

IDENTITY and LOVE

I thought it would be interesting to search the internet with regard to 'identity'.

The first thing I saw was a statement from a website which says that quote "One of the most fundamental needs we have is for a sense of identity".

This was followed by numerous links to help people in their search for identity – teenagers on a quest for identity, how to find your identity, how to teach people to develop a positive identity of themselves, how to define yourself! (And lots more.)

Basing my identity on my life experience -

So, when I was a baby my father died. I grew up not knowing my daddy. My mum remarried so I had a step-dad, and step brothers and sister, but I knew that I was adopted into my step-dads family – I had a sense even from a very young age that I didn't belong, that I was different.

I grew up with a 'distant' parent who also shaped how I saw myself, I had low self-esteem, not having had emotional needs met.

We all have a need to receive love and affection, to be encouraged and helped to develop a sense of self-worth – a distant parent can create a lack of confidence, lack of trust, difficulty forming friendships, difficulty seeing yourself accurately, limit yourself and adopt wrong view of yourself, to be overly sensitive, experience rejection.

This can also affect you physically – fearful, unhappy, anxious, angry...

We can go through life identifying ourselves by our experiences and the feelings that go with those experiences.

Basing our identity on other people's opinions -

"Over a century ago, a social psychologist Charles Cooley identified the phenomenon of the "looking-glass self," which is when people believe "I am not what I think I am, and I am not what you think I am – I am what I think that you think I am." This kind of external validation has insecurity at its core, and relying on it for even a short time chips away at our sense of self-worth and self-confidence."

TRUTH

The good news is that all of the above are not the truth of who I am.

Because the TRUTH is that before I was even born, God knew me.

Jeremiah 1:5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart"

Psalm 139: O Lord, you have searched me [thoroughly] and have known me.

²You know when I sit down and when I rise up [my entire life, everything I do];
You understand my thought from afar.

³You scrutinize my path and my lying down, And You are intimately acquainted with all my ways.

⁴Even before there is a word on my tongue [still unspoken],
Behold, O Lord, You know it all.

⁵You have enclosed me behind and before,
And [You have] placed Your hand upon me.

⁶Such [infinite] knowledge is too wonderful for me;
It is too high [above me], I cannot reach it.

⁷Where can I go from Your Spirit?

Or where can I flee from Your presence?

⁸If I ascend to heaven, You are there;

If I make my bed in Sheol (the nether world, the place of the dead), behold, You are there.

⁹If I take the wings of the dawn,

If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea,

¹⁰Even there Your hand will lead me,

And Your right hand will take hold of me.

¹¹If I say, "Surely the darkness will cover me,

And the night will be the only light around me,"

¹²Even the darkness is not dark to You *and* conceals nothing from You,

But the night shines as bright as the day;

Darkness and light are alike *to You*.

¹³For You formed my innermost parts;

You knit me [together] in my mother's womb.

¹⁴I will give thanks *and* praise to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;

Wonderful are Your works,

And my soul knows it very well.

¹⁵My frame was not hidden from You,

When I was being formed in secret,

And intricately *and* skilfully formed [as if embroidered with many colours] in the depths of the earth.

¹⁶Your eyes have seen my unformed substance;

And in Your book were all written

The days that were appointed *for me*,

When as yet there was not one of them [even taking shape].

¹⁷How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How vast is the sum of them!

¹⁸If I could count them, they would outnumber the sand.

When I awake, I am still with You.

The TRUTH is that God created me in HIS image.

Genesis 1:27 Amplified Bible (AMP)

²⁷ So God created man in His own image, in the image *and* likeness of God He created him; male and female He created them.

The TRUTH is God Loves me.

Romans 8:37-39 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The TRUTH is God created us to live in relationship with Him.

(Looking at Adam and Eve)

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let Us (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) make man in Our image, according to Our likeness [not physical, but a spiritual personality and moral likeness]; and let them have complete authority over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the cattle, and over the entire earth, and over everything that creeps and crawls on the earth." ²⁷ So God created man in His own image, in the image and likeness of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Adam and Eve lived in God's presence in the Garden of Eden. God created Adam and Eve in His image so that they could enjoy a relationship with Him. They had no shame, knew no rejection, just complete love.

They had the capacity to worship Him and commune with Him. They were created completely without sin—they had the ability to conform to God's standards perfectly. But they also had free will, so they were able to choose to disobey. And they messed up! They sinned. One of the immediate effects of the Fall was that mankind was separated from God.

Genesis 3:24 says "So God drove out the man"; Adam and Eve were sent from the Garden of Eden (I will let you read the whole account). *In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve had perfect communion and fellowship with God. When they rebelled against Him, that fellowship was broken. They became aware of their sin and were ashamed before Him. They hid from Him (Genesis 3:8-10), and man has been hiding from God ever since.*

But did God give up on us? No!!! He sent His own Son to restore us back into that relationship with Him, the relationship He wants to have with us.

