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## Resisting False Identity

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Free media and discipleship resources for pastors, leaders, and growing disciples.

# Resisting False Identity

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Inevitable failure. Unavoidable temptation. Life is fated and stacked against us. It is easy to live with a mediocre hope for freedom and a shoulder-shrugging, “whatever” kind of dependence on God. In the choke-hold of temptation we hear the sound of the inevitability of our demise and all-too-often say, “Uh, Ok.”

In the clip from *The Matrix* (1999) above (Internet connection required to view), the character of Neo realizes that who he really is (Neo) gives him all he needs to successfully resist his enemy. At the last moment, he rejects the lie that he is just Mr. Anderson, and that losing is inevitable.

How can we move from passive acceptance of sin in our lives to victoriously striving against temptation? What has to change?

What Satan does best is call into question our identity. He tries to get us to prove our worth without depending on or trusting God. His accusations sound like this: “How can you call yourself a Christian, look at what you’ve done.” “Who do you think you are? If people only knew what you are really like...” “There’s no way God or anyone else could ever love you.” “This time you’ve gone too far; you can’t be forgiven now.”

We don’t get very far in our struggle against temptation by just trying harder. When we are hit with these kinds of accusations, we all too quickly accept them and passively expect to give in. After all, if we’re just messed up sinners who at best can only pretend to be good, why not give in this time too?

Resisting, however, ultimately depends on who we believe we are. “Understanding your identity in Christ is absolutely essential to your success at living the Christian life. No person can consistently behave in a way that’s inconsistent with the way he perceives himself.” [1]

1 John 3:1 says, “See what sort of love the Father has given to us: that we should be called God’s children—and indeed we are! For this reason the world does not know us: because it did not know him.” Jesus tells the parable in Luke 15 commonly called, “The Prodigal Son”, but it is better called “The unconditional love of the Father.” In it, we are given a picture of God’s unshakeable, almost unbelievable, love for us that welcomes us back as his beloved children, no matter our choices.

When we know and believe that we are cherished kids, beloved children of God, and victorious saints we have a firm place to stand in the fight against sin.

If someone, out of the blue, accused you of stealing their money, you would almost certainly resist the accusation if you knew you were innocent.

When a tempting thought occurs to us, our first thought can be, "That's not who I am." 1 John 3:9 says, "Everyone who has been fathered by God does not practice sin, because God's seed resides in him, and thus he is not able to sin, because he has been fathered by God." This verse is not a club to beat down Christians who sin, but hope that embracing our new identity will bring freedom!

One of the best ways to reverse the years of lies about who we are is the daily practice of reading out loud statements about our new identity in Christ. Reading aloud may seem weird, but it's so valuable to see, hear, and declare truth instead of just seeing it. Study the scripture passages from which the statements are taken. The daily practice of reading these statements will begin a slow process of turning us from trying to resist temptation on our own (not depending on God) to resisting based on who we are, which is a beloved child, thankfully dependent on God.

[1] Neil T. Anderson. Victory Over the Darkness, (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1990) 43.