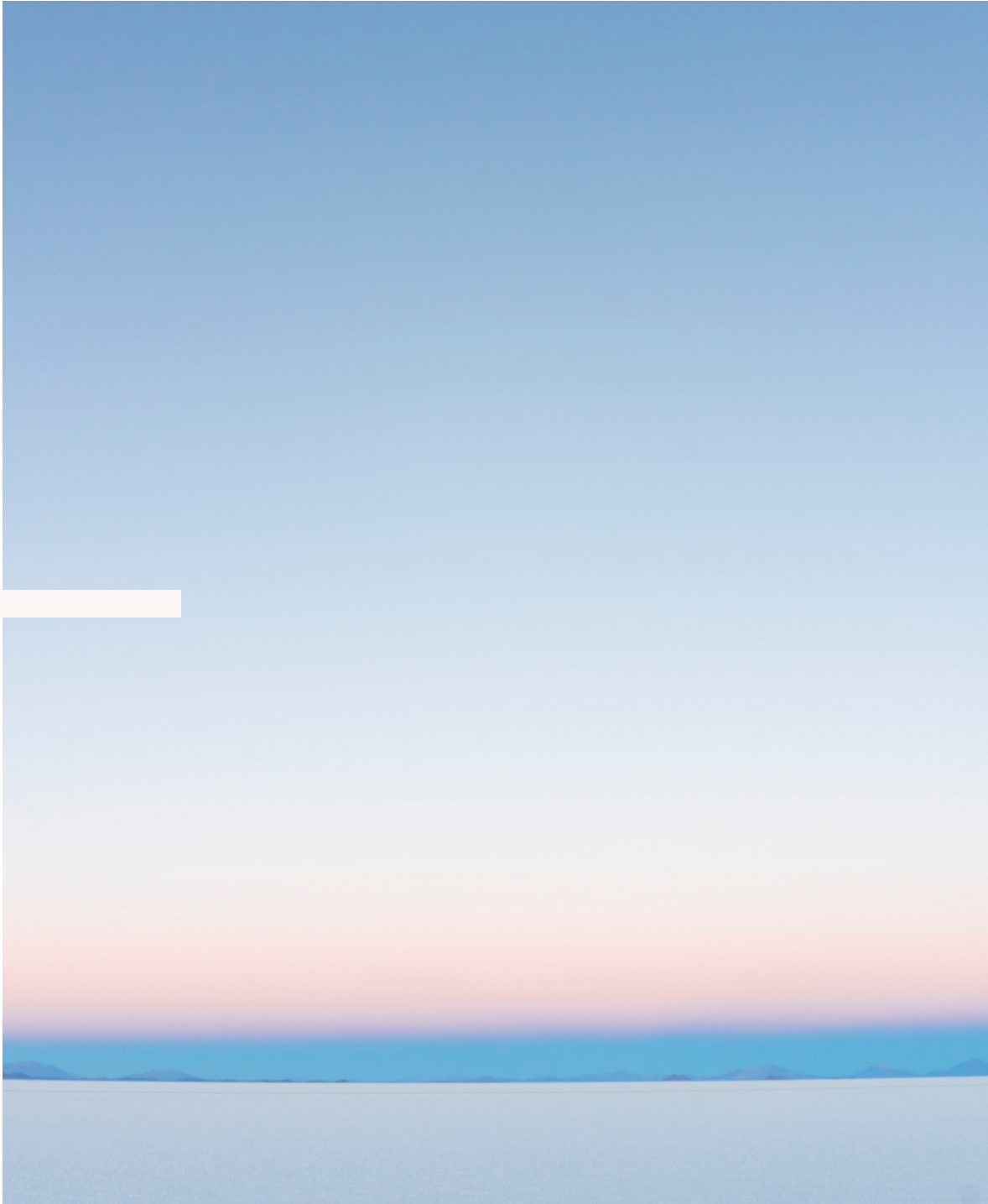


KINGDOM CULTURE



GRACE BIBLE CHURCH

FOLLOW. BECOME. DO.

