

# THE FOUNDATION OF DISCIPLESHIP: BEING COMPLETELY SECURE IN WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU ARE CALLED TO.

The two big human questions are,  
“Who am I?” and, “What am I here for?”

*Security comes from being able to live with a deep sense of what these mean for you, whatever your circumstances.*

*These questions are reflected in two great themes that run throughout the Bible.*

*Identity: God made us to live in the deepest relationship possible with Him, known as a covenant. Growing in this relationship gives us the identity of being His children, loved forever. That is who we are.*

*Calling: In Christ, God calls us to join in with Him to see the world become increasingly as God wants it to be through our daily lives. This is the meaning of “God’s Kingdom”, on earth as it is in heaven. Growing in seeking the Kingdom above everything else is the basis for knowing our calling. That is what we are here for.*

*As disciples, while life may not make us secure – many challenging and unexpected things can happen every day – these two things never change, and our growth is always related to them.*

We grow the more we experience that identity of being in covenant relationship with God – you could call that our way of being.

And we grow the more we live out our calling in God’s kingdom – you could call that our way of doing.

The more we grow in these, the more secure we become.  
That is our right, and our foundation, as disciples.

For example, in John we read, “Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist.” In other words, Jesus was able to live out His kingdom calling to serve His disciples, because His identity was secure in His covenant with God His Father.

As Jesus reveals his relationship with his heavenly Father, Jesus invites us into a new depth of understanding of the Covenant. He offers to us the relationship that he enjoys with the Father.



# Who am I – my covenant identity.



Throughout the Bible, God makes covenants again and again – with Noah, with Abraham, with David. In a covenant, God offers Himself completely in love to His people, in a way that nothing can break, and He invites them to offer themselves to Him. “You will be my people, and I will be your God.” Even when people turn away from Him, God keeps His covenant with them.

This defines the relationship He wants with us. It’s like a marriage (in which people say to each other, “All that I am I give to you, and all that I have I share with you.”) In fact, as we read the Bible we find that we are called “God’s Bride”!

## What does this relationship look like?

Jesus lived fully in this covenant relationship with God, and invites us, His followers, **into exactly the same relationship**: “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.” (John 14:23)

Identity comes from the one who gives us life. We are children of God, born again into a new family, given a new name and a new identity.

The New Testament teaches that when we are baptized we embrace our new identity. Jesus connects us to God and defines who we are.

We share his Name: “Christ-ian”, and everything He has is ours.

This means God –  
our Covenant  
partner – wants to  
give us everything  
He gave Jesus.

God's commitment to us is forever – it is written in the blood of Jesus. As we share in the “Covenant” meal that Jesus gave, we are reminded of this – the bread and the wine help us remember who He is, and who we are.

As a result, we start to live in a new way. Jesus says that he does only what he sees the Father doing (John 5:19). A shared identity leads to the same life purpose.

The New Covenant means that God's code of behaviour for his people – “the Law” – is now written in our hearts. This happens when the Holy Spirit fills us and gives us new life when we are born again as God's children.



## Now we are free to obey God because this is truly a reflection of who we are.

We choose to obey because this is the most consistent way of expressing our identity.

What we do tells the world who we are...Obedience is always an act of love.

Because of our shared Covenant identity with Jesus, we do the things he did: "I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father."  
(John 14:12)

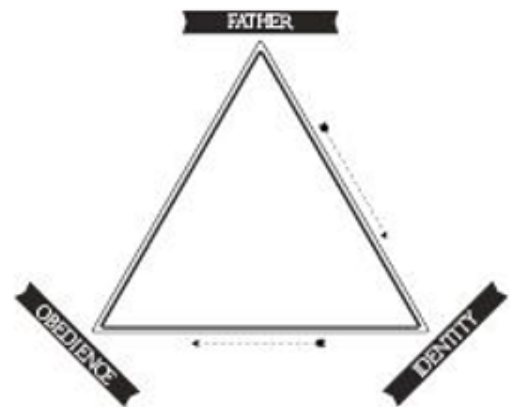
Living in this relationship brings freedom. It begins with the Father, who gives us our identity.

Now we are able to obey because as children of God we are empowered to do so.

It is so important that things always start with our covenant identity. If we try and approach God only through obeying Him, rather than recognising who we are, we will fall into the trap of the Pharisees whom Jesus encountered.

We will try and "prove" our identity by what we do, and become anxious, driven and insecure before God.

This is not what God, our Covenant partner wants. We are God's children – He is already pleased with us. Knowing this can free us to serve Him out of love.



## What am I here for – my kingdom calling

Jesus began with the words, "The Kingdom of God is among you!" He announced that His coming means that the way God wants the world to be starts to emerge. People healed, relationships restored, forgiveness and things being put right. Everywhere He went he taught about what this looks like, and he demonstrated it. His calling was the kingdom.

