

WHO YOU SAY

I AM

DAY 1

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# DAY ONE

**There are different types of identity - personal, social, family just to name a few.**

Today we are going to focus mainly on your personal identity - who you are.

**I've got a few questions to get you started.**

1. *Where were you born?*
2. *How many siblings do you have?*
3. *What are 3 positive adjectives you would use to describe yourself?*
4. *What is something your family loves about you?*
5. *What is your family's heritage?*
6. *What show are you bingeing right now?*
7. *Who's your favorite Muppet? (PAC staff included.)*

Go ahead. Take a minute and write your answers down.

If you went around the church on a Sunday morning... okay, if you went through the Facebook comments on a Sunday morning, and compared your answers, you might find *someone* with similar answers.

**Even though there might be some similarities, you are all uniquely and wonderfully made.**

Some of the questions have answers that will change - those are not your identity. They are part of who you are but just one part. Some of the answers are your family identity - they don't change but they are not unique to you, your whole family has the same answers. The things that make you who you are, the traits that God has designed and given to you, the gifts and abilities that he has placed in you for His purpose, are your identity!

**Those 3 adjectives you have written are part of that.**

Maybe people have spoken those words over you and those words have also been affirmed by God in the unique way he speaks to you (We'll chat more about that later) and it's easy for you to believe them. But maybe you had trouble finding positive adjectives to describe you; find someone to help you. Talk to your housechurch or other people you trust and ask them. These can be much easier to see in someone else, and sometimes we need help seeing them in ourselves.

In my growing up years, my identity was totally wrapped up in what other people thought of me.

**I became an expert chameleon, learning to fit in no matter the people or the circumstances.**

My dad expected good grades, so I did my best to be an A student so he would be proud of me. My friends expected me to go with the flow, follow where they led and so I did. My teachers expected me to give the right answers and not cause problems in class, so I did and quickly identified myself with the "nerds" which automatically meant some people didn't like me. This was a really big problem, because it was extremely important to me that I was liked and accepted.

*The trick is, I knew how to become who everybody expected me to be, but I had no idea who I was.*

If you had asked me a question like "what three positive adjectives describe you?" I would have had no idea how to answer. Or my answers would be only what the people around me said I was.

I have struggled with my identity for years. It's only very recently that I have been able to say even two positive things about myself without looking for the input of others. Trying to keep everybody happy or liking you is exhausting!! I was SO afraid of being alone, not being accepted or liked, and disappointing people around me.

**It was like being in a prison of my own making.**

I often wonder who I would be if I had people in my life who recognized that I was believing lies about myself and had spoken truth over them. Or if I had grown up in a youth group like our youth group at PAC, where we can talk about hard things and process them in the moment with people we trust. Or if I had any awareness that there

was a God who didn't just judge me for what I had done wrong, but who truly loved me for me.

How would the trajectory of my life be different?

Would I be different or would I be the same but without all the years of "stuff" I needed to work through?

But we can't dwell on what has gotten us where we are. We have to look ahead to what is coming, and what Jesus has for us. And when I do shift my thinking and dwell on who our loving God is telling me I am, I begin to see the positive adjectives that He would use to describe me.

I still struggle sometimes, the old lies creep back in, but I am learning to hold onto the good things I hear from Him, and the way He affirms me through scripture, other people, songs, books etc. I am learning that my identity in God is who I really am.

My favorite book of the bible is Ephesians and imagine that, there are a ton of identity affirming verses in there. Like these ones:

### **Ephesians 1:3-7**

*<sup>3</sup>All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. <sup>4</sup>Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes.*

*<sup>5</sup>God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. <sup>6</sup>So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. <sup>7</sup>He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins.*

If I was to ask you the question: Who are you? I wonder what you might say. And I wonder who your answer is really coming from.

## **Who is telling you who you are?**

Because the truth is that the creator of the universe has already told you who you are. You can see who he says you are in Ephesians.

**You are blessed.**

**You were chosen by God before He formed the world.**

**You are adopted into the family of God.**

**You have been purchased and given freedom.**

**You are loved by Jesus.**

If you have a clear picture of who you are I think that is fantastic. Use that gift to help others discover who God has made them to be.

But if you are someone who is struggling with knowing who you are, if you struggle agreeing with those statements above, my hope is that over the next few days, you will discover something new. That you will discover who you are, and that the Holy Spirit will rewrite the lies, and show you what it takes to make it stick.