Only through Christ can that fellowship be restored, because in Him we are made as righteous and sinless in God's eyes as Adam and Eve were before they sinned. "God made him who had

no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Father God sent Jesus to die for us, He is the God of love, that is how much He loves us.

When God created Adam and Eve he knew me, even at that time he already had me in mind. He knew me! He had plans and purposes for me, I am created in His image to be in relationship with Him. But I was born into a fallen world. I experienced the effects of that sin. I lived my life based on my experiences and how I felt. But that is not the truth of who I am. That isn't my true identity. My true identity is how God sees me, who He created me to be.

Father God created me in His love and nothing can separate me from Gods love (considered prodigal son who left his father, took his inheritance and went off! His father still loved him, the fathers love didn't diminish when son rejected him, he still loved him and when the son returned his father welcomed him home, he welcomed him back into that love).

God paid highest price to welcome us back into relationship with him.

He gave his only son Jesus for me.

Jesus, son of God, born as man totally without sin paid that price, the ultimate sacrifice for my sin so that I can live in the relationship God created me for.

I was created in God's love, to be loved by him and live in relationship with him.

And even though we messed up God had a plan, God's love brought us back into relationship with Him.

Just as it says in John 3:16 – God loves me so much he gave Jesus his only son to die for me.

(Who believes in him.)

Yes I am looking at identity but in this I also want to look at God's love for us, because I believe that to really walk in our identity, to know who we are in God (and who He is), it's so very important to know and accept Gods love for us. It's in His love, from His love, out of His wonderful love we are created, God is love.

If God is love all he does comes from who He is, from His love.

When we live as a son or daughter we are living in that love. He is in us and we are in him.

If we live from a place of works and not from relationship, we are living outside of that love, striving, trying to earn a place at His table when the Truth is we are His beloved and He has already prepared a banquet for us, Psalm 23 says **5**You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows. **6**Surely

goodness and loving kindness will follow me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.....

It's also so important to accept the TRUTH of who God says we are, the truth of how God sees me tells me that:

I am God's child for I am born again of the incorruptible seed of the Word of God, which lives and abides forever ([1 Peter 1:23](#)).

I am God's workmanship, created in Christ unto good works ([Ephesians 2:10](#)).

I am a new creature in Christ ([2 Corinthians 5:17](#)).

I am a joint-heir with Christ ([Romans 8:17](#)).

I am more than a conqueror through Him Who loves me ([Romans 8:37](#)).

I am an overcomer by the blood of the Lamb and the word of my testimony ([Revelation 12:11](#)).

I am a partaker of His divine nature ([2 Peter 1:3-4](#)).

I am part of a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people ([1 Peter 2:9](#)).

I am the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#)).

I am the temple of the Holy Spirit; I am not my own ([1 Corinthians 6:19](#)).

I am the head and not the tail; I am above only and not beneath ([Deuteronomy 28:13](#)).

I am the light of the world ([Matthew 5:14](#)).

I am forgiven of all my sins and washed in the Blood ([Ephesians 1:7](#)).

I am delivered from the power of darkness and translated into God's kingdom ([Colossians 1:13](#)).

I am redeemed from the curse of sin, sickness, and poverty ([Deuteronomy 28:15-68;Galatians 3:13](#)).

I am firmly rooted, built up, established in my faith and overflowing with gratitude ([Colossians 2:7](#)).

I am called of God to be the voice of His praise ([Psalm 66:8;2 Timothy 1:9](#)).

I am healed by the stripes of Jesus ([Isaiah 53:5;1 Peter 2:24](#)).

I am raised up with Christ and seated in heavenly places ([Ephesians 2:6;Colossians 2:12](#)).

I am complete in Him Who is the Head of all principality and power ([Colossians 2:10](#)).

I am alive with Christ ([Ephesians 2:5](#)).

I am free from the law of sin and death ([Romans 8:2](#)).

I am far from oppression, and fear does not come near me ([Isaiah 54:14](#)).

I am born of God, and the evil one does not touch me ([1 John 5:18](#)).

I am holy and without blame before Him in love ([Ephesians 1:4](#); [1 Peter 1:16](#)).

I am greatly loved by God ([Romans 1:7](#); [Ephesians 2:4](#); [Colossians 3:12](#); [1 Thessalonians 1:4](#)).
(And there is so much more !)

So the truth of who I am is in what My God says about me and in His love for me, because He is my creator. When He looks at me He sees the Julia He created me to be.

When we go through life judging ourselves based on how we feel or on our life experiences taken from living in a fallen world, on mistakes we may have made or other people's opinions of us, we judge ourselves and live our lives based on those lies. And they are lies because they are contrary to Gods truth about us.

