

Making a Masterpiece - Ephesians 2:4-13

Ice Breaker: Tell about a memorable or special gift you received.

Main Idea: It is God who gives us our identity. We do not earn it. It is a gift of God that no one can take away from us.

Our primary identity is NOT built on something we DO, but on something that's already been DONE.

Ephesians 2:4-10 *But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. 6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

1. Why does God save us? (4-5,7,8,10)

2. What does it mean to be saved? What do we do to become saved? Please explain. (8,9)

3. According to 2 Corinthians 5:17, What is our new identity?

2 Corinthians 5:17 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!*

4. How does building our identity on what Christ has already done look different than building our identity on something we do?

It's easy to lose sight of our primary identity and not even notice.

From Pastor Brian: Sometimes we allow our core identity to be based on so many other things!! We get tripped up on other identity markers, Job, Relationships, Bank accounts, Working harder, Possessions, Appearance, Achievements, Titles.

5. What are the temporary identities of life that, if we are not careful, we can prioritize over God? How does busyness and distractedness keep us from staying focused on our true identity? (Luke 21:34-36; Mark 4:18-19)

Luke 21:34-36 *“Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap. 35 For it will come on all those who live on the face of the whole earth. 36 Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.”*

Mark 4:18-19 *Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; 19 but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.*

Other labels of identity put us in competition with each other.

6. Why do you think we should not boast about our salvation? (Jeremiah 9:23-24)

Jeremiah 9:23-24 *This is what the LORD says: “Let not the wise boast of their wisdom or the strong boast of their strength or the rich boast of their riches, 24 but let the one who boasts boast about this: that they have the understanding to know me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,” declares the LORD.*

7. How does living by temporary labels of identity create a competition and comparison with others? (Romans 12:3,16)

Romans 12:3 *For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.*

Romans 12:16 *Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.*

Truths about our identity

8. What is our identity in Christ? (Ephesians 2:6,10,19-20; John 1:12-13; John 5:14; 1 Peter 2:9; Colossians 1:12-14)

Ephesians 2:19-20 *Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.*

John 1:12-13 *Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.*

John 5:14 *"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.*

1 Peter 2:9 *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

Colossians 1:12-14 *and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. 13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

9. How could focusing on our identity in Christ keep us from being distracted inappropriately from the cares this world?

10. How could focusing on our identity in Christ keep us from pride or shame? (1 Corinthians 12:21-27)

1 Corinthians 12:21-27 *The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" 22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, 24 while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, 25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. 26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. 27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.*

11. How can seeing our identity as God's workmanship (masterpiece) guide us toward living out God's plan for our lives? (Ephesians 2:10)

Ephesians 2:10 *For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

For believers, He sees us through the work of the cross!

12. What can be done to refocus ourselves when we discover that our primary identity is not centered on what we do instead on what Christ did on the cross and who we are in Christ? (Romans 6:6-8, Ephesians 4:1-7)

Romans 6:6-8 *For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—7 because anyone who has died has been set free from sin. 8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.*

Ephesians 4:1-7 *As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. 2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. 3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. 7 But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.*

***God loves you just the way you are, but He loves you too much to leave you there!**