

## **Group Study Guide**

First Baptist Church Merritt Island

*Who are You and Why are You Here?*

I Peter 2:9-10

April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2018

### **Main Point**

Knowing our purpose and identity is crucial to living a satisfied life. These verses give us insight into both.

### **Getting Started**

Every person must grapple with these two questions – the question of existence and the question of purpose. “*Who am I, and why am I here?*” These two verses in I Peter 2 answer both these questions. The Bible teaches us that God has chosen us and calls us a royal priesthood, a holy nation and a people for his own possession. That’s huge! The God of the universe who created all life wants you. And He has a purpose for your life. He calls us as believers to proclaim his excellence to others. He wants us to tell our Gospel story about how God has called us out of darkness and into his marvelous light. It’s amazing that the Bible answers the questions of existence and purpose in two verses of Scripture! Consider these other passages that also deal with our identity in Christ and God’s purpose for believers: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21, Ephesians 2:1-10, 4:20-23 and Colossians 3:1-3. These are just a few of the many passages in God’s word that answer those very important questions: “*Who am I, and why am I here?*”

### **Observation**

Have a volunteer read 1 Peter 2:9-10.

*Looking at verses 5 and 9, what terms describe the identity of Christians? Which is most important to you? Why? Which is most difficult? Why?*

*What was the role of a priest for Israel? In what way do believers fill that role for one another?*

Peter described believers as priests who offer spiritual sacrifices. As Israel was God’s chosen people, believers are a chosen race. We are also a royal priesthood, belonging both to the family of the King and to the priestly family. We are a holy nation, a people for His possession, as Israel had been. Our purpose as the people of God and as priests is to proclaim the praises of God. We exist to praise God for what He has done for us in Christ, how He has called us out of the darkness and into His marvelous light.

Peter addressed believers as aliens in this world and directs his attention to their behavior in a hostile culture. He summons them to conquer evil desires with which they struggle. Christians must live exemplary lives with the kinds of good deeds that will make unbelievers take notice. Hence, they will fend off any suggestion that they are practicing evil. Even more important, the goal is to provoke unbelievers to glorify God in the day of visitation. Peter’s hope was that unbelievers will be compelled to admit that the lifestyle of believers is morally beautiful, and this admission will bring them to saving faith so that God will be glorified on the day of judgment.

## **Application**

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

*Consider how Peter describes believers in verses 9 and 10. Re-read the royal titles he gives to those who have placed their faith in Christ. What do these titles imply about believers' identity? How might these titles encourage believers who struggle with a poor self-image? How might a correct understanding of these titles also produce humility and gratefulness? Have we earned these titles?*

*How can we demonstrate our identity before the unbelieving world in a humble and loving manner?*

*What forces or influences seek to redefine who we are? Think about how we sometimes allow our past, the world or even our occupation to define us. Determine to cling to the truth of who Jesus says you are! Commit to discover and follow His purposes for your life.*

*How can believers reassert the truths of their identities in Christ and their purpose for living according to God's Word? How do the truths of I Peter 2:9 and 10 impact you personally? These two verses reveal to us who God says we are and what He wants us to do in life. Share your answers with your group.*

*What would it look like to proclaim the excellencies of God to those around you? Ask God to help you both demonstrate and declare the Gospel to your five. Pray for one another in your group and encourage them to consider ways to apply this command to life.*

## **Prayer**

Dear God, please deepen my faith in your word today. I don't want to ever forget who I am in Christ and the purpose you have given me. I want to understand what it truly means to be chosen by God, to serve as a priest in your kingdom and to proclaim the excellencies of You who have moved me from darkness to light. I look to You to make me confident in who You say I am. Please don't let me get sidetracked from these bedrock truths.

## **Commentary**

2:9. Peter then identified implications of the new identity that Christians have and are to understand. As Israel was God's chosen people, believers are a chosen race. We are also a royal priesthood, belonging both to the family of the King and to the priestly family. We are a holy nation, a people for His possession, as Israel had been. Our purpose as the people of God and as priests is to proclaim the praises of God. Here we learn the nature of the spiritual sacrifices of this new priesthood—praising God. Hebrews 13:15 refers to “a sacrifice of praise.” Romans 12:1 speaks of the spiritual worship of offering our “bodies as a living sacrifice” to God. Although Peter did not name the sacrifice of our bodies here, the entire passage implies it. Such a sacrifice of praise is merited by the nature of what God has done for us in Christ. He has called us out of the darkness of our world into His marvelous light in Christ.

2:10. Peter then applied Hosea 2:23 to these largely Gentile congregations. Once they did not belong to God's people Israel, but then they became part of God's people, the church. Formerly they knew nothing of God's mercy to Israel, but then they received mercy through the Lord Jesus Christ. Many believers have a faulty sense of identity as Christians. They may see themselves only as church members or as possessing a certainty of a home in heaven. Such believers can find their lives transformed by understanding they are part of something far greater than themselves. They belong to the new people of God. God now lives in them. They are priests serving before God, offering up the sacrifice of praise to Him amid a perverted and lost world.