Week 1: Made By God

Overview: This week, we're going back to where it all began in the book of Genesis. In a world filled with voices telling us who we are, God's Word gives us the only identity that truly lasts. We will discover that our identity is rooted in the truth that we were created by God and in His image. Because God is our Creator, He alone has the authority to define who we are. When we understand that we are made by God, we can live with confidence, purpose, and security in Him.

Key Scripture: Genesis 1:26-31

Supporting Scripture: John 1:16; 2nd Corinthians 5:17

Content

Key Takeaway: When our identity is rooted in the God who made us and redeemed us, it will never waver.

Key Points

- How does the world define us?
    - The world tells us our identity comes from our appearance, achievements, popularity, feelings, or failures.
    - Culture encourages us to create our own identity rather than receive one
    - These identities are constantly changing and leave us searching for purpose and acceptance
- How does God define us?
    - We are created by God: Our existence is not an accident, we were intentionally created by our creator
    - We are made in Gods image: Genesis 1:26-27 gives humanity unique value, dignity, and purpose
    - God calls his Creation very good: After creating humanity, God looks over everything he has made very good (Gen 1:31)
    - We belong to our creator: Because God made us, he has the authority to define who we are and how we were created to live.
- Truth that stands
    - Sin has distorted God’s good creation, but it has not erased our value as image – bearers
    - The same God who created humanity in Genesis is the same God who pursued his creation, which includes us though his son Jesus

    - In Christ we are
        - Children of God (John 1:12)
        - A new Creation (2 Cor 5:17)
    - The world's definition of identity will continue to change, but God's truth remains
    - Our identity is ultimately not found in what the world says about us, but in what God has said and what Christ has done for us
- Living out of this identity
    - Where have I been looking for identity instead of to God? Consider: appearance, grades, likes, relationships, performance?
    - Because I am made by God and belong to Him, what would change this week if I believed that? (How I talk to myself, how I handle a bad grade or a rejection, how I show up when no one's watching)
    - Practice: Instead of asking "how do I feel about myself today," ask "what has God said about me today"; let Scripture answer instead of feelings.
    - This week, identify one lie the world has taught you about your worth, and replace it with one truth from this session (Genesis 1:27, John 1:12, or 2 Corinthians 5:17).

Gospel Application: We don't have to strive for our identity or prove our worth because, through Jesus, the Father has already given us an identity as His children. Our identity is received, not achieved, we rest in what God has provided for us through Christ. And from that place of security and belonging, we are free to live the life God has called us to.

Key Question: Am I striving to prove who I am, or am I resting in who God says I am?

Application

Activity Suggestions

- Give each student a sticky note. Ask them to write any roles or descriptors they have of themselves. Use a PowerPoint/Propresenter slide to create a list of who God says they are and give space for students to reflect on their identity
- Use a backpack as a message illustration for the labels or weight we can carry. Demonstrate that God takes the "weight" of false identity off our shoulders and gives us a new identity in Him.
- Create a "Who Am I" document for students to take home and keep as a reminder.

Community Group Questions

- Why do you think God, when he made humans, called them "very good?"

- Based on this passage, which part of our God-given identity sticks out to you? Why?
- What makes it difficult to believe you belong to God?
- What labels or opinions from the world have shaped the way you see yourself? How might Jesus redefine those things?
- When you feel like you must prove yourself or get your sense of worth from other people, how does this passage speak to that?"