

I am **what the I AM** says I am.¹

He is the **origin of truth**,² not my feelings. (Feelings must not be lord over us.)

His word creates reality,³ not what people think or say.

Truth is true, **not because** I believe it but **because He sustains**⁴ the existence of everything.

He is LORD of lords⁵ and has **supreme authority**. Yet He exercises His authority **always in love**.

There is **no conflict** between God's authority and His humility to allow others to choose against Him.

Love without freedom is an **oxymoron**.

Freedom without love is a **travesty**.

The prodigal son **tried freedom without love**⁶ and ended up nearly **losing sight** of his true **worth**.⁷

The older brother **despised freedom** and **lost sight** ⁸of who he was, losing both love and freedom.

Both sons **didn't know** who they were because they **didn't believe** they were **really loved**.

Both sons **presumed** that **love was predicated** on **what they did**, not what the father said.

The **party** was **not for the Father's** sake but to **convince** the boys of their true identity as loved sons.

Going to the party was **optional**, but how they responded to the invitation **affected their psyche**.

The best **robe**⁹ was **not** intended as **a cover-up** to hide the son's real identity.

The robe was a **signal** to everyone what his **true identity** was despite all evidence to the contrary.

The robe of **righteousness is a gift**¹⁰ from God, **not a demand** to be met in order to be loved.

The father loved them both all along, yet **not believing** they were loved **created distance** for them.

Refusing to wear the robe at the banquet party has **consequences**,¹¹ but they are **not punishments**.

Refusing to wear our family identity does **not change the truth**, but it does **alienate** us from love.

We are not punished for rejecting our true identity, we **experience loss** by rejecting¹² a love of the truth.

What we believe about our identity does **not make it true** in actuality, but in our **perception** of reality.

What I choose to believe about **who I am** is **symbolized** as **the robe** I wear that **identifies my family**.

My **family**¹³ is who I choose to **hang out with** and **identify with** as **my kind of people**.

Group identity has enormous **impact** on how I **think**, **act** and what I **believe about reality**.

The **group identity I embrace** shapes how I **act** like myself, what **habits** I form and my **character**.¹⁴

Salvation involves **choosing** to **embrace my true identity** in Christ

Sanctification involves **allowing** my true **identity to shape my character**, how I **feel and react**.

Jesus is Lord,¹⁵ yet He **never lords over** anyone because **He is love**.

We must **not allow any other lords**¹⁶ to define what we believe about our worth and identity.

When I choose to make Jesus Lord in my life, I give Him total **authority to define me** exclusively.

Making Jesus Lord ¹⁷does not affect His identity as supreme Lord, but **embraces it for me** personally.

My **freedom**¹⁸ involves my **capacity to engage in a love**¹⁹ that is **outside my control**.

Rejecting a love of the truth isolates my heart from receiving life itself that **withers my spirit**.

Choose you this day²⁰ who you will serve, **who will be Lord** that defines **your family identity**.

We **choose** by what we believe is **true about our identity**,²¹ either our **feelings** or **what God says**.

