

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

May 12, 2024. "Who am I? How can I discover who I am? We were made to grow"

I Intro.

Happy Mother's Day! Summer is just around the corner. Welcome to our companion devotional to Sunday's message. It's just a part of all we have to offer to you. We don't want you to miss out on anything. So, make sure you stay connected to keep informed. We hope you are fed and ministered to by NCC, and we consider you part of our community. We have many ways you can plug into life at NCC. You can find all those through our website, app, and social media sites. Our app is the best way to livestream our services, but you can also livestream on FaceBook and YouTube. You can revisit past services, sign up for events and even give. We're encouraged by your presence when you gather with us. New and familiar faces join us every Sunday. If you join us online, we appreciate your presence. We are 100% committed to our virtual attenders. We are your church family, and if there is anything you need, prayer, or anything else, please let us know. This is our weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work through from Sunday's message. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotion is free-standing. You can use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. We hope you find this tool helpful on your spiritual journey.

II Recap.

We're in our second Sunday of this series discovering who we are. A complete discussion is in last Sunday's devotional, but here are a few foundational understandings that speak to this journey.

1. Our identity is a combination of inherent traits and environment and experiences affecting those traits. You are an aggregate of everything in your life. Traits and

experiences. **Understanding this truth will help you accept inborn things about you, and how your experiences have shaped those in discovering who you are.**

2. Sometimes we're the role we have to fill. We're one way at school, work, in public, at church, and at home. **Understanding this truth will help you frame what often feel like contradictions in who you think you are.**

3. There is one constant in our constantly evolving self. There is a divine presence within us implanted by God, to guide us to participate in, and experience certain things. There's a divinely designed, God-breathed, dependable, trustworthy identity inside you. **Understanding this truth will help you find a solid place to stand while you and the Holy Spirit do the work of discovering who you are.**

4. Integration vs Disintegration. Experts are discovering the importance of being integrated. Having an internal sense of harmony, united in heart, mind, body and soul. Being integrated leads to a healthy state of being. Psychologists, and mental health experts have discovered the root of mental health issues, and even physical health issues, apart from biological causes is what's called 'disintegration' or being internally fragmented, divided, conflicted.

5. Identity is found in relationship. Identity is formed in relationship with something else. Answering who I am is in context to what is around you. Last week we talked about how we were made for joy and we grow this identity when we gather with others on the same journey.

III Sunday.

Sunday we hit the inner search for "Who am I?" with the statement, we were made to grow. Not just TO grow. But our actual design was FOR growth. Growth isn't just a natural part of who we are. But

there are significant negative effects from NOT growing. And that will be the driving force in this conversation. But first some questions about growth.

What does personal growth mean to you?

What does it take to live a life bent towards growth?

The scripture for Sunday was **John 17:6-19**. In this passage was one of the final prayers of Jesus and outlined what his work was about and what he hoped happened while he was here.

What jumped out to you from this passage?

What were some growth phrases or understandings you saw in this passage?

What did you see was the purpose of Jesus' emphasis on growth?

Some truths about our inner divine nature for growth.

1. Growth is rooted in joy. The natural bend towards growth is connected with the joy already within us. And when we actually grow we fulfill what Jesus prayed; *"So that my joy is complete"*. This is what we celebrate today...a mother's joy. There is the sadness of watching their babies grow up. But also the joy of seeing what they're becoming. This answer to *"Who am I?"* and discovering this joy is when we can embrace the truth- we were made to grow. Designing our life for growth connects the inner divine placement of joy with this work that Jesus came here to do. In this prayer Jesus went in detail here to talk about what his work was about. To help people grow.

2. The danger of not growing. The effects of a life not growing is just sad. We all know people who seem to just be stuck. No condemnation or judgment. Just the realization when you don't grow you miss out on the joy of life. Do a little self-inventory and see if you wrestle with any of these.

Stagnation. Lack of purpose or meaning. Disconnectedness. Disintegration. Shallow relationships. Lack of resilience. Closed-mindedness. Unfulfilled potential. Lack of compassion or empathy.

Things that aren't doing what they were made to do suffer. Being made FOR growth states there is an ultimate purpose and intent built into us in our growth. There is meaning, a larger purpose, when we grow. It's built into who we are. We have to also accept that there is discomfort and pain in growth. As a kid some of you may have had to deal with physical growing pains. And in our maturing growth, the even deeper pains of letting go of old, outdated things in order to make room for new things to help you grow. This includes continually revisiting our beliefs and practices to see if they still promote growth in us. This bend towards growth, who we are at our deepest level, calls us to make sure we align our outside actions with the inner divine wiring towards growth. If we were meant to grow, then how we design, shape, form, cultivate our lives is to satisfy that inner design to grow.

3. Growth is the inner divine design of salvation through sanctification. Salvation is the continual work towards a well-formed maturing. We will never completely arrive, but we are always moving in that direction. The work of salvation is a series of smaller steps and commitments. It's the first step of commitment to follow Jesus. *"I want to surrender my life."* It's having the desire and want to, to redirect your life in a different direction. We know it doesn't full on happen at that point. That first moment is important. But the real work is when we do all the things that are a part of the continual work of salvation. And that's growth. The natural us, that lies deep within. This is the continual work of salvation...to grow. Salvation is towards not from. Growth becomes our work. And in that work, as difficult and tough as it can be, brings joy when we see the fruit of our effort.

IV Challenge.

This is our second: "*Who am I?*" We were created for and later updated for growth. And this growth is actually the work of salvation. And this one is directly connected to our first "*Who am I?*" Joy. But also growth, how we were specifically designed, is the process of being saved. I am saved. I am being saved. I will be saved. This is the true nature of growth.

What are a few things that may be inhibiting your growth and how can you let go of them?

What are some practices you could incorporate into your daily life that could help you grow?