

Identity

Story: Take a close look at the tips of your fingers. Do you see the tiny ridges and lines? Human fingerprints are detailed, unique, difficult to alter, and don't change over time. Fingerprints are often employed by police and other authorities to identify individuals who wish to conceal themselves. Forensic science has now become so precise that many criminals consider gloves essential. The faint lines you see were completely formed by the time you were 6 months conceived – 3 months before you were born!

You are special and unique. You are created by God and are loved by Him. Our society, however, will tell you that your identity is attached to your billfold, the ballfield, and the bedroom. Your identity should not be wrapped up in material things. It should come from knowing how much God loves you and desires to be in relationship with you.

When you know your identity the pressure to perform can shift into the pleasure to perform.

Questions to consider:

How do you define success?

Who would you be if everything you do was taken away from you?

Where do you find your identity?

What do you boast in? Where does your confidence lie?

Context: The apostle Paul lived during a time in history not much different than ours. Our culture says you are a person of worth or importance if you reach a certain standard of performance, influence, or wealth. We often spend our time trying to reach whatever standard we are told to reach to find “significance”. Paul spent his life climbing the ladder of success as a Pharisee (religious leader) only to find out God doesn't accept us because of what we do (self-righteousness), but because of what He (Jesus) has already done for us. On the outside, Paul had many reasons to boast, however he came to realize His true identity and purpose came from being found in Christ.

Scripture: Philippians 3:5-11

1. What types of things did Paul once use to put his identity in as a person?
2. Where did Paul ultimately find his identity and purpose in life?
3. How did a change in Paul's identity transform his life and how he lived?

Key Verse: *“...whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ.” Philippians 3:7*

Anchor to remember:

- Your value is constant and priceless, never going up or down based on results or performance.