

3 Sinister Reasons the Devil Is After Your Identity

In today's culture, identity is at the forefront of peoples' minds, even if they don't always realize it. Because this generation is desperate to live lives that make a difference, many are highly affected by what they believe about their significance and purpose—two key aspects of identity.

The 2 Identities That Define You

As I explore in my book, *Activating the Power of God's Word*, there is one of two identities that you can allow to define your life at any one time. The first is a perceived identity. A perceived identity is a definition of who you are, characterized by how you feel, what you fear, the ways you fall or what others have said about you. This is where the enemy wants you, believing that perception is reality. Accordingly, he uses all of the negative experiences and voices in your life to create a script to say, "This is who you are."

The second identity is one inked in heaven, which was given to you by God long before you were born, and despite the issues you face. This is the essence of what Paul described to the Ephesians: "just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless before Him in love" (Eph. 1:4).

The incomprehensible truth of your heavenly identity is that before the creation, God saw all the good, the bad and the ugly of your life, yet He still chose to bring you into existence. In fact, way back then, He decided to overlook your shortcomings and see you through the lens of Jesus as holy and blameless.

3 Reasons Why Identity Matters

Obviously, the devil doesn't want anyone to experience the power of their heavenly identity. So he works tirelessly to keep us from knowing and living in the truth of who we are in Christ. And he does so for at least three reasons.

1. What you believe about yourself affects how you behave and what you achieve.

Proverbs offers a profound truth on this point: "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life" (Pro. 4:23). It's important to note that "heart" in this instance doesn't refer to the blood-pumping organ we know of it as today. No, the reference here is to the inner being of a person. In other words, Proverbs instructs you to guard what you believe about yourself, because these beliefs dictate your destiny.

This was certainly the case for my life. Because of issues in my early years, I suffered from feelings of rejection and the overall sense that I was wrong. Eventually, these persistent feelings dictated how I carried myself. Because I believed I was a "reject" or "wrong," I always expected to be rejected. Therefore, I held myself back from relationships and rarely took any risks.

Thankfully, as I began to study about my identity in Christ, my "I am" changed from "I am a reject" or "I am wrong" to "I am accepted" (see Eph. 1:6) and "I am the righteousness of God" (see 2 Cor. 5:21). Over time, I began to rise to the level of who I believed that I am. And with this, I grew in a godly confidence that has completely transformed my life.

2) What you believe about yourself affects how you relate to other people.

In speaking of the commandments, Jesus prioritized the two most important: love God and love people. And in order to love

people, He said you must “love your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:31). Part of what this means is that to love other people, it’s essential that you love yourself first. After all, you can’t give what you don’t have.

I realized that for too many years I played the “holiness police” in other people’s lives—pointing out everything they were doing that was wrong—because I didn’t really love myself. In other words, when I lived out of a false identity, I subconsciously found issues in others’ lives in order to relieve the feeling of dissatisfaction in my own.

Thankfully, this all changed when I truly understood my identity in Christ and God’s love for me. With the understanding that God chose me and loves me despite my brokenness, a greater compassion arose for others. And while I’m not always perfect in this, I’m much more eager to extend grace and forgiveness to others because I know that I’m also forgiven of much.

3. What you believe about yourself affects your relationship with God.

Here’s what the devil is ultimately after. The pain and grief that comes from Satan’s attacks aren’t his end goal; no, they are the means to his end goal, which is to erode your relationship with God.

The Bible assures that humankind is made in God’s image (see Gen. 1:27). But the devil, who always tries to pervert God’s Word, wants us to view God in our image. To do so, he uses what you feel and face in order to skew God’s character in your eyes.

In my book, I explain much more about this; but here’s the gist. If you suffer from some pain or affliction, the question he wants to provoke in you is, “Why did God give this to me?” And with that, he begins to erode your confidence in God’s goodness. If you face some trial or disaster, the question he

wants you to consider is, “Why did God do this to me? Maybe He’s punishing me?” And with that, the devil erodes your confidence in God’s love. Finally, if some sort of feeling or emotion plagues you, he wants you to wonder, “Why did God create me this way?” With this, he hopes you’ll believe that God is mean or isn’t fair.

Questioning God’s character is a slippery slope, and the devil counts on it to achieve his mission. When you believe God isn’t good, doesn’t love you or is out to get you, then you naturally keep yourself at a distance from Him.

On the other hand, those who know their identity in Christ are already confident in God’s goodness and His love, despite how they feel or what they’ve done. In fact, they’ve experienced God’s love all the more through the unfortunate circumstances of life, which provokes gratitude and praise, and ultimately, greater intimacy with God.

Identify with Your Heavenly Identity

My challenge to you is to not allow the pressures of the world, the influences of your feelings or any negative voice to put a false identity on you. Long ago, God decided to define you in the identity of Jesus. And that’s an identity far more real than anything you feel or any of the words spoken about you. Begin to identify with your heavenly identity by thinking and speaking about who you are in Christ: “I am God’s child” (Gal. 3:26), “I am a new person” (2 Cor. 5:17), “I am righteous” (2 Cor. 5:21), “I am loved unconditionally” (Rom. 8:28), “I am complete” (Col. 2:9–10) and “I am God’s masterpiece” (Eph. 2:10).

Kyle Winkler equips people to live in victory. His mobile app, *Shut Up, Devil!*, is the #1 spiritual warfare app; and his book, *Activating the Power of God’s Word*, uncovers 16 strategic declarations to transform your life. Kyle holds a Master of Divinity in biblical studies from Regent University.

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