

more to be IDENTITY

*replacing stinking
thinking with holy value*

Identity. What is it? How does it impact our lives? And where can we find it?

According to Dictionary.com, identity is:

i·den·ti·ty

1. the condition of being oneself or itself, and not another;
2. condition or character as to who a person or what a thing is;
3. the sense of self, providing sameness and continuity in personality over time
4. the state of having unique identifying characteristics held by no other person or thing
5. the individual characteristics by which a person or thing is recognized

Identity is rather important. It is knowing who you are, with confidence, and choosing to not be like someone else. It is about being consistent in your personality and characteristics. In other words, knowing your identity is the key to being authentic and confident, the real deal and not a phony, true to yourself and not swayed by the crowd.

Most people, however, assume that identity is about fancy titles, degrees, and accomplishments: Class President, Captain of the Soccer Team, Graduate with Honors, PhD, Lawyer, Senator, Published Author, Mom of Five. These are your roles, which reflect your unique combination of gifts, talents, skills and passions, but not your identity.

Identity isn't about credentials or responsibilities. It is about your God-given uniqueness manifested in the plans He has for your life (Jeremiah 29:11). You are not an accident or a mistake. Everything from how you look to your family dynamics, your personality to your passions, your strengths and weakness, your gifts and talents are all apart of God's master design. There is no one else like you! His plans set you apart, fearfully and wonderfully made and absolutely unique, to be used for a good purpose, right here, right now (Psalm 139:14, Philippians 2:13).

our holy value

In order to really uncover our true identity, we need to first start with knowing who we are and whose we are. It starts at the cross, when we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior. By faith in Christ, we are adopted into God's family (Ephesians 1:1-14). At the point of our salvation, we are given a brand new identity as a member of God's family.

In acknowledging that God sent His son to die for our sins so that we may experience eternal life, we move from a place of needing to define ourselves by our own goodness to resting in God's grace. We are freed to simply be a child of God, created in His image, and loved by a perfect God who has room his heart for imperfect children. We belong to Him, a Holy God with holy purposes for His holy people who have holy value. Yes. Holy. Yes. Set apart.

- **We belong to a Holy God.**

Isaiah 6:3 "And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."

- **Who gave us His Holy Son.**

Luke 1:35 "The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God."

- **And He makes us holy.**

Hebrews 10:10, 14 "And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all...because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy."

- **We are given His Holy Spirit.**

Ephesians 1:13 “And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit...(also see John 14:18)”

- **We are called to live holy lives.**

1 Peter 1:15-16 “But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy.’”

Understanding the fact that we are set apart in Christ should be the foundation for seeing that our identity is about who we AND whose we are. We are more than skin and bones brought into this world. We are more than the sum of all our accomplishments. We are more than the sordidness of all our sin. We are holy.

a new identity

Imagine being invited to a party this weekend, hosted by a good friend, and the guest list includes many you’ve never met before. You spend time figuring out what to wear and when to arrive, hoping to make a good first impression. When you walk in the front door, the crowd is loud and every corner of the house is packed with warm bodies. There’s no hope of finding your friend, nor being able to stick with her for the evening. You’ll have to get into the mix and introduce yourself again and again. What will you say? How will you describe yourself? Will it be based on feelings? Accomplishments? Dreams? Will you be honest? Authentic? Fake? Transparent?

Chances are, you’ll tell people your name and what you do, once again establishing the belief in your mind that you need “to do more impressive things” in order to feel more valuable. You might also be brewing over a lot of unspoken thoughts, similar to the labels most females give themselves all day long. These destructive identity labels usually sound like, “I am so _____!”, or “If only I wasn’t so _____!”

What do you fill your *blank* in with? Stupid, fat, ugly, smart, pretty, better, foolish, rebellious, perfect, insignificant, insecure, bad, good, worthless, hopeless, independent, needy, lonely, alone. Does this self-dialogue actually do anything for you? Is it valuing the

life God gave you? Is it honoring God?

