

Hello,

It is difficult for anyone to have an really accurate view of oneself. In most cases, we are either unable or unwilling to see ourselves as we really are.

*my
name is,*

Lesson One

Just Who Am I Anyway?

Just who are you, anyway? It may sound like a silly question, but there's a lot more to you than just your name. Your identity — what makes you the unique person that you are — covers everything from your favorite flavor of ice cream to the way you laugh to the things deep inside your heart. Do you realize that there isn't another person in the world exactly like you?

See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are! But the people who belong to this world don't recognize that we are God's children because they don't know him.

— 1 John 3:1 (NLT)

Day 1

Think for a moment about your unique characteristics. Write down three words that describe you physically, three words that describe your personality, and three abilities that you have:

Physical traits

Personality traits

Abilities

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

All of these things go together to help form your view of who you are — your identity. But are they really the things that make you a unique, whole person? As we'll discover together, your value doesn't come from the things you do or how you act on the outside. Your identity is rooted in your relationship with God, who loved you long before you were even created.

1. Have you ever considered that God knows you better than anyone else? Let's see what He has to say about you. Read Psalm 139:13-16 and fill in the blanks below.

"I praise you because I, (insert your name) _____, am _____ and _____ made; your works are _____, I know that full well." (Psalm 139:14, NIV).

2. Check the box or boxes below that best describe how you feel when you read that verse.

- Special
- Doubtful
- Happy
- Sad
- Confident
- Confused
- Loved
- Angry

3. Based on these verses, would you say that God made you the way you are on purpose?

yes no

4. Based on these verses, do you think God makes mistakes in creating people?

yes no

5. Based on these verses, on a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being the most), how much does God value every person He created?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Knowing how God sees us should affect the way we see ourselves. Prayerfully ask Him to show you what He sees when He looks at you.

Day 2

What would happen if you woke up, got dressed in the dark, and went to school without ever looking in a mirror? Chances are your clothes might not match and your hair might stick out in every direction. Just as people can't know what they look like until they glance in a mirror, we can't get an accurate picture of who we are without looking into the "mirrors" of our relationships with God and others. What we find there might just surprise us.

Read Jesus' parable about the Pharisee and the tax collector in Luke 18:9-14 to answer the following questions:

1. What did the Pharisee think of himself? (Check all that apply)
 - I'm such a good person! God must be really impressed with me.
 - I am a sinner just like everyone else.
 - I never fall short of pleasing God.
 - I'm not even worthy to come into God's presence.
2. What did the tax collector think of himself? (Check all that apply)
 - I'm such a good person! God must be really impressed with me.
 - I am a sinner just like everyone else.
 - I never fall short of pleasing God.
 - I'm not even worthy to come into God's presence.
3. Were their perceptions of themselves accurate?
4. What do you think God's impression of each man was?
5. Think for a moment about how you see yourself. Do you think God's view of who you are is different from your own? If so, how?

Making It Personal

At the beginning of this lesson, you wrote down three words that describe your appearance, personality, and abilities. Now, as you think about how well God knows you and cares for you, write down three words He might use to describe you:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Finally, write down three words you would use to describe God. As you close in prayer, praise Him for those qualities and thank Him for making you His child!

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



Day 2

In Psalm 51:1-17, David was honest with God. He had messed up big time and knew that he needed to come clean and ask for forgiveness. God didn't remove the consequences of David's actions, but He did completely forgive him and restore their relationship.

1. How does it make you feel to realize that God can see what's in your heart?
 Frightened
 Free
 Uncomfortable
 Relieved
 Happy
 Don't really care
 Other: _____
2. What words or verses in this Psalm show you that you don't need to fear being honest with Jesus?
3. Our sins are things that we do that displease God, but sin is also who we are – it is the nature with which we are born. What does Psalm 51:5 reveal about us?
 We were sinners from the moment we were conceived.
 We didn't become sinners until we started middle school.
 We're not really that bad.
 We can choose whether or not we have a sin nature.
4. What does God want from us, according to verse 6?
5. What are the areas in your life where you need to tell God what's really going on?



Making It Personal

God hears our prayers no matter when, where, or how we say them. Sometimes, though, the position we take can help us have the right attitude. It's likely that when David prayed Psalm 51 before God, he was lying on the ground (2 Samuel 12:16).

This week, find a quiet place where you can pray on your knees. Use this time to tell God everything that's going on in your life. Ask for His forgiveness and help. He already knows, but He wants to hear it from you!

2. Write your name in the first blank below. Then look at Jeremiah 17:9 to fill in the rest of the blanks below:

"_____ 's heart is _____ above all things and _____
Who can understand it?" (Jeremiah 17:9, NIV)

3. What do you think that means?

We are born with pure hearts that seek God above all things.

