



PERFECT

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Why is it important to explore identity?

Identity is the subconscious belief system we carry around in our hearts. It often determines or hinders decisions we make or do not make, supports or undermines what we determine to be our value, and affects the way we treat others or ourselves. It influences our relationships (including our relationship with God) and how we live out our daily life. It drives everything.

Factors that form identity:

- Things from our past - how we grew up, things we learned, or what we've internalized
- Issues that have not been dealt with
- Individual uniqueness
- Strongholds and lies we have believed that hinder our walk with God

There are places in our life God wants to refine, heal, and bring His truth to. All transformation comes from this truth, but identity can hinder or help our ability to believe and receive who God says we are. There are things God wants to **redeem, restore** and then **release** from you to those around you because **every person has a calling and a cause.**

Adam and Eve

Adam and Eve were seduced into eating forbidden fruit. They had a choice, and they chose to disobey God. Sin entered the world and the heart of man. Since the fall in the Garden of Eden, we have inherited a sinful nature. Even as children, we can see the independence, selfishness, and pride that we are prone to.

Things were lost when sin entered the world:

- Our direct connection and covering from God.
- Death, disease, loss, temptation and sin become the norm.
- The environment changed. Work became toil and did not have the ease, fruitfulness or satisfaction it once had.
- Relationships were strained. Hiding, blaming and not accepting responsibility for actions followed.

Ultimately, we lost our connection with God and with that, we lost the essence of our identity in Him. Now, there are many things we have adopted or allowed to define us.

- Life experiences
- Our own interpretations
- Other's perceptions or accusations
- Pain, trauma, pride, or fear that not only govern who we believe we are or we believe are not, but also determine the decisions we make, the people we allow into our lives, or the opportunities & risks we are willing to take.

We may determine our value by what we provide or do rather than who we are. Almost all of us have valued or determined our worth by an incomplete and incorrect series of partial truths. Your identity is a huge part of your life and a lens through which you make decisions and behave. It impacts more than you; it impacts generations of other people.

- What or who has shaped your identity?

- What incomplete truths have you been believing about yourself? How has it affected you?

We want things to be perfect. Some of us feel the pressure to be perfect. Some want to control things so that they are as close to perfect as possible. The truth is- life is not perfect, but Jesus is.

This is one of the reason Jesus came to the earth. Where man has failed, the Father sent Jesus to make right, to die for the sins of the world and satisfy the need for a perfect sacrifice and Savior, to restore our relationship with our heavenly Father and to help us rediscover who we are in Him. We must allow only this perfection to define us and there is only one who is perfect- Jesus Christ.

- Do you struggle with perfectionism?

Identity, Standard, and Perfect

Identity: the fact of being who or what a person or thing is; A close similarity or affinity

- We know we are made in the image of God; according to scripture, we are made a little lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honor.

Standard: a level of quality or attainment; an idea or thing used as a measure, norm, or model in comparative evaluations

- None of us would eat, drink, or take medications if we did not trust the source. Why? Because we want what we put into our lives to be held to a certain standard.

God has a standard.

In order to appreciate the Father's response, we must understand His perfect character. Love, grace and mercy are some of His characteristics, but holiness and justice are equally who God is.

Because of this, a good, perfect, and loving God has to hate sin and bring judgment to it, because sin kills, destroys and violates God's perfect ways. **Justice demands a response.**

- Imagine you lose someone you love to injustice and the person gets off on a technicality. *How would that affect you? Why?*

What is the standard?

- The standard is being sinless in relation to God.

- We may have never committed what we would consider horrible crimes or sins, but in comparison to who?

We may think that we are "good" but what we convince ourselves of is that we are better than most. **But still, this is not the standard.** It doesn't matter who we compare ourselves to because according to the sinless standard (Christ), **we are all the same.** We do not always understand God's standard for holiness and because we don't always grasp His standard, we cannot comprehend how amazing the grace He has shown us.

According to scripture, we deserve death:

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

James 1:15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

Matthew 21: 43-44 Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. Anyone who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed.

We must see our true nature apart from Christ so we can discover our new nature in Christ. **There is no other option.**

Luke 18:11,13 The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.' But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'

Outside of Jesus, none of us are close to the perfect standard. The closer we get to Jesus the more we truly see we don't meet the standard.

Perfect: having all the required or desirable elements, qualities, or characteristics; as good as it is possible to be; to make (something) completely free from faults or defects, or as close to such a condition as possible.

- Jesus was perfect, sinless. And He had to be to answer and satisfy the perfect standard of God.

5 ways Jesus was perfect:

1. Perfect obedience
2. Perfect Person/Life
3. Perfect Sacrifice
4. Perfect Savior
5. Perfect High Priest

Every place where man failed, sinned and fell short, ***Jesus was and is perfect.***

Perfect obedience

If there is any need in any way, we have a savior who lived in perfect obedience and has won the victory. He can give us life in the areas of our brokenness and sinfulness.

- He fulfilled every expectation from the Mosaic Law and God's moral law.
- Matthew 22:37-40
- He was perfectly obedient to all the Law and the Prophets, the demand of perfect expectation of holiness.
- John 10:17-18 Jesus willingly laid down His life. Even when He didn't want to go to the cross, He did. Even when He could have called down angels from heaven to rescue Him, he stayed and obeyed, **to the point of death.**

Perfect person with the perfect life

He is our example, as the highest expression of God in human form.

Colossians 1:15-20 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

John 14:8-9 Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

He is the perfect life on display.

Jesus tells Philip that if someone saw Jesus, they saw the Father.

- Jesus was whatever He needed to be in the moment.
- We see His treatment of people, His desire to live to provide truth, His hatred of hypocrisy, and His sole focus to honor His Father.
- Even though He could answer His critics at accusation, He withheld His tongue

Perfect sacrifice

There is no other offering that needs to be made for our sin.

Hebrews 2:9 But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

Romans 5:7-8 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

1 John 2:2 Jesus was the “wrath-quencher.”

Perfect Savior

Jesus was the perfect reconciler, redeemer, restorer and “re-namer.” He is able to save to the uttermost.

1 John 4:14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.

Hebrews 5:8 though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.

Perfect holiness demands a perfect answer. The perfect answer will be provided through perfect love. Perfect love is proven through a perfect sacrifice.

Perfect High Priest (Perfect Representative/Perfect Pastor)

Paul is using language New Testament followers would understand. The High Priest would offer a perfect animal as a sacrifice for sin (pointing to need for a permanent sacrifice). God would accept it but it had to be ongoing, the Passover Lamb. Jesus became that Passover Lamb for the sin of all time. Now, the Father sees us through the perfect life of His son Jesus when we confess Him Lord and Savior.

Hebrews 4:14-15 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.

When we sin we can confess our sin and be forgiven.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

The requirement for perfection was met in Jesus Christ. He is the Author and Finisher of our faith. **He alone has the right to determine our worth and value.** Our identity starts and ends here. God is committed to us becoming more and more like Jesus. It is for the rest of our earthly journey.

- What was your takeaway from this message?
- How does the perfection of Jesus give you hope?
- How will you let Christ's perfect life define your identity?

