

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

August 7, 2022 "The Unique You: Why Do I Feel So Different?"

I Intro.

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work through from the message Sunday. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotion is free-standing, and you can use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. We are thick in the heat of summer and as we move forward we've got some big things planned. Our children's area is expanding, and we've moved check-in into the lobby. We also have many ways you can plug into life at NCC. You can see all that through our newly upgraded app, and social media sites. We're so encouraged by your love and presence when you gather with us. A great group of familiar and new faces join us each Sunday. If you're joining us online, we appreciate your presence also. We are 100% committed to our virtual attenders. We are your church family, and if there is anything you need, prayer, ideas or suggestions, please pass them our way. We know the future is still uncertain, but we are committed to making our virtual congregation as central to NCC as our in person group.

II Sunday.

Okay...we finished out our Story of You series. We hope that it was helpful in guiding you to understanding yourself specifically a little more. The fears, emotions, passions that drive our choices and decision making. Now we want to turn the corner, embrace our divine uniqueness. And weave it into a larger understanding of who we are and how we can use our uniqueness for a greater purpose. Let's first talk about uniqueness and how we see and experience it. Just some opening questions.

We all know our families are unique. What are some practices or traditions that are important to your family?

Without being too judgy, what are some habits or practices you noticed in other families that seem a little...odd?

If you have brothers or sisters, how are you different from each other?

All of that divine uniqueness is just amazing isn't it. I think in our attempt to make everyone the same, we lose the beauty and amazingness of uniqueness. Not that we overlook bad behavior as an acceptable difference. But we can just see what almost seems like an infinite variety of people in our world. Almost like there's a purpose to it...a divine purpose.

Anyway, this is the goal of this new series. To not only see, embrace, and welcome how unique we all are, but to see the purpose behind it. And to discover how we all can work together in our uniqueness to be a part of this great work God is doing. Both inside and outside of the church. So, this first Sunday we begin to look at our uniqueness and answer the question; ***"Why do I feel so different?"***

The scripture is a well known passage for people who grew up in the church, and is filled with truths from God about our divine uniqueness. The story is found in **1 Samuel 16:1-13**, and is the beginning of a long journey of personal discovery in the life of David. Read it, and we'll answer some questions.

What jumped out to you from this story about uniqueness?

Were you able to identify with David in any way?

How do you believe David was beginning to understand God's plan for him?

The first step of this journey in accepting and embracing our uniqueness is found in accepting and embracing some truths about being divinely unique.

1. Being unique sometimes feels like it can isolate you. David had already felt the sting of being excluded because of his differentness. He was not like his brothers. Most of us hate and avoid being noticeably different. We don't want to be cookie-cutter like everyone else, but we don't want to stand out too much. Because of his unique calling, David faced a lot of lonely times, before he understood his uniqueness and how to use it well. This was not an automatic elevation into fully embracing his uniqueness. It was a journey of discovery...that was really hard at times. Being unique sometimes means accepting and standing boldly in that uniqueness.

2. Being unique does not mean less. David had already been labeled as less before this event. Not worthy to be about important work like his brothers. We have to avoid adding value judgment to uniqueness. Especially comparing. The 'er disease. Smart-er, pretti-er, bett-er. And we love making some traits 'better' than others. Being unique means there is a place for you, no matter what, that will value who you are. You just need to find that place. David had no place in his family that felt like contributing well. He probably felt like he was given the afterthought job. But that was a preparation for a journey to use his uniqueness for good, and find his place. If you feel like you've always been slightly out of phase, know you are not less. Like David, there is a journey ahead of you of discovering the purpose of your uniqueness.

3. Being unique is God designed and has purpose. It's easy to look backwards over David's life and see God's plan. You can see that all the things that happened to him helped prepare him for the next thing. You can look back and see a lot of the same journey for yourself. The problem of faith is we often lose the ability to see forward with the same clarity that we can make sense of the past. This is not an accident. YOU are not an accident. You weren't just swept along this weird path to get who you are or where you are. David was not able to fully live into, and do the work of being prepared to accept the role that came with his uniqueness, until he surrendered himself to accepting the purpose for who he would become. And that would take 22 years!! There is a beautiful design woven all through this world of why we are the way we are, and how we can use our uniqueness for a greater purpose. This is the long game, but you're not alone on that road of discovery.

4. Being unique is at its best when it's God anointed. We all need guidance in growing in our understanding of our uniqueness and how it can be used well. You have no idea the depth and magnificence of your uniqueness. The gifts, abilities, talents, skills, your 'youness', and what you can do for this world. Did I mention David had to wait 22 years between when he was anointed king and when he actually got to be king? There was a lot of work to move him in understanding his uniqueness and grow in God's anointing of it. Seek God, gain knowledge, wisdom, test your uniqueness, take chances, fail, sometimes miserably, and learn. Anointing is not sprinkling God glitter on your plans. It's growing in him. God will not abandon something he created for good. Trust in that.

III Challenge.

The journey towards understanding our uniqueness and its purpose comes first from accepting it as an intentional plan and design from God.

What one or two things could you do today to begin to accept how you were made?