We can fix our sin problem by trusting what's in our hearts.

The human heart is pure and very easy to understand.

We all have a heart condition — sin — that fools us into thinking we are good.

4. Do you ever find yourself trying to earn God's love and forgiveness? Will your good deeds ever be good enough (Isaiah 64:6)?

5. If God did all the work of taking away our sin by sending His Son, Jesus, why should we bother to ask His forgiveness or obey His words? (Hint: Read Romans 6:15-16.)

Making It Personal

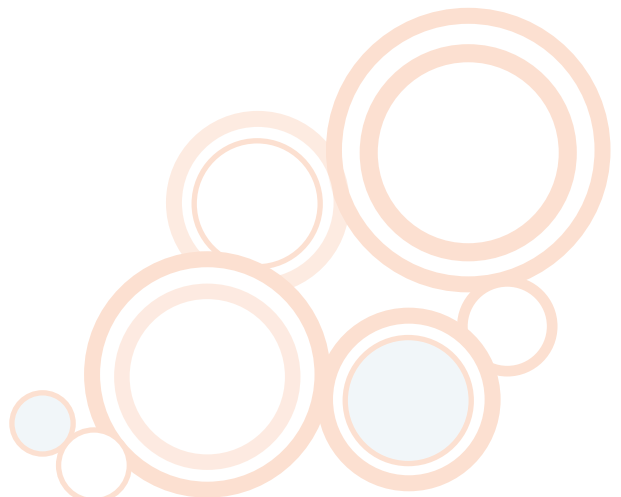
Read Psalm 103:12 to see God's response when we come to Him with our sin. A part of discovering your identity is recognizing where you've come from, where you are right now, and where you are going. In the three boxes below, write down a few words that describe your journey. Where does God fit into each of those descriptions?

If you don't have a personal relationship with Him, now is the time to begin. Ask God to forgive you of your sin and give you a new nature through Jesus Christ. God wants to restore your identity by transforming you into His son or daughter.

who i was...

who i am now....

who i want to be...



Lesson Four

Homeward Bound

Day 1

Where are you in the birth order of your family? Oldest? Youngest? Middle? Is one of your siblings considered to be the “good” one? Is one considered to be the “wild one”? How do you think your family would describe you?

Read the story of one family’s experience in Luke 15:11-32 and answer the following questions. (Each question may have more than one answer.)

1. Why did the younger son rebel and want to leave home?
 - He wanted to see the world.
 - He was tired of his father’s rules.
 - He no longer cared about his father’s approval.
 - He needed to get away from his older brother.
2. What finally caused him to come to his senses?
 - All his new friends left him.
 - The pigs smelled really bad.
 - He realized that he was lost and had nowhere else to go
 - He was out of money.
 - Other: _____
3. How did his father respond when he came home?
 - Welcome home!
 - How could you do this to me?
 - You’re grounded for life!
 - Where’s my money?
4. How might this story be different if the younger son had been afraid to go back home after what he had done?
6. How do you think his father’s response made him feel?
 - Sad Loved
 - Forgiven Special
 - Worthless Like he could never do anything right
 - Like he could start over

It doesn’t take a rocket scientist to tell that this story was meant to resemble God’s response to us. We are the prodigal children. We have rebelled and lost our way. All of us can identify with the wayward son in some way. Spend a few moments talking with your heavenly Father.

Day 2

1. Look over the story in Luke 15 again. Who in this story can you relate to most?
 - The forgiving father
 - The younger son in his rebellious phase
 - The disapproving older son
 - The younger son in his repentant phase

We don’t yet see things clearly. We’re squinting in a fog, peering through a mist. But it won’t be long before the weather clears and the sun shines bright! We’ll see it all then, see it all as clearly as God sees us, knowing him directly just as he knows us!

— 1 Corinthians 13:12
(The Message)

2. What kept the older son from seeing his brother with the same attitude of forgiveness his father had? (Check all that apply)
- He saw himself as the “good son” who deserved special treatment over his “bad” brother.
 - He was very concerned for his brother’s physical and spiritual health.
 - He couldn’t see past his own feelings of jealousy, anger, and bitterness.
 - He was mad that he hadn’t thought of throwing a party first.
3. How do you think the younger son felt when he saw his brother’s point of view? (Check all that apply)
- Sad
 - Loved
 - Forgiven
 - Distant
 - Worthless
 - Like he could never do anything right
 - Like he could start over
4. What lesson can we learn from this story? (Check all that apply)
- God loves and forgives us.
 - We need to see others as God does, and forgive them.
 - We need to make peace with our brothers.
 - We need to leave “fairness” to God.
 - Other: _____
5. Who should we trust to shape our view of ourselves? (Check all that apply)
- People that truly love us.
 - People that love God.
 - People that are related to us.
 - People that have had a lot of experience in the world.
 - People that have a lot to say about us.



