**Identity Theft and How You Can Prevent It!**

No, this is not an article about steps to take if your credit card information gets hacked or how to freeze your credit report so others can’t open new accounts in your name! This article is about a different kind of identity theft and how we can prevent it from happening! I recently attended the Labor Day Singles Retreat in North Carolina and the theme was: Mission Possible: The Power of One (Colossians 1:28: *He is the One we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ*.). This was a remarkable weekend with Kris Swiatocho and many other singles ministry leaders, with God moving through new friendships, touching hearts and answering prayers!  One of the sessions was about our identity and how Satan tries to rob us of our true identity in Christ, as a child of God.

Satan has many tricks in his bag and he knows which ones work most effectively with each of us! He is the master of deceit and disguise, so that we don’t oftentimes recognize his destructive ploys. In 2 Corinthians 11:14 (New International Version), we read, “*And no wonder, since Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light*.” I have heard it said that he likes to use our spiritual gifts and callings against us; for example, if you have the gift of encouragement, he will try to discourage you, etc. With some of us, he uses our pasts to keep us from moving forward and stepping out to be all that God has planned for us to be. He constantly tries to remind us of things we did or said to hurt others and make us feel guilty and hopeless. I once heard something on Klove Christian Radio that aptly applies here: *Satan knows our name but calls us by our sins, God knows our sins, but calls us by our name!* This burden of guilt and shame that Satan tries to inflict can weigh us down so much that we become physically or emotionally sick. He sometimes uses doubt and insecurity to try to crush us, whispering in our ear that we’re not good enough, not smart enough, not pretty/handsome enough to attract a mate, and the list could go on and on until we begin to believe him and journey through that valley of depression. This is not the way that God wants us to live, He doesn’t want to see us weighed down by ghosts from our past, by unforgiveness-either of others or of ourselves, or by overwhelming sadness and despair, but He wants us to live fully and with joy, clinging to His promises and His truth that never changes! Our real identity is in Christ and even though he may try, Satan can never rob us of that! We were bought with a price!

John 10:10 (Amplified Version) says: “The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have ***and*** enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows)*.”*In this version, the word, “and” is italicized and I believe it is written that way for emphasis--to have a full and complete life in Christ, to experience His joy and His peace! I like this version of this particular verse because it expands on how abundant our life can be -- full and overflowing!  We obey and trust grows, the more we trust, the more secure we become in our identity in Him. Step out in faith and when Satan tries to discourage you, in that moment, turn that thought over to God! Take a few minutes and think silently to yourself how your life would be different if you started living as though you truly believed John 10:10!!! Being secure in who we are in Christ can mean the difference between living a life of despair and hopelessness and having the joy and peace to live abundantly, resting in our identity as a child of God!