

Identity...My Life of Faith

Six Week Lesson Series

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Note from Pastor Kermit:

Let's talk about our identity as it relates to our faith in Christ

- ❖ **Be engaged**
 - Take notes, participate, and do the worksheets
- ❖ **Be in prayer**
 - Pray that God will open up our understanding to His Word
- ❖ **Invite a friend**
- ❖ **Identity:** who someone is, the name of a person, the qualities, beliefs, etc., the thing that makes a particular person or group different from others.

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Lesson 1

Life in Christ (Luke 9:18-26)

What's a word or phrase that you would like to come up when people describe you?

Luke 9:18-20

18 And it happened, as He was alone praying, *that* His disciples joined Him, and He asked them, saying, "Who do the crowds say that I am?"

19 So they answered and said, "John the Baptist, but some say Elijah; and others say that one of the old prophets has risen again."

20 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered and said, "The Christ of God." (Matthew 16:13-16)

Discussion Question #1

- What are some words or phrases people use to describe Jesus daily?

Luke 9:21-22

21 And He strictly warned and commanded them to tell this to no one,

22 saying, "The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day."

Discussion Question #2

- How would you have felt if you heard Jesus' instructions as one of his disciples?

Luke 9:23-26

23 Then He said to *them* all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.

24 "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.

25 "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost?

26 "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His *own* glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels.

Discussion Question #3-4

- What does it look like on a practical level to deny ourselves? To daily take up a cross?
- How can we help one another obey Jesus' instructions in these verses?

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Live It Out

Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. How will you respond to that truth in the days to come?

- **Research.** Take some time to read through your church's statement of faith. (You can start with your church website, or with a staff member.) what are some specific truths that statement teaches about Jesus?
- **Surrender.** Saying yes to Jesus as Lord means saying no to yourself. Do a self-examination and surrender any area of selfishness to Him.
- **Share.** We are called to tell everyone who Jesus is. Think of someone you know who needs Jesus. Pray as a group for this person to come to know Jesus, and pray about your part in that process: sharing your testimony, inviting him or her to church, answering questions and loving them with love of the Lord.

Who are you? That's an interesting question. An important question. But you'll never find the answer without understanding that your identity is directly tied to Jesus.

WHO YOU ARE

If we are disciples of Jesus, then He is the foundation of our identities. Use the boxes below to record additional words that describe who you are as a person. Examples may include "parent," "plumber," and so on.

JESUS

Choose one of the words you used to describe yourself above. How does having Jesus at the foundation of your identity influence that portion of your life?

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Lesson 2

Life In The Church (1 Peter 4:7-11)

What do you like most about the church? (ekklēsia)

1 Peter 4:7

7 But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.

Discussion Question #1

- When have you seen prayer make an impact in the lives of others?

1 Peter 4:8-9

8 And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins."

9 Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.

Discussion Question #2-3

- What are some ways love covers the damage done by sin?
- Why is hospitality an essential part of any church family?

1 Peter 4:10-11

10 As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

11 If anyone speaks, *let him speak* as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, *let him do it* as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Discussion Question #4

- What opportunities help you feel excited about using your gifts to serve others?

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Live it out

How will you love and serve Christ through His church this week?

- **Pray.** Make a commitment to pray each day. Prayer is simply talking to God. Pray for your church and those who lead it. Serve them by praying for them.
- **Practice hospitality.** Identify a way you can show more love and kindness to the people in your church, in your community, and in your family.
- **Identify others gifts.** Every member in God's church is gifted, but many Christians don't see themselves that way. Encourage others by pointing out the gifts you see in them. Bless each other with a word of encouragement, a note, a phone call, or something that will brighten their day?

Whether you've been a Christian for years, or whether you recently discovered your identity in Christ, you have a vital connection to the Church. Don't miss out on that incredible gift.

THE GIFT OF GIFTS

Take a moment to review the lists of spiritual gifts below. Make a circle around gifts you see represented in your group. Make a rectangle around gifts you possess.

GIFTS OF SERVICE

Giving

Mercy

Service

Faith

Discernment

Administration

Hospitality

GIFTS OF SPEECH

Prophecy

Teaching

Exhortation

Leadership

Wisdom

Knowledge

Evangelism

What step can you take to learn more about your own spiritual gifts?

"The motto of every missionary - whether preacher, printer, or schoolmaster - ought to be 'Devoted for life.'"

—ADONIRAM JUDSON

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Lesson 3

Life At Home (Ephesians 5:22-28; 6:1-3)

What do you like best about your home?

Ephesians 5:22-24

22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

23 For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.

24 Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in everything.

Discussion Question# 1

- What is your initial reaction to these verses?

Ephesians 5:25-28

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,

26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,

27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

28 So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.

Discussion Question# 2&3

- How do these verses compare and contrast with the husbands we see today in movies and TV?
- Who's been a positive role model for biblical sacrifice and submission in your life?

Ephesians 6:1-3

1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

2 "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise:

3 "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."

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Discussion Question# 4

- How do these verses apply to your current situation?

Live It Out

How will you live out your identity in Christ at home in the days to come?

