



Identity Lesson 1

God is the Author and Creator of all things. All things, visible and invisible were made by Him and for Him. We as humans are each a part of God's creation. This means that God is the one who truly knows who we were created to be and what we were created to do. Unlike the rest of creation, our identity is wholly dependent on our relationship with our Creator. God created us to reflect His own image and likeness and breathed His own breath into our lungs to let us live that way. Because of sin, however, our relationship with our Creator was broken which fatally tainted our ability to be who He created us to be and do what He created us to do. But thanks be to God! Through Christ's life death and resurrection, we have been reconciled to our Creator and can now live in our true identity once again!

This 4-week study is here to help us grow in relationship with God and each other so that we can deeply and securely know and live in our God-given identity.

A growing disciple of Jesus loves God with all their heart, mind, soul and strength. A love for God is taught throughout Scripture as reflected in Deuteronomy 6:4-6. "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts."

As a group watch the Bible Project video: [Lev: Heart](#)

Discuss

1. Have you ever considered this verse to be a daily prayer like the ancient Hebrews practiced? How would expressing this prayer daily effect a follower of God? Do you practice anything similar to this in your own life? If so, what effect has it had on your life?

A growing disciple of Jesus learns to love God with all their heart, mind, soul and strength through the study of the Bible and in community with other believers. The transformation of the "heart" involves the renewing of our minds.

Read the following Scripture passages:

- Romans 12:2 "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."
- 2 Corinthians 4:16 "Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day."
- Colossians 3:9-10 "Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator."
- Titus 3:5 "he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit"

The renewal of your mind is essential

Our goal in loving God with all our heart, soul and strength isn't to simply change our circumstances, our behaviors or our feelings. It's to actually experience the renewing of our minds. Your rational mind develops images, concepts and judgements based on what the world would provide and the flesh would desire. Our need as a result is to put off the mindset of the world as we put on the mindset of the Holy Spirit.

Discuss

2. What are three "thoughts" that have occupied your mind this week? Why those thoughts, and not some others? What have their effects on your life been?
3. What are the main ideas that rule our society today? Do you think they favor a godly life or hinder it?
4. Where do you see images most at work in our lives today? Political campaigns? Advertising? Religion? Education?

Mind renewal equals "narrative renewal"

As a part of our renewal we must put off the old satanic narrative of self/works/law and put on Christ's redeeming narrative of grace/faith/love. Narrative renewal focuses on redeeming the images, concepts and judgements of our old self and putting on the new images, concepts and judgements reflected in Christ Jesus.

Discuss

5. What images of God seem most common and influential in our world? How about in your own thinking and devotional life? In that of your friends?
6. What are the major ideas Jesus brought into human history and how do you see them affecting the contemporary world?
7. Reflect on the New Testament Gospels as being informative about our current reality and as a means by which we should live. Is that a good way to think about the New Testament? If it is, and we do believe that it is, how can the New Testament assist us in renewing our old narratives into new, redeemed narratives that lead to grace and put off shame? Are there particular verses or content you would point to as having a significant impact on your own transformation?

Mind renew impacts our relational health

When we seek and find renew for our minds in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit we grow by loving, learning, living and leading in ways we could only have imagined when our minds were under the influence of a narrative given to us by the World, the Flesh and the Devil.

8. What are some steps you can take to make sure that your thoughts are rightly directed and used in the process of renewing your mind? How can images help in experiencing your renewed mind?

Prayer

Close by partnering up and giving thanks for the grace and love poured out in Jesus. Then pray for each other's steps shared in the renewing of our minds.