

## Identity: Who Am I? Who are You? – Introduction

As the parent of four children, I can't tell you how many times I have heard the question, "What is that?" Many times, the answer isn't hard at all. That's a chair, a truck, a powerline, or an egg. Regardless of the item, it needed to be identified. But how do we identify things? At some point in our life someone had to tell us what an item was and we needed to associate it with something. Perhaps it was physical characteristics, functions, or how people interacted with the item that helped us determine what something was. But what about someone? Identifying someone is a bit more complex. I don't mean saying, "that's Mike" but rather, "who is Mike at his core?" In an attempt to answer the fundamental question, "Who am I?", I believe people gravitate to one or more of the following areas. Identities are often wrapped up in our image, our choices, our relationships, or our accomplishments. Our culture presents these areas as the identifying characteristics of who we are. Sadly, we were always created to be so much more than these. During this series we are going to consider what the Bible says about who we are in relation to these things, but more importantly, who we are in relation to God. As we begin, I'd like to consider *1 Peter 2:9-11* as a framework for how we move forward.

When we consider image as an identifying characteristic we're referring to the outwardly visible realities of our life. This could include our physical characteristics, style, emotions, personality, economic status, or nationality. Generally, these can be seen by others. When we consider our image in light of *1 Peter 2:9-11* we see something a bit different. These verses declare that we are royal holy worshipers proclaiming His praises. The identifying characteristic of those in Christ is that we take on the image of the King of Kings. Through Christ, we are washed whiter than snow and become those who sing His praises.

Choices involve the decisions that we make as we navigate life. The number of choices that you and I make in an hour are overwhelming. Trying to define our identity by our choices is impossible. We are being told that we can choose our gender, our sexual orientation, our destiny, and the list goes on. The only choice that we see made in *1 Peter 2:9-11* is the choice that God made in choosing us. We see that God chooses us to be a part of His family and His kingdom. Because of His choice, our identity is wrapped up in Him.

When relationships become an area in which we find our identity, we need to consider those we choose and those that we are placed into. Our families, coworkers, friends, teammates, and church congregants can make up our relationship identity. When we consider *1 Peter 2:9-11* we are told that our relationships are grounded in our relationship with God and then one another through His Spirit. We are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a people for His own possession. The identifying relationship is one with Christ and each other.

Lastly, as we consider finding our identity in our accomplishments, we must address all that we've achieved. Most people consider academic success, athletic prowess, certifications earned, or college degrees, and much more. Identities wrapped up in accomplishments often require a constant pursuit of achieving more and more at a higher level. It can be a tireless and endless pursuit. *1 Peter 2:9-11* addresses our accomplishments in terms of the good works, through Christ, that enable us to point others toward God. The struggle to find our identity forces us to consider each of these areas as we ask, "Who am I?" Be encouraged, the Bible addresses all of these while providing an alternative that declares our true identity in Christ.

### Discussion Questions:

- 1) Consider the 4 Categories in which we are tempted to find our identity. Which of the 4 are you most likely to find your identity in? Which of the four do you think others are most likely to find their identity in?
- 2) Consider this quote, *"In actuality we are defining ourselves all the time through the decisions we make, and the actions we take, in the ways we spend our time, and the people who we choose to spend it with, and by what we consider the most meaningful and fulfilling in life."* What are some decisions you regularly make? What actions do you take, and how do you spend your time? Who do you spend time with? What do you find meaningful in your life?
- 3) Consider *1 Peter 2:9-11*. How do these verses challenge your answer to the question, "Who am I?"