

## Identity Theft Study- Chapter 2 Notes

### **Reflection: Made in God's Image**

*Without knowledge of self, there is no knowledge of God . . . without knowledge of God, there is no knowledge of self—John Calvin*

### **Identity Theft**

So often we search for things to ground our identity: our roles, our gifting, personality, etc. The question out there is who are we really?

This confusion often leads us to turn to categories to give a sense of who we are. We sort ourselves by age, gender, class, relationship status and more. While these can be helpful, they're limited. Our reliance on them can even cause confusion.

Problem with categories:

- 1) When often rely on them too much to define who we are. We are complex, and so these small categories can feel tight or cramped.
- 2) Any shift in them can destabilize our sense of self
  - a. If life doesn't play out the way we expected (which let's face it, things rarely go as we expect them to go), then it can cause an identity crisis.
  - b. If we've invested our sense of self in something small, temporal, and unstable, we will become small, temporal, and unstable people.
  - c. We can easily lose our sense of purpose, calling, direction. Life will become meaningless and empty.
- 3) If we look below the surface, we'll most likely discover we've somehow begun to center our sense of self on our children, our family, or even our theological convictions.

### **Identity Truth**

**Truth:** Our core identity is so much *richer, more glorious, and more soul-satisfying* than any category or role we could conceive for ourselves!!!

God (whose ways are far above ours), calls us to find ourselves in something more than earthly categories. He calls us to find our identity in Him!!

**Truth:** We are made in God's own image. In Genesis 1, it says "in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them" (1:27).

- What this means: Our deepest sense of self must be found in God. Not in categories, not in roles, not in successes or failure. IN HIM!!!
- By making us in His image, God instilled in us a deep sense of purpose and calling—everything in our lives all somehow connect back to Him.
- As image bearers of God, we are called to show forth glory, power, and might of our King.

*Nothing less than God will satisfy you. Nothing less will sustain you. Nothing less will suffice.*

Danger here is how easily we can be tempted to want to actually *be* God.

We can confuse our created identity with God's identity as our Creator.

In Genesis 3, after revealing our identity as image bearers, we see the first man and woman reject their God-given identity when they rejected his authority over them. They denied the authority and power of their King.

To be an image bearer (who we were created to be): We must first submit ourselves to the authority of our King!! We must remember God is the source of our life. We must be about reflecting his power and glory, and not seek power and glory for ourselves.

To do this we remember who we are and who He is as our God. He is both Savior and Lord. The answer for the pride that can creep in is the example of Christ in Philippians 2:6-8—out of his deep humility, Christ Jesus—despite being in the form of God, did not count equality with God as something to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross”.

Jesus took on the limits of our human identity. When he became obedient to the Father, he restored our true identity as image bearers. All the first Adam lost was redeemed through the last.

Finding our identity in Christ: to be our truest selves, we must know Him!! This requires surrender to Him, and losing our lives for His sake, picking up our cross daily.

### **Identity Transformed**

As you center your identity more fully on God, life around you may not change, but God will make you a different person in it. So that when changes do come instead of shattering your sense of identity, you will find them transforming it. Each new challenge, each shifting role is a tool in the hand of God to shape you into the image bearer you are meant to be.

In moments of difficulty, confusion and loss, God is stripping you of all the things you may reach out for instead of Him. Do not be afraid because a good and powerful God is at work.

He is coming to reclaim his own, and he will not stop until you become your truest self—a woman whose life reflects the greatness and glory of God.

*Scripture references for discussion:* Genesis 1:26-27, Romans 5:5-21, Ephesians 4:20-5:2