

# THE JOURNEY IS THE DESTINATION

## - LEADERS GUIDE -

### Chapter 6: Pursue Identity

Hey Leaders - here's a couple of reminders. The role of leaders is to care for the people in your group. Get to know them. Listen to them. Care. Getting through the material is never the primary goal.

While you are probably quite capable of being the guest lecturer at your table, great leaders help DISCOVERY occur. We ask questions, listen, steer, but we don't teach. There are plenty of places that teaching is the right thing to do - just not in this environment. Admittedly, for many of us, asking, listening, and steering is much more difficult than sharing our best thoughts.

Each week you will receive the notes for your group and some leader's notes. For some groups - it will be tough for you to get through the material b/c discussion will be plentiful. For others, you will have to work a little harder to make it happen.

For this process to work well, we can't have a discussion about the words in a book. Analyzing words or the writer is a pretty empty exercise. We need to get the words off the page and into the fabric of our lives. Please help steer conversations this direction. Obviously, this gets easier as people become more comfortable with each other and find it a safe place to share. Everyone starts out with some protective walls up.

Before group time - please read the chapter in the book. The more you take it in, the more you can help your group. Also read through and answer the group guide questions. Push to make yourself get beyond the surface (first) thought. The group won't go any deeper than the leader.

Let's get started with this week's stuff

**Identity is a powerful force in our lives. There are many things that contribute to forming our identity. Let's jump into the subject with these questions.**

1. If a child is born and everyday for the first 10 years of their lives they were told they are dumb, stupid, and worthless - how big a hit to their identity would it be? Why? Have you ever experienced this or seen someone else experience it?

Most people have seen a child cared for poorly. Talking about this is a safe way to get people started talking - it is about someone else. If they share their own hurts from their childhood - be sure to listen and care about what they are saying. PRO TIP - asking another question about the answer given is a great way for conversations to gain traction. I.e. They answer with a story about a childhood friend. They share the difficulties for them. Maybe a follow up question might be - "How much do you think this has affected them as adults?" You are smart - you'll see the opportunities if you are looking.

2. If the child is constantly told, "You are the prettiest," "You are the smartest," "You are the best athlete," "You are the best \_\_\_\_\_," could this have a negative impact on his/her identity? Why?

Who knows where this one will go. Many of us have experienced someone who was overly praised and ended up with much too high a view of themselves. Better way to say it Perhaps they found their value in their looks or their ability to perform more than in who they are as a person.

"Insecurity, fear, and shame were never intended to be a part of our vocabulary, but when sin entered the picture, they became not only a part of our vocabulary but the lens through which we see ourselves— they became our identity." (p. 99)

**Insecurity, Shame, and Fear - the painful trifecta. When they are present we are all affected.**

### 3. When people are insecure - how do they usually react?

Sometimes when I (Kris) am insecure (and it is far more often than you would think), I kinda pull away or isolate. It's just easier to try to be invisible. Other times I can try to do things to fit in better. I.e. 1. Work harder so I'm needed 2. Try to say or do something impressive so I will be thought of more highly 3. Pretend like I don't care so no one knows I'm hurting. None of these help much - but insecurity doesn't bring out the best in anyone.

The question ask how do they react? The better question is how do you react, but we are all new around the tables, so I'm leaving some room to not force people to get too personal. You can help with this. Your willingness to share your reality will lay the groundwork for a good group.

### 4. The three reactions to fear are said to be - fight, flight, or freeze. Which one of the is most typically for you? Explain.

This time the question is more personal (which is more typical for you). Fight = blow up, push back, become angry, more vocal, intense. We react to fear b/c we hate the feeling. Our reaction is intended to stop the feeling. Flight = shut down, leave, quit, become isolated or sullen, use victim language. Freeze = can't make a decision, unsure, overwhelmed, stuck, analysis paralysis.

"Before the fall, our greatest asset was being accepted, loved, and welcomed by God. After the fall, it became our greatest need. When we unify in relationship with Jesus, we are grafted back into the family of God—we are welcomed! We no longer need to feel the insecurity that surrounds us every day."

**God wants to take away our insecurity, fear, and shame and replace them with being welcomed, safe and significant. It is no surprise that the exact things we lost can be found in the person of Jesus. Check out these amazing verses.**

*God is love. When we take up permanent residence in a life of love, we live in God and God lives in us. This way, love has the run of the house, becomes at home and mature in us, so that we're free of worry on Judgment Day—our standing in the world is identical with Christ's. There is no room in love for fear. **Well-formed love banishes fear.** —1 John 4:17-18 (MSG)*

**As you read through the last part of this chapter in the book - there are lists of verses that establish we are welcomed, safe, and significant because of our relationship with God. Knowing this truth is great, but living it out is much more difficult.**

### 5. What would can we do to get the knowledge from our head into our everyday lives? (be practical - try to list 5 things around your table)

The opposite of love isn't HATE. Perfect love doesn't banish hate - it banishes fear. The truth is - hate is the result of insecurity, fear, and shame. Love is the antidote. The answer can't just be knowing about love - it has to include receiving it. This question is intended to allow some positive stories to be told. These aren't the weaknesses or painful parts - but the healing ones. Most people have a family member - friend - someone who has loved them well and can be excited to talk about them. These stories are a huge front door to getting to know the people in your group. PRO TIP - ask the name of their person who cared for them. Remember it. They are big parts of their story and you celebrating them is a very caring thing to do.

**On pages 103-104 there are three verses that establish we are welcomed, safe, and significant because of our relationship with God. Knowing this truth is great, but living it out is much more difficult.**

6. What can we do to get the knowledge from our head into our everyday lives? (be practical - try to list a few things around your table).

Ideas:

- ~ read the verses every day
- ~ memorize the verses
- ~ replace the general words with personal words i.e. "If I confess my sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive my sins and cleanse me from all wickedness."
- ~ pray - talk to God about your need for his grace - and your gratitude for it.
- ~ put verse(s) in a place where you will see them (bathroom mirror, fridge, dash of car, etc.

Pray with your group before you head out. Ask them to let you know if they won't be able to attend any future sessions. THANKS!!!!

