



# REAL IDENTITY

SERMON NOTES

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These sermon notes are to be used in conjunction with *Real Identity: Where Bible and Life Meet* by Thaddeus Barnum (Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2013).

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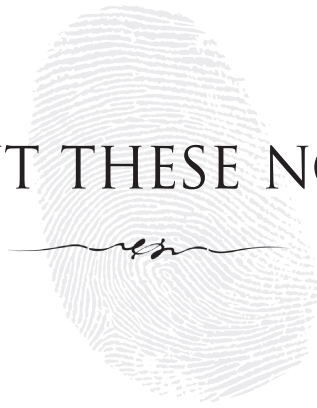
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# ABOUT THESE NOTES



*Real Identity* by Thaddeus Barnum serves as the text for this four-week interactive study. With clarity and utmost practicality, *Real Identity* helps us understand what it means to have a vital relationship with Jesus. This relationship includes a distinct identity, high calling, and significant covenant. But it also challenges us to practice obedient faith, even when hard trials invade our lives.

Trust the Lord to enrich your life and the lives of your group members as you explore your real identity in these four sessions.



WEEK 1  
IDENTITY IN JESUS

Identity with Jesus transforms our lives.

INTRODUCTION

Many people try to guard their identity by using safe passwords and buying identity theft protection. Clearly, they value their personal identity. Do we value our identity in Jesus above every other form of identity?

SERMON OUTLINE

- I. Our Identity in Jesus Gives Us Redemption (Eph. 1:7)
  - A. The Purchase of Our Redemption (“through His blood”)
  - B. The Power of Our Redemption
    - 1. It brought “the forgiveness of sins”
    - 2. It brought freedom from slavery to sin (1 Pet. 1:18–19)
      - The word *redeemed* in 1 Peter 1:18 means to purchase in the slave market, to purchase out of the slave market, and to set free from slavery.
- II. Our Identity in Jesus Gives Us Restoration
  - He said we’d be welcomed home” (*Real Identity*, p. 95).
  - A. Restored to the Image of God (Rom. 8:29; 2 Pet. 1:3–4)
  - B. Restored to Fellowship with God (John 14:23; Eph. 2:18; 1 John 1:2–3)
- III. Our Identity with Jesus Gives Us Responsibility (Matt. 28:16–20; 1 Pet. 1:15–16)
  - A. To Share the Good News (Matt. 28:16–20)
  - B. To Show God’s Holiness (1 Pet. 1:15–16)
    - As Barnum challenges, this task involves “Less Selling. More Applying” (*Real Identity*, p. 62). Fortunately, the Holy Spirit ministers in our lives to conform us to the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:17–18). The image of divine holiness that we lost in Eden, we regain in Jesus!

CONCLUSION

Let’s value our identity, thank God for it, and walk worthy of it!



WEEK 2  
RESPOND TO GOD'S CALL

God is calling us.

INTRODUCTION

In *Real Identity*, Barnum points out that “God speaks. His word is true. We can trust it. We can trust Him.” He also states that one voice calls us by name. “One voice calling us to come, follow Him, and say no to the other voices crouching at the door” (see Gen. 4:7) “and say yes to Him.” He closes the chapter by posing the question, “Can we hear and respond to the only voice that matters?” (p. 102). Will we respond to God’s call?

SERMON OUTLINE

I. Examples of Those Who Responded to God’s Call

A. Abel (Gen. 4:3–5; Heb. 11:4)

B. Abram (Gen. 12:1–4; Acts 7:2–4; Heb. 11:8–10)

In chapter 24 of *Real Identity*, Barnum writes about the faith God gave a woman named Julie. He depicts Julie as having the faith to answer God’s call to cross over Jordan and see Jesus on the other side. “The Lord was calling her home,” Barnum writes, “And with the call came the faith she needed to see Jesus. to know, rejoice, and cross over” (p. 136). Do we have faith to respond to God’s call whatever it may be?

