

# Identity

**Challenge:** Take a close look at your palms and the tips of your fingers. Do you see the tiny ridges and lines? If you pressed a finger onto an inkpad and then onto a piece of paper, it would leave a print of the lines and ridges on your finger — a fingerprint! Your fingerprints are unique. No one else in the world has the exact same set of ridges and lines that you have on your fingers. Their uniqueness and lasting quality make fingerprints one of the best ways to identify a person.

The crux of fingerprint formation lies in the field of developmental biology. Our fingerprints reflect the environment we encountered when our life began. A person's fingerprints are formed when they are a tiny fetus developing in their mother's womb. The faint lines you see were completely formed by the time you were 6 months old – 3 months before you were born!

One of the foundational teachings of the Bible is that humans are special. We are created by God and loved by Him – not just as a group, but individually. More than that, God wants to know each of us individually (Revelation 3:20). The nature of fingerprints perfectly resemble the biblical message of our uniqueness before God our maker – each set of fingerprints is unique, just as we are said to be to Him (Psalm 139:13-15).

Will winning or losing your next game matter in 5 years? When you get the ball with 1.8 seconds left in the game, the pressure to make the shot is based on the significance you will have placed on the end result. If you make it, you're the hero, if you miss you're a loser. All too often, we turn things in our lives into a big deal, when many times they aren't. It is incredibly valuable to train ourselves to keep a healthy perspective when we find ourselves in circumstances and situations that trigger us to create pressure.

When you can be honest with yourself with this question, you can have more focus on the present by doing the very best you can, where you are, with what you have in front of you. That is all you can do. Do your best regardless of the outcome. That is all you have control over.

By consistently training to have this perspective, you will begin to operate with freedom and will be able to perform at a higher-level cause you are focused on the process and the controllables, which decreases pressure and increases confidence.

Our society tells us is that your value is attached to what you will achieve or don't achieve. True satisfaction and fulfillment cannot be found through achievement, but by knowing how much God loves you and desires to be in relationship with you.

## Questions to consider:

1. How do you define success?
2. Who would you be if everything you do was taken away from you?
3. Who would you be then?

4. Where do you find your identity?
5. What do you boast in? What does your confidence lie?

**What's going on:** 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 spend his life climbing and 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.

**Game Time:** 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 off results or performance.