Identity is not about what you do nor is it about what you feel. Identity, ultimately, is about who God says you are. See, if He was given the chance to introduce you as the part and respond to your silent, self-sabotaging thoughts, He would say:

- ★ **I chose her before the creation of the world and adopted her into my family by faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.** Ephesians 1:4 - 11
- ★ **She is MY Child.** John 1:12, Romans 8:14-15
- ★ **She is Christ's friend.** John 15:15
- ★ **She is MY workmanship.** Ephesians 2:10
- ★ **She is MY coworker.** 2 Corinthians 6:1
- ★ **She is chosen and appointed by MY son, Jesus Christ, to bear His fruit.** John 15:16
- ★ **She is forgiven.** Matthew 26:28, Ephesians 1:7
- ★ **She is sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.** Ephesians 1:13
- ★ **She is a new creation.** 2 Corinthians 5:17
- ★ **She is alive with Christ.** Ephesians 2:5
- ★ **She is blessed with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places.** Ephesians 1:3
- ★ **She is set free.** Romans 8:2, John 8:32
- ★ **She is not alone and does not need to fear.** Isaiah 43:1-3, Deuteronomy 31:6-8
- ★ **She is victorious through the Lord Jesus Christ.** 1 Corinthians 15:57
- ★ **She is not controlled by the sinful nature but by the Spirit.** Romans 8:9
- ★ **She knows my voice and follows me.** John 10:27
- ★ **She has received eternal life and cannot be snatched out of MY hand.** John 10:28
- ★ **She is able to hear MY voice.** John 8:47
- ★ **She does not belong to this world.** John 15:19
- ★ **She belongs to ME!** 1 Peter 2:9

stinking thinking

So where did our thinking about our identity go wrong? Why do we struggle to define ourselves by our accomplishments, what others say about us, and what we feel instead of looking to God to determine our value and worth?

Unfortunately, our identity is often shaped by the people in our lives, our environment, our circumstances, and the influences upon us. We are so quick to listen, watch, and learn from the opinions and examples of others, that often “stinking thinking” permeates our beliefs. These lies counter God’s truth, but until we recognize them, they have power over our sense of self and the course of our life.

When life has dealt a series of painful traumas, imprint beliefs can be left on a child’s heart and mind, shaping how she sees herself, God, and the world around her. These false beliefs are processed in the midst of deep wounds and, until healed, leave a negative affect.

“Stinking thinking” is also passed down from generation to generation, deeply engraining lies into every aspect of life. The culture and media also offer their part in the warping of our thinking: beauty is defined by Photoshop, success is defined by money, love is defined by feelings, sexuality is defined by experience, marriage is defined by contracts, intelligence is defined by degree. In Christian circles, femininity is defined by meekness compared to the world that defines it by the feminist movement. Yikes. No wonder we don’t know our identity. Who should we believe? How do we know what’s true?

Uncovering true identity in Christ is about determinedly stepping out of a false belief system -- stinking thinking -- and into the truth. It requires inventorying every thought and putting it up against the test of Scripture.

2 Corinthians 10:5

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

Romans 12:2

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Taking captive false beliefs and replacing them with the truth is a life skill and discipline. In some cases, it requires Christian counseling to uncover the source of the lies deeply engrained in painful experiences. For others, in an emotionally stable place, developing a new thinking pattern is a matter of practice. A friend, accountability partner, or even a life coach, can be a great encourager in helping move out of stinking thinking.

To replace stinking thinking with holy value, every time a thought-defining label comes into your mind, you have to check it against Scripture to see if it is true. For example, you might be thinking...

“I feel so alone...”

but the truth is...

“Yes, right now, right here I am alone, without another person, but I am never totally alone because I belong to God (1 Peter 2:9) and He is always with me (Deut. 31:6-8).”

Living in the place of truth -- and true identity -- will entirely change your life. By lining up feelings with fact you gain freedom to live and breathe without being in emotional bondage. It takes practice to replace stinking thinking with truth-filled statements about your identity. Without regular study of Scripture, it is a nearly impossible feat. So grab your Bible and some index cards, and begin claiming your new labels and declaring your holy value as a daughter of the King. Uncover your true identity and experience life transformed!

resources

- Mental Makeover
- Get Real
- Immersed Challenge
- Quiet Time
- Redefining Beauty
- Spiritual Gifts & Personalities
- Live the Worthy Call