

# / by design series study guide

Speaker: Pastor Henry Schorr

Date: February 23/24, 2019

## Sermon Title: IDENTITY By Design

**PURSUE RELATIONSHIP:** Opportunities to connect and pray as a group

1. What is one activity you like doing by yourself and one activity you like to invite others to join in?
2. Have there been times in your life where your primary identity was not found in Christ? In those times, where did you find your identity?

**PURSUE GOD:** Time that is devoted to the Word of God

*Read James 3:13-18*

1. Pastor Henry pointed out that there are basically two fundamental worldviews: 'God exists' and 'God does not exist'.  
-What are the implications for how we **view** ourselves and others based on these worldviews?  
-What are the implications for how we **treat** ourselves and others based on these worldviews?
2. Pastor Henry referred to the story of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-31). Have someone in your group briefly summarize this story (2 minutes or less!).
3. There are two implications of worldview and our identity: We must make a decision about who to trust and what to follow, and we must extend love and grace to one another. How did each of these characters' worldview and identity affect their decisions?
4. Does your worldview/identity align with one of these characters? Which one and why?

**PURSUE MISSION:** Seek to be the community of God's people in your community

1. Who in your life bases their identity on a worldview that is different from yours? What differences do you see between their life and yours?
2. Pastor Henry told the story of a man named Jonathan who was estranged from his church, but an elderly lady kept reaching out to him. How can we extend love and grace, and at the same time uphold truth, to those in our lives who have different worldviews?

**This week's writers:** Deb Matiko, Edi Dygert, Jared Harrison

### For Personal Reflection/Prayer:

*Pastor Henry, on behalf of the church, apologized for times we have not been welcoming and have not shown grace and love. Is there anyone in your life whom you have hurt, or who has hurt you, that you need to ask for forgiveness or to give forgiveness?*

### THE WORD (NIV)

#### **James 3:13-18**

<sup>13</sup> Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.

<sup>14</sup> But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. <sup>15</sup> Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. <sup>16</sup> For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

<sup>17</sup> But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. <sup>18</sup> Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.

#### **Genesis 1:26-27**

<sup>26</sup> Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

<sup>27</sup> So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

#### **Luke 15:11-31 The Parable of the Lost Son**

#### **Proverbs 14:12**

There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death.

## / by design series study summary

This sermon continues the CSC series 'By Design' in which we are exploring God's vision and plan for our identity, sexuality and relationships. Our goals throughout this series are, first, to grow in how to love others the way that Jesus loves us (see Sermon and Study Guide from Feb 16/17 on 1 John). How do we love even those who hold different viewpoints/worldviews from us? Our desire is that CSC is a life-giving church, a community of people who reflect the love and grace of Christ. We want to be a place where people can be honest and transparent about their struggles, grapple with questions around their identity, and work through matters of faith and how to live a life of wholeness and freedom in Christ. Secondly, we want to be a people who are open to knowing and growing in our understanding of the truth. When it comes to the Bible, we don't change it to align with what we want it to say. Rather, we want our lives to align with the teaching of the Bible by the power of the Holy Spirit. Thirdly, we want to be a community of hope, a place where we can find answers to our questions and struggles.

The message this weekend focuses on God's design for our identity. What defines our identity? Imagine going for a job interview, or going on a date, or having a casual conversation with a neighbor. No doubt questions will come up such as: Where are you from? Who are your parents? Are you married? Do you have kids? Where did you go to school? What do you do for work? All of us could answer the majority of these questions and others about our basic identity. But many people are unclear what their *true* identity is. Our true identity is bound up with our worldview. Everyone has a worldview whether or not they can put it into words. Our worldview informs our decisions and actions and how we live our lives. A person's worldview answers four major questions: *How did I get here? Does anyone care that I'm here? Is there purpose for me being here? What happens to me after here?* What we believe about our identity is largely based on what our worldview is. In James 3:13-18 we read about two kinds of wisdom - an earthly wisdom and a heavenly wisdom. In broad terms, when we think about our society, the earthly wisdom represents the worldview that God does not exist whereas the heavenly wisdom is based on the worldview that God does exist. In the first worldview humans (and everything else in the universe) are viewed as a product of chance. There is no afterlife because this life is all there is. And if there is no God, then we are our own gods - we are in charge. What are the implications of this worldview on our morality? On how we view and treat others? On our bodies and sexuality? According to this worldview our bodies become pleasure machines and there is no fundamental reason to keep sex within certain boundaries. In other words, anything goes. And if there is no God, where do I find my identity? Where does my sense of purpose, significance and value come from? A person with this worldview has to find their value in themselves, and oftentimes this comes about by comparison and competition with others. How true is this in our society? What kind of car I drive, the clothes I wear, the house I live in, what my title is, how good I look, the friends I have... these become the markers of identity, value, and purpose in a naturalistic worldview, a worldview closed to God and anything beyond this world.

In James 3:17 we read about the wisdom that comes from heaven. This is a worldview founded in God and his eternal wisdom. The Christian worldview begins with God, a God who created the universe with a very specific plan or design in mind, and this is especially true for humans, who are the highpoint in God's creation, the masterpiece created in his image (Gen 1:26-27). Out of love and a desire to be in relationship with his creation, God created mankind. This is significant when we think about the four major worldview questions: *How did I get here? Does anyone care that I'm here? Is there purpose for me being here? What happens to me after here?* God created us; he loves us and cares about us in this life and the life to come. What are the implications of this worldview on our morality? *God* declares what is right and what is wrong. We are not led by the whims of our inner desires - God shows us what is good, what we should embrace and what we should refuse. God created us to be like him and to be in relationship with him. Our identity can be rooted in these truths, not in our performance or in comparison with others. My significance, value, and meaning in life are found in the fact that God made me, loves me, and calls me to be in relationship with him. That sets me free to truly love others as I have been loved, instead of comparing and competing in order to feel significant. In the parable of the prodigal son, Jesus tells the story of a father who has two sons (Luke 15:11-32). Just like the younger brother in the parable, we all have a choice. We all must make a decision about who or what we trust and follow. We need to decide whether we will follow our Creator God or reject him. Are we going to embrace the life he calls us to? Or like the younger brother will we live life however we want. But secondly, we have to extend love and grace to one another. When the younger brother came home and was received by the father, the older brother was angry and resistant. He had a prideful, self-righteous attitude toward his brother - attitudes just as toxic and sinful as the sins of his younger brother. When it comes to those who hold different worldviews, those who see the world differently than us - are we going to have outstretched arms like the father? At CSC our desire is that we are Christ-followers who lead with love, uphold truth, and offer hope.