

Wrestling with Identity

Who am I - Identity

A stable self-understanding that serves as the fundamental core of who someone is.

Includes self-regard...how I feel about my self-understanding.

Traditional (Non-Western) Cultures

Identity is largely assigned to you by your clan, family, or community.

Late Modern (Western) Cultures

Identity is determined by the individual based on how one feels /self-identifies.

“Expressive Individualism”

Each person has a unique core of feeling and intuition that should unfold and be expressed if individuality is to be realized.

--Robert Bellah
American Sociologist

“[the culture of authenticity is one where] each one of us has his/her own way of realizing our humanity, and that it is important to find and live out one’s own, as against surrendering to conformity with a model imposed on us from outside, by society or the previous generation, or religious or political authority”

-- Charles Taylor
The Age of Authenticity

You do you

Be true to yourself

Follow your heart

Find yourself

“Live your truth!”



Which of these methods of determining
your identity is biblical?

Traditional or Modern?

It'll Never Work

Tim Keller

It's incoherent

It's unstable

It's an Illusion

It's Suffocating

It's Excluding

“Let us Make a Name for Ourselves”

Genesis
11:4

Modern

Traditional

Individual

Community

Man has tried to name himself from the beginning

You Are Created

Utterly Dependent

Physically Fragile & Spiritually Vulnerable

Deuteronomy 8:17-18

¹⁷ Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.' ¹⁸ You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day.

Galatians 5:16-17

¹⁶ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

You Are Created

Morally Accountable

Imago Dei & Internal Sense of Ethics

Genesis 2:16-17

¹⁶ And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

Psalm 119:4

You have commanded your precepts
to be kept diligently.

John 14:15

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.”

2 Corinthians 5:9-10

⁹ So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. ¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

Truth Changes Us

Sincere Humility & Profound Gratitude

Our true identity begins with our
utter dependence and vulnerability

Ephesians 2:1-3

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

Romans 5:18-19

¹⁸ Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. ¹⁹ For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

You WERE “in Adam”

- Spiritually Dead
- A slave to self, the world, the devil
- An object of God’s wrath

Represented by Jesus

Paul uses “in Christ” - 160 x’s

Perfectly obeyed & fully paid

“He lived the life we could not live and he died the death we deserved to die.”

You ARE “In Christ”

- You are Spiritually Alive
- You are Free to Obey (A Slave to Righteousness)
- You are Justified; Adopted; A New Creation

You are Justified in Christ

Justified means to be declared *legally* innocent and accepted as righteous.

Galatians 2:15-16

We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; ¹⁶ yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified

Galatians 3:10

¹⁰ For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.”

The Gospel Primer by Milton Vincent

“The gospel encourages me to rest in my righteous standing with God, a standing which Christ Himself has accomplished and always maintains for me. I never have to do a moment’s labor to gain or maintain my justified status before God! Freed from the burden of such a task, I now can put my energies into enjoying God, pursuing holiness, and ministering God’s amazing grace to others.

The Gospel Primer by Milton Vincent

The gospel also reminds me that my righteous standing with God always holds firm regardless of my performance, because my standing is based solely on the work of Jesus and not mine. On my worst days of sin and failure, the gospel encourages me with God's unrelenting grace toward me. On my best days of victory and usefulness, the gospel keeps me relating to God solely on the basis of Jesus' righteousness and not mine."



- How does this truth of our Justification secure an identity for us that is durable and lasting?

Or

- How does an identity based in our justification differ from an identity based in self-evaluation or experiences?

You are Adopted in Christ

Adoption means to become a legal son or daughter to someone who is not your biological parent. An adopted child has all the rights and privileges to the same inheritance and blessings of biological children.

The Gospel Primer by Milton Vincent

"The gospel is not just a message of reconciliation with God, but it also heralds the reconciliation of all believers to one another in Christ. Through the death of Christ, God has brought peace where there was once hostility, and He has broken down the racial, economic, and social barriers that once divided us outside of Christ(Eph 2).

The Gospel Primer by Milton Vincent

Also, when God saved us, He made us members of His household (Eph 2:19), and He gave us as gifts to one another (Eph 1:18). Each brother and sister is a portion of my gospel inheritance from God, and I am a portion of their inheritance as well. We are significant players in each other's gospel narrative, and it is in relationship with one another that we experience the fullness of God in Christ (Eph 3).

