

More Than a Name

Module: CHRIST IN YOU: GOD-GIVEN IDENTITY

Lesson 3: IDENTITY RESTORED

Objectives:

- Students will discover God's plan of restoration for the human race
- Students will learn that their true, God-given identity is only lived out through dependency on the presence of 'Christ in you'

Materials Needed:

- ☐ A YouTube (or HGTV.ca) clip showing the restoration of something (i.e. furniture, home) – OR – someone who actually does restoration work
- ☐ Copies of "Identity Restored" Handout
- ☐ Bibles with Romans 8:10-11, 2 Corinthians 5:17 and John 15:4-5 bookmarked
- ☐ Same items as used at the end of Lesson 1 (i.e. flashlight, picture of sun/moon, car)

Minds On

Find a great clip on YouTube that demonstrates restoration e.g. a video of an old home, furniture or vehicle being returned to its original glory. You could even consider watching an episode of a home renovation show like *Disaster DIY* on HGTV.ca. Another option if you know someone who actually does restoration work, is to consider either going to them or having them come to you with some real-life examples of the power of restoration.

Ask questions like: “What does it mean to restore something? What happened in this clip that demonstrates the power of restoration? What might this whole idea of restoration have to do with our last couple of lessons?”

Say something like: Over the past couple of weeks, we've been following the journey of God's most prized creation: humanity. In week one, we discovered that we were created with a specific identity and purpose: to be image-bearers of God. He created us to be indwelt by Himself that we might be like Him in character and behaviour. This is who we are and what we've been made for. Last time, we talked about how that original design was shattered by the power of sin. We saw how Adam and Eve's choice of independence caused them and everyone who followed, to be distanced from God and alienated from their identity in Him. Because of sin, God's original design was destroyed, infecting all of humanity with an identity crisis.

[Tip: rather than summarizing the last two sessions yourself, you could also encourage students to summarize them for you - it's a great way to reconnect them to the story and engage them for what's to come this week.]

Thankfully though, as we'll discover tonight, there is hope. God is faithful and He refuses to leave His children to waste away in their sin. God's ultimate desire is to restore His creation back to its original state. And it's pretty cool how He goes about it.

Action

Ask: What has to happen in the restoration process before something can be made new and returned to its original state?

[Tip: you're not looking for the specifics of furniture restoration here. What you want students to recognize is that the oldness/deadness of the piece has to be dealt with before newness can be breathed into it. You can't just paint over the oldness or ignore it, it needs to be refinished--removed--before it can be made new. Be sure and guide the responses to this question in this direction]

Help students understand that restoration is all about dealing with the deterioration before bringing in the newness. If the mold, mildew, bumps and scratches aren't removed, true restoration can never happen. So when restoring something, a lot of work has to be done in order to remove all the defects and deformities. Once that deterioration is dealt with, however, newness can come! The restorer, with a clean surface to work with, can breathe new life into the piece. Little by little, its original glory is returned, and along with it, its purpose, usefulness and beauty.

Ask: How does this whole idea of restoration fit into what we've been talking about over the last couple of weeks?

Say something like: In many ways, we are just like an old, worn out, beaten down piece of furniture. As we've already learned, in our original state, we were beautiful creations of our Heavenly Father with distinct purpose and identity as His image-bearers. However, with the introduction of sin into our existence came deterioration. As we saw last week, ALL HAVE SINNED AND FALL SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD (Romans 3:23). Sin, by removing the presence of God from within us and separating us from Him, caused us to fall short of our purpose, losing our image-bearing abilities and identity. We became worn down, defective and useless... until the Restorer came to make things right.

Have students quickly get into groups of three with those around them. Give each group a copy of the Identity Restored handout. Groups will read through Romans 3:22-25 together and consider how it fits into our restoration story. Give students five minutes to discuss. Then, gather the entire group's attention and spend a few minutes having students share.

***Say something like:** Jesus Christ is God's answer for a sin-filled, deteriorated, purposeless creation. Through the work of Jesus on the cross, through the forgiveness of sin, God began the restoration of the human identity. Jesus took the punishment for our sins, making us right with God. When we put our trust in Him and receive Him into our lives, our sin-filled, diseased selves are sanded down, cleaned up and prepared for something new!*

Continue the discussion by ***asking something like***, "With a piece of furniture, once the deterioration is dealt with, what is the next step in the restoration process?" [Full restoration – the return to the original state].

Follow this by asking, "When our trust is put in Jesus for the forgiveness of our sin, what might God's next step be in His restoration of us?"

Have someone read Colossians 1:27 and ask, "What might this simple statement – **Christ in you, the hope of glory** – have to do with our restoration?" Encourage them to think back to Lesson 1 – we are intended to be indwelt by the very presence of God in order that we might display His character.

***Say something like:** Through His death, Christ paid the penalty for our sin, healing our disease and making us right in the sight of God. But Christ didn't stay dead! He rose again! Through His resurrection, Jesus defeated death and rose to new life. When we accept Christ, this new life is then offered to us through the very presence of Christ IN us! With our sinfulness cleared up, the very presence of God can once again reside within us, just the way it was always intended to be!*

Help your students to understand that with ‘Christ in us’, our identity is restored and we experience newness of life as we learn to be dependent on His indwelling presence, just as Christ was dependent on His Father, and as Adam was dependent on his Creator.

It is in Him and through Him that humanity can have any hope of returning back to its original state. It is in Him and through Him that we rediscover our identity and purpose—that we find normality once again.

Consolidate/Debrief

Have different people read Romans 8:10-11, 2 Corinthians 5:17, and John 15:4-5.

Remind students that their purpose – their identity – is to be an image-bearer of God. Remind them that the only way to truly live out their true, God-given identity is to first receive the forgiveness of Christ and then to be completely dependent on the presence of Christ in them.

If time permits, hand out the same items you used at the end of Lesson 1 and have students consider how these items display the truth from this module.

Close your time together by praying for each other – that the truth of ‘Christ in you’ would sink into hearts and minds and that dependency on the presence of Christ would be lived out and experienced. Pray that all would discover their true identities in Christ.

IDENTITY RESTORED

Together, read the following passage from Romans 3:22-25 NLT:

We are made right in God's sight when we trust in Jesus Christ to take away our sins. And we all can be saved in this same way, no matter who we are or what we have done. ²³ For all have sinned; all fall short of God's glorious standard. ²⁴ Yet now God in his gracious kindness declares us not guilty. He has done this through Christ Jesus, who has freed us by taking away our sins. ²⁵ For God sent Jesus to take the punishment for our sins and to satisfy God's anger against us. We are made right with God when we believe that Jesus shed His blood, sacrificing His life for us.

This is our restoration story! As a group take a few minutes and discuss together how these verses fit into the story of God's restoration of humanity:

- Thinking back to the example of furniture restoration, what part of the process might this passage be describing?
- What role do Jesus and His work on the cross play in *our* restoration?
- Is this the end of the story or is there more yet?
- What might be the next step?