**Lost Identity**
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**On August 31, 2004, a Burger King employee in Richmond Hill, Georgia found an unconscious, beaten, and left for dead man lying in front of the restaurant’s dumpsters. The ambulance arrived and took him to St. Joseph’s Hospital in Savanna, where he was admitted under the name “Burger King Doe”. In spite of showing no signs of physical injury, psychologically, something was obviously wrong. Doe identified himself as, “BK”, Benjamin Kyle. His memory only recalled faint images of an old movie theater, a long winding road through a cornfield, and streets that appeared to be located in Denver.**

**Benjamin was diagnosed by doctors with Retrograde Amnesia and spent over two decades trying to uncover his identity. Thanks to a new genetic genealogy, DNA and detective work, Benjamin Kyle's true identity was William Burgess Powell and he was later reunited with his family.**

**It seems astonishing, at first glance, that a man can live two decades of life without leaving a mark. In this regard, Powell was not unique at all. Just like Benjamin Kyle, the enemy is trying to erase our identity and there is a spiritual warfare going on at this very moment over our identity. The Bible says, "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12).**

**Christians, we’re in a BATTLE whether we realize it or not. The BATTLE is for our identity, our mind, our spirit, and ultimately our life. Our true identity has been hijacked, stolen by the enemy and fallen prey to the clever, believable lies of the enemy (Genesis 3:1-7). Lies that we are: inadequate, unlovable, ineffective and powerless. As a result, it has short-circuited God’s plan for our lives. Paul warned us about this ongoing battle of conflict in his letter to the believers in Ephesus, and he gives us a strategic game plan for winning the battle (Ephesians 6:13-18). When we grasp the truth of who we really are in Christ, and the understanding that we are made in His image and in his likeness, we can then began to walk in the realm of who He created us to be (Genesis 1:27).**

**How Does The Enemy Keep Us From Knowing Our True Identity?**

**He Tries to Erase Our Identity**
Like Benjamin, the enemy tries to erase whom we belong to and who we are. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight (Ephesians 1:4). The enemy force-feeds us lies in an attempt to distract us from Jesus and who He says we are. The Bible tells us that we have an enemy (Satan), and he “comes only to steal and kill and destroy” (John 10:10). Satan wants to steal our identity, distort the plans of God, and ultimately destroy us (John 10:10). **When you know who’s you are, you then know who you are.**

**Challenge: Being confident in your identity is like a muscle, if not used, it will atrophy. Reading and meditation on the Word of God daily, changes the way you identity yourself and live.**

**Validation by Others**
We tend to buy into the opinions of others, eventually began to question our own identity rather than how God defines us. Our personal identity, how we see ourself began long time ago, often shaped by our early experiences. Parents may have said things to you as a child that made you question your worth or value. Perhaps you were rejected by your peers, or abused by a relative. Family member. Over an extended period of time, we begin to believe the lies of what the enemy says about us based on those experiences. We then carried those emotional wounds into adulthood, parenthood, church leaders, deacons, ministry leaders, or teachers. The Word says, I am God’s child (John 1:12) and “Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God” (Romans 15:7). **Don’t allow your emotions to overshadow the Truth.**

**Challenge: Discover your unique talents and special gifts from God. What are YOU passionate about?; what is important to you about life?; where do I want to be in the next 5 months, 1 year, 5 years? Spiritual gifts assessments (i.e. The Team ministry Spiritual Gifts Survey; Clifton Strengths Assessment; S.H.A.P.E. Test).**

**Our Past**
Our past does not determine our identity everyone has a past. It does not align up with who we are. God is asking, why do you keep returning to your past, Jesus says, “Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you” (Luke 10:19). Hebrews 12:1 says, “Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us”. The Word says, “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come (2 Corinthians 5:17); and “To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27). **Our joy and identity had to be found in Christ alone!**

**Challenge: Acknowledge-accept-forgive, repent, and surrender-“let it go”. Face your fears and take action; practice gratitude ; anchor plans for the future and transform your narrative.**

**Social Media**
In the digital revolution, people’s worth gets attached to “page- views” and “likes”. Social media has become a tool the enemy uses to deceive us into believing we are not enough. We project images of our idealized financial worth, appearance, size, children, as we began developing a brand for ourself for the purpose of shaping others’ perception of us. We no longer need to use fig leaves, but rather with a new updated profile photo hide shame, guilt, and fear. The Bible says, "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing” (Genesis 12:2). Seek God’s face and name (Rom 1:21-25). **I belong to the One who is ENOUGH.**

**Challenge: Build healthy relationships; check your hearts regularly-am I walking by the spirit?; am I bragging?; am I battling envy and discontent?;is this the best use of my time?; do I define myself by what is being said?; do I have an OBSESSION with social media?**

**Deception**
The enemy uses deception when he entices us with sin, portraying that sin as attractive and fulfilling, trying to convince us that sin will meet our needs that God has yet to meet. Example, praying for a mate, God’s not responding fast enough, then the enemy steps in and says, “Here is an unattractive man (woman), he’s not a Christian but he’s (she’s) nice. The enemy then makes you doubt your beliefs by saying, “Christian men (women) are not perfect, and they cheat and lie as well, being a Christian is no guarantee of obtaining a good mate. Therefore, the unsuspecting get spellbound into marriage to a nice unbeliever! (2 Corinthians 2:13; John 10:10; 1 Peter 5:8). **Don’t believe the hype.**

**Challenge: Adopt a correct view of God; enroll in a Bible study class/Stephen’s Ministry; focus on relationship with God, latch on to God’s promises and establish safe guards.**

If you are anything like me, you have or will struggle through finding your true God-given identity. Alessia gave us five great challenges and I hope that you will push through some of those this weekend before we hear her speak on Sunday! I hope you all enjoy her this Sunday at our Mother's Day Luncheon!

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