

A blue spiral-bound notebook with the word "Identity" written in white in the center. The spiral binding is visible at the top edge.

Identity

Defining Identity?

- ❑ Definition - How you think of yourself, value yourself, view yourself...(self-image)
- ❑ Issue for everyone!

Defining Identity?

- ❑ Building our self-image...
- ❑ Write down a few words to describe yourself
- ❑ Evaluate what you have written
- ❑ Picture of ourselves + evaluation = Self-image/ self esteem

Defining Identity?

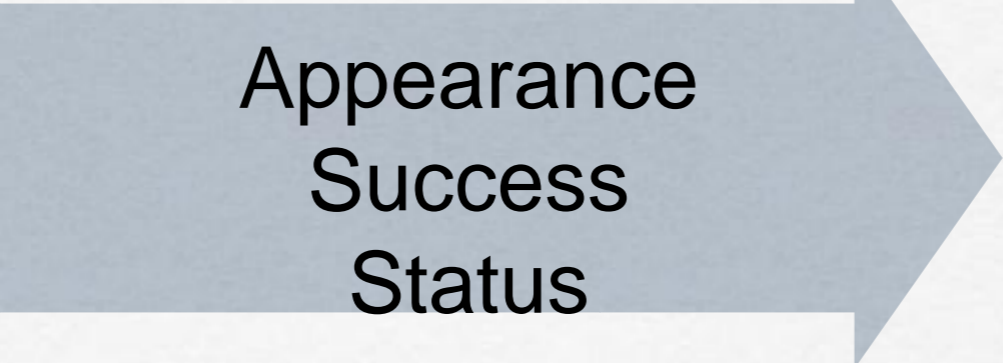
- ❑ Components of self-Image:
 - ❑ Your performance of roles
 - ❑ Your pedigree
 - ❑ Your acceptability to others
 - ❑ Your significance

Defining Identity?

- Variations in self-image:
 - Variations in what we think is important
 - Variations over time
 - Variations in the conclusions we draw

OTHER PEOPLE
with their
comments,
actions, attitudes
and expressions

acceptance/rejection
inclusion/exclusion
appreciation/ criticism



ME
thinking about my
worth and
significance

noticed/ignored
approving/disapproving
complimentary/ insulting

Way forward?

- ❑ Deceive yourself
- ❑ Reinvent yourself
- ❑ Understand yourself
- ❑ Faulty Christian Perspective:
 - ❑ Think badly of ourselves
 - ❑ Think well of ourselves

THINK BIBLICALLY OF OURSELVES!

- Image of God - “humble dignity”
 - We’re only an image..
 - ...but the image of God!
- This image is now marred by Sin
 - We are sinners

THINK BIBLICALLY OF OURSELVES!

- The image is marred by sin so:
 - Now as I stand before God - we are a shadow/ a corruption of what we were meant to be.
 - Yet the value of being made in God's image is not something that is lost after the fall into sin.

THINK BIBLICALLY OF OURSELVES!

- Now as I stand before other people...
 - None of us want the state of hearts to be seen warts and all. (Gen 3:7)
 - We put on masks, play certain roles to deceive others:
 - There is the real me as I really am
 - There the person I'd like to think of myself
 - The person I'd like everyone else to think I am

The New beginning...

- Because of Jesus...
 - New identity in Him
 - I am a new Creation (2 Cor 5:17)
 - I am seated with Christ in the heavenly realms (Eph 2:6)
 - I have been washed and sanctified (1 Cor 6:11)
 - I face no condemnation (Rom 8:1)
 - I face

- ❑ I have been adopted as God's child (Gal 4:5)
- ❑ I have received the Spirit to call God father (Roms 8:15)
- ❑ I am a joint heir with Christ (Roms 8:17)
- ❑ I am part of God's chosen people and holy nation (1 Peter 1:18-19)
- ❑ I am called a brother or sister by Jesus (Hebs 2:11)

New life!

- ❑ Ultimate security
- ❑ Ultimate stability

New life - Live free!

- ❑ Free to obey
- ❑ Free to serve
- ❑ Free to love others

Identity from relationships and Opinions	Humble dignity in Christ
Need people to affirm me	Can serve people without their affirmation
Avoid people who make me feel worse about myself	Can be with, and embrace anyone
Respond badly to criticism	Can accept and listen to criticism
Look up to some people wishing I could be more like them	Am able to be myself
Feel threatened by those I think are better than me	Can rejoice in other people's abilities and gifts
Treat people like an audience I have to impress	Treat people as individuals I can love

Discussion:

- Why do we sometimes find it difficult to accept our identity in Christ?
- Thinking through the various stages of life (E.g. Teenager, parent, working, retired) what will the affect be if I define myself by anything other than Christ? (E.g. I define myself by my looks, job, status, role in church etc.) What will my life look like, how will I feel? what will happen if these things are taken from me?

Discussion

- Thinking through the various stages of life (Teenager, parent, working, retired) what will the affect be if I define myself by my identity in Christ? What will my life look like, how will I feel? what will happen now if my health, job, looks, roles & responsibilities are taken from me?

FEEDBACK

- Ed Welch “knowing we are in Christ means we can need people less and love people more”
- What implication should our biblical identity have in the life of the church? [Think about obedience, serving, relationships, tackling sin]
- Describe things you think should/ should not happen as a result?

FEEDBACK

Summary: Combating the negative

Which mirrors do I tend to look in for my self-image?
(appearance, performance, opinions, background)



Why do I do this?

(something in my upbringing; my situation; my culture; my friends; my personality;
my talents; my opportunities)



How should I respond to this area of my life?

How does God want me to think about it?

What truths should I remind myself of?



What practical steps can I take to avoid looking in this mirror?

What practical steps can I take to counteract the effect this has?

(e.g. not fishing for compliments; avoiding certain conversations with friends;
deliberately praising others I would usually feel envious of)

Summary: Reinforcing the positive

Realize who I am in Christ

(Which aspects of my humble dignity in Christ do I tend to forget? How do I tend to think of my identity as a Christian? What do I need to remind myself of?)



What prevents me believing/ living out this truth?
(e.g. lack of understanding; unwillingness to believe God; pride)



How does God want me to respond?
Do I need to be reassured/ encouraged/ rebuked/ humbled/ taught?



What practical steps can I take so that this truth sinks in?
(e.g. memorization of bible verses; particular focus in prayers; encouragement of others; bible study on certain topics; asking friends to keep me accountable and remind me of truth.)

Useful Books

- When People are Big and God is Small by Ed Welch
- Mirror, mirror: Discover Your True Identity in Christ by Graham Benyon