



PARENTING

IDENTITY IN CHILDREN & TEENS

Identity as a cultural phenomenon

Identity = a sense of _____ and _____. (Tim Keller)

A child's understanding of their identity is found in how they answer to 2 primary questions:

- 1) _____ am I? 2) _____ gives me meaning & purpose?

Children and teens are encouraged to not only answer those questions, but to answer them based on how they _____ and what they _____ in the world around them.

Finding identity in feelings - Merriam-Webster: "1. the distinguishing character or personality of an individual" or "2. the relation established by psychological identification." In other words, you are what you feel.

Finding identity by looking at the world - watching how others answer identity questions. Receiving constant feedback from others on their own answers to identity questions. Calibrating and curating those answers for maximum affirmation.

Identity as only 2 choices

_____ or _____

Children (and adults too) were designed by God to _____ and _____ identity questions and then to live based on the answers found in God.

"His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. For this very reason, make every effort to..." 2 Peter 1:3-5

"The lie espoused by contemporary culture is that our existence defines our essence. The things we do, the experiences we have, the ensuing thoughts and feelings is who we are. But, God's word tells us that our essence precedes our existence." - Vaughn Roberts, quoted in "A House Built upon the Rock: Finding Our Identity in Christ," Pierce Taylor Hibbs

Horizontal Identities - When something created looks to something else that is _____ for its identity, it will only result in disappointment, fear, anxiety, drivenness, and control.

"Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say..." - Genesis 3:1

“...ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
- 2 Peter 1:8

“When good writing was my only goal, I made the quality of my work the measure of my worth. For this reason, I wasn’t able to read my own writing well. I couldn’t tell whether something I had just written was good or bad, because I needed it to be good in order to feel sane.” - Benjamin Nugent, NYT article, “Upside of Distraction”

Vertical Identity - Through Jesus Christ, sinful humans are offered _____ identities to live as His creation in relationship to Him as their Father.

“Identity is not achieved, it is _____.” - Tim Keller

“To all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God...” - John 1:11-12

A child’s identity is shaped by their _____ and how they _____ to those experiences. A parent’s task is to point them to find their identity in Christ and respond to every circumstance in relationship to Him.

2 dangers to avoid: viewing the shaping influences either deterministically or in denial of their influence. - Tedd Tripp

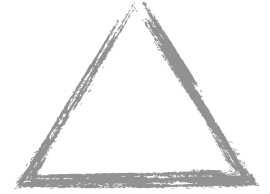
Identity as a focus in parenting

Become _____ in your children.

How do they answer the above identity questions?

How does their unique makeup of temperament, giftedness, and temptations respond to their circumstances and world?

Are they relating to God as orphan or His son/daughter?
(see orphan vs son/daughter assessment)



Teach your children the _____ and unshakable realities of who they are in Christ.

In Christ, they are accepted, secure, and significant. (see attached verses)

“Help me to honor thee by believing before I feel, For great is the sin if I make feeling a cause of faith.” - Valley of vision prayer

Equip your children to discern the _____ of cultural identities and the emptiness that results.

The effects of finding identity in the wrong things is rarely seen or felt – especially in the moment. So, children need the loving exhortation of parents to prevent the deception of sin and hardening of heart (Hebrews 3:13)

_____ to your children based on vertical God-given identities, not horizontal ones.

Identity in Christ Truth Statements

I am accepted...

- John 1:12 I am God's child.
- John 15:15 As a disciple, I am a friend of Jesus Christ.
- Romans 5:1 I have been justified.
- 1 Cor. 6:17 I am united with the Lord, and I am one with Him in spirit.
- 1 Cor. 6:19-20 I have been bought with a price and I belong to God.
- 1 Cor. 12:27 I am a member of Christ's body.
- Ephesians 1:3-8 I have been chosen by God and adopted as His child.
- Colossians 1:13-14 I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins.
- Colossians 2:9-10 I am complete in Christ.
- Hebrews 4:14-16 I have direct access to the throne of grace through Jesus Christ.

I am secure...

- Romans 8:1-2 I am free from condemnation.
- Romans 8:28 I am assured that God works for my good in all circumstances.
- Romans 8:31-39 I am free from any condemnation brought against me and I cannot be separated from the love of God.
- 2 Cor. 1:21-22 I have been established, anointed and sealed by God.
- Colossians 3:1-4 I am hidden with Christ in God.
- Philippians 1:6 I am confident that God will complete the good work He started in me.
- Philippians 3:20 I am a citizen of heaven.
- 2 Timothy 1:7 I have not been given a spirit of fear but of power, love and a sound mind.
- 1 John 5:18 I am born of God and the evil one cannot touch me.

I am significant...

- John 15:5 I am a branch of Jesus Christ, the true vine, and a channel of His life.
- John 15:16 I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit.
- 1 Cor. 3:16 I am God's temple.
- 2 Cor. 5:17-21 I am a minister of reconciliation for God.
- Ephesians 2:6 I am seated with Jesus Christ in the heavenly realm.
- Ephesians 2:10 I am God's workmanship.
- Ephesians 3:12 I may approach God with freedom and confidence.
- Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me.

Orphan vs. Son or Daughter

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Read through each bulleted description from left to right. Under "The Orphan," check the box if you see that tendency in yourself. Underline the words that most apply. Under "The Son/Daughter," check the boxes that describe where you most want to grow, underlining the key words.

THE ORPHAN	THE SON/DAUGHTER
Lacks a vital daily intimacy with God	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Feels freed from worry because of God's love for you
Anxious about friends, money, school, grades, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Learning to live in a daily partnership with God
Feels as if no one cares about you	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Not fearful of God
Lives on a success/fail basis	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Feels forgiven and totally accepted
Needs to look good	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> A daily trust in God's sovereign plan for your life
Feels guilty and condemned	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Prayer is a first resort
Struggles to trust things to God	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Content in relationships b/c you are accepted by God
Has to fix your problems	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Freedom from making a name for yourself
Not very teachable	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Is teachable by others
Is defensive when accused of error or weakness	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Open to criticism b/c you rest on Christ's perfection
Needs to be right	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Able to examine your deeper motives
Lacks confidence	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Able to take risks—even to fail
Feels discouraged and defeated	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Encouraged by the Spirit working in you
Strong-willed with ideas, agendas, and opinions	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Able to see God's goodness in dark times
Solution to failure: "Try harder"	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Content with what Christ has provided
Has a critical spirit (complaining and bitterness)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Trusting less in self and more in the Holy Spirit
Tears others down	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Aware of inability to fix life, people, and problems
A "competent analyst" of others' weaknesses	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Is able to freely confess your faults to others
Tends to compare yourself with others	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Doesn't always have to be right
Feels powerless to defeat the flesh	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Does not gain value from man-made "props"
Needs to be in control of situations and others	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Experiences more and more victory over the flesh
Looks for satisfaction in "positions"	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Prayer is a vital, ongoing part of the day
Looks for satisfaction in "possessions"	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Jesus is more and more the subject of conversation
Tends to be motivated by obligation and duty, not love	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> God truly satisfies your soul



Adapted from "The Gospel-Centered Life" by Bob Thune and Will Walker

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