

What does the Bible say: Identity – Who am I? pt 1

Intro: Stefan Duerksen, Lead Pastor

Announce: *“Grace Penner, age 67, passed away on Thursday, November 21st. She and her husband Harold attended here many years. Harold passed away about 3 years ago. She leaves behind two daughters and their families. The funeral will be at our church this coming Tuesday afternoon at 1pm. Our hearts go out to them as they mourn their mom and grandma.”*

Church-Wide Prayer: Heart of PRAYER – PRAYER SUMMIT – Grace’s family & friends

- Pray that Jesus would give comfort, hope, and peace, for Grace’s family
- Pray for Grace’s many friends at SC who are grieving
- Pray that our church would continue to press into their faith through prayer
- Pray that each gen would encounter Jesus through prayer
- Pray for God to stretch out his hand and answer our many prayers (Acts 3:29-31)
- Pray for our average attendance at PS to grow to 500 ppl (BIS)
- Pray for those struggling with mental health & addiction to press in through prayer and find healing, strength to overcome, and for them to know Jesus more
- Pray for those struggling with major health concerns - healing, strength, joy

INTRO: LIVE DEMO: Credit: John Stonestreet webinar/book practical guide to Culture AND our very own Pastor Chris Carr! He did this with our HS students!

- **Caveat:** NOT a functional computer – just a shell! No computers were hurt in the making of this demonstration.

I had a friend who told me of a customer who had been upset because her coffee holder had broken. On her computer... he was puzzled as to what she meant... it was her CD Rom drive!

QUESTION: is this a cutting board? NO! is this a frisbee? NO! BUT it can DO both of those things!

BEFORE you ask what you can DO with something. You must ask what it is FOR!

1. **What is it?** A COMPUTER. IDENTITY
2. **What is it for?** A computer is a device that processes data for a variety of reasons. DATA PROCESSORS.
3. **What can it do?** It can store pictures, videos, sounds, words, numbers, it can load programs that perform very specific tasks – like writing a sermon! Or homework!
4. **The LAW:** With this in mind. It’s important that you do NOT throw your computer. It has delicate internal electronics. Do not submerge your computer under water! Water damages the electronics. Do not use as a cutting board??? Well. I am not sure I have seen that one!
5. **Breaking the law voids warranty!** The manufacturer defines what it is, what it is for, what it is designed to do, as well as defines what it should NOT be used for.

NO ONE ARGUES when a manufacturer sets what something is FOR, what it can DO and what you are NOT ALLOWED TO DO with it.

TODAYS SERMON: What does the Bible say about? IDENTITY – Who am I?

When we ask, “who am I?” we are essentially asking “what is this? What is it for?”

If we try and answer the question, “WHO AM I?” by starting with, “WHAT CAN I DO?” we end up in trouble!

A. Current Cultural worldview on Identity: looking inside yourself

Two phrases that capture the heart of our current culture:

1. **Expressive Individualism:** The term “expressive individualism” was coined by the American scholar Robert Bellah, who defines it as follows: **Expressive individualism holds that each person has a unique core of feeling and intuition that should unfold or be expressed if individuality is to be realized. (strange new world: Carl Truman)**
2. **Self-authorship:** the belief that your authentic self can only be found by looking inside yourself – your feelings, thoughts, desires and discovering your identity there.

In the coming weeks – we will look at some of the main LIES RE:IDENTITY that we are exposed to

Example 1: What if I see someone weaker than me eating a burger and I am hungry? Can I take it from them? NO! why not? Animals do!

Example 2: everyone says to DO WHAT MAKES YOU HAPPY – what if a couple who is dating sleeps together and gets pregnant. Should she abort her child? NO! why not? The child will be a burden and make them unhappy! Besides, they aren’t ‘ready’.

Example 3: what if I feel attracted to another man? Should I pursue him in a gay relationship? According to the world – YES – to be your authentic self you MUST give in to those urges.

- What if, as a married man, I am attracted to another woman? Should I pursue her?
- Or, a child? NO!
- How can I be my authentic self?

Example 4: In Germany, Hitler told everyone that the Jews were responsible for WW1 and that they were killing the economy. They were the enemy. He led a campaign of terror and killed 6 million Jews. Regular people committed genocide.

- Was this ok? NO! why? Animals do this type of thing to each other ALL THE TIME.
- **Jordan Peterson said**, “without an external LAW GIVER” we all end up being “GOOD NAZI’s”
- What does he mean? Without being governed and defined by an external Creator - Human beings are no different than animals.

These are just a spattering of examples. But ALL of them share this in common. A failure to understand what it means to be human. Who we are. Why we are here. What we are for.

History tells us that mankind left to follow their internal feelings & intuition ALWAYS leans towards EVIL.

C.S. Lewis refers to the Moral Laws of Nature (which implies a LAW GIVER) he’s talking about a law for how human beings should behave—not necessarily how they do. Counterintuitively, the fact that people disagree about the right thing to do suggests that there must be some Law of Nature—some preexisting idea of Good outside of humanity.

- **Our Creator – Manufacturer warns us that looking INSIDE results in FAILURE & DEATH!**
- **Genesis 6:5 (BSB)** Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was altogether evil all the time.
- **Jeremiah 17:9 (BSB)** The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?
- **Mark 7:20-23 (BSB)** He continued: “What comes out of a man, that is what defiles him. For from within the hearts of men come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, debauchery, envy, slander, arrogance, and foolishness. All these evils come from within, and these are what defile a man.”

