

## **Creation and Identity Small Group Guide**

**Warm-up Question:** (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part altogether, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. When this life is over, what do you want those closest to you to remember about you?
2. Who is one person not in your family whom you greatly admire and why?

**Read the following passage:** Genesis 3:1-11.

Identity affects nearly every part of our lives. In the sermon on the mount, Jesus reminds us that we can't consistently produce fruit that doesn't align with who we are (see Matthew 7:16-18; 12:33). Our behavior is a reflection of our identity. Genesis 3 shows us why identity is so often a struggle for us. We can identify at least six factors.

- We have sinned
- We hide.
- The human voices in our lives often hurt us.
- We have a spiritual foe.
- We all experience pain.
- We're separated from God.

The last of these is the root issue. Apart from God, we don't know who we are. In order to build a healthy identity, we need to return to God. This involves taking off the masks all of us put on at times, receiving God's forgiveness, and listening to God's voice.

**Questions for Discussion** (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. What are some of the factors that have made the greatest impact on your identity? What are some of the areas of your life in which you are conscious that your behavior is a reflection of your identity?
2. Are there any areas of your life in which you regularly fight against negative thoughts about yourself? Explain.
3. It is normal to feel some sense of shame when we do something blameworthy. But God does not intend for us to stay stuck in shame. Are there areas of your life in which you regularly experience shame? Explain. What should we do about such areas?
4. Read 1 Chronicles 4:9-10. Are there any hurtful words that were spoken to you in the past that you still think about? Explain. What can we learn from Jabez's example?

5. What are some ways pain can impact our identity? How can we keep from spiraling downward when we are going through a painful experience or season in our lives? Is it possible to use our painful experiences to our advantage? Explain.
6. Explain why separation from God is our most fundamental problem.
7. Many 12-step programs include steps like the following:
  - We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
  - We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

Why are steps like these an important part of recovering the identity that God wants us to embrace?

8. Read 2 Corinthians 5:16-21. Receiving God's forgiveness is a crucial component of our salvation. How does receiving God's forgiveness connect to our identity?
9. How, practically, do we listen to God's voice and allow him to shape our identity?

**Pray**