THE YEAR OF INTEGRITY

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HUMAN AND HABITS

FINDING IDENTITY IN CHRIST IN THE AGE OF SELF-CONSTRUCTED IDENTITY

Bethany International Church

Vision

To be a "House of Prayer for all nations" Isaiah 56 :7b

Mission

A praying and witnessing church who have a close personal relationship with The Lord, to change the world for the glory of the Lord.

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Finding identity in Christ in the age of self-constructed identity

By Sonia Pranatha

"Who am I?", "What is my purpose?", "Why am I created this way?"

These are the questions that have popped up to everyone's mind at some point of their life. Don't believe me? Go to your local bookstore and you will find a whole section dedicated for books trying to help people answer these questions. We ask these questions because we all strive to make sense of our identities and existence in this world. And generations after generations, the search for the answers continue, hoping that eventually we come to a final definite answer where we truly find the context of our existence.

But fast forward to the present, we have now come to a highly fluid era, where we can simply say that everything is indefinite. Society is now encouraging us to create our own identities the way we want and like, rather than finding the absolute and definite meaning of ourselves. And with the rapid expansion of digital media, it becomes even more easy to alter and tailor our identities to our own imagination. It's a simple and effective alternative solution to this unanswered problem.

Yet even though we now are in control of our identities, many of us still feel empty and unhappy. We create meaning to our existence, and yet we continue to find our lives meaningless and purposeless. Why is this happening? Why is the solution the world has offered us fails to live up to its promise?

When the mirror doesn't reflect who we are

Identity functions as a way to identify

the characteristics of a person. Think of your identity card, what does it say about you? Typically, information such as your gender, age, and nationality are written. These things define who you are. But identity doesn't just define a person based on that person's exterior looks. One's values, beliefs, experiences, and memories also make up one's identity. Identity - comprises all of these things - helps others to know who you are, and it also serves as a mirror for you to see your own image, a reflection to your true self.

But nowadays, instead of our identity defining and reflecting who we are, we get to define our identities. After all, since we live our own life, shouldn't we get to decide how we want to be seen as? What we want to become? What is our purpose? The mirror doesn't reflect our true selves anymore, but it reflects an idealized, imagined version of ourselves. We see this becoming ever so prevalent in social media. People construct their image to their own liking, posting picture-perfect versions of themselves, deleting something they don't like about themselves or enhancing what could be perfected. They can even construct a narrative about Themselves that is totally different from the reality. There's this sense of freedom and liberty in that we become our own creator. And therein lies the issue with self-made identity.

Whenever mankind is given so much freedom and power, we tend to turn what can potentially be good into something destructive because of our sinful nature. According to a research from Springer Series Social Psychology, the selfin constructed image we disclose to others are motivated by two things, to please the 'audience' and to deny some of our image rather than to embrace it. We try to build our identity based on the approval and love from others, to the extent of becoming somebody we are not. No

wonder the more we try to construct our own image, the more dissatisfied we become with our lives. We try to make meaning of who we are in the wrong place.

There is relief for us though. If we've been searching our identities in the wrong place, that means there is a right place. The concept of selfconstruction tells you that you are your own creator, and it's all nothing but the devil's trickery. We are not our own creator, for we are created by God, in the image of Him. God is our creator. And where is a better place for us to seek our identities, if not from the Creator Himself?

What the Bible says about our identity

1. We are new creations in Christ

The Bible tells us in 2 Corinthians 5:17 that we become new creations in Christ, that the old has passed away and the new has come. But what is the newness this verse

means? Well, before we receive our new identity in Christ, we live in our sinfulness and we were slaves to our sins. But when Jesus came into this world and was crucified for our sins, all of our transgressions were also crucified along with Him, so that we may no longer be enslaved to sins (Romans 6:6). There is always the temptation for us to go back to our sinful habits while we are still in this world, such as in the case of trying to find approval from men rather than from God. But when we remember our new identities we receive through Christ, we will - with the power from the Holy Spirit - resist the urge to indulge in our sins.