The Gospel Primer by Milton Vincent

Hence, the more I comprehend the full scope of the gospel, the more I value the church for which Christ died (Eph 5:25), the more I value the role that I play in the lives of my fellow-Christians, and the more I appreciate the role that they must be allowed to play in mine."

You are A New Creation in Christ

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

2 Corinthians 5:17

You are A New Creation in Christ

With a New Purpose

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Ephesians 2:10

The Gospel Primer by Milton Vincent

Through the gospel I learn not only of the saving works of God on my behalf, but I also learn that one of God's key purposes in doing these works is to put me to work myself. The Bible tells me that when Christ redeemed me, He did so in order that I might now be "zealous for good works."

The Gospel Primer by Milton Vincent

When God "works" in me day by day, He does so in order to produce in me the desire and the power to "work for His good pleasure." Indeed, though I am saved by grace and not by works, I am God's "workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that I would walk in them.

The Gospel Primer by Milton Vincent

Preaching the gospel to myself each day not only reminds me of the love of God for me, but it also reminds me of the love of God for the works that He has saved me to perform. When I see the Cross, I see the premium that God places on the works that He has prepared for me.

The Gospel Primer by Milton Vincent

How valuable all of these must be if Christ would die so that I might now perform them! And how precious are those for whom these works are done if Christ would die that they might be served!

2 Peter 1:3-11

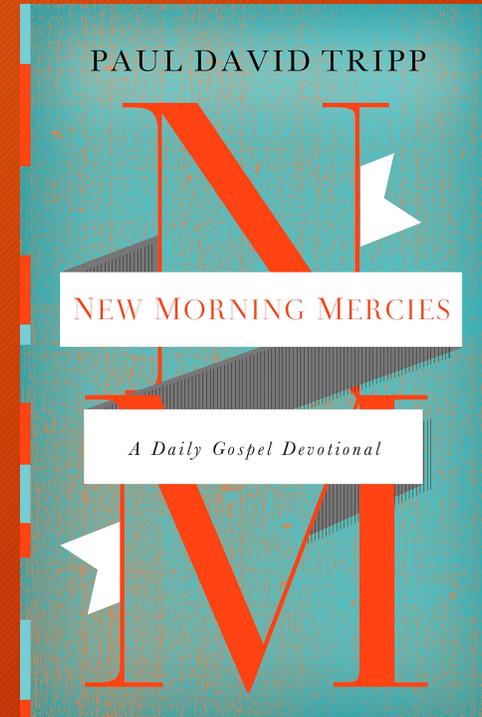
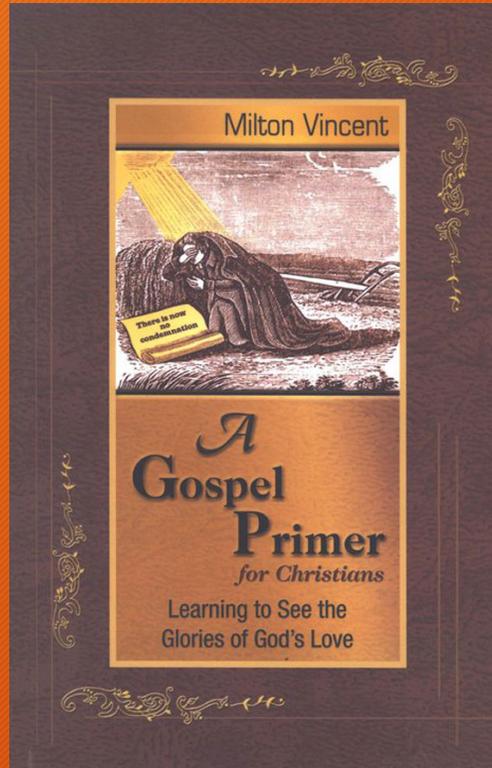
³ His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, ⁴ by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

2 Peter 1:3-11

⁵ For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, ⁶ and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, ⁷ and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.



If you are already in Christ by grace through faith, why must you “make every effort to add to your faith?”



Preach the Gospel to Yourself