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Where do you find your identity?

Our culture is very interested in the journey of discovering individual identity. Personality tests, dream assessments, even BuzzFeed quizzes are available everywhere you look. It seems like everyone is searching for something to tell them who they are, where they belong and how they relate to the world.

The Bible says that all men and women are created in God's image. Humankind was created to reflect some of God's attributes. You can look for your identity anywhere, but followers of Jesus are called to find their identity in Him. At the heart of what it means to be a Christian is to receive a new identity. In Jesus, we do not lose our true selves, but we become our true selves. Unfortunately, we look for our identity horizontally (in the world) and not vertically (in Christ).

Any or all of these horizontal pursuits may feel like solid foundations, but none of them are permanent. Any of them could change without warning. If you base your identity on things like jobs, careers, success, wealth, power, physical appearance, and so on, you are setting yourself up for great disappointment. A sudden job loss could leave you questioning your choices in life. One piece of gossip aimed your way could destroy your reputation, even if it is untrue. Your appearance will change as you get older.

God, however, is unchanging. God is the same yesterday, today and forever. If you find your identity in God/Jesus/Holy Spirit, you will never ultimately be let down! Your identity should never be based on a hope, a guess, things of this world, or someone else's opinion. The Bible tells us of God's character and who we are as children of God. Consider these Bible verses as you clarify your identity.

- "You are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household." (Ephesians 2:19, New International Version)
- "God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work." (2 Corinthians 9:8)
- "See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know Him." (1 John 3:1)
- "The LORD your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in His love He will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing." (Zephaniah 3:17)
- "God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Corinthians 5:21)
- "Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you." (Colossians 3:13)
- "We are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." (Ephesians 2:10)
- "If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- "You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light." (1 Peter 2:9)
- "Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12)

Living A Christ-centered Identity

On a scale of 1 to 10 rate this statement: *I feel connected to the present moment and vitally alive in my spirit. I am congruent with my beliefs and behaviors, and I keep my faith and values at the forefront of my decisions and daily actions.* | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Even if you know all the areas of the Bible where a follower of Christ finds their identity, there can often be obstacles standing in the way of believing who you are in Christ. Other sources of identity often stand in the way, such as career, appearance, or money. But there are other things that can distract you as well. Identify the obstacles, consider how a Christ-center person (you) overcomes the obstacles, and take action to live into the person Christ has called you to *be*.

Selfishness

Everyone has made mistakes. Everyone has sinned. Everyone struggles with living life on their own terms. In what areas of your life do you try to be in control? Where do you seek your identity other than in Christ? In what areas of life and in what ways do you try to fulfill your own needs?

Outside Messages & Experiences

The world is broken by sin. There are people who have experienced unspeakable injustice. From gossip to verbal and physical abuse, outside messages are trying to shape your identity every day. Those outside messages can lead you to believe that you are unworthy of what the Bible says is true of you in Christ. What outside messages and experiences are you allowing to shape your identity?

False Beliefs

As you follow Jesus, you will seek to know Him more. You can do this through time in the Word, through prayer, through talking with friends or a mentor and through gathering together with other in worship. As your understanding of God grows, you may recognize flawed beliefs that you held before that do not line up with what you are hearing and learning about your identity now. Are there any false beliefs that you need to let go?

How to respond!

These obstacles are difficult to navigate. It's easy to believe that these things are legitimate barriers to following Jesus. But by the power of the Holy Spirit, you can overcome these obstacles and live fully in the identity that you were given in Jesus.

- Repent – repentance is a desire to be realigned with God. Ask Christ to forgive you of sin, and strengthen you in the areas where you choose to find your identity anywhere by in Jesus.
- Realize – what is one scripture verse you can use as a foundation for your identity? (read it to yourself daily)
- Keep it Real - 3 words that will now define the best of who I am in Christ and that will be used to guide my personal life, including my thoughts and actions, include...