2. We are citizens of heaven

Philippians 3:20 reminds us that our citizenship is in heaven and not in this world. We are part of a larger kingdom where God is the Ruler. Thus, when we know this part of our identities, things of the earth would no longer entice us. Instead, we will set our mind on things above



(Colossians 3:2) and do not put value on things the world values. We will not be seeking love nor approval from this world, because why would you seek something from where you do not belong? As Matthew 6:21 says, "for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also". So, when we treasure the things of the earth, we put ourselves in a situation where we will care more about the earth than heavenly things. But let us become like Abraham, acknowledging the fact that we are not of this world (Hebrews 11:9-10), and fixing our gaze and focus upon our King, to whom we will worship and be together with eternally.

3. We are children of God

In our new identity in Christ, we receive a new transformation in our relationship with God. Instead of fearing Him as a judge, now we have the great privilege where we can call Him our Father (Romans 8:15-16). Thus, we can have the confidence that we can approach

Him and ask of Him what we need (Hebrews 4:16). With God becoming our Father, we have the confidence that God loves us and cares for us. and it is shown through the sacrifice Jesus has made for us. Unlike our earthly families and peers, there is no need for us to earn God's love, for His love cannot be earned by our performance. Instead, it is because of His grace that despite our flaws and sins, we are still loved by Him. When we remember this truth, doesn't it feel comforting that we have a sovereign God, the Author of our life, the Creator of this world, who loves us in our shortcomings?

God looks at the heart, not the outward appearance

The devil wants us to believe that the outward appearance is all that matters, when the issue is something bigger. It's like putting a band-aid on a broken leg and hoping it will resolve the brokenness overnight. He doesn't want us to resolve the issue, because he wants us to be more alienated from God. We may be able to alter our looks and construct our identities in this world. People may believe what you show to them because of our nature. because we look and judge by the outward appearance. But God is not like us. God doesn't just us by what we disclose of ourselves, but what He looks at is our hearts (1 Samuel 16:7). There is no trickery that can be used against God. No matter how well we construct our identities, it will not be able to fool God, because all that is important to Him is the condition of our heart. As Jeremiah 17:9 says, our heart is deceitful and desperately sick. The issue lies in our heart because every motive in what we do is and will be tainted with our sins. And our heart cannot be healed by us keeping on fueling our egoistic desires and ignoring the fact that our heart is sinful in its nature. So instead of fixing something that is already wonderfully and fearfully made by God (Psalm 139:14), we should re-examine our heart and ask God to heal the brokenness of it. As Romans 12:2 says, we are not to be conformed to this world and its way of thinking. We will not find contentment in altering our identities, even if we construct it to the way we want. Only when our heart is restored and renewed, will there be full joy, satisfaction, and confidence in knowing that our identities are shaped by what God thinks of us. Only in that will we find contentment in our own selves.







Human and Habits

How to build a self-discipline habit in our life

By Jennifer Chandra

We are familiar with the term of discipline and as Christian we need to have discipline to crucify our fleshly desire. But if you feel that discipline is associated with restraint, legalism, rules and regulation, then the task as a sanctified Christian seems like an uphill battle to unseen mountain tops.

While we normally think that the habit of discipline is about willpower, we need to reframe our *metacognition (an awareness and understanding of one's thought and thought*)

process) into a new paradigm. In Romans 12:2; Paul urges us to be transformed by the renewing of our mind. The word 'transform' used in this verse is translated into English word as metamorphosis. It describes a change from within. Therefore, it is important for us to dig deep into our motivation and sense of purpose of doing anything in this life. Then we can form a habit as a tactic not as a destination. We are not just building a good habit but we are pressing towards a goal which will encourage us every time we need it.

According to James Clear in his book "Atomic Habits"; there are three layers of behavioral change. Identity, process and outcome. For example, you try to lose weight (outcome), then the process of getting there (process) is by dieting and exercising. But the real goal should be in the deepest layer where identity lies. Compare the mindset when you know that you are a healthy and strong person (identity) then you will have (process) a good diet and exercise then eventually you will lose weight (outcome). In 2 Peter 1:4-7; this clearly explained the model of identity-based model of behavior. Because God has given us the identity of being a Christian with divine nature then we make every effort in the process of getting the outcome.

