



Fall Study Discussion Guide #6

Sermon Title: Identity Crisis

Biblical Reference: 1 Corinthians 3:1-11

Date Preached: Sunday, December 11th, 2022, @ 11am

Fall Study Date: Wednesday, December 14th, 2022

Sermon Summary

Last Sunday we learned about some of the problems in the church in Corinth. One problem was that they did not have the security that comes from thinking about themselves in the light of God's Word. They were carnal and not able to connect on a spiritual level. Paul had to communicate with them as babes because they were sensitive to receiving the truth. People in this church attempted to build themselves up by creating divisions between them and the other members.

Paul addressed this by telling them that he was only a minister (servant) and all of them were laborers together. He told them they were like a plant in the Lord's garden; they were God's building. Ignorance of one's identity in Christ causes one to create his own identity out of the forge of his own efforts. Knowing our identity in Christ leads to security, confidence, and a sense of value.

Quick Review

Ice Breaker:

Go around and have each group member briefly tell the name of their hometown growing up and what it was "famous for".

In thinking about your identity in Christ from this week's text, were there any insights the Lord showed you or anything that caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?

My Testimony

Most Christians have had seasons in their life that they felt insecure.

- Do you still have difficulty with this? What has your experience been?
- How did the Lord help you overcome that?

Digging Deeper

1. Introduction

In the following verses, Paul confronts the church at Corinth about their spiritual state. He tells them they were carnal. Meaning they lived their life in a fleshly way. They operated by their

emotions and physical desires ungoverned by the Spirit of God. They were not able to receive spiritual truth. Essentially, the people were like babes (being overly sensitive made them unable to receive the truth they needed). The Corinthians were envious of one another constantly fighting and sought validation by identifying themselves with their favorite leader. Their behavior resulted in them creating factions (small groups) within the church. These factions did nothing to advance the spiritual climate in their church, nor did this behavior help to keep their members pure.

Ask a volunteer to read:

1Co 3:1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.

1Co 3:2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.

1Co 3:3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

1Co 3:4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

Discussion Questions:

- Can you tell us about your struggle with carnality, and describe how God works in your life to bring you to spirituality?
- Why do you believe God's people find the need to identify with factions?
- Tell us about a time when it was important to you to identify with a certain group. What negative impacts did you notice? Who/what/how did God use to show you he had a better way for you?
- From the above text. what do you perceive to be the most harmful problem in the church at Corinth and why?
- As members of HABC how can we work together to avoid falling into the same sins of the church at Corinth? What can you personally do?
- How can we avoid these problems without going so far, the other way, and by acceptance the Church becomes carnal? (Rev 2:18-20)

2. God Created You, God Gets to Define You

In the following verses we see that the Corinthians defined themselves by their preferences. These people identified themselves by the preachers they followed or their unique

beliefs and practices. This gave them a sense of pride. They thought the group they identified with made them special and were very vocal about this.

If we look at the broken and hurting society around us, we see the same thing. People identify themselves by their own ideas. They believe because they identify themselves in a particular way, they deserve special treatment and must fight for justice and equity. Paul taught the Corinthians that they had misidentified themselves and their judgment was off. True identity was in what Christ had made them (they were plants in God's garden; they were God's building). Paul used himself as an example. He asked, "Who is Paul?" The answer he gave was not his opinion, it was what God said about him.

Ask a volunteer to read:

1Co 3:4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

1Co 3:5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

1Co 3:6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

1Co 3:7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

1Co 3:8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

1Co 3:9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

Discussion Questions:

- What, in this passage, is the most significant to you? Please explain.
- In 1 Cor 3:9 we see several examples of who we are in Christ. What point speaks to you the most? Please explain.
- How do you believe the people would have been changed had they embraced their God given identity?
- What do you believe is the difference between people seeking validation (according to 1 Cor 3: 4 method and the 1 Cor 3:9 method)?
- At some point all of us have felt insignificant or not valuable. We have tried to find confidence in external things. From the list below what did you look to for value? How has this failed you?

How we feel
What we believe
People's opinions

How we look
What we do
Intellect or education

Possessions.
Achievements
Abilities

- Can you give us an example (or Bible verse) of how you could help a struggling Christians to overcome feeling worthless and unvaluable? How can we help as a Church body?

3. Gods Definition of Me

In the following verses you can see how God defines us and how He feels about us (this is only a small sampling). The Bible has so many wonderful truths in it about who God has made us to be and how He loves and cares for His children.

Believing what God said about you will bring an incredible sense of wellbeing. Our value and worth are connected to God. ***You can be God-confident instead of self-confident.*** God-confidence is built on truth while self-confidence is built on a lie. Knowing the Lord Jesus Christ did not make a mistake when He made you is a powerful truth and when you meditate on it from the Word of God it brings a sense of true security. When we are secure in God, we can grow up into the person we were born again to be.

Ask a volunteer to read:

Gen 1:26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

Gen 1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

Gen 2:7 And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

Psa 139:13 For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.

Psa 139:14 I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.

Psa 139:15 My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

Psa 100:3 Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Joh 15:15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

The light of the world

Mat 5:14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

Discussion Questions:

- What is your favorite verse in this list or in the Bible that reminds you how God thinks of you? How has that verse comforted you? Please explain.
- Can you give us an example of how moving from self-confidence to God-confidence would change how you approach a situation?
- Is there a specific area in your life you need us to pray for you to be God-confident in now?

Taking It Home

The following questions are intended to be open-ended and encourage members to consider how they felt and what they can do because of discovering the truths and principles in the text:

1. What truth or principle in this text was most impactful for you?
2. How did this truth or principal challenge, change, or affirm your thinking?
3. How will you put into practice what you have learned today?