child; Week 4 sent you out as a priest and light. Why does being loved have to come before being sent? What happens to ministry that skips the belovedness?

4. Trace one word across the whole month: how does bearing the image (Week 1) connect to being sealed and named (Week 5)? What did the seal protect that the image began?

5. If you truly believed all thirty of these words were facts about you, not goals to achieve, what is the first thing that would change about how you walk into work, into your home, into a hard conversation this week?

MONTH-LONG REFLECTION

1. What is the single biggest insight you are taking with you from this month?

2. Which Hebrew or Greek word has most changed how you read Scripture, or how you see yourself?

3. What is one thing you believed about your identity before this study that you now see differently?

4. How has your view of God, not just yourself, shifted or deepened over these five weeks?

GOING DEEPER

“Knowing God” by J.I. Packer.

A classic on who God is, which is the only stable ground for knowing who you are. Slow, rich, worth the year it might take you.

“Gentle and Lowly” by Dane Ortlund.

On the heart of Christ for His people. A book-length meditation on the beloved and not-ashamed truths we touched in Week 3.

“Who Am I? Identity in Christ” by Jerry Bridges.

Short, accessible, and built around many of the same biblical identities we studied this month. A good next step for a small group.

Blue Letter Bible (blueletterbible.org) and Vine’s Expository Dictionary.

If the word studies hooked you, these are the tools to keep digging. Look up the Strong’s numbers in the glossary and follow the words yourself.

NEXT MONTH PREVIEW

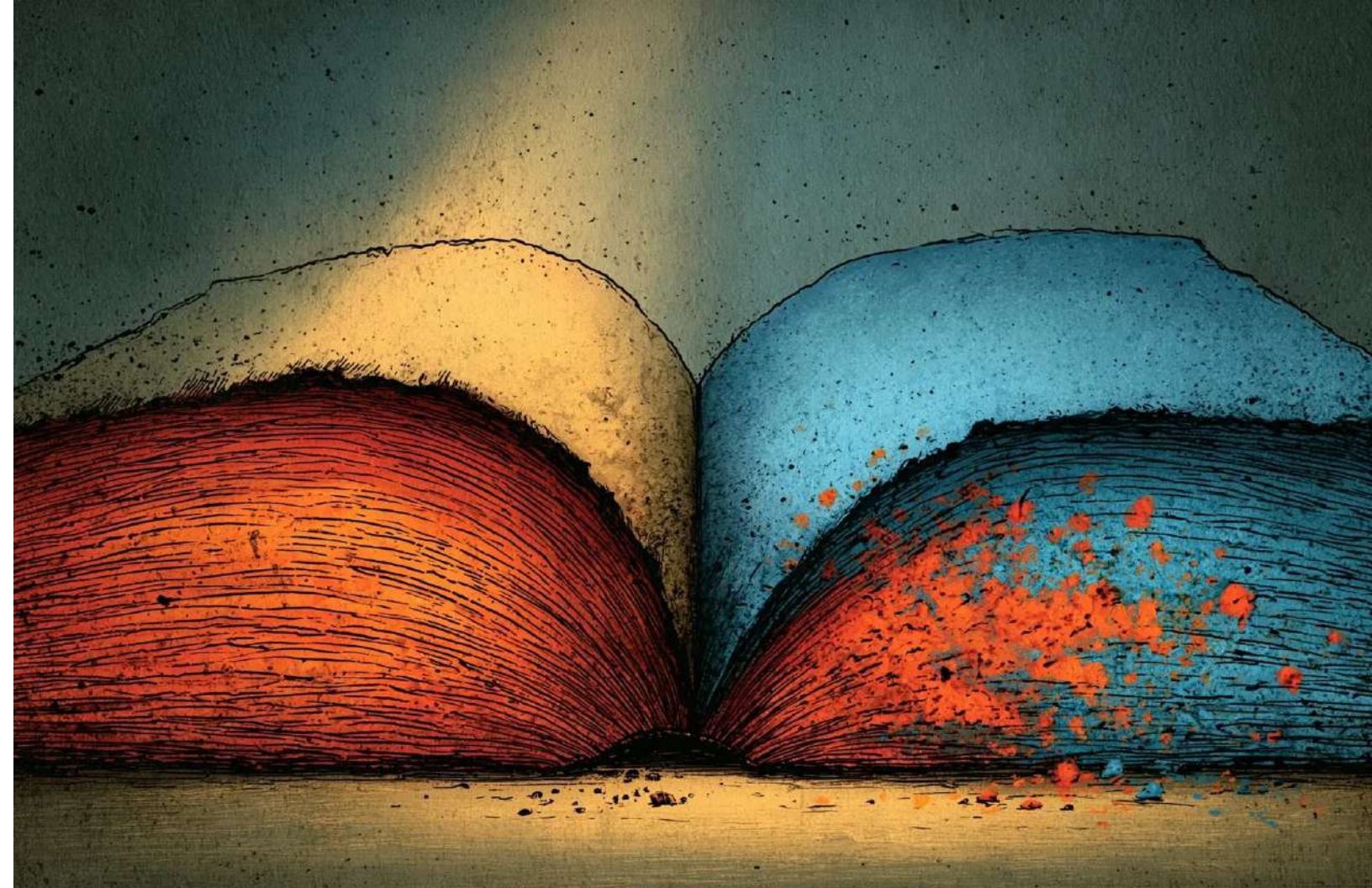
July is Words of Freedom. Liberty, bondage, release.

