

Flint Hills Bible Church  
Biblical Soul Care Sunday School  
*Identity Crisis! Part 1*

**I. Introduction**

There are few topics that are more controversial in our culture right now than Identity. Of course the biggest and loudest conversations are happening around so-called Gender Identity. But identity is also one of the fundamental questions that each person answers - whether intentionally or not. Whenever we ask and answer the foundational question Who am I? We are talking about identity.

1. How do people develop identity? (How did you develop your identity?)
  
2. What are some ways that people use “identity” language in our everyday conversations?
  
3. How does identity and the problems associated with it change over a lifetime?
  
4. In what context are you personally dealing with this issue of identity - in your life, family, work, school, etc?
  
5. How do we help people who are struggling with identity?
  
6. Do you feel prepared or confident in your ability to help someone who claims to identify as something or someone they are not? Why or why not?

**Objectives:**

We will explore the wide range of implications of identity in our culture, and how the bible speaks to who we are.

**II. What is Identity?**

What is identity?

When we talk about identity, we are talking about how we think of ourselves.

One author writes this:

“Identity is generally understood as a person’s sense of self or self-understanding. In the broadest scope, a person’s identity is the collection of characteristics that make up who they are. These include personality traits, abilities, strengths and weaknesses, and likes and dislikes as well as ethnicity and nationality, group affiliations, appearance, socioeconomic status, roles, value systems, and worldview.”

In the following examples, consider how these biblical people thought of themselves:

Gideon:

**Judges 6:15 (ESV) — 15** And he said to him, “Please, Lord, how can I save Israel? Behold, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house.”

7. How did Gideon perceive himself?

Moses:

**Exodus 3:11 (ESV) — 11** But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?”

**Exodus 4:10 (ESV) — 10** But Moses said to the LORD, “Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue.”

**Hebrews 11:24–26 (ESV) — 24** By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, **25** choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. **26** He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.

8. How did Moses’ perceive himself?

The Ephesians:

**Acts 19:24–29 (ESV) — 24** For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought no little business to the craftsmen. **25** These he gathered together, with the workmen in similar trades, and said, “Men, you know that from this business we have our wealth. **26** And you see and hear that not only in Ephesus but in almost all of Asia this Paul has persuaded and turned away a great many people, saying that gods made with hands are not gods. **27** And there is danger not only that this trade of ours may come into disrepute but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis may be counted as nothing, and that she may even be deposed from her magnificence, she whom all Asia and the world worship.” **28** When they heard this they were enraged and were crying out, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!” **29** So the

city was filled with the confusion, and they rushed together into the theater, dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians who were Paul's companions in travel.

9. What did the Ephesians consider as the major point of their identity?

Early church in Colossae:

**Colossians 3:11 (ESV) — 11** Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.

10. What was apparently an identity issue in Colossae?

Paul:

**Philippians 3:4–7 (ESV) — 4** though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: **5** circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; **6** as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. **7** But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

**1 Corinthians 15:9–10 (ESV) — 9** For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. **10** But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.

11. How did Paul identify before Christ saved him?

12. What specifically changed in Paul's self perception?

### III. How do I form an Identity?

13. Where do we learn about ourselves? How is this identity developed?

14. What are some legitimate aspects to our identity?

Adonijah

**1 Kings 1:5–6 (ESV) — 5** Now Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, "I will be king." And he prepared for himself chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him. **6** His father had never at any time displeased him by asking, "Why have you done thus and so?" He was also a very handsome man, and he was born next after Absalom.

15. How did Adonijah form his identity? What was missing?

The Biblical foundation for Identity:

**Genesis 1:26–27 (ESV) — 26** Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” **27** So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

16. How does this foundational scripture all the way at the beginning help us think about ourselves?

#### **IV. How do we get this wrong today?**

17. What are some wrong ways you can form your identity?
18. What are some examples of identities that people have?

#### **V. Conclusion**

19. What questions or topics are you hoping to cover in this study?

Over the next few weeks, we will consider how Identity and Worship are inseparable. Identity crises of all shapes and sizes are directly linked to idolatry. We will end this study by considering how the promises of Christ and the gospel can reshape how we think about ourselves, our purpose and our mission by focusing on who God says we are and what He calls us to do.