

SAFEGUARD YOUR CHRISTIAN IDENTITY!

Note to the speaker:

Help audience realize that regardless of our years in the truth, our Christian identity can be compromised. Encourage all who have been serving Jehovah to remain firm as true worshippers. Especially help young Christians who have grown up in Witness families to appreciate the privilege of being identified as Christians and the need to safeguard that standing

SERVING AS WITNESSES OF JEHOVAH—A GRAND PRIVILEGE (4 min.)

It is a blessing to be counted as one whom Jehovah has seen fit to draw into a special relationship with him (Joh 6:44; 2Ti 2:19)

Our identity as worshippers of Jehovah sets us apart from the world (Mal 3:18; Joh 17:16)

We are known for following Jesus' command to preach the "good news of the kingdom" (Mt 24:14)

The love we have for one another distinguishes us as disciples of Jesus (Joh 13:35)

Our outstanding conduct helps us to shine as illuminators in a spiritually dark world (Php 2:15)

However, maintaining our identity as true Christians during these "critical times hard to deal with" is challenging for all and especially for young ones (2Ti 3:1)

THREATS TO OUR CHRISTIAN IDENTITY (7 min.)

To continue being recognized by Jehovah as belonging to him, we must keep on our "outer garments," our identity as followers of Christ Jesus (Re 16:15; *re* 231-2)

Our Christian identity can be obscured or lost if we succumb to the world's unhealthy stress on self-interest

Those who do succumb often face an identity crisis

They go through periods of self-doubt, keep reevaluating their goals, and claim they have to "find themselves" or "become their own person"

Such a search for "identity" has sometimes resulted in abandonment of responsibility and sound morals

If we are not on guard, the world's attitudes can affect us

The writer of Psalm 73 began to have doubts about the value of pursuing an upright course (Ps 73:1-14; *w*99 9/1 21-2)

In time, the psalmist gained Jehovah's viewpoint on matters and rekindled his appreciation for his privileges as a worshipper of Jehovah (Ps 73:23-28)

It is essential that we be continually conscious of our identity as Jehovah's Witnesses (Isa 43:10)

A person who does not appreciate who he is and where he stands in relation to the outworking of God's purpose will lack direction in his life (Eph 4:14; Jas 1:6-8; Re 3:16)

AS JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES, WE KNOW WHO WE ARE (7 min.)

The Scriptures tell us what our purpose in life is (Re 4:11)

True Christians live to do God's will (1Pe 4:2)

The Bible reveals the values, qualities, standards, and characteristics required of those who want to be identified as Christians (Eph 4:22-24; 1Pe 2:21)

First and foremost, we view ourselves as true worshippers of Jehovah

We have the privilege of being among the latest in a long line of faithful witnesses starting with Abel (Heb 11:4)

Our Christian identity supersedes any ties based on family, race, color, language, or nationality (Ga 3:28)

It also supersedes personal ambitions and desires (Mr 8:34)

Maintaining a personal relationship with God is essential for true Christian identity

You young people cannot expect to be acceptable to God simply because your parents are believers

You must come to love Jehovah on your own (Mt 22:37)

But how can we cope with the many pressures we face to abandon our Christian identity?

WITNESSES WHO SAFEGUARDED THEIR IDENTITY (5 min.)

The Bible contains many examples of those who, in spite of adversity or a young age, maintained their identity as God's worshippers

Josiah enacted long-term religious reforms, repaired the temple, and led the nation back to Jehovah (2Ki 23:24, 25; *w*01 4/15 25-8)

He was not molded by the corrupt legacy left by his father and grandfather

Daniel and the three Hebrews captive in Babylon never forgot their identity as servants of Jehovah

They kept their integrity under pressure and temptation (*dp* 33-45)

Christians today, young and old, must be determined to safeguard their Christian identity

FIRMLY ESTABLISH YOUR CHRISTIAN IDENTITY (5 min.)

The Bible encourages us to prove the truth to ourselves (Ac 17:11; Ro 12:2; 1Th 5:21)

This is done, not by experiencing the bad things the world has to offer, but by making a personal study of the Bible, wholeheartedly embracing its teachings, and displaying conduct that evidences we are "firmly set in the truth" (2Pe 1:12)

God's Word will help us to know our own abilities and potential

It will reveal our deepest feelings and motivations (Heb 4:12, 13; Jas 1:22-25)

Setting goals can also help us to use our spiritual gifts to the full (1Pe 4:10)

Make known your identity as one of Jehovah's Witnesses; this can be a protection (w00 11/1 13-14)

Preach to others, and maintain fine conduct to remain separate from the world and resist its unwholesome influence (Pr 20:11; Lu 6:44, 45)

BLESSINGS RESULT FROM SAFEGUARDING OUR CHRISTIAN IDENTITY (2 min.)

Many blessings result when we safeguard our Christian identity:

The privilege of being recognized by Jehovah (Mal 3:16)

A personal friendship with God (Jas 2:23)

Productive goals and a clear sense of purpose

The hope of an eternal future (Ps 37:9)

By doing the things we have discussed, you can safeguard your Christian identity and reap eternal blessings

(Adhere closely to the outlined material, and observe the indicated timing of each section. Not all cited texts need be read or commented on. See *Ministry School*, pp. 52-54, 166-169)