



WHAT AM I WORTH?

PERSONAL IDENTITY IN BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

The World: Four Sources of Identity...

- Identity in _____.
- “My worth is the sum of my performance and achievements.”
- Identity in _____.
- “I need others’ praise and approval to feel valuable.”
- Identity in _____.
- “I’m not one of those people!”
- Identity in the _____.

The Word: One Ultimate Source of Identity

- _____ changes everything about the way we understand personal identity. (Col. 3:3; Phil. 3:9)
- Like the moon’s light, our value is _____.

Living As New Creations...

- We can _____ in Christ’s performance for us. (Phil. 1:20-21)
 - We live to advance *Christ’s* legacy of greatness. (Rom. 15:18)
- The praise of _____ is drowned out by the praise of God.
 - “...He will exult over you with loud singing.” (Zeph. 3:17)
- We find value in our _____ story of redemption recognizing that at our core, we’re *just* like everyone else. (Col. 3:1)
- Our story is re-written with a new _____. (Col. 3:4)

One Question...

- Is that _____?



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PERSONAL IDENTITY IN BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

The World: Four Sources of Identity...

- Identity in _____ **achievement** _____.
- “My worth is the sum of my performance and achievements.”
- Identity in _____ **reputation** _____.
- “I need others’ praise and approval to feel valuable.”
- Identity in _____ **association** _____.
- “I’m not one of those people!”
- Identity in the _____ **past** _____.

The Word: One Ultimate Source of Identity

- _____ **Christ** _____ changes everything about the way we understand personal identity. (Col. 3:3; Phil. 3:9)
- Like the moon’s light, our value is _____ **derived** _____.

Living As New Creations...

- We can _____ **rest** _____ in Christ’s performance for us. (Phil. 1:20-21)
 - We live to advance *Christ’s* legacy of greatness. (Rom. 15:18)
- The praise of _____ **man** _____ is drowned out by the praise of God.
 - “...He will exult over you with loud singing.” (Zeph. 3:17)
- We find value in our _____ **common** _____ story of redemption recognizing that at our core, we’re *just* like everyone else. (Col. 3:1)
- Our story is re-written with a new _____ **ending** _____. (Col. 3:4)

One Question...

- Is that _____ **enough** _____?



WHAT AM I WORTH?
PERSONAL IDENTITY IN BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

Dear Children,

I love you so much and recently I've been thinking things over and have decided to change the recipe for a fulfilling meaningful life. I know that resting in my grace is difficult for your sense of value worth so I've come up with an alternative. From now on, your value and worth will depend on how well you do things. It will be based on general life performance. If you are a high achiever—earning the respect of your peers, raising excellent kids, excelling in your career and generally being a winner—then your life will count. You will matter. And you will be fulfilled knowing that you made something of yourself.

But if you're not a cut above the rest—a little funnier, or smarter, or talented—and you're just...normal...then your life won't count for very much. You won't be fulfilled. Ultimately, if you don't make something of yourself and outpace those around you, then no one will remember your name or the contribution you made in this life. So get to work, and make sure that you shine brighter and get further than your neighbor. Because if you don't, you'll just be another person stuck in the middle...not bad, not great...just ok...and you'll end up living small mediocre life.

I'm convinced that if this were true, that there would be little to know change in our lives as a result. Because that's what we're doing. We live in a broken world and we need to ground our identity in something to help fix our brokenness.

The World: Four Sources of Identity...

When I say identity I mean the things that we find our worth and value in . The things that make us feel like we count and like we matter.

- Identity in achievement.
 - “My worth is the sum of my performance and achievements.”

You believed the lie that if you don't win you don't count. If you're not the best you don't matter. “You are only as good as your accomplishments.” You're only as good as how well you're progressing in your career, how well you're raising your kids; you're only as good as your next step toward achieving your dreams and goals. And so your running and trying desperately afraid that if you don't produce, you may just be like one of the rest of them. And you're tired...and you wish there was another way...

- Identity in reputation.
 - “I need others' praise and approval to feel valuable.”

Others find their sense of worth less in their personal performance and in others' personal opinions. You may be a people pleaser. If this is you, nothing keeps you up at night more than the thought that someone

doesn't like you, doesn't approve of you. You need that. If you tend to put your identity in your reputation, you're controlled by what people think about you and you're constantly trying to manage the public perception of how wonderful you are. Maybe you're the funny person or the smart person or the really nice person or attractive person—and you'll bend over backwards to keep that reputation intact.

