

PASTOR'S PEN

DNow was a great experience for me this year. The last time I taught a group at DNow, the parents of the boys I led were in their high school years, or maybe even younger! Denise and I have been host homes most years, but this is the first time I taught a group in over 25 years. I really hope the young men I taught had half as much fun as I did. These guys were well-behaved and respectful. During our group study times, they participated and gave thoughtful answers. During one session that worked through some complex Scripture passages that fell easily into giving very “churchy” answers, I challenged them to answer as if they were explaining their answer to a friend who had never gone to church. Numerous times during that session they would begin to answer, stop, then start again. It was obvious they were making sure their answer would be understandable to that unchurched friend. This practice should be something we all work on in our own lives. It is so easy to fall into churchy language that might mean something important to us but is completely foreign to those outside of the church world.

The theme of finding our identity in Christ and then learning to live out that identity was challenging. The truth that we are sinners condemned to an eternity separated from God, which is not God's plan, but have been rescued and restored to a relationship with God through Christ's death and resurrection was hammered home. But then we began working through what is our identity now. What does it mean to be part of God's family and united with Christ in His death and resurrection? Even this old pastor learned some truth to apply to my life.

This Sunday we will begin a two-part series on Deacon. Our current deacons have requested that the church begin the process of selecting, testing and ultimately ordaining men to serve as Deacons in our church. Over the last couple of years, we have grieved as some deacons have passed away. We have some other deacons who have come to the point of needing to step away from serving as active deacons. Over the last few months, the Deacon Body has finalized a process to select Deacon Trainees. The first step in that process is receiving nominations from the church of men who have the qualification and heart necessary to serve in this role. On Sunday February 4 and 11 I will preach on these topics. Then the church will submit detailed nominations describing how individual men demonstrate those qualities. I ask that you listen carefully to this series and pray over who should be nominated. I will give more details on the nomination process in the sermon series and my next blog.

Have a wonderful week and live out your identity in Christ!