2

KINGDOM
IDENTITY



PURPOSE: TO RECEIVE OUR
IDENTITY AS BELOVED
CHILDREN OF GOD

KEY VERSE | ROMANS 8:14-17

OUR STORY

Genesis 3, Ephesians 4:17-24

Our identity as God's children is the truest thing about us. Following Jesus involves embracing this identity at the core of who we are.

TRUE SELF

We are defined by our relationship with Christ and are being transformed daily by him.

FALSE SELF

Someone we pretend to be to secure ourselves or to hide who we truly are. At its core, the False Self is the belief that my value depends on what I have, what I can do and what others think of me.

OUR STORY

We are shaped by our story. Our life experiences influence how we view ourselves, how we view God, and how we relate to others. Consider the following areas:

- Our parents (whether present or not, good or bad, loving or negligent)
- Our childhood home life and family dynamics
- Our friendships and relationships
- Our education, the school we went to, teachers, peer groups, social lives
- Our faith and religion (Christian denominations/traditions or other religions/faith systems)
- Our vocation or work places, our successes and failures
- Whom we have trusted and has loved us, whom we have trusted and has let us down

Often past hurt, pain, traumas, or love deficits that have harmed us contribute to faulty thoughts about God, ourselves, and others that trap and distort us. Most of us go through life with these realities “under the surface” but they eventually interfere with or even dominate our lives.

OUR STORY

THE LIFE OF THE FALSE SELF

- LIVING AS AN ORPHAN
- IDENTITY EARNED
- ALONE, AFRIAD, ANXIOUS, ACHIEVING
- DRIVEN AND PERFORMING
- SECURITY AND SIGNIFICANCE ACHIEVED BY WHAT WE CAN DO AND WHAT OTHERS THINK OF US
- HAPPINESS SOUGHT IN AUTONOMY FROM GOD AND IN ATTACHMENTS
- IDENTITY IN OUR IDEALIZED SELF
- MAINTAINED BY EFFORT, CONTROL AND PERFORMANCE
- IDENTITY IN DOING, SUCCESS, AND THE ACCUMULATION OF MATERIAL POSSESSIONS
- OFTEN TRAPPED IN CYCLES OF COMPULSIVITY AND ADDICTION
- AVOID REALITY BY BURYING, AVOIDING, OR HIDING BEHIND FIG LEAVES OF OUR OWN MAKING

What are two areas from the Life of the False Self that resonate with you and your story? What might God want to say to you in this area?



THE WORLD'S STORY

Genesis 11:1-9, Ephesians 2:1-3, 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

We are shaped by the world's story. Our worldview is the lens through which we see and understand the world, and how this affects us. Our worldview is shaped by things like:

- Western culture
- American culture: the American Dream (Or the culture of your family's home country/region)
- Ann Arbor culture: The world of education, career success, and political perspectives
- The pursuit of treasure, pleasure and leisure
- Materialism and Consumerism: Identity through what I consume, "I consume therefore I AM"
- Individualism, autonomy, and narcissism
- Greed, performance, and competition
- Social Media: "I am liked therefore I AM", "FOMO and YOLO"

IDOLATRY

Without God as our center, the False Self cannot resist the invitation of idolatry. Over time, we become enmeshed with and entangled by the fallen culture around us. On the surface, many of us have what appears to be a life of success and fulfillment. Yet underneath, there are often hidden addictions, compulsions and motivators that we use to secure ourselves.

