



Big Idea: You don't find yourself by fitting in. You find yourself by being formed by God.

Primary Scripture: Psalm 139:13-14 NLT

[Teacher note: Begin with a story where you changed your personality to fit in.]

Do any of you have different versions of yourself depending on the situation or group of people you were with? When I got my very first job I had nothing in common with my coworkers. I really wanted to fit in and to be a part of the conversations. They all liked the same music, and it wasn't something I listened to. I started listening to it and pretended I liked it. I didn't though. I hated it. They even asked me to go to a concert and I was dreading it. It was like I built my whole personality on a lie.

I don't think I'm alone in that though. How many versions do you have of yourself? Do you have a school version and a church version? What about an online version and another version when you're with your friends?

I don't know if you feel the same way, but I thought it was exhausting to edit my personality to be someone's friend. And if you have more than two versions it gets even more exhausting. You must learn how to read the room and how to adjust who you are depending on who you're with. You have to learn how to become whatever the moment needs you to be.

Maybe you've never said this out loud, but deep down, there's this quiet question that sits in the back of your mind. It sat in mine. That question is "if people really knew me, would they still like me?"

Have you ever gone home after being with people and felt completely exhausted? And not because you did anything physical, but because you were trying so hard to be someone; someone other than yourself?

Pretending, even just a little bit, takes energy. You have to keep up with each of the different versions you've made of yourself and over time it can leave you feeling disconnected; from others and even from yourself. You may even start to forget which version of yourself is actually the real you.

And that's why we're starting this series called "Connected" today. So, before we talk about being connected to friends, before we talk about being connected to God, and before we talk about being connected to the world around us, we have to talk about this relationship first: your relationship with yourself.

And we're not talking about this in a selfish way or a "me first" type of way. We are talking about who God made you to be.

Tonight's big idea is simple, but that doesn't mean that it's easy. You don't have to change who you are to belong.

SCRIPTURE (What does God's Word say?)

I want to look at a few verses. Let's go to Psalm 139 starting in verse 13.

"You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it." Psalm 139:13-14

David wrote, "You formed my inner parts..." This means your personality, your wiring, your humor, your sensitivity, your creativity, your curiosity, your leadership, even the parts that feel confusing. He said that God designed us with intention.

He also used the phrase, "knit me together..." This is such an intentional phrase. Knitting is careful. It's slow. It's on purpose. One stitch at a time. God didn't rush when He made you. It means you are not an accident or a backup plan. You are not a mistake that needs to be fixed. Yet, even knowing that I feel like some of us struggle to believe it.

Let's look at another verse.

"Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect." Romans 12:2 NLT

In another version (the NIV), it puts it this way, "don't conform to the pattern of this world." That word conform literally means to be pressed into a mold.

In other words, the world has a shape it wants you and I to fit into. They tell us how we should look and how we should act. They tell us what we should care about. They even tell us what to hide, what to post, what we should laugh at, and what success looks like.

Often the pressure to conform is subtle. The world doesn't say, "Hey, stop being yourself". It says things like, "everyone else is doing this" or "if you say no, you'll get left out" or "if you don't laugh, you'll look weird". And slowly, without realizing it, you start shaping yourself around expectations instead of truth.

Paul told the church in Rome that God offers something different instead; not conformity, but transformation. Transformation doesn't mean becoming someone else. It means becoming the complete you who God always designed you to be.

There's one more verse I want us to look at.

But the Lord said to Samuel, "Don't judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The Lord doesn't see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." 1 Samuel 16:7 NLT

The prophet Samuel was sent out to find the person God had chosen to replace King Saul. He went to David's house and met David and his brothers. He was ready to overlook David because he wasn't the tallest or strongest. In fact, he wasn't even invited originally. His dad and brothers left him in the field because they didn't think it was him either.

God told Samuel that He doesn't choose based on appearance. He chooses based on the heart. That's a really big deal because the world rewards appearance. But God values authenticity. The world tells us to look the part, and God tells us to be real.

INSIGHTS (What might this Scripture mean?)

So, let's talk about what this means for your life.

1. Comparison disconnects you from who God made you to be.



Big Idea: The closer you are to God, the clearer your identity becomes.

Primary Scripture: James 4:8 NLT

Supporting Scripture: John 15:4–5 NLT, Matthew 6:6 NLT

Surface

- When you hear the word “prayer,” what’s the first feeling that comes to mind, comfort, confusion, boredom, stress, or something else? Why?
- Where do you usually go when you want quiet, your room, outside, music, scrolling, or somewhere else?

Serious

- Have you ever felt connected to people but still felt lonely on the inside? What do you think makes that happen?
- What are some distractions that make it hard for you to slow down or feel close to God?

Spiritual

- James 4:8 reads, “Come close to God, and God will come close to you.” What do you think it looks like to take one small step toward God?
- Jesus talked about “remaining” in Him in John 15. Why do you think staying connected matters more than trying harder?
- How does knowing that God wants relationship, not performance, change the way you think about faith?
- In Matthew 6:6, Jesus spoke about praying in private. Why do you think closeness with God often happens away from noise and distractions?
- What do you think it would look like to be more honest with God about doubts, fears, or questions?
- What’s one simple step you could take this week to move closer to God, even if it feels small?

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