

Truth or Lies?

Know your story. Live the truth.

Introduction

Imagine God is thinking about you. What do you think He feels when you come to His mind?

I think God feels: _____

Many people are convinced that their sin and failure are what catch God's attention. Therefore, they assume He feels angry, frustrated or disappointed with them. That simply isn't true. God sees our sin but that's not what catches His attention if you're in Christ. Like any good father, He feels love and delight when He thinks about you.

Having a biblical self-image is important because everything we do we do according to our self-image. It's important to discern the lies we believe about ourselves so we can live in the truth of God's love. As we believe the truth we become secure in Christ and can therefore take risks to love others.

Discerning our Core Lie

Because of the tragic Fall (Genesis 3) we live in a sinful world. Everyone is born with a heart that's in rebellion against God. By nature, people are self-centered, not God-centered. Instead of depending on God for our thirst for love and acceptance, we foolishly turn to people, demanding that they meet our needs. Because of this self-centered approach to life, we all sin against others and they sin against us. The words of Jeremiah ring true—"Be appalled at this, O heavens, and shudder with great horror," declares the Lord. 'My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns [wells], broken cisterns that cannot hold water' (Jeremiah 2:12-13)." As a consequence of our sin against God and each other, we all get hurt. No one's exempt. In this broken world we all experience some form of rejection, disappointment and failure.

Can you remember a time in your past when you were rejected or hurt by the words or actions of someone? Maybe it was when one of your parents walked out and never came back or when classmates mocked you. Maybe it was a "silent" wound caused by your father's passivity and lack of involvement in your life or when your neighbor sexually abused you. Disappointments come in overt and covert ways. And our pain is real. Don't try to ignore it or minimize it. God cares about your pain and He invites you to talk to Him about it.

Most people can remember moments in their life story when they were hurt. If you can recall such a memory briefly write down what happened:

Most people can remember more than one painful memory. If you can recall one or two more, briefly write those down. What happened?

Those painful experiences likely had a negative impact on you. They influenced how you saw yourself. If you took the painful memories you just wrote down (and others you may recall) and "boiled them down" to a word or phrase about how you tend to "see yourself," what might that word or phrase be? People have used words and phrases like *Loser, Not good enough, Not worth being loved, Failure, Strike-out, Unwanted, Alone, On my own, Used goods, Worthless*, and so on.

If you boiled *your* painful memories down to a word or phrase about how you see yourself, what might that word or phrase be? _____

What you wrote down is your "core lie." It's what you tend to believe about who you are. That lie influences the way you live and relate. When you believe the lie, how might it influence the way you relate to God and others?

The lie tells me I must always _____ in order to gain acceptance.

The lie tells me I must never _____ in order to avoid rejection.

How you answered the above statements are your ways of forsaking God and digging your own broken cisterns. They represent your attempts to be in control of gaining acceptance and avoiding rejection without entrusting yourself to God. This is your "style" of idolatry. It's how you live a self-centered life.

Embracing the Truth

If you have received Christ as your Savior, you have been made clean by God's grace and forgiveness. You have been adopted into His family, the Church. And you have been given a new identity (2 Corinthians 5:17). You are *God's dearly loved son/daughter* (Ephesians 5:1-2). You are fully accepted and loved by God because of His loving-kindness. You are secure in His love; a love you did not earn and therefore a love you cannot lose. Take time to prayerfully reflect on the following Bible verses in order to go deeper with the truth of your God-given identity/self-image. You may want to look up other verses too:

THE TRUTH OF WHO I AM IN CHRIST

You are a dearly loved child of God: Ephesians 5:1; 1 John 3:1-2, 4:10

There is no hint of condemnation from God toward you: Romans 8:1

You are fully accepted and loved because of Jesus' work on the cross: Romans 3:21-24, 15:7; Titus 3:4

You are a new creation, with a new heart: 2 Corinthians 5:17

You have been chosen by God: Ephesians 1:4-5, 11

You are called and gifted by God to accomplish His eternal purposes: Ephesians 2:10

In light of what the Bible says about how God sees you and how He feels about you, what would you say is your true identity? My true identity in Christ is _____.

As you believe the truth about your identity in Christ and repent from believing the lie (this is a process) you will become more secure in His love and therefore you can take risks to love others. You don't have to live by the dictates of the lie that tells you what to do or not do in order to be accepted. Your growing security in Christ will enable you to love and depend on God and genuinely care about others.

If you believed the truth about who you are in Christ, how would that influence the way you relate to God and others? How would you treat them differently?

Two ways I can begin to embrace the truth about who I am in Christ:

1. _____
2. _____

One risk I will take in order to love others better: _____

Summary

My core lie: _____

The lie tells me I must always: _____

The lie tells me I must never: _____

My core truth about my identity: _____

When I believe the truth: _____