

Identity Study – Gen.1:26-27, Gen. 2:18, Gen. 11:1-9, 1 Peter 2:9-10 – Who are We? – Lesson Summary

As we continue our Identity series it's important to consider how we can be tempted to allow our relationships to define us. We cannot escape the relational reality of our existence. The Bible declares that we were created in the image of God. When considering God's Word more carefully we see that the decision to create man was made within a relationship. *Gen. 1:26* states, "let **us** make man in **our** image according to **our** likeness". The very image of God is a relational one. We were created in relationship for relationship. Sadly, relationships are broken by sin. As a result of our brokenness, apart from Christ, any attempt to place our identity in our relationships fails. Let's consider **three potential categories of relationship identity**.

A prominent message in society today is **radical individualism**. You are encouraged to be true to yourself, do what makes you happy, don't let anyone get in the way or your dreams, you can be whoever you want to be, and the list goes on. Individuality declares that we identify with no one other than ourself. Individuality is motivated by a fierce independence and freedom from others. Individuality was attractive to Adam and Eve in the Garden. Their temptation to eat the fruit was motivated by a desire to be like God. This desire drove them to a place where they surrendered their relationship with God in order to pursue independence. Because of this, our relationship with God is broken as well. Finding our identity in individuality prevents us from reflecting the image of God. Worse than that, individuality places us in the position of God which is a place we weren't meant to reside.

Identifying with ourself isn't the only misguided identity we pursue. We also face a strong temptation to **identify with the cultural community** around us. Apart from Christ, we find society establishing their own morals, glorifying their reputation among others, and creating a cultural community independent of those who disagree. Perhaps the best example of this is recorded in *Gen. 11:1-9*. In the beginning, God instructed Adam and Eve to be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth. Sadly, humanity's godlessness and evil became so bad that God destroyed all humanity but Noah and His family. Upon arriving on dry land, God gives Noah and his family the same command in *Gen. 9:1*. Initially, things appeared to go well. *Gen. 11:1-9* begins by expressing the people's obedience. We see that they were united and expanding their territory. However, that didn't last long. Instead of continuing to fill the earth, they decided to settle in order to avoid being scattered. Their decision was driven by a desire to create a city and culture the way they wanted to. They wanted to establish their own reputation. They wanted independence from God. Despite their attempt to do their own thing, God's plan moves forward as the triune God comes down, confuses their language, and scatters them Himself. What they were unwilling to do, God accomplishes anyway. It may be tempting to stand in judgement and point out how foolish it was to go against God's direction. However, we do the same thing every time we identify with any relationship other than our relationship with Christ. An identity found in radical individuality or cultural communities opposed to God destroys our relationship with God and one another.

These truths may seem discouraging. Sin prevents us from identifying with God and one another. We are incapable of bearing the image of a relational God. It's God's mercy that provides hope and restoration. Jesus, God in the flesh, steps out of Heaven in order to provide a way back to the Father. His life, death, and resurrection provide a way to identify with God, the King of Kings, Our Heavenly Father. The Gospel also accomplishes much more as we are reunited to one another through His Spirit. *1 Peter 2:9* declares that we are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, who belong to Him in order to sing His praises. When we **identify with our relationship with Christ, and those He has called to Himself**, we become image bearers of the triune God. Jesus's mercy accomplishes what we can't as He reunites us with the Father and one another.

Discussion:

- 1) What are some of the most significant relationships in your life? How do they affect your behaviors, thoughts, and decisions?
- 2) At the tower of Babel, the people's desire was to do what they wanted, create their own identity, and be independent from God. How do you struggle in the same way?
- 3) God scattered His people due to their arrogance. Christ's humility allows for us to be reunited with God and one another. How is this encouraging? How have you found it to be challenging?