

Your Identity  
Ephesians 1:3-6  
February 9, 2020  
Boy Scout Sunday

Today, we will talk about identity, about who we are. We will focus on how we form our identity – how we form our self-image; and the biblical view of who we are.

Defining one's identity is multi-dimensional. It involves many things: memories, experiences, relationships, culture, hobbies, core values and beliefs. The combination of all of these things creates a sense of who we are.

Psychologist Erik Erickson (1902-1994) called it “ego identity.” “Ego identity” is a sense of self that each person develops as a cohesive personal identity. Each person has many different versions of oneself: the parent self, the student self, the career self, and various kinds of relationship self. Ego identity is the combination of all these different versions of self.<sup>1</sup>

As a person grows older, different life experiences, such as achievements and upheavals, redefine his identity. His achievement like awards, promotion, education, or financial accumulation and his upheavals like divorce, the death of loved one, retirement, being a victim of a crime, or major disasters in life, often redefine the person's identities. So, we can say identity is something that is constantly evolving.

Our political opinions, moral standards, religious beliefs, and cultural upbringings affect our identity. The relationships we build and the physical appearances, such as skin color, height, weight, physical limitations all affect our identity.

Most young people, if not all, struggle with identity confusion, because they are in the process of finding their identity. As they choose a career path, develop moral and ethical standards and political beliefs they discover making choices is difficult. It would not be an exaggeration to say that during adolescence, identity formation is most intense and many confusions can happen.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/identity>

I want to share with you what the Bible says about who you are. Our passage this morning from Ephesians says these words: “For God chose us in Christ before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ.”<sup>2</sup>

The Bible says, we are predestined, predetermined, prearranged to be God’s children. That is our identity. Yes, we have other identities like the things I have mentioned already, but one thing we should not forget is that we are the children of God.

There is a spiritual warfare going on in our society about your identity. Satan is powerful and he is constantly trying to distort your identity.

If he succeeds in distorting your identity, then he will hurt you. By doing so he hurts God, which is his ultimate purpose, because God loves you and he doesn’t want you to be hurt. When you are in pain, God is in pain. Satan wants to hurt God. Satan is trying to hurt God by distorting your identity.

Satan uses different methods to distort your identity. First, he uses other people’s opinions. Many people say things about you. Your boss, your parents, your peers, your friends have all said things about you. Some of them are true. Some of them are not true.

Satan knows that if he can get you to be angry, shameful, resentful, bitter, or guilty, then you are not going to miss your true identity.

Satan knows that once he puts a certain thought into your mind, you will repeat it yourself. He uses people’s negative remarks about you. People have said things like: “You never do anything right.” “You never get it right.” “You are always making troubles.” “You will never mount to anything.” It hurts you when you hear things like that,. You feel ashamed and Satan uses that.

Satan himself also says things like: “God is not going to accept you. Are you kidding me? He knows what you did and you know what you did. You are not going to be forgiven for that. You should be ashamed of yourself.” He puts these thoughts into your mind.

He watches you repeating these thoughts yourself. He doesn’t have to do anything anymore because you keep repeating these thoughts yourself. Satan

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<sup>2</sup> Ephesians 1:4-5

knows this. You constantly think about what other people have said to you or about you, and the thoughts Satan has put in your mind. You keep repeating it yourself. As you keep on repeating it, you become angry or shameful. You cannot erase it from your mind. Instead you keep thinking about it, keep repeating it until it becomes a part of your identity and you miss who you really are.

The important thing is that no matter what people say, you have choice either to accept it or to reject it. Remember that. Satan uses people's opinions to distort your identity.

Second, Satan uses culture and media to distort your identity. The most painful thing we experience in life is rejection. We all have experienced rejections in various degrees from our family, friends, in school, or someone we love. We all have experienced rejections and that hurts.

We all want to be accepted. We do almost anything to be accepted. We even try to find acceptance in wrong places. This is one of the reasons why some young people join the gangs.

We try to find acceptance based on how well we perform: like how well we do in school; how well we do our work.

Our culture and media strongly suggest that we need to wear certain things to be accepted, to be cool. They suggest the kind of cars we should drive, or jobs we have, or houses we live in, or schools we go to. Our culture and media affect everything we do.

Let's say, you want to explore a certain career but your parents or someone you like, disapproves of it or laughs at you for even thinking about it. So, what do you do? You end up doing something else, because you want to be accepted. The end result is that you are not happy, because that is who you are.

We do almost anything to be accepted but you don't need to worry about other people's acceptance.

Listen to the word of the Lord. The Bible says, "You are adopted as God's children through Christ." In a Greco-Roman world, the person who had been adopted had all the rights and privileges of the legitimate son or a daughter of his new family. His new father would have absolute control over his or her life and death. When we are adopted into God's family, God has absolute control over our

lives. Our destiny is in God's hand. Now, our identity is in God. We are accepted into God's family.

You may say, Pastor, I don't feel that I have been accepted by God? How do I know I have been accepted by God? We need to have faith in God's word. Our passage verse 4 says, "Before the creation God chose us to be his children." Can you imagine? Even before anything was created, you were chosen to be God's children. God had said, "I am going to choose to love you." "I am going to choose to lead you. Not because of anything you have done, but because I want to, because I choose to. Jesus has made you acceptable and lovable in God's eyes.

In his letter to Titus, Paul said, "Jesus treated us much better than we deserve. He made us acceptable to God and gave us the hope of eternal life."<sup>3</sup> God's acceptance came through Jesus Christ. It is a gift. You cannot earn it. It is given to you through Christ. All you have to do is to accept it in faith.

Once you accept that, you become extremely valuable.

Do you know what makes things valuable? Two things: one, who owns it, and the other, how much people are willing to pay for it. For example, the chair that J.K. Rowling sat on to write the Harry Potter stories was sold for \$394,000. The original pair of red slippers of Dorothy in the movie, The Wizard of Oz, was sold for \$666,000.<sup>4</sup> The value of an item is determined by who owns it and what someone is willing to pay for it.

You are extremely valuable because God owns you. You belong to him. Jesus was willing to pay for you with his life, with his blood. That is who you are. Someone was willing to pay for you with his life. That someone is none other than the Son of God. That is why you are extremely important, extremely valuable. That is your identity.

Now, the important thing is how well you will live out your identity. If you are a student, the important question is, how good a student are you? If you are a parent, how good a parent are you? If you are an engineer, how good an engineer are you? If you are a teacher, how good a teacher are you? Since you are a child of God, how good of a child of God are you? That is the important thing.

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<sup>3</sup> Titus 3:7 (Contemporary English Version)

<sup>4</sup> <https://people.com/celebrity/expensive-celebrity-items-at-auction/>

Our responsibility with our multiple identities is to live out those identities faithfully and responsibly. That is the challenge for all of us. We need to keep putting our efforts to become better and more responsible in all things, but especially in our relationship with the Lord. Because our relationship with the Lord is the basis for all things. When you are faithful to the Lord, you become faithful in all things. I hope and pray that we all realize who we really are and live out our identities responsibly and faithfully.