

More Than a Name

Module: CHRIST IN YOU: GOD-GIVEN IDENTITY

Lesson 1: IDENTITY CREATED

Objectives:

- Students will understand what it means to have been created in the image of God
- Students will discover that their purpose is be indwelt by and dependent on God Himself in order that they might display His character to the world around them
- Students will learn that their identity should be rooted in their Creator

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Slips of paper with students' names on them
- ☐ Hat or bucket to hold slips of paper
- ☐ Play Doh or other molding clay
- ☐ Cue card, pen and Bible for each student
- ☐ A variety of items that depend on something working within them in order to function properly and fulfill their purpose (i.e. flashlight, picture of a car, etc.)

Food for Thought for the Leader —Man in the image of God was to be equipped by His divine indwelling, the Holy Spirit occupying the human spirit, so that man would manifest the very glory of God. It was derived glory, exclusively dependent upon the presence of the Creator within the creature. God Himself, as our Creator, always intended that He should indwell us; His cherished ambition was to be seen and heard in those He created. That is normality for a human being; when God Himself is behaving in and through a man or woman. This is the purpose for which He created us, that we might be a physical, visible expression on this earth of the God who is otherwise invisible (John 1:18). God created each human being with a physical, visible, and audible body to be inhabited by an invisible God, to make Himself visible through what that

person does and says and is God Himself must be the origin of this activity within us.(The Indwelling Life of Christ, Major Ian Thomas; pgs 17-18).

Minds On

Play Doh Images (*This game could be done up front or in groups*)

Place the names of each student in a hat or bucket. Have volunteers draw a name and attempt to create a clay model of that person while the rest of the group attempts to guess who it is. Have several volunteers take a shot at it. After each correct guess, ask the group what gave it away – *What characteristics did the model display that helped them to guess?*

Action

Say Something Like: *What is the purpose of a model? What could be another word for ‘model’? [replica; copy; representation; image]*

Divide students into groups of 4-5 and give each person a cue card, a pen and Bible.

Individually, have everyone write down a definition of the word ‘*image*’. It doesn’t need to be anything fancy, just what comes to their minds. Give them 30 seconds to complete this. In turn, have each individual share their definition with the rest of their assigned group. When this is done, encourage them to combine their ideas to come up with **one** definition as a group.

Once each group has decided on one definition for the word *image*, have them read Genesis 1:26-27. In light of their definitions, have each group discuss what it might mean that ‘*God created mankind in his own image*’ (*Genesis 1:27a*). This activity will get students thinking about this in ways they may never have before. Be sure and circulate from group to group, encouraging their conversation. Give groups 10-15 minutes to work thought this.

When the groups have finished their discussion, bring everyone back together into a large group. Have each group share their thoughts on the word *image* as well as how it applies to Genesis 1:26-27. **Ask questions like**, “What does all of this say about us - who we are/our identity?” or “What might it say about our purpose? What are we intended for?”

Say something like: *Some of the most common questions asked by human beings are: Who am I? What am I here for? One of the best places to look for an answer to these questions is back at the beginning of the world, as recorded in the book of Genesis. The opening chapters of Genesis bring us back to the moment where people were first created, giving us a glimpse into the heart of God; as to why He created us in the first place. We see that when God creates mankind, He doesn't just do it, but forms us with purpose and intention - there is something different about us from the rest of creation.*

Have someone read *Genesis 1:24-25*.

Then, have someone read *Genesis 1:26-28*.

Have the students compare and contrast these two passages. **Ask things like** “What stands out to you as different between these two passages? What makes the creation of man different from the creation of the animals? What might this be telling us about how God views us”? [humans distinctly created in God’s image]

Say something like: *Through these few verses, we see God making a decision to make people unique from anything else in creation. He chose to make us in His image, according to His likeness, and to give us authority over every other created thing. Something else that separates us from the rest of creation is found in Genesis 2:7*

Have someone read the verse and then ask, “What happens in this verse and what do you think it refers to?”

Help your students understand that when God created Adam, He breathed "the breath of life" (His Spirit) into him, causing him to become a "living being" – not just alive functionally, but spiritually alive. Adam was made in the image of God because the very presence of God lived within him! We have been designed to be inhabited by the Holy Spirit so that everything we do, think and say might display the image of the invisible God! We are made to be dependent on His presence in order to be who we were created to be. This isn't just Adam's history: this is our history too—a defining moment that lays the foundation for who we are, what we are here for and what God's intentions are for us.

When talking about how we are created in God's image, some students may assume this means that we have been made to look physically just like God. Help them to see that there is a lot more to it than that! We are to live our lives in a way that looks like God would want. Scripture gives us an excellent example of this through the life of Jesus. Jesus lived a perfect human life, giving us the perfect picture of God's original design for humanity. By looking at what the Bible says about Him and by paying attention to how He lived and what was important to Him, we can begin to develop a picture of what being a human being is really all about.

Have someone read Colossians 1:15 and 2 Corinthians 4:4 and ask, "*How do these verses describe Christ? What do you think it is about Christ that causes Him to be the image of God: is it His physical appearance, or something else?*"

Say something like: *Christ is the image of God because everything about Him—His very essence—displays who God is. His behaviour, the way He treats people, His thought-life, everything about Him shows everyone around Him what His Father is like. How does this happen though? How is Jesus able to display the character of God in all that He does?*

Have someone read John 5:19 and John 5:30. Through these verses, help students recognize that Jesus displays the character and image of His Father through dependence on Him and obedience to Him. For thirty-three years, the Lord Jesus walked on this earth to demonstrate normality; to demonstrate man as God created man to be. He was prepared to be man as God created man to be, constantly living in dependence on the Father. Jesus says in John 5:30 that He can do

nothing on His own initiative – He does only what He sees His Father doing. This is what makes Christ an image-bearer of God.

Consolidate/Debrief

Have students return to their previously assigned groups. Give each group an item that demonstrates the truth learned today. Examples could include:

- Flashlight – the power of the batteries within the flashlight, and the flashlight depending on the batteries, enable it to produce light (evidence/a representation of the power inside)
- A picture of the sun and moon – the moon only shines what is reflected off of it by the sun. The light from the moon is an image of the light from the sun. Without the sun, the moon won't shine
- Car – the car depends on the work of the engine (or gasoline) within itself in order to produce activity. The movement of the car is a direct representation of the work that the engine is doing under the hood. No engine? No activity.

Give groups just a few minutes to think of a way their item displays the message from today's lesson. After groups share, pray together, thanking God for His original design.