- ¹ Moses said to God, "Behold, when I come to the children of Israel, and tell them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you;' and they ask me, '**What is his name?**' What should I tell them?" God said to Moses, "**I AM WHO I AM**," and he said, "You shall tell the children of Israel this: '**I AM has sent me** to you.'" (Exodus 3:13-14)
- ² Jesus said to him, "**I am** the way, **the truth**, and the life. No one comes to the Father, except through me. If you had **known me**, you would have **known my Father** also. From now on, you know him, and have seen him." (John 14:6-7) Jesus therefore said to those Jews who had believed him, "If you **remain in my word**, then you are truly my disciples. You will **know the truth**, and the **truth will make you free**." (John 8:31-32)
- ³ **By Yahweh's word**, the heavens were made; all their army by the breath of his mouth. (Psalms 33:6)
- ⁴ For **by him all things were created**, in the heavens and on the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been **created through him**, and for him. He is before all things, and **in him all things are held together**. (Colossians 1:16-17)
- ⁵ **Give thanks** to Yahweh, for **he is good**; for his **loving kindness** endures forever. **Give thanks** to the God of gods; for his **loving kindness** endures forever. **Give thanks to the Lord of lords**; for his **loving kindness endures forever**: (Psalms 136:1-3)
- But you, man of God, flee these things, and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith. **Lay hold of the eternal life** to which you were called, and you confessed the good confession in the sight of many witnesses. I charge you before **God, who gives life to all things**, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate testified the good confession, that you keep the commandment without spot, blameless, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ; which in its own times he will show, who is **the blessed and only Ruler**, the King of kings, and **Lord of lords**; who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light; whom no man has seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and eternal power. Amen. (1 Timothy 6:11-16)
- These will war against the Lamb, and **the Lamb will overcome** them, for **he is Lord of lords**, and King of kings. They also will overcome **who are with him**, called and chosen and faithful." (Revelation 17:14)
- ⁶ The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, **give me my share** of your property.' He divided his livelihood between them. Not many days after, the younger son gathered all of this together and **traveled into a far country**. There he wasted his property with riotous living. (Luke 15:12-13)
- ⁷ I am **no more worthy to be called your son**. Make me as one of your hired servants.'" (Luke 15:19)
- ⁸ But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been **working like a slave for you**, and I have **never disobeyed** your command; yet **you have never given me** even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. (Luke 15:29 NRSV)
- ⁹ "But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out **the best robe, and put it on him**. Put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. Bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat, and **celebrate**; for **this, my son**, was dead, and is alive again. He was lost, and is found.' **They began to celebrate**. (Luke 15:22-24)
- ¹⁰ I will greatly rejoice in Yahweh, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, **he has covered me with the robe of righteousness**, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. (Isaiah 61:10)
- But now **apart from the law, a righteousness of God** has been revealed, being testified by the law and the prophets; even **the righteousness of God** through faith in Jesus Christ to all and **on all those who believe**. For there is no distinction, (Romans 3:21-22)
- Let us **walk properly**, as in the day; not in reveling and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and lustful acts, and not in strife and jealousy. But **put on the Lord Jesus Christ**, and make no provision for the flesh, for its lusts. (Romans 13:13-14)
- For as many of you as were **baptized into Christ have put on Christ**. (Galatians 3:27)
- that you put away, as concerning your former way of life, the old man, that grows corrupt after the lusts of deceit; and that you **be renewed in the spirit of your mind**, and **put on the new man**, who in **the likeness of God** has been created in **righteousness and holiness of truth**. (Ephesians 4:22-24)
- ¹¹ Those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together as many as they found, **both bad and good**. The wedding was filled with guests. But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man who **didn't have on wedding clothing**, and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here **not wearing wedding clothing?**' He was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and **throw him into the outer darkness**; there is where the weeping and grinding of teeth will be.' For many are called, but few chosen." (Matthew 22:10-14)
- ¹² Then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will kill with the breath of his mouth, and destroy by the manifestation of his coming; even he whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deception of wickedness for those who are being lost, because **they didn't receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved**. (2 Thessalonians 2:8-10)
- ¹³ A multitude was sitting around him, and they told him, "Behold, your mother, your brothers, and your sisters are outside looking for you." He answered them, "**Who are my mother and my brothers?**" Looking around at those who sat

around him, he said, "Behold, my mother and my brothers! For **whoever does the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.**" (Mark 3:32-35)

¹⁴ ...actions repeated form habits, habits form character, and **by the character our destiny** for time and for eternity is **decided.** (COL 356)

¹⁵ You call me, 'Teacher' and 'Lord.' **You say so correctly,** for so I am. (John 13:13)

Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and don't do the things which I say? (Luke 6:46)

¹⁶ Yahweh our God, **other lords** besides you have had dominion over us, but **by you only will we make mention of your name.** (Isaiah 26:13)

¹⁷ But don't you be called 'Rabbi,' for **one is your teacher,** the Christ, and **all of you are brothers.** (Matthew 23:8)

For we don't preach ourselves, but **Christ Jesus as Lord,** and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake; seeing it is God who said, "Light will shine out of darkness," **who has shone in our hearts,** to give the light of the **knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.** (2 Corinthians 4:5-6)

¹⁸ For you, brothers, were **called for freedom.** Only don't use your freedom for gain to the flesh, but **through love be servants to one another.** (Galatians 5:13)

¹⁹ Behold, **how great a love** the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! For this cause the world doesn't know us, because it didn't know him. Beloved, **now we are children of God,** and it is not yet revealed what we will be. But we know that, when he is revealed, **we will be like him;** for we will see him just as he is. (1 John 3:1-2)

²⁰ If it seem evil to you to serve Yahweh, **choose you this day whom you will serve;** whether the gods which your fathers served that were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve Yahweh. (Joshua 24:15)

²¹ **Do you look at things only as they appear** in front of your face? If anyone trusts in himself that he is Christ's, let him consider this again with himself, that, even as he is Christ's, so also **we are Christ's.** (2 Corinthians 10:7)

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for **you are all one in Christ Jesus.** If you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed and **heirs according to promise.** (Galatians 3:28-29)