- **Submission.** Begin each morning by actively and intentionally submitting to Christ. Verbally acknowledge Him as your Lord and Master.
- **Love.** Be on the lookout for an opportunity to demonstrate self-sacrificial love to someone important in your life, your spouse, your friend, your neighbor, and so on. Express your love both verbally and through action.
- **Honor.** Even as adults, we're still called to honor our parents. Identify a practical way you can express that honor to one of your parents this week if possible.

There is certainly no place like home. It's likely the place where you feel most comfortable, like your true self. For that reason, make sure your home reflects your identity as a disciple of Jesus.

SAY THANKS

Use the following template to express your thanks to someone (or to a couple) who has modeled for you what it means to be a biblical spouse.

Dear _____,

I'd like to thank you for the different ways you've modeled what it means to be a biblical spouse. I've noticed many wonderful characteristics in your approach to marriage, including these: _____

One of my favorite memories of your dedication to your spouse is when you _____

I am deeply grateful for your example, and I hope to use what I've learned from you as I _____

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Lesson 4

Life At Work (Colossians 3:22-4:1)

What do you like best about the work you do?

Colossians 3:22

22 Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God.

Discussion Question #1

- How would you describe a biblical approach to work?

Colossians 3:23-25

23 And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men,

24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.

25 But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.

Discussion Question # 2&3

- Who comes to mind when you read these verses? Why?
- What are some practical ways you can honor Christ in your workplace?

Colossians 4:1

1 Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

Discussion Question #4

- Why is it important to treat all people the way our Master treats us?

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Live It Out

How will your work reflect your relationship with Christ this week?

- **Be positive.** Employees often speak disparaging about their employer and company. Choose to stand out in your workplace by being consistently positive in your speech.
- **Encourage.** Take a step to encourage someone you work with this week. Be open and direct about your desire and offer support as an act of obedience to Christ.
- **Pray.** Think of a person who is confrontational or difficult to work with. Pray for that person each day. Seek opportunities to be a witness for the love and grace of Christ as you work.

Many of us still don't know what we want to "be" when we grow up. But all of us will need to work even as we seek our dreams. Therefore, all of us have the opportunity to reflect Christ and the values of His Kingdom in the work we do.

FACING WORK

*Select the image that best represents your emotions
when it's time to start your work each day.*



What's a practical step you can take each day to submit your work to Christ?

*"The man who keeps busy helping the man below
him won't have time to envy the man above him!"*

—HENRIETTA MEARS

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Lesson 5

Life In The Community (Matthew 25:34-40)

What do you like best about your community?

Matthew 25:34-36

34 "Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

35 'for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in;

36 'I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'

Discussion Question #1-2

- What modern circumstances come to mind when you read these verses?
- What emotions do you experience when you encounter someone in need?

Matthew 25:37-40

37 "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink?

38 'When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You?'

39 'Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?'

40 "And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did *it* to one of the least of these My brethren, you did *it* to Me.'

Discussion Question # 3&4

- With so many needs in our community and beyond, how do we decide whom to help?
- What is something we can do as a church to serve Jesus by serving "the least of these"?

Live It Out

What can you do this week to serve Jesus by serving others?

- **Start small.** You will see someone who needs help this week. It may be something minor, but step in and help and do so without making a judgment call about whether or not he or she deserves it.

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- **Get involved.** Look into the ways your church serves and ministers to those in need both inside the church family and outside. Invest your time and energies in working in one of those ministries for a longer period of time.

You may not live in one of the best communities in the country according to some list. But you live in a place filled with needs. Therefore, we have so many opportunities to serve Jesus, our Lord.

COMMUNITY NEEDS

Use the space below to draw a rough map of your community, or to create a list of the major regions within your community. When finished, mark some of the specific areas in your community where there are major needs waiting to be met.

How has Jesus influenced your approach to meeting the needs of others?

"Christian brotherhood is not an ideal which we must realize. It is rather a reality created by God in Christ in which we may participate."

— DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

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Lesson 6

Life On Mission (1 Corinthians 9:19-27)

What do you like best about connecting with people?

1 Corinthians 9:19-23

19 For though I am free from all *men*, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more;
20 and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those *who are* under the law, as under the law, that I might win those *who are* under the law;
21 to those *who are* without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those *who are* without law;
22 to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all *men*, that I might by all means save some.
23 Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with *you*.

Discussion Question #1&2

- How did you first hear the gospel?
- What are some different approaches Christians use for sharing the gospel?

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain *it*.
25 And everyone who competes *for the prize* is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a perishable crown, but we *for* an imperishable *crown*.
26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as *one who* beats the air.
27 But I discipline my body and bring *it* into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

Discussion Question #3&4

- What is the prize for living the Christian life each and every day?
- What things might we need to set aside and pick up to run the race of faith well?

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Live It Out

How will you step into the shoes of others this week to share the gospel?

- **Pray.** Identify someone you know personally who still needs to follow Christ. Pray for this person each day. Ask for guidance and opportunities to be a witness.
- **Learn.** Work with a partner to study a specific people group in your community or around the world. Learn what you can about their beliefs and customs. Pray that the gospel would penetrate their culture. Ask God how you can get involved.
- **Step out.** As a group, plan a ministry project to serve a person or group, something that requires you step out of your comfort zone. Seek a way to connect with that person or community in order share Christ.

Walking a mile in someone else's shoes is harder than we often realize. But it's a necessary part of sharing the gospel with those who need to hear it. Are you ready?

