

FORWARD TO FREEDOM

THE SEARCH FOR IDENTITY & MEANING – PART 1

INTRODUCTION – AVAILABLE FREEDOM IN CHRIST (John 8:31-32, 36; Galatians 5:1)

NOTE: *Pastor Scott Hansen was the representative of Freedom In Christ Ministries for Italy; the content of this series borrows significantly from Neil Anderson's book Victory Over The Darkness and well as his Resolving Personal Conflicts seminar.*

WHO ARE YOU? A LITTLE HELP PLEASE – Identity Theft Warning (2 Corinthians 5:16)

DEAD END APPROACHES – False Equations in Searching for Identity & Meaning (Psalm 8:3-4)

PRINCIPLE: It is not what you _____ that _____
_____ you _____, but rather _____ you are that
determines what you _____. (Matthew 12:33-35)

LIFE WAS LOST IN THE FALL

❶ CREATED ALIVE – The First Adam (Genesis 2:7)

- a. Physically Life (BIOS) - We have physical life when our _____
(or _____) is in _____ with our _____;
physical death occurs when the soul (or spirit) is
_____ from the body.

- b. Spiritual Life (ZOA) - We have spiritual life when our soul (or spirit) is in _____ with _____; spiritual death occurs when human beings are _____
_____. Being spiritually alive means to be "_____
_____." (Ephesians 2:1; Genesis 1:26-27)

❷ THE EFFECTS OF THE FALL (Genesis 3:8-4:9)

- ▶ The mind is darkened, the emotions are messed up & the will is bent toward evil & disobedience
- ▶ As a result, mankind feels...
 - _____ – Therefore a need to belong!
 - _____ & _____ – Therefore a need of self-worth!
 - _____ & _____ – Therefore a need of strength & self-control!

To be continued

Prayer

Take some time to pray with your group before beginning. If there is anything weighing heavy on your heart, please mention it and pray about it.

My Story

Have you or someone you love ever been a victim of identity theft? Was it financial, medical or online identity that was compromised? How did you react?

Digging Deep

1. Talk about anything from Sunday's message that caused you to think, react or talk with God this week.
2. If someone were to ask you, "What makes a Christian different than any other religious person?" what answer would you give? Would you meet your own definition? Explain.
3. Read John 8:31-32, 36 and Galatians 5:1. How do you define the expression "spiritual freedom?" Brainstorm together and share some of the many ways the Christian life offers freedom.
4. The identity question of "Who am I?" is one of the most daunting questions to answer for human beings as they develop and grow through life, especially for non-Christians. What are some common examples of how people who are not walking with Jesus seek to give themselves identity, purpose or value that leave them feeling empty?
5. Read 2 Corinthians 5:16. List some of the many ways we can regard ourselves and others with a worldly point of view. Of the ways discussed within your group, which one causes you the most concern? Are you willing to ask for prayer in this area?

Digging Deeper

6. Read Romans 7:14-25 carefully. This passage speaks about the struggle between our old sin nature and our desire to serve Christ and do what is right. Discuss how our daily actions can contribute to our identity struggle. How is it that Jesus Christ rescues people from such a dilemma?
7. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17. The one PRINCIPLE given in Sunday's message was this: *It's not what you do that determines who you are, but rather who you are that determines what you do.* In other words, as we seek our true identity and value, BEING must proceed (and produce) DOING. Share some examples which illustrate how a clearer concept of our biblical identity as Christ-followers impacts the way we think and live.

Taking it Home

8. Read John 10:10 and Colossians 3:1-3. What earthly things hold your identity captive from embracing your true identity in Christ? How can the love of God and truth of His Word help release you from your areas of bondage which rob you of the full spiritual freedom Jesus intends for you?

NOTE: This week's message was not easy to digest because we had to look soberly at some difficult truths. But be of good cheer because there is a lot of GOOD NEWS for you this coming Sunday! We will now pivot to what God says is true about His children!

Prayer

Pray together that we all have increased spiritual discernment to identify and defeat any areas in life which are holding us back from experiencing full spiritual freedom in Christ.