Here is the order, and it is deliberate. You had to know who you are before you could be free. An identity built on performance can never rest, because the next test is always coming. But an identity that is given,

sealed, and named can finally exhale. In July we follow that exhale all the way out. The words of release, redemption, and liberty that turn “I belong to Christ” into “and therefore I am free.”

You learned your name this month. Next month, you learn to walk in the open air it bought you.





APPENDIX

Complete Word Study Glossary

All 30 words of June 2026, in the order we studied them

Occurrence counts are marked "about" because faithful sources count slightly differently. Strong's numbers are given with confidence.



Complete Word Study Glossary

All 30 words of June 2026, in the order we studied them. Occurrence counts are marked “about” because faithful sources count slightly differently. Strong’s numbers are given with confidence. Where a word is rare, the exact count is noted.

Week 1: Made in His Image

תְּצַלֵּם tselem (TSEH-lem) | Strong’s H6754

Image, representative likeness. About 17 times in the OT. Key verse: Genesis 1:27. Humanity made as God’s image, like a king’s statue marking whose authority rules the land.

דְּמוּת demut (deh-MOOTH) | Strong’s H1823

Likeness, resemblance, pattern. About 25 times in the OT. Key verse: Genesis 1:26. Paired with tselem; we resemble God, made to reflect Him.

εἰκών eikon (ay-KONE) | Strong’s G1504

Image, exact representation. About 23 times in the NT. Key verse: Romans 8:29. Christ is the perfect image of God, and we are remade into it. Source of “icon.”

נְשָׁמָה neshamah (nesh-aw-MAW) | Strong’s H5397

Breath, the breath of life. About 24 times in the OT. Key verse: Genesis 2:7. The breath God breathed mouth-to-clay; life and dignity given up close.

אָדָם adam (aw-DAWM) | Strong’s H120

Humanity, mankind, the human. Hundreds of times in the OT. Key verse: Genesis 2:7. Tied to adamah, the ground; we are crowned dust.

κτίσις ktisis (KTEE-sis) | Strong’s G2937

Creation, creature, the act of creating. About 19 times in the NT. Key verse: 2 Corinthians 5:17. In Christ you are a new creation, demolished and rebuilt.

ἅγιος hagios (HAG-ee-os) | Strong’s G40

Holy, set apart, saint. About 233 times in the NT. Key verse: 1 Corinthians 1:2. The title given to messy believers on page one. A starting line, not a trophy.

Week 2: Chosen and Belonging

ἐκλεκτός eklektos (ek-lek-TOS) | Strong’s G1588

Chosen, selected, picked out. About 22 times in the NT. Key verse: 1 Peter 2:9. He chose first, before you behaved.

הַגֵּזֶר segullah (seg-oo-LAW) | Strong’s H5459

Treasured possession, personal property. About 8 times in the OT. Key verse: Exodus 19:5. The treasure a king keeps in his own pocket.

אָמ am (AHM) | Strong’s H5971

A people, nation, kin. Very frequent in the OT. Key verse: Hosea 2:23. God renames Not-My-People as My-People.

λαός laos (lah-OS) | Strong's G2992

A people, the people of God. About 142 times in the NT. Key verse: 1 Peter 2:9. The term once reserved for Israel, now handed to all in Christ. Source of "laity."

οἰκεῖος oikeios (oy-KAY-os) | Strong's G3609

Household member, belonging to a family. 3 times in the NT. Key verse: Ephesians 2:19. Not a guest. Family with a key.

γῆ ger (GARE) | Strong's H1616

Sojourner, resident foreigner, stranger. About 92 times in the OT. Key verse: Leviticus 19:34. What we were before grace; the outsider God moved in.

