

Small Group Guide



Small Group Guide: Identity in Christ

Based on Ephesians 4:17-24

Leader Notes

Be sensitive to: Some group members may have deep wounds or trauma connected to their past identity. Create a safe space, don't force sharing, and be prepared to pray with individuals who may become emotional.

Encourage: This is just the beginning of understanding our identity in Christ. It's a lifelong journey. Grace and patience with ourselves and each other is essential.

Follow up: Check in with group members during the week via text or call to see how they're doing with their applications.

Opening Prayer (2-3 minutes)

Ask someone to open in prayer, inviting the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion and help the group receive what God wants to say about their identity in Christ.

Icebreaker (5-10 minutes)

Question: If you had to introduce yourself without mentioning your job, family roles, or accomplishments, how would you describe who you are?

This helps the group begin thinking about how they define themselves.

Key Takeaways from the Sermon

1. Identity comes before behavior - Paul spends three chapters in Ephesians establishing who believers are before addressing how they should live.
2. We must reject our old identity - The "old self" is no longer who we are; we need to actively put it off like removing rotting clothes.
3. Transformation begins in the mind - Being "made new in the attitude of your minds" is the starting point for change.
4. Our new identity is a gift, not an achievement - We don't behave to become; we become, then behave accordingly.
5. We're called to live from our identity, not for our identity - God has already declared who we are in Christ.

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text (15-20 minutes)

1. Read Ephesians 4:17-24 together. What stands out to you from this passage? What questions does it raise?
2. The sermon emphasized that Paul begins with identity (chapters 1-3) before addressing behavior (chapter 4+). Why is this order so important? What happens when we reverse it?
3. Paul tells Gentile believers they "must no longer live as Gentiles." What point is he making about their identity? How does this apply to us today?

Personal Reflection (20-25 minutes)

4. The sermon asked: "What parts of your old identity do you need to reject?" Take a moment to reflect silently, then share if comfortable:
 - What has defined you in the past that God says is no longer true about you?
 - Examples might include: failures, wounds, labels others gave you, past sins, achievements, roles, etc.
5. Jeff mentioned we often define ourselves by:
 - What people say about us
 - Our accomplishments or failures

- Our wounds and traumas
 - Our feelings
6. Which of these do you struggle with most? How does it affect the way you live?
 7. Read through Ephesians 1:3-14 together. List out every identity statement Paul makes about believers (chosen, adopted, redeemed, forgiven, etc.).
 - Which of these truths is hardest for you to believe about yourself? Why?
 - Which one do you most need to hear right now?

Application (15-20 minutes)

7. The sermon said: "You cannot live the life you're called to live while continuing to believe the old story about who you are."
 - What "old story" do you need to stop believing?
 - What "new story" (what God says about you) do you need to start believing?
8. Paul says transformation starts with being "made new in the attitude of your minds." What practical steps can you take this week to renew your mind with God's truth about your identity?
9. Jeff noted: "We have an identity crisis, and because we have an identity crisis, we have a behavior problem."
 - Can you think of a behavior struggle in your life that might actually be rooted in an identity issue?
 - How might seeing yourself rightly change that behavior?

Practical Applications for This Week

Choose 1-2 of these to commit to as a group:

Daily Practice

- Read Ephesians 1-3 this week. Each day, underline or write down identity statements. Choose one each day to meditate on and declare over yourself: "God says I am _____."

Reflection Exercise

- Make two lists:
 - "Old Identity to Put Off" - Things that used to define you but no longer should
 - "New Identity to Put On" - What God says is true about you in Christ
- Keep this somewhere visible and review it daily.

Accountability

- Share with one person in the group the specific old identity lie you're struggling to let go of. Ask them to pray for you and check in during the week.

Scripture Memory

- Memorize Ephesians 4:22-24 together as a group.

Journal Prompt

- Complete this sentence daily: "Because I am _____ in Christ, today I will _____." (Fill in the first blank with an identity truth; fill in the second with how you'll live from that truth)
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Closing (10 minutes)

Group Prayer Time

- Pray for each other specifically: Have each person share one identity truth they need to believe more deeply, then pray for the person on your right that God would make this truth real to them.
- Declare truth together: Go around and have each person complete this statement: "By faith, I believe God says I am _____."

Before Next Week

- Continue reading through Ephesians

- Practice your chosen application
 - Be ready to share next week what God revealed to you about your identity
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