



Scriptures: Psalm 139:13-14, Genesis 1:27, Luke 15:32, Psalm 139:16, I Peter 2:9, Romans 8:38-39

Takeaway: Rather than finding your identity in temporary things that can fade, find your identity in the one who created you.

INTRO

Growing up I wanted to be a doctor or a teacher or a dragon slayer. Cut me some slack, I was in elementary school. I just knew that I wanted to make a difference in the world. I also wanted to be unique. I didn't want to be just like everyone else. That is probably why I wanted to be a dragon slayer. I also dreamed of being a superhero, but I was never bitten by any crazy animals or exposed to radiation.

TENSION

When you look at the world around us, people in our culture are very interested in discovering their individual identities. You can take personality tests, dream assessments, even find out what Disney princess or Marvel superhero you are most like – by the way, I'm most like Captain America. It seems like everyone is searching for something to tell them who they are, where they belong, and how they relate to the world around them.

[Leader Note: if you'd like to see what Marvel Superhero you're most like, you can do that here: <https://www.buzzfeed.com/perpetua/marvel-cinematic-universe-character>]

Most people want those around them to know they matter. When you scroll on social media you can find people showing off and bragging about all the things they are doing. Everyone wants to make a difference, and everyone wants to matter. And they want others to see they are making a difference and to know that they matter.

Society encourages you to look within yourself for your identity. Are you a great athlete? Do you make good grades? Maybe you're incredibly talented and in the school play. Are you on the robotics team? Maybe you're the best looking or best dressed in your friend group. Any of these things may

be true about you, they may be something that others know about you, but they don't define who you are as a person. Your abilities, in other words, what you can do, do not make up your identity. Many people tie their identities to these things and find their worth and value in these things.

The problem with drawing your identity from things like grades, athletic or musical abilities, or even appearances, is that all those things are temporary. If you were to get an injury and lose your ability to play the sport you are good at, or someone who's better than you were to come along, what would happen to your worth and value? Appearances can change as you get older. And all it takes is one poor decision or some gossip that's spread about you, even if it's not the truth, to destroy a reputation. Then when happens to your identity?

What if our purpose isn't found in what we do, but in who we are?

TRUTH

Here's the thing: we don't have to be great at all these things and impress others to matter. We already matter. You are so much more than what you can do and what you look like. You were created by the same God who created the universe.

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**

NLT

Think about that. The same God that hung the moon and the stars in the sky took the time to create you exactly the way you are: your hair color, body shape, abilities, strengths, and even weaknesses.

You were created with love by an amazing creator. You were created uniquely and with intention. God lovingly designed every single detail about you. That's what it means when the psalmist wrote, "He knit me together in my mother's womb." There is no one else in the world like you. You are not a mistake.

So where should we find our identity? We should find it in the One who created us.

So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. **Genesis 1:27 NLT**

Think about how cool that is. God created everything and humans were the only part of creation made in His image. You might be thinking, but what does it mean to have your identity in God?

It means that we matter, and we make a difference simply because we were created by God. And when we have a relationship with God, and we are part of His kingdom, we make an even bigger impact on the world.

Sometimes though, there are things that get in the way of us believing that we matter and that we are valued just by being who we are.

Even though the Kingdom of God is breaking through, we still live in a world where there is sin and hurt. In fact, if you've ever made any sort of mistake in your past, or if you're like me and have made more than one mistake in your life, you often have thoughts of guilt and shame. When you let guilt and shame creep into your mind it's easy to start believing lies about your identity. Lies like "you're not good enough" or "you'll never be enough." But that's just it. Those are lies.

Everyone has made mistakes. Everyone has sinned. Everyone has messed up. Jesus has forgiven you for every one of those things.

Jesus told a parable you may have heard before called "the prodigal son." It's a story about a guy who went out and spent all the inheritance his father had given him. He didn't just spend it all, he wasted it and he was so broke he was sleeping and eating with pigs. He had found his identity in his mistakes, but when he finally returned home his father didn't see his mistakes. He saw his son.

"We had to celebrate this happy day. For your brother was dead and has come back to life! He was lost, but now he is found!" **Luke 15:32 NLT**

We often remember our sins, and by remembering them they can make us feel unworthy and keep us from accepting our true identity, but God removes your sin from you.

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