II. Exhortations to Respond to God’s Call

A. Answer His Call (1 Sam. 3:10–11; Isa. 6:8)

B. Actively Fulfill Your Calling (Phil. 3:14; Col. 4:17)

III. Encouragement to Respond to God’s Call

A. God Is Faithful (1 Thess. 5:24)

B. God Rewards Those Who Respond to His Call (Gen. 4:4; 12:2–3; Gal. 3:6–9; Rom. 4:3; 2 Tim. 4:7–8; 1 John 2:17)

CONCLUSION

There is no higher calling in life than to do God’s will. Let’s depend on the Holy Spirit for guidance to go where God wants us to go, for sanctification to be what God wants us to be, and for power to do what God wants us to do.



WEEK 3

# OUR COVENANT-KEEPING GOD

We have a covenant relationship with God.

## INTRODUCTION

In the old days—whenever they were—a written contract seemed unnecessary. A person’s word was accepted as being as good as gold. Today, however, broken contracts are plentiful in business, sports, entertainment, real estate, and many other situations. “Get it in writing,” we are advised, and at times we wonder who we can trust.

The Bible provides the answer to the trust question. We can trust God.

## SERMON OUTLINE

### I. The Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 15:7–21)

#### A. Its Participants

God initiated the contract, made all the promises, and finalized it by passing all the way through the severed animals to Abraham (15:7–17). Abraham and his descendants were the beneficiaries of the covenant (15:18–21). Circumcision would be the outward sign of Abraham and his descendants’ participation in the covenant (17:7–8).

#### B. Its Basis

The covenant was made at the cost of shed blood (15:9–10). In *Real Identity*, Barnum writes: “Why the sacrifices? Simple truth: Relationships cost everything” (p. 144).

#### C. Its Blessings

God promised Abraham long life and a peaceful death (15:15). He also promised to give Abraham’s descendants the land between the Nile River and the Euphrates. Do the Jews have a right to the land God promised? They do indeed, because God cannot lie (Titus 1:2).

### II. The New Covenant (Luke 22:14–23)

#### A. Its Participants

The Lord Jesus has entered into a new covenant relationship with all who believe in Him as their Savior (Heb. 8:6; 10:11–18).

#### B. Its Basis

The new covenant, established by Jesus, is based on His shed blood (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25; Heb. 9:13–15).

### C. Its Blessings

Barnum summarizes at least some of the blessings that God has bestowed on believers. He states, “[God] has called a people to Himself. He has rescued us, saved us, and if we truly belong to Him, He has put His resurrected life into our mortal bodies causing us to be in Christ and Christ in us by the Holy Spirit, born from above (Rom. 8:11; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 2:20; 1 Pet. 1:3)” (*Real Identity*, p. 158).

### CONCLUSION



As participants in the new covenant, we have been blessed beyond measure. But let’s remember that to whom much is given, much is required. May we faithfully live for Him and daily do His will!





WEEK 4  
ABRAHAM'S OBEDIENCE

Faith obeys God without asking why.

INTRODUCTION

It is not always easy to obey the Lord. Nevertheless, when Abraham received what must have been an unsettling command from the Lord, he obeyed. He truly loved the Lord.

SERMON OUTLINE

- I. Abraham's Ultimate Test (Gen. 22:1–2)
  - A. The Test Came from God (22:1)

When God tests us, it is for our good (see 1 Pet. 1:6–7).
  - B. The Test Involved Sacrificing Isaac (Gen. 22:2)

The fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham depended upon Isaac living.
- II. Abraham's Unquestioning Obedience (Gen. 22:3–4)
  - A. He Arose Early to Face the Test (22:3)
  - B. He Prepared Materials for the Altar (22:4)
- III. Abraham's Unswerving Faith (Gen. 22:5–10)
  - A. He Promised the Servants That He and Isaac Would Return (22:5)
  - B. He Promised Isaac That God Would Provide a Lamb for the Sacrifice (22:6–9)

Hebrews 11:17–19 credits Abraham with the faith to believe that, if he sacrificed Isaac, God would raise him from the dead.
- IV. Abraham's Unfailing God (Gen. 22:11–18)
  - A. God Provided a Substitute (22:11–14)

He provided His Son, the Lamb of God, as the substitute for our sins (John 1:29; 1 Cor. 15:3).
  - B. God Affirmed His Covenant Promises (Gen. 22:15–18)

CONCLUSION

Abraham met the ultimate test with obedient faith. He believed God's covenant promises would not fail, and therefore passed the test. We can triumph over every test if we, like Abraham, obey God and believe His promises.