

Icebreaker: We hold many titles in life (husband/wife, brother/sister, boss, friend, etc.). Which one is most important to you? How do they define you?

Key Verse: *Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus.* Ephesians 1:1

Each of us finds our identity in some place. Whether it's our role in the home, in our family, at our work, or some other measure and label society uses to define us, we look to titles and labels both to explain ourselves and find our sense of identity. Yet when we come to know Christ, Scripture tells us we are given a new identity. We are no longer just mom/dad, husband/wife, brother/sister, friend, boss, coworker. We are saints of God. Paul's opening words in Ephesians 1 introduce two titles: saints and the faithful, and they are related.

Translated, "saints" is the same word that means holy. *Holy* is a state of moral perfection that only comes from God. It is a word used to describe God. God is separate from us, different from us, and undefiled by the stain of sin. Yet when we believe in God, we become holy and faithful. These are fixed, objective realities for the follower of Jesus.

We are not holy because we earn it or faithful because we follow all the rules. We are holy because Jesus earned it and because Jesus followed all the rules. He did what we could never do and earned for us what we could never earn for ourselves. Our title is an earned title, but not by our works – it is through the grace of God available to us through our faith in Jesus Christ. We are saints because of the gospel.

THINK IT OVER >>>

Thinking back on Dwight's message, what stood out to you?

Dwight said to grasp my inheritance as a saint, I need to understand . . .

- my past (sinner)
- my present position (saint)
- my practice (living it out)

Does being saints before God mean that we will never screw up again? Why or why not? How should we respond in those moments when we do?

How are we made saints? Is this something that can ever be taken away from us? Discuss.

How does the biblical definition of what it means to be a saint differ from how we understand that term culturally?

LOOK IT OVER >>>

Do you see yourself the way God sees you? Why or why not?

What happens when we fail to see ourselves the way God does? What impact does that have on our sense of self-worth?

What are some ways our identity as saints informs the rest of our life and relationships?

Do you know other Christians who are struggling to take hold of this precious identity? How could you help them see who they truly are in Christ?

NEXT STEPS

This week, consider taking some next steps together as a group:

1. Pray that we would take hold of our identity as saints of God before any other identity we have. Ask that we would find our worth and fulfillment in Jesus alone and see all other identities as a good gift originating from God. Pray that you would see yourself as a saint, and let that inform everything else you do.
2. Think through some ways we can encourage one another to see who we are in Christ. How will we remember throughout the week and move beyond Sunday?

EVALUATION/ACTION

Embrace your identity as a saint of God.

Rate yourself from 1 to 10 1 (never), 10 (always)	1	2	3	4		6	7	8	9	10
Why did you give yourself this rating?										
What benefits will you obtain by raising your rating?										
Do you know someone who demonstrates this bottom line well? What do you admire about that person?										
What specific action can you put into practice to raise your rating?										
At the end of this week, reflect - where did you see the bottom line show up in your actions throughout the week?										

PRAYER

List group members and their prayer requests for this week:

FURTHER STUDY

Want to dig deeper? Check out these verses:

- Ephesians 1:15
- Ephesians 1:18
- Ephesians 2:19
- Ephesians 3:8
- 1 Peter 2:9

Don't let the conversation stop here. Keep talking it over with others throughout the week.
(Don't forget to bring this paper to the next small group meeting)