As Christians we can also approach God through law. We can try to live life by doing, by works. Legalism. God is a God of Love. We can't work our relationship with Him. He's not dishing out badges for who get it right or keeping a chart on our behaviour! Legalism teaches we obey God out of law. Grace teaches we obey out of love. God is love so the relationship He wants to have with us is a relationship built on, based on, love. His perfect wonderful love.

Legalism urges us to act right through works.

Grace enables us to be right by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Look at Paul

Galatians 1:1 Paul, an apostle (not commissioned and sent from men nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ—the Messiah—and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead), 2 and all the brothers who are with me, To the churches of Galatia: 3 Grace to you and peace [inner calm and spiritual well-being] from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, 4 who gave Himself [as a sacrifice to atone] for our sins [to save and sanctify us] so that He might rescue us from this present evil [a]age, in accordance with the will and purpose and plan of our God and Father— 5 to Him be [ascribed all] the glory through the ages of the ages. Amen.

Paul knew who he was and who sent him (verse 1). He knew who Jesus was (verse 1), he knew what Jesus did (verse 4), he knew what this meant for us (verse 4) and he recognised that this was God's plan, and that God is our Father.

Paul wasn't living from his past experience, he wasn't living his life based on what he had done. He knew who he was and lived in the truth of his identity (otherwise he wouldn't have been able to accomplish or be effective in all God had for him). Yes, he messed up before he met with Jesus, big time! In verse 13 Paul acknowledges his past. 13 You have heard of my career and former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to hunt down and persecute the church of God extensively and [with fanatical zeal] tried [my best] to destroy it.

BUT in verse 15/16 he met with Jesus, the Son of God

15 But when God, who had chosen me and set me apart before I was born, and called me through His grace, was pleased 16 to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles [as the good news—the way of salvation], I did not immediately consult with anyone [for guidance regarding God's call and His revelation to me]. 17 Nor did I [even] go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia and stayed awhile, and afterward returned once more to Damascus.

Paul knew who he was, that he was chosen and set apart even before he was born, called by God's grace, that he had a purpose, and that he was loved.

When he had his encounter with Jesus he didn't go straight to people (looking for people's approval) - he withdrew for a time. He waited on God. And then he went out there! Living the life God called him to live from who God created him to be.

Love/Law

Paul recognised God's grace. Even in church we can get so caught up in works, feel obliged, guilty, serve from a place of obligation, and not from love. Works bring resentment, love cherishes. God is Love and we are created in His love.

The enemy seeks to attack us at the core of who we are. He will try to put anything in the way of us knowing the truth because in that truth of our identity we are free and we are strong. Knowing our identity in God, living in that truth, roots us to God. Secures us to Him. It's like cement in our lives, fixes us in truth and secures our foundations.

My prayer is for a revelation of the Fathers love for us, to touch our heart – for Him to inhabit our hearts.

I want to carry His love. How? Not through 'works'. We don't need to try to earn brownie points to win His favour.

But we can seek Him, we can pursue Him. And not give up. Like the Shulamite woman in Song of Songs pursued her lover.

For God to touch our hearts they need to be open. Is there anything in the way – is there anything blocking the Fathers Love from touching your heart?

If we believe lies then we are blocking the door to truth. For example, if someone has told me a lie which I have then taken hold of and believe, and then someone else comes to me with the truth, I will reject the truth if I believe the lie. Image of believing a lie – hold something in hand. Can't take truth in my hand if it's holding a lie. Release the lie to be able to take hold of the truth.

Father won't force truth on us – He is love, love isn't forceful. Like Adam and Eve, we have free will.

Picture your heart like a garden, exposing lies and repenting clears the ground, pulls out the weeds. When the weeds are out we can plant the seeds of Gods truth into our hearts.

Are there lies that are blocking the truth of God's word from your heart?

Ask Him to show you, to expose and uncover any lies that you may believe, any lie that you have taken to your heart.

Repent – give Him the lie and accept the truth of who Father says you are.

You don't have to work to earn Father's love, He loves us and from that love we can seek Him. I am my beloveds and He is mine.

Are you living from law, or from love? Ask Him to show you, for a revelation of the Grace of God to touch your heart.

Are you struggling with acceptance? Father God loved you before you were born. You are the beloved child of God. God has created you with a love that only He can satisfy, proclaim His love, accept His love, ask Father God to speak His Love words to your heart.

We won't get perfection from people or things around us. People will let you down, things will let you down. Don't look to people for approval, don't look to people to meet your needs, don't identify yourself through the opinions of people. We are not rejected by God, where man may have rejected us, God does not reject us. Only perfection is in Jesus. Look to Jesus.

Are you looking to people for approval, seeking your identity in people? Make a choice today to look to Jesus to meet your needs, our approval is in Him.

God's love will pursue us all the days of our lives, pray that it will have a place to take root in our hearts.

Pray for seeds of Gods truth to be rooted firmly in our hearts, to grow and bear fruit.

We are loved.