THE LIFE OF THE IDOLATROUS SELF

THE FANTASY SELF

Living lives of escape into all sorts of fantasy worlds

THE POPULAR SELF

Living for significance from others, constantly searching for acceptance

THE SUCCESSFUL SELF

Living a life of power, striving to become the best in all we do

THE RELIGIOUS SELF

Living a life of religious performance until it all comes crashing down

THE ADDICTED SELF

Living a life of compulsion and addiction to medicate the pain inside

THE SOCIAL MEDIA SELF

I'm liked therefore I am

G O D ' S S T O R Y

John 1:9-14, Galatians 2:20, 4:6-7, and 5:22-25, Romans 8:14-17
The good news of Jesus is that we are being transformed by God's Story. We can learn to jam the cycles and patterns resulting from strongholds in our life when we encounter God's love and receive his forgiveness. We can grow in embracing our true identity as beloved children of God

The discovery of our True Self can only be found in God's story:

- Formed by God's Story: Creation, Fall, Redemption, Restoration
- The Cross Shaped Life: We embrace suffering as an opportunity to become like Jesus.
- The Spirit Empowered Life: We are transformed by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit.
- The Prayer Filled Life: practicing daily time with Jesus, worship, prayer, and spiritual disciplines.
- The Missional Life: Engaged in authentic biblical community and living on mission

Our identity as beloved children becomes the center from which our actions flow. Over time we learn to become more like Jesus and increasingly do what Jesus does.

THE LIFE OF THE TRUE SELF

- LIVING AS A CHILD OF GOD
- IDENTITY SECURED
- CHOSEN, SECURE, SAFE
- BELOVED, TRUSTED, RECEIVING
- FULL ADOPTION INTO GOD'S FAMILY
- SECURITY AND SIGNIFICANCE ACHIEVED BY BEING LOVED BY GOD
- FULFILLMENT FOUND IN SURRENDER TO GOD AND LIVING OUR VOCATION
- IDENTITY IS WHO WE ARE BECOMING IN CHRIST
- I DO WHAT I DO AS A RESULT OF WHO I AM IN GOD
- RECEIVED AS A GIFT AND MAINTAINED BY GRACE
- EMBRACES REALITY, EMOTIONAL MATURITY AND HEALTHY PROCESSING

As you reflect on your story, where have you experienced the Life of the True Self emerge? What is one area that the Holy Spirit may want to lead you into a deeper awareness of?

2

P R A C T I C E



WITH YOUR GROUP

This week, we will unpack each of our stories, to see how we have been shaped and formed by our life experiences. Take 5-10 minutes to think about formative moments in your life that have shaped you into the person you are today. They can be positive or negative experiences, the important thing to consider is their impact on you.

Choose six formative experiences and list in the boxes below. You can either list these experiences or create an image that best illustrates the event/experience. Afterwards share select experiences with your group. Briefly share the story to show how it formed and shaped you.

If you have time at the end, after each group member has shared, debrief the experience together. How was this experience for you? What is the impact of vulnerability with others linked to our individual stories?

O N Y O U R O W N

Take some time this week to reflect further on your Life Map and your experience sharing with your group. We recommend journaling as you reflect as this can be a tool for slowing down and processing internal thoughts or feelings that wouldn't otherwise be intentionally explored. We encourage you to try a "stream of consciousness" approach to journaling so you can write unedited and unfiltered as thoughts come.

Reflect and journal on the following questions:

- Reflecting on the experiences you've included in your Life Map, how has God taken these experiences and used them to form you into who you are at present?
- How have these experiences affected how you view God or yourself?
- How have these experiences affected how you relate to others?
- What is something new God might want to be revealing to you today regarding these formative moments of your life?
- What was it like for you to share your story with the group?
- Where are you tempted to live out of your false self rather than your true self as a beloved child of God?

Close your time of reflection in prayer, asking God to remind you of your identity in him and thanking him for the ways he's used these experiencing ultimately for good. And remember, "in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28)

DAILY TIME WITH JESUS

Day One | Luke 9

*watch video on Luke 9-19

Day Two | Luke 10

Day Three | Luke 11

Day Four | Sabbath

Day Five | Luke 12

Day Six | Luke 13-14

Day Seven | Luke 15-16