



## One Stock in God's Grove: Rooted in Values of Grace

### Week 1 Discussion Guide

# Divine Connection: The Father Gives Us Identity

Our Father uniquely crafts each person in His image to have a personal relationship with Him. He graciously redeems sinners to be His own children and gives us purpose on His earth. Connecting with Him is central to everything we do.

#### **Opening Questions to get started**

1. **If you want to tell someone about yourself, what do you say?**
2. **How have you defined yourself throughout your life?**
3. **Has the way you've thought about yourself every changed?**

#### **WATCH VIDEO for Week 1: Divine Connection**

#### **Passages in the video**

##### Romans 8:14-17

“For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.”

##### Deuteronomy 7:6-9

“For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations.”

##### Matthew 28:18-20

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in<sup>[a]</sup> the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

## Questions to Discuss

1. God created all people for a relationship with Him.
  - a. **How does it feel to know that, out of all the people who have ever lived, God created you so that He could have a relationship with you?**
  - b. **Does that influence how you think of yourself?**
  - c. **Has the way you've thought of yourself always reflected this fact? Why or why not?**
  
2. There was nothing anyone could do to entice God into a relationship with us. We had nothing to offer Him and we didn't "add any value to Him". He pursued a relationship with us out of pure love and desire for us.
  - a. **How is that different from how relationships form today?**
  - b. **Is it strange to think that God loves you and wants to be with you *just because*, without getting anything in return from you?**
  
3. God wants a relationship with everyone you come in contact with. It's easy to treat people we *like* as precious and chosen children of God, but it can be tough to see people from that perspective when we don't get along with them.
  - a. **How does this truth from God's Word shape how we see other people?**
  - b. **How do you remind yourself to love people like Jesus, even when it's hard?**
  
4. The question of identity is a big topic in our culture today. Mid-life crises are often caused by questioning one's underlying identity. And more recently, the topic of "how I identify myself" is a central question young people are asking. Whether people are Christian or not, this question of identity is so significant that individuals go to great lengths to create an identity which seems to fit them best.
  - a. **Has the question of identity (who am I, and how do I define myself) been significant for you in your life?**
  - b. **What does it mean for you that God gives you an unshakable, eternal identity?**
  
5. Our identity as God's chosen children is secure because it's rooted in God's character and His faithfulness. We know that what God says is true because He has proven that we can trust Him to follow through with His promises.
  - a. **Have you always found it easy to trust that what God says is true? When has it been challenging for you to believe what God says?**
  
6. The identity we receive from God isn't performative (it doesn't depend on us to maintain), but it does bestow upon us a purpose. God's people have purpose and meaning to every single day, and our purpose is significant because it affects people's eternal future.
  - a. **How does it feel that God wants to partner with you to share His love and connect people to Him?**
    - i. **Do you feel excited? Empowered? Terrified? Honored? Burdened?**

- b. Do you feel like you've been a good ambassador for Jesus so far in your life?
    - i. Why or why not?
  - c. When is it difficult to spread your identity as God's child with the world? When has it been easy?
  - d. Do you think others would benefit from identifying themselves as God sees them?
  
- 7. This value is about receiving our identity from our Creator and the importance of prioritizing a connection with God. We are connected to God because of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection in our place and our faith in Him. Connecting with God, strengthening this identity, and living out our purpose to make disciples is at the heart of everything we do at Grace.
  - a. **How do you feel close to God? What situations, events, habits, practices, and times make you feel like you're connecting with God?**
    - 1. Worship is an essential aspect for our connection with God, but this value goes beyond worship and Bible study. Challenge yourself to think outside of those connection points!
    - ii. **Have those changed over time for you?**
  - b. **Do you expect that most Christians will connect with God in the same ways?**
    - i. **What if something that makes you feel close to God doesn't have the same effect on someone else?**
    - ii. **What if their connection to God looks different from yours?**
  - c. **Does someone in your group connect with God in a way that you haven't tried before?**
    - i. **How can you give it a try this week?**
  
- 8. This first value is significant because it influences all the rest. Everything we do at Grace is connected to who God says we are. Our identity in Christ is our starting place for our lives as individual followers of Jesus, and for our common life together as Grace Lutheran Church.
  - a. **How have you seen this value exemplified at Grace?**
  - b. **How would you like to see this value in action at Grace?**
  - c. **Do you think the importance of connecting with God and receiving our identity from Him has been a key factor in Grace's ministries and decision-making?**
  - d. **Is Divine Connection an essential value in your life? Would you put it at the top of your list?**
    - i. **If not, what would be most important for your own values?**

Whether Grace has been your church home for your whole, long life- or you just found us- we can all grow in our connection with God. Spend some time this week reflecting on and reinforcing the identity you have been given in Christ, and try an unfamiliar way to connect with God. You never know, you may find a new favorite!