- Identity in **distinction** .
 - “I'm not one of those people!”

You love “us them”. And your biggest fear is being one of them. Hard working/lazy. Rich/poor. Good parent/bad. Smart/dumb. Strong/weak. You feel value in being in a kind of person that is distinct from everyone else. “I'm not the kind of person that...”

- Identity in the **past** .

Now sometimes people draw their sense of worth from something they did in the past—usually some sort of achievement. But what I have in mind here is someone who allows some sort of brokenness in the past to define who they are in the present. If this is you maybe you did something that you're ashamed of and you just can't seem to escape it. You always think about yourself now in light of what you did then. It's hard for you to think about yourself as any better than your failures. Perhaps something was done to you and no matter how much you tell yourself otherwise, you just feel like damaged goods.

All four of these sources of identity have one thing in common—they are all inadequate as grounds for your identity. They're frankly horrible ways to try to understand who we are and evaluate whether we're valuable or not valuable. There is something way more stable, sturdy and satisfying. **Pray**

The Word: One Ultimate Source of Identity

- **Christ** changes everything about the way we understand personal identity. (Col. 3:3; Phil. 3:9) Everything about what makes you valuable, what makes your life count, why you matter, what you're living for—all of that changes when Christ calls you to life (Colossians 3:1-3) **“If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.**

What's this business about being raised with Christ? Well you have to look back at 2:13 to get some context and it says, **“And you who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him having forgiven us all of our trespasses.”** John uses the imagery of being born again. Jesus hasn't come to just encourage us. He hasn't come to turn us from bad people into good people. Jesus has come to us as dead people and raise us to life as new people. And when we repent and believe God makes us new people. Which exactly what verse 9 says... **“Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.** We used to have certain dreams and hopes and fears and goals but God comes and changes all of that. **Augustine: “But it is not I”** This is what happens when we're saved.

So we become new people and part of being a new person is having a new identity—namely my value and worth and reason for living are changed. And here is the easiest way to explain that change—it is a shift from finding my deepest purpose and meaning and joy and worth in myself and my achievements finding it in someone else's. This goes against our society which says that you need to create and establish your own identity—standout, get ahead, be unique, make a difference—your identity is wrapped up what you've done and the story you're writing for yourself. But when we're saved our identity is wrapped up in someone else, and what He's done, and the story He's writing for you.

2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. 3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.” You are hidden in Christ—he is your life. My value is not grounded in how wonderful I am, but in how wonderful and beautiful someone else is. Not in my achievements, but his. Not in my purposes but his.

Had a telescope when I was little. When I was little I used to think the moon has its own light. The brilliance of the moon is seen in its reflection of the sun. It doesn’t produce its own light. It shines because it’s shined upon.

- Like the moon’s light, our value is derived.

The only thing we bring to the table in our selves is sin, rebellion, and unbelief—only evil all the time. Contrary to what the world says, we have no light in ourselves. We are not like the sun. We’re like the moon. Make no mistake about it. We were created to shine—but not your own light. We were created to shine because we’re shined upon. And our light to the world is simply a reflection of the light of the world. Where our beauty and glory is simply a participation in the superior glory of Another. Our value and worth tells a story about the infinite value and worth of the Son. That’s why you exist. And any attempt to have an identity that’s not derived from Christ—any attempt to have this self-made autonomous identity that really depends on how good you are is like the moon trying to install light fixtures on itself so it can be bright without the sun.

But when you realize that your identity is in someone else everything changes. And so I won’t to close by showing you how Christ gives us an identity that is superior to anything the world has to offer.

Living As New Creations...

We’re tempted to put our identity in our performance and achievement...but in the Gospel.

- We can rest in Christ’s performance for us. (Phil. 1:20-21)

3For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. Chucke Cheese suit—all his benefits are mine. (alternative: “Online” by Brad Paisley) In myself I’m a wretch but in Christ I’m the son of a king etc. Everything that is Christ’s is yours. His victory is yours. His kingdom is yours. His riches are yours. I’ve been brought into the inner life of the Trinity!! This is the rest we have in Christ’s achievements for us.

Don’t you want to wake up tomorrow and not feel like you constantly have to win? Isn’t that exhausting? Like the Gospel isn’t thee good news that you’ll always be winning in life, but what that someone won for you. And the live I live now is simply a participation in his victory.