To discover WHO WE ARE, we must first know WHOSE WE ARE.

Spoiler alert: You will never know WHO YOU ARE until you know WHOSE YOU ARE.

The foundation of WHO WE ARE begins in Genesis.

B. Biblical Worldview on Identity: Look to God for identity

QUESTION: Humans are made in the..... “image of God” YES! **What does that mean?**

We find this information in the beginning! In the **First Chapter of the Grand Story: Creation**

Genesis 1:1-2 (BSB) In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Now the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. (**SOVEREIGN**)

Genesis 1:24-27 (BSB) ...God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that crawls upon the earth according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness, to rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, and over all the earth itself and every creature that crawls upon it.” So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

C. From the Manufacturer: Made in the Image of God.

Image means, ‘likeness’. We are born to reflect the likeness of God. With this, we carry smaller versions of his attributes that separate us from the rest of all creation.

Identity is ALWAYS found in the IMAGE of another...

Psychologists will say the part of our brain that forms ‘identity’ actually forms as a reflection of our parents or caregivers. As we see their responses to us, how we are treated, etc. we form a picture of WHO WE ARE.

- From conception till around 13 – kids are often becoming a carbon copy of their parents.
- Teens – become a carbon copy of their friends and peers – with slight variation
- Adults the same! We are far less “individualistic” than we believe!

We REQUIRE an external source to instruct (reflect) us on WHO WE ARE, WHAT WE ARE FOR & WHAT WE SHOULD DO

Psalms 135:15-18 (BSB) The idols of the nations are silver and gold, made by the hands of men. They have mouths, but cannot speak; they have eyes, but cannot see; they have ears, but cannot hear; nor is there breath in their mouths. Those who make them become like them, as do all who trust in them.

5 idols we currently are being formed by: (John Stonestreet Practical Guide to Culture)

1. **Self** – Self - expressive individualism - self-authorship - set the 'self' as god.
2. **Media**: - Paul “my God will supply every need” – we rely on the media for truth, rest, joy, excitement, escape
3. **Sex** - for many has become the highest pursuit in life! Sex slavery, abuse, adultery, pornography, lust, are far too common - even amongst God's people!
4. **Science** - or "scientists" have replaced God's Word as the source of absolute truth. Rather than pointing us back to God who made everything.
5. **Stuff** - materialism has become the god to many in our society. We measure our worth and the worth of those around us by our stuff. When stressed? We purchase MORE to feel alive.

Blaise Pascal said, ‘we have a God sized hole that can only be filled with God’

The more we worship these idols. The more we trust in them. The more we become like them.

If we are to discover WHO WE ARE – we must go back to the source and discover WHOSE WE ARE!

QUESTION: You might wonder. IF this is so important. Why does the Bible say so little about what the image of God means???

Answer: **BECAUSE THE ENTIRE BIBLE ANSWERS THAT QUESTION.** God reveals Himself in Scripture. He reveals his nature, values, purposes, origin, destiny and more! He is the One we are supposed to REFLECT. We are made in HIS IMAGE “likeness”.

Systematic theology: the fact that man is in the image of God means that man is like God in the following ways: intellectual ability, moral purity, spiritual nature, dominion over the earth, creativity, ability to make ethical choices, and immortality.

Even this statement falls short and is deemed unnecessary when you have the Bible!

We have EVERYTHING we need to know WHO WE ARE, WHAT WE ARE FOR & WHAT WE SHOULD DO

D. From the Manufacturer: You have tremendous value inherent in your existence

When you look INSIDE yourself for your identity & worth – it will always lead to pain, confusion and more brokenness. WHY? Because you weren’t made to do that! That is not a burden you were given!

You were made to look OUTSIDE yourself – to God – who created you, loves you, designed you and made a way for you to redeemed – HE IS THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN TELL YOU WHO YOU ARE & EXPLAIN YOUR VALUE & WORTH.

Psalm 139:13-16 ESV For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the

depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.

Romans 5:8 ESV But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Jeremiah 1:5 ESV “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

Isaiah 49:15-16 (BSB) “Can a woman forget her nursing child, or lack compassion for the son of her womb? Even if she could forget, I will not forget you! Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; your walls are ever before Me.

You will never know WHO YOU ARE until you know WHOSE YOU ARE

THIS WEEK – Get into the Word, engage in prayer – PRAYER SUMMIT, worship your heart out and invest into your RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR MAKER.

Last song: No longer Slaves

AFTER SERVICE PRAYER – PRAYER ROOM – 9AM and 11AM

MARANATHA!! Come soon Lord!

Care@mysouthland.com

SC CHURCH WIDE PRAYER REQUESTS 2024

Cruise ship → → → → → Battleship

1. **Life on Mission** (Mt 28:18-20, Mt 22:37-40): Love, serve & disciple people to Jesus
2. **Next Gen** (Ps 78:7-8): Encounters with Jesus, strong mental health, boldness & belonging
3. **Israel & Persecuted Church** (Lk 21:13): Faith, fortitude & wisdom “to not waste the opportunity to share the Gospel”
4. **Heart of Prayer** (Ps 27:4): Every generation to find Jesus & learn to bring their needs to Him in prayer
5. **Church Renewal**: Directors for India and other new countries & many global disciple makers