



# IDENTITY THEFT

CAMOUFLAGED BY CULTURE



Week 1 Leader Guide

## THE WIN

The group member will demonstrate their understanding of their value as a child of God by writing out their faith story using the format 'before-during-after'.

3-5  
minutes

### SERMON RECAP: WHAT DID THE TEXT MEAN? WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Recall the main points from this week's message:

- I am chosen by God so I am avored (v.3)
- I am chosen by God so I am ifferent (v.4)
- I am chosen by God so I am adopted (v.5)
- I am chosen by God so Hallelujah (v.6)

Having the ability to know our value as God's children is important for understanding our identity as Christ-followers and our role in fulfilling the mission of God.

- What thoughts/feelings did this week's message stir in you?

3-5  
minutes

## WARM UP

- What teams/organizations/groups do you participate in/on?
- What is your role on that team/organization/group?
- Describe to the group how well you could perform for your team/organization/group if you did not know what was expected of you.

30-40  
minutes

### THE TEXT: WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR ME?

**SAY THIS:**

Will someone please read John 15:5-8?

**SAY THIS:**

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Will someone please read John 15:9-12?

**SAY THIS:**

Will someone please read John 15:13-17?

*Leader Tip: Always thank the person you asked to read aloud. Also, be attentive to body language because not everyone is comfortable reading aloud.*

**ASK THIS:**

Jesus is teaching His disciples the importance of commitment and obedience to His love. He refers to himself as a vine and His followers as branches. With Him/connecting to Him they can do all things and outside/apart of Him they can do nothing.

- In your view, what does it mean to be committed and obedient to Christ's love?
- In what ways do you struggle with commitment and obedience to Christ's love?
- What is at the root of your desire to abide in Christ? Has this always been the root? Has it evolved?
- How has the root of your desire to abide in Christ shaped your identity as a person?

**Recall vs. 9-12**

Jesus commands His disciples to remain in His love and in order to remain (abide) in His love they should keep His commands. For Jesus, there was a connection between obedience & being in His love. When we obey Jesus we show our love for Jesus and because of our love for Jesus we obey Him.

New Testament scholar Gerald Borchert comments on the cyclical nature of verses 9-12:

*"Here some of the elements of the circle of love are enunciated. They are as follows: The Father loves the Son (cf. 3:35; 17:23), and the Son obediently loves the Father (cf. 10:17;14:31); the Son loves his followers, and they are to love and obey him (cf. 13:34;14:15,23); loving and obeying the Son also implies loving one another (cf. 13:34;15:12,17); God not only loves the disciples but loves the world and gave his Son for its people (cf.3:16); but many in the world love darkness and do not do the will of God (cf.3:19;14:24)....Bearing fruit therefore means loving others as God loves them and giving witness to the world. Such fruit bearing is possible only by abiding in Jesus, the Vine."<sup>1</sup>*

- From Jesus' teaching in verses 9-12 what is the role of a disciple?
- How easy is it to live out this role? How difficult?
- How are you managing to succeed?
- In what ways are you struggling?

**DO THIS:**

Have someone read John 15:13-17

**SAY THIS:**

In verse 16 Jesus makes clear his point that He chose us, we did not choose Him. Gerald Borchert notes, "It is absolutely crucial whenever one discusses the subject of election to realize that election is not about privilege but purpose."<sup>2</sup>

**DO THIS:**

Have someone read Matthew 28:18-20

**ASK THIS:**

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1. Borchert, G.L., *The New American Commentary: John 12-21*, vol.25B (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2002), 146.

2. *Ibid.*, 150.

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In Matthew 28:18-20 Jesus gives his final command to His disciples.

- In one sentence how would you communicate the purpose or mission of Jesus' disciples?

**SAY THIS:**

To sum up:

Jesus, in his grace and mercy, chose His disciples and anointed them (set them apart) to pursue the mission of God. The disciples will only bear fruit if they remain in God's love and it is God's love that compels them to bear fruit.

**SAY THIS:**

Our value and purpose in Christ is important to understand if we are to make improvements in our lives (i.e. abide in Christ) so that we can bear fruit for the Gospel. The faith story of each disciple is unique and it's when we are able to articulate our faith story that we are able to better see where we fit in and help further the mission of God.

**DO THIS:**

Take the next 10 minutes and have each group member write out their faith story in three parts:

Part 1-Before I came to Christ I \_\_\_\_\_

Part 2-When I met Christ I \_\_\_\_\_

Part 3-Since accepting Christ as Savior and Lord I \_\_\_\_\_

*Leader Tip: Encourage group members to keep their story handy (in the jacket of their Bible, on mirror at home etc.) as a reminder of where they have come from and how God has worked in them for His purposes.*

*Leader Tip: Be sensitive to group members who may not have a relationship with Jesus. If this is the case, you might consider an alternate activity such as asking for volunteers to verbally communicate their faith story.*

10  
minutes

## DIGGING DEEPER

Have each group member go around the circle (voluntarily) and share their faith story and how they view themselves in light of John 15:9-17.

## CLOSING THOUGHT

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit...fruit that will last.

-Jesus