And we forget that. And we drift. That’s why Paul says, in vs 1-2, “seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.” Seek and set. Effort—not going to do itself. And constancy—this is the default. Never met someone too heavenly minded. Set your minds! Otherwise you’ll be all horizontal and not vertical. Remind myself of these things otherwise the world will tell me a different story about who I am and what makes life worth living.

We’re tempted to find our worth in the praise and approval of others—in our reputations as people pleasers.

- The praise of man is drowned out by the praise of God.
 - “...He will exult over you with loud singing.” (Zeph. 3:17)

“The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.”

This is one of my favorite verses. About Israel but it represents God's attitude over his covenant people. First, it presents God as a musician. It tells me that God is glad in me. And He exults over me with loud singing! The God of the universe sings over me. And it's his song—his praise approval—that you and I need to turn it up to ten, otherwise we'll be tempted to root my self-worth in the praise and approval of others. John Newton "If two angels were to receive at the same moment a commission from God, one to go down and rule earth's grandest empire, the other to go and sweep the streets of its meanest village, it would be a matter of entire indifference to each which service fell to his lot, the post of ruler or the post of scavenger; for the joy of the angels lies only in obedience to God's will, and with equal joy they would lift a Lazarus in his rags to Abraham's bosom, or be a chariot of fire to carry an Elijah home." Why does it not matter how glamorous their job is, because their joy is in God's approval! Not in what any one else thinks—not in anyone else's opinion of them—they're identity comes from the praise of a one man audience. And it must be the same with us. If your self-worth is no more stable than your current approval ratings, you'll never live in the freedom Christ bought for you at the cross.

Which leads to our next point. I can't tell you how many times I've sat with people who struggle with low-self esteem or feelings of worthlessness and I've told them that God sings over them...I know but...He loves millions of Christians. There's nothing exclusive about that. I want to be prettier, funnier, smarter, more athletic...I need to something that sets me apart in some way from others. I need an identity that is located in being distinct from the others...And this is an insight that came to me last year and it's still changing my life. I'm still learning the power and freedom that comes with the fact that...

- We find value in our common story of redemption recognizing that at our core, we're *just* like everyone else. (Col. 3:1)

Our self-esteem worth value is rooted in the fact that God set his affection on us rescued us redeemed us, and will spend eternity with us—by us I mean the millions of people he has personally redeemed. The thing that makes you truly valuable isn't something that's unique to you. The things that makes your life count is not something that makes you distinct from me or the believer next to you. It's something that millions of other people have—namely a personal relationship with Jesus. And if it's less valuable to you because a lot of other people have it I don't know if you really understand what you have. Freshman guy goes to prom with senior cheerleader.. Someone says "this sure is a special night" your friend says "yea look at your date" and you say, "Nahhh that's not what's special...other guys have dates, my watch is nicer than everyone else's." What an idiot. What makes you special is that the most beautiful person in the universe chose you—stop looking to your professional career to make you feel good about yourself.

- Our story is re-written with a new ending. (Col. 3:4)

Some of you struggle to escape the shame of your past. Whether it was your fault or not it's hard for you not to label yourself by what's broken about your story. You see in the Gospel, what's been done for you is more fundamental than anything that can be done to you. "What shall separate us from the love of God?" It's not longer about failure that stains the past but a victory that secures your future.

You know how this thing ends for you? Spotless, blameless, pure, overcomer, reigning with Christ forever that's how your story ends. Not damaged goods not an asterisk next to your name—you may have a checkered past Jesus has come to you in all of your brokenness and taken personal responsibility upon himself for putting every single piece back together. vs 4, "When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory." Set your mind on that! Set your hope on that. That's not a fairy tale—that's real life. And it's moments away. That is how your story ends—If you've been raised with Christ....

I don't promise to make you rich. I promise to give you the grace and desire to spend your life enriching the lives of others. I don't promise that people will think you are awesome, but I promise that I will remind you daily of how precious you are to me and how I died so that we could be together forever. I don't promise to make you successful by the world's standards. I promise that I will use you as an instrument to tell the World how I was successful in redeeming sinners through my blood. I don't promise that you'll have a big family or a beautiful spouse, but I promise that I will satisfy your deepest longings for intimacy and companionship by my presence and through my body, the church. I don't promise you an easy life. I promise to make you holy and to let you taste the joy of righteousness formed through trials and suffering. I don't promise to give you everything you want. I promise to satisfy you deeply. I don't promise that you will become great in the world. I promise I will make your life count for the greatness of my name.

One Question...

- Is that enough?