And as God's covenant partners, our life calling is the same. That's why he said, "Seek the kingdom first."

As a disciple, my purpose is to put God's kingdom above everything else.

This can be a challenging path. Sometimes we want to be our own rulers, to sort the world out ourselves, to put ourselves at the centre.

In fact, this is the main problem with humanity – in the Bible and in history.



## I.D. GROUP RESOURCE

We live in an amazing time. Before Jesus, the prophets could only look forward to the time when God's King would arrive. But now the King has come among us. Jesus brought God's kingdom because He is the King. The one who has taken on flesh and has chosen to walk among us, even when we reject Him.

Most of the time, his kingly glory was hidden – but sometimes he was seen in all his splendour. When he was baptized the heavens opened, on top of a mountain he shone in all his glory (at His “transfiguration”), and when He ascended to God.

He has shown us God's dream of a future when we, and everything, is put right. And those who let Him be King, by surrendering to Him, can begin to see that dream coming real now.

## What does this kingdom calling look like?

Jesus showed that the way God rules is as a humble, tender, loving servant.

It is His sacrificial love that brought the ultimate victory of the Kingdom over our enemies of sin, death and hell.

In an earthly kingdom, it's the ruler who benefits most. But God's kingdom is for our benefit – for our healing.

As the servant King, Jesus constantly offered himself as the doorway to the future Kingdom. He looked for those who needed forgiveness; he searched for those who needed restoration or healing.

Jesus the King was single-minded in his determination to reveal his Kingship. He searched for the lost, fed the hungry, mended the broken and healed the sick. He told stories, painting pictures of a life worth living and a future worth dying for.

Those who see this, and receive it, naturally start to offer their King love and loyalty, and live for His honour.

The Kingdom is all about the King. But disciples are His subjects, and so God calls us to fully reflect and represent Him, doing all that He did and living as He lived.

Jesus brought God's kingdom because He had been given the amazing authority from His Father to act.

Jesus gives His disciples that same authority when He says, “As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”

He authorizes us to act on his behalf for His kingdom, giving forgiveness, and healing, and being a blessing.

He also gives the power to disciples to do this through the presence of the Holy Spirit. Whenever we depend on God's Spirit we are connected us to the King, and His Kingdom for which we long.

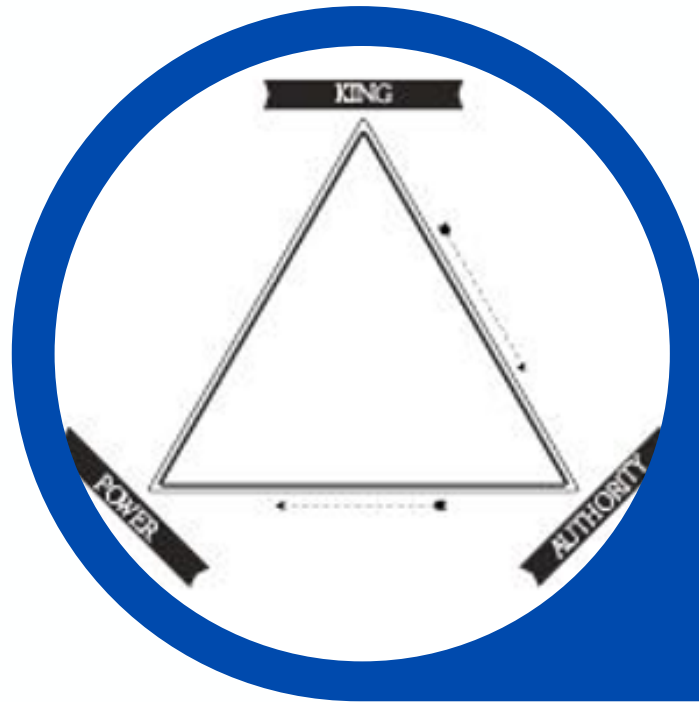




Just as in growing into our identity knowing the Father comes first, so in growing into our calling the King comes first.

Once we let God be King, and receive His authority and power, we get to act.

If we try to make the world into God's kingdom in our own strength we will not be relying on His power – and become discouraged. And we may not realize the authority the King gives us – and lack confidence.



## Who am I?

God's covenant partner, precious and loved, living in the same relationship that Jesus had with His Father.

## What am I here for?

To see God's kingdom come, serving the King and living with His authority and in His power.

### Questions:

How secure am I in my relationship with God?

Am I experiencing God's love?

How much does my relationship feel like a "transaction" or a connection with God?

How am I living into my calling?

Am I secure in the authority God gives me?

Am I depending on His Spirit?