πολίτευμα politeuma (po-LEE-tew-mah) | Strong's G4175

Commonwealth, citizenship, homeland. 1 time in the NT (Philippians 3:20). Your true passport, stamped where it does not expire.

Week 3: Sons, Heirs, and Beloved

τέκνον teknon (TEK-non) | Strong's G5043

Child, one born of someone. About 99 times in the NT. Key verse: 1 John 3:1. Family resemblance in your bones. "And so we are," present tense.

σπέρμα zera (ZEH-rah) | Strong's H2233

Seed, offspring, descendants. About 229 times in the OT. Key verse: Genesis 3:15. The promise running through history toward Christ, and to you.

κληρονόμος kleronomos (klay-ro-NO-mos) | Strong's G2818

Heir, one who receives an inheritance. About 15 times in the NT. Key verse: Romans 8:17. A fellow heir with Christ, named in the Father's hand.

יְדִיד yedid (yeh-DEED) | Strong's H3039

Beloved, dearly loved. About 9 times in the OT. Key verse: Deuteronomy 33:12. The name God sent for Solomon before he did anything.

בְּכוֹר bechor (beh-KORE) | Strong's H1060

Firstborn, one holding the firstborn's rank. About 120 times in the OT. Key verse: Exodus 4:22. Christ is the true firstborn; His standing becomes ours.

ἀδελφός adelphos (ad-el-FOS) | Strong's G80

Brother, kin from the same womb. About 343 times in the NT. Key verse: Hebrews 2:11. Jesus is not ashamed to call you family.

υἱός huios (hwee-OS) | Strong's G5207

Son, with full standing and inheritance. About 377 times in the NT. Key verse: Galatians 4:7. No longer a slave working for wages, but a son who owns the estate.

Week 4: Set Apart and Sent

קָדוֹשׁ qadosh (kaw-DOSHE) | Strong's H6918

Holy, set apart, consecrated. About 116 times in the OT. Key verse: Leviticus 20:26. Claimed before you cleaned up; reserved for a purpose.

כֹּהֵן kohen (ko-HANE) | Strong's H3548

Priest, one who stands in the gap. About 750 times in the OT. Key verse: Exodus 19:6. Now opened to every believer; you go in, and carry others.

βασίλειος basileios (bas-IL-ay-os) | Strong's G934

Royal, kingly. 2 times in the NT. Key verse: 1 Peter 2:9. A royal priesthood; the dignity of the King attached to His people.

מַמְלָכָה mamlakah (mam-law-KAW) | Strong's H4467

Kingdom, dominion, royal rule. About 117 times in the OT. Key verse: Exodus 19:6. A kingdom of priests; God's people as His domain.

φῶς phos (foce) | Strong's G5457

Light. About 73 times in the NT. Key verse: Matthew 5:14. What you are by nature in Christ, meant to be seen. Source of "photo," "phosphorus."

נַחְלָה nachalah (nakh-al-AW) | Strong's H5159

Inheritance, heritage, allotted possession. About 223 times in the OT. Key verse: Ephesians 1:18 (concept). Your secured portion; the ground of being sent.

ναός naos (nah-OS) | Strong's G3485

Temple, inner sanctuary, dwelling place. About 45 times in the NT. Key verse: 1 Corinthians 6:19. The sanctuary relocated into you.

Week 5: Sealed and Named

צֹתָם chotam (kho-TAWM) | Strong's H2368

Seal, signet, mark of ownership and authority. About 14 times in the OT. Key verse: Haggai 2:23. The picture behind being sealed with the Spirit.

Χριστιανός christianos (khris-tee-an-OS) | Strong's G5546

Christian, one belonging to Christ. 3 times in the NT (Acts 11:26; Acts 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16). First used in Antioch. The word that gathers the whole month into one.



About FaithLabz

FaithLabz makes biblical content that takes the Word seriously and takes you seriously at the same time. Daily word studies, devotionals, storytelling, and original artwork, built to put the depth of Scripture within reach of ordinary people living ordinary weeks.

This study is part of "Words That Shaped the Faith," a year-long journey through the Hebrew and Greek words underneath the verses you thought you knew. Each month has a theme. Each theme builds a book. June was Words of Identity. July is Words of Freedom.

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Our app, and the best way to support everything we do here. Every word study and every piece of FaithLabz artwork turned into a puzzle you actually want to sit with, then saved as your phone wallpaper, with a daily word study built in. It is the dopest puzzle app for Christians on the planet, and we built it ourselves.

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*You were never just a viewer or a reader to us. You bear the image of God, you were chosen, you are His child,
set apart and sealed.
You belong to Christ.
That is who you are.*



F A I T H L A B Z

*“You are not what you have done.
You are what He has said.”*



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