

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

For the week of October 22-28, 2023

"IDENTITY MATTERS"

GETTING STARTED

To the facilitator: Use this section to introduce the topic. If possible, give a brief recap of the sermon.

Share a memorable point, a spiritual lesson, a personal application, a question, or something that challenged you from the sermon last Sunday.

How do you think technology has impacted (both positively and negatively) the concept of community and belongingness in the modern world?

GROUP DISCUSSION

Read Ephesians 1:1-8.

1. How does the passage reveal God's plan for believers, as highlighted in the phrase "according to his good pleasure" (verse 5)? How does understanding that God has a plan provide the Christian with a sense of purpose and peace in life?
2. What do these verses reveal about the spiritual blessings that believers have in Christ? Do you consider being blessed as a Christian as something real in your life? In what way?
3. Consider how the first century believers understood adoption. How does the truth of God choosing to adopt us into his family impact your understanding of your relationship with God? How does being adopted into God's family influence you?
4. Verse 7 says that God's grace has been lavished upon the believers. Think of a recent personal experience where you have encountered or witnessed the grace of God. How has that shaped you? How does this understanding of abundant grace influence your response to God and your relationship with others?
5. What are your thoughts on the quote: "*We're saints not because of our performance; we're saints because of our position*"? In what way is this counter-cultural?
6. Reflect on the blessings of living as children of God, as highlighted in the passage. Does this identity influence your actions, decisions, and interactions with others? If yes, how? If not, why?

NEXT STEPS

"We are not defined by our past. We are defined by God, who has a purpose for our future." (Tony Evans)

- ☐ I thank God that my identity rests not on what he says and not on what others or the world says.
- ☐ I will praise God for his spiritual blessings.
- ☐ I will live as a child of God who has been adopted and redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus.
- ☐ *Don't forget to:*
- ☐ Go through the devotionals every day this week.
- ☐ Have a regular daily time of prayer and reading of God's Word.

CLOSING THE SESSION

Close the session by taking the time to pray for one another. Consider the following as you pray:

- Pray that God will strengthen your faith so that you can fully believe and embrace your identity as a saint, as someone who has what God says they have, and as his blessed child.
- Pray for relationships to grow with other Christ-followers, that you will encourage and care for one another.
- Pray for your unsaved family, friends, and loved ones.
- Pray for protection, provision, healing and comfort for everyone who's going through physical, emotional, mental and spiritual pain.

BIBLE READING GUIDE

October 23 Ephesians 1:1-2
October 24 Genesis 1:25-31
October 25 Ephesians 1:3-8
October 26 Isaiah 12:2-6
October 27 Romans 8:12-17
October 28 Ephesians 1:9-14
October 29 Psalms 98