Making It Personal

All of us, whether we realize it or not, are on a spiritual journey. We need friends around us that can help us see through the fog and give us an accurate view of God and of ourselves. We can travel together and share the lessons we are learning and the things we are experiencing.

- Who are your trusted friends that help you on your journey?
- Who are the friends that help you when you lose sight of God?
- How do you feel about sharing your journey with your friends?

If you have these friends, thank God for them today. If you do not, ask Him to send them to you.

Lesson Five

The Ultimate Rescue

Think of a time in your life when someone came to your rescue. It may have been a lifeguard, an ambulance driver, or a parent who brought your lunch to school. Who rescued you, from what, and what might have been the outcome?

When Jesus came to earth, He was on a rescue mission. He didn't come to save us with life jackets or oxygen masks; He saved us by giving His life. The Bible tells us that we were on a fast track to total destruction because of our rebellion against God, but because of Jesus' sacrifice, our identity has changed. We were once God's enemies. He came to make us friends.

Day 1

Read Romans 5:6-11 and answer the following questions.

1. Who did Jesus come to rescue? (Check all that apply)
 - Good people
 - Sinners
 - The ungodly
 - Enemies of God
 - His friends
2. Do you think most people would be willing to give their lives for their enemies?
 - No way
 - Maybe
 - Of course — wouldn't you?
3. What did God demonstrate by dying for us while we were still sinners? (Check all that apply)
 - We would never be good enough.
 - He is the only way.
 - How much He loves us.
 - How hopeless our situation was.
4. God did not wait for us to become good enough before He sent His Son to save us. It was worth it to Christ to leave heaven, come to earth, be born as a baby, and live and die to save us. What does this tell you about the way God sees you?

Romans 5:11 says we should rejoice about this great news. Do that today.

Day 2

Read Galatians 3:26-29 and answer the following questions.

1. Fill in the blanks: "You are all _____ through faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26, NIV).
2. What does this mean?
 - You wear Christian T-shirts.
 - You have put on Christ's nature.

"When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners."

— Romans 5:6-8 (NLT)

- You try your best to act like Christ so you can earn God's love.
- You dress very modestly.

3. How does God view you once you belong to Him?

(Check all that apply)

- Pure because of Christ's sacrifice
- As only human
- Not so bad
- As a work in progress
- As His child

4. What does verse 29 say we are if we belong to Christ?

5. What promise did Jesus make to His followers in Matthew 28:20?

- You will have lots of money.
- Everyone will admire you.
- Nothing bad will ever happen to you.
- I will be with you always.

6. What is the most recent time that you were aware that God was with you?

7. Judging from the verses we've studied, how valuable are you to God?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all				Kind of valuable					Priceless



Making It Personal

God sent Jesus to earth on a rescue mission. He went as far as sacrificing His own Son to demonstrate how much He loves you and desires a relationship with you. This week, spend some time thanking God for showing you how much He values you, His child. Complete the following sentence prayers:

"God, you are worthy of my praise because _____."

"Because of you, I am _____."

"I want to demonstrate my love for you by _____."

"Help me to see myself as _____."

Lesson Six

Lasting Impressions

Did you ever form an opinion about someone based on the way they dressed, or talked, or the activities they were involved in — only to discover later that they were very different than you'd originally thought? What caused you to change your opinion? Why can't we always trust our first impressions?

Day 1

Look at the story in 1 Samuel 16:1-13. God told His prophet, Samuel, to go out and meet the man He had chosen as the new king for Israel. Read the story for yourself to answer the following questions:

1. What might have gone through Samuel's mind when he first saw Jesse's son, Eliab?
 This guy sure looks like a king! He's got to be the one!
 Hmm... I'd better wait to hear from God before I make a judgment.
 I wonder what kind of man he is.
 I wonder how much he can bench-press.
2. What is important to God in considering a person?
 Age
 Character
 Intelligence
 Heart
 Family
3. What was God communicating by choosing David over his brothers?
 Shepherds make really great kings.
 Kings should be young and brave.
 Who you are is more important than how you look.
 Samuel needs his eyes checked.
4. How do you think Jesse and his sons reacted when God chose David to be the next king? (Check all that apply)
 We always thought David would make good.
 David? He's just a baby!
 Surely God knows what He is doing.
 There has to be some mistake!
5. Think for a moment about some of the things you look at when you form an opinion of others. See if you can list three:

6. What is the danger of judging someone based on outward appearances? (Check all that apply)
 Appearances can fool you.
 You can't know what is in a person's heart.
 You might catch them on a bad hair day.
 Clothes will become more important than character.
 Other: _____

"The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

— 1 Samuel 16:7

Thoughts...



Thoughts...