2 Peter 1:4-7

4 Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in <u>the divine nature (identity)</u>, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. 5 For this very reason, <u>make every effort (process)</u> to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; 6 and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; 7 and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, <u>love (outcome)</u>.

According to Alex Pentland, a computer scientist and a professor

Massachusetts at Institute of Technology, 90 percent of what most people do follows routines so that their behavior can be predicted. Habits are essentially an autopilot to our brain or a memory of steps that solved problems in the past. It means the brain draws a memory or unconscious repetitive actions which are triggered by the environment. Therefore, we can train/discipline/ build memory in our brain to create new habits. Especially for our spiritual life. As Paul said to Timothy in 1 Tim 4:7b-8, "...train yourself to be godly. 8 For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come."



Here are a few practical tips for all of us to create new good habits.

Habits are compound interest

Compound interest is exponential when a little incremental can result in massive results. Same thing with habits in which accumulation of little steps forward will bring us far to our destination. For example, you want to build the habit of praying. You can start by trying to pray five minutes and eventually you will pray longer and frequently. Success is the product of daily habit not oncein-lifetime transformation.

Do not give up on failure

Motivation is not constant. There will be a time when your motivation reaches an all-time high but a motivation plummet might come right after that. If you fail to stay on your commitment, you can try again. The worse thing is we are stuck in our failure and have thought distortions where the doubts and negative thoughts discourage us to continue and try again. Do not let one failure linger in your mind too long, you can try again right after that. Do not give up.

Do it in the morning

In psychology there is a term called decision fatigue where the quality of decision deteriorates as the day goes on. Every hour goes by in our life, we face so many decision making. And after a series of decision making, you will feel weary and it will be harder to avoid or face temptation. Thus, if you need a lot of willpower to do your habit, it is better to do it in the morning.

Plan out your habit

Be specific with your tactic. This

will avoid us in a decision fatigue situation. We just follow the plan without thinking too much. It is easier to remember and stick to the plan. For example, every time I brush my teeth in the morning, I will continue with my five-minutes prayer. Or if you want to be more specific, as you know you always wake up at 7.30 AM and you will wash your face and brush your teeth and at 7.45 AM you will start your prayer. Other examples, doing a meal prep for a good diet or making a list of groceries every time you go to the supermarket.

Committing to doing something daily actually removes all questions of motivation — and that makes a habit/ discipline more likely to stick. Where there is discipline, there is freedom. With effective habits, you are free to think about other things and ready for new challenges in life. Last thing to remember, we always need the grace of God for everything that we do. It is a great comfort knowing that God will help us and supply us with the will and power to overcome our old nature and build discipline in our life.

Titus 2:11-12

"For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live selfcontrolled, upright and godly lives in this present age,"







MINISTRY LIST

Vocal – Jessica Sutiono Musician — Raynaldo Ali Multimedia — Budi Sendjaja Lighting — Budi Sendjaja Sound - Steven Santika Usher - Elbert Pranoto Translator - Elbert Pranoto Caring — Felix Hariyadi Dancer — Priska Sunaryo Drama — Jennifer Chandra Sunday School — Reinetta Tanujaya Hospitality - Tasmin Ifah Intercessor — Monica Haryanto Mission — Felix Chietra Media Art – Sonia Pranatha Community Kitchen — Yolanda Tjong Cultivated Podcast – Ravello Satria Youth - Rio Susanto

If we do not abide in prayer, we will abide in temptation

JOHN OWEN







THE ULTIMATE LIST OF

LOVE SONGS

#1

First Love KARI JOBE

#2

Who You Say I Am HILLSONG WORSHIP

#3

Love Won't Give Up ELEVATION WORSHIP

#4

Extravagant BETHEL MUSIC

#5

Tak Terukur KasihMu Yesus symphony worship

You can find the complete playlist in Spotify

