

Made in the Image of God - All of Us!
Wednesday evening Bible Study ~ Genesis 1:26-27; Mark 12:29-31
Pastor Brent McDougal

Tonight we are using a few reflections from the book Untamed. Chapter 7 is about our identity in Christ.

Table talk: How would you describe yourself to others? What qualities, personality traits, experiences?

A.W. Tozer (1897-1963) said, “What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.”

When one discovers their true identity, not only does it bring authenticity, but it delivers real authority. The authenticity and power of being a disciple is unleashed when we live out our true identity in Christ. This is why so much of the New Testament is dedicated to helping us find ourselves again “in Christ.” If we don’t find our identity in Christ, we’ll find it somewhere else.

Paul’s letters: first half typically about identity, the second part is about how to live out your identity. Who you are leads to what you do.

Alan and Deb Hirsch: “Any attempt to live as a disciple that is not founded on a true identity in Jesus will result in a deviant religion.” How do we develop a true sense of identity? Two big relationship areas: relationship with God and relationship with others.

1. The God relationship is absolutely foundational. Søren Kierkegaard claimed that without God, there is no possibility of a self, because “we are constituted by the relationship to that which brought us into being.” Augustine: our hearts are restless until they find their rest in God.

2. Relationships with others, however, also shape our identity. We can’t form who we are in isolation from one another. (Example: girl raised by wolves. Human, but not fully!)We need the language, human contact, symbolic gestures, and love — all of that goes into making us who we are. Even the negative influences and conflict can shape us into who we are. (Example: Brent being a middle child.)

Broken image

“In a broken world filled with less-than-perfect relationships, is it any wonder that most of us struggle with our sense of self? A healthy identity and a basic security in who we are as individuals seems to be hard to come by.”

“Then God said, ‘Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground.’ So God created human beings[d] in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:26-27, NLT).

The Shema

“‘The most important one,’ answered Jesus, ‘is this: Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these’”(Mark 12:29-31, NIV).

Self is formed in relation to God and others — perfectly represented in the Shema.

Start here when seeking to love, bless, and reach others: Imago Dei. Seeing the image of God in others generates compassion. **Bottom line:** “Many things intrude on our sense of identity: vocations, culture, sexuality, idols, and other people, to name but a few. The formation of correct identity is crucial to both our discipleship and our mission in the world., because how we image ourselves is what we become. And how we view others determines the way we relate to them.”

- Read the Bible through the lens of identity statements.
- Find yourself in relationships.
- See the image of God in others.

Table talk: Whom do you struggle to love?