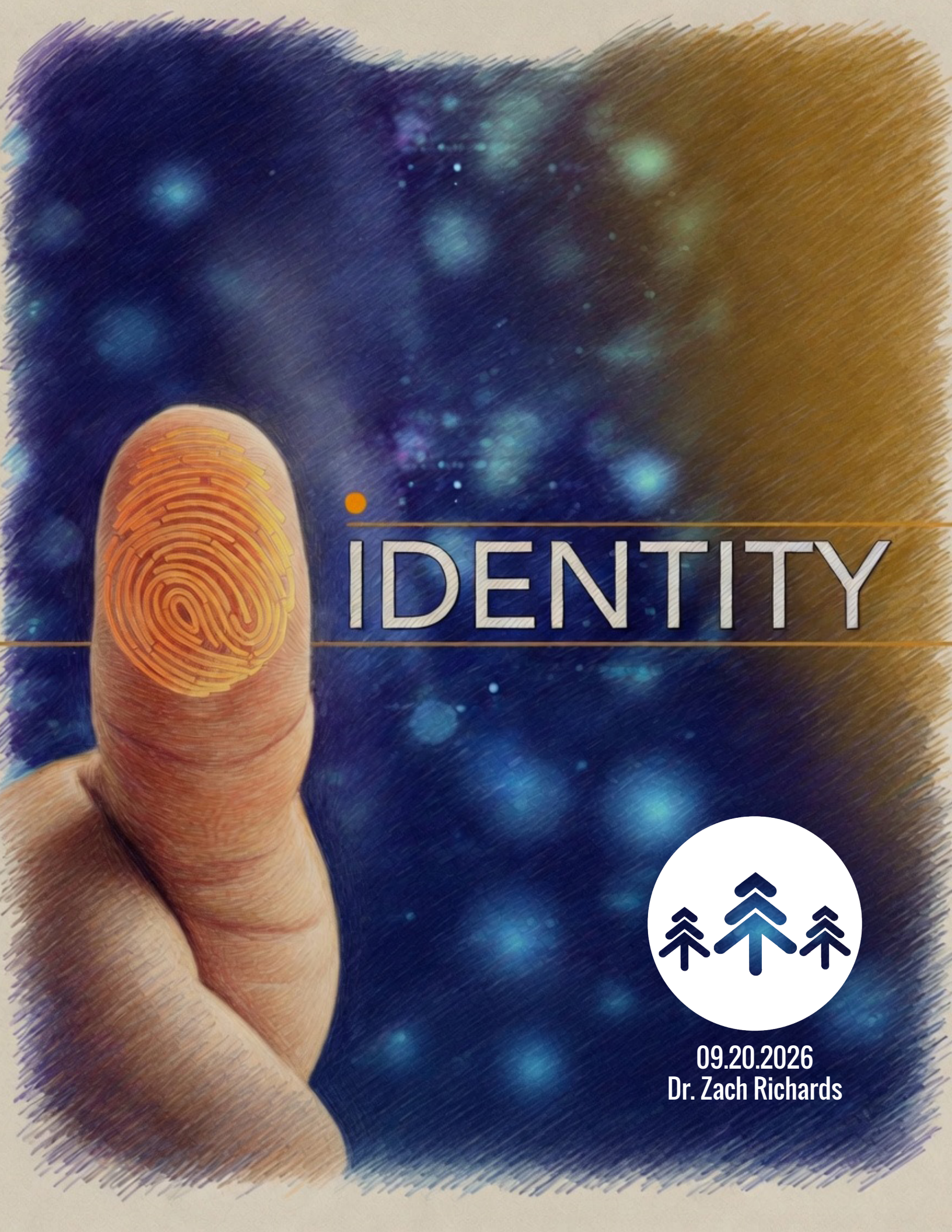


The background of the entire image is a textured, painterly depiction of a cosmic scene. It features a dark blue and purple nebula with scattered bright blue and white star-like points of light. On the left side, a human hand is shown from the wrist up, with the index finger extended. The fingerprint on the tip of the finger is highlighted with a golden-yellow, concentric circular pattern. A thin, horizontal orange line runs across the middle of the image, passing behind the word 'IDENTITY'.

IDENTITY



09.20.2026
Dr. Zach Richards

Clearly Different

2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1

Sermon in a Sentence:

While we must live among unbelievers to reach them, we do not have to live like them.

Question:

Why does it matter if we associate closely with unbelievers?

I. We have been given a command.

- A. Paul explicitly commanded the Corinthians concerning their relationships with unbelievers.
 - 1. This is not limited to marriages.
 - 2. The whole idea is for believers not to be mismatched with unbelievers.
- B. Paul's command to the Corinthians applies equally to us today.
 - 1. This is not a command to ostracize unbelievers from our lives.
 - 2. This is a command to guard ourselves against allowing unbelievers to affect our lives.
 - a) In our devotion to God
 - b) In decision-making
 - c) In matters of morality
- C. Remember: any command given to us by God is for our good and His glory.

II. We have been given some catalysts for change.

- A. Paul then suggested some reasons for guarding a believer's relationships.
 - 1. There is to be a distinction between the holy and the unholy.
 - 2. Believers are the temple of God.
 - a) Paul has covered this subject with the Corinthians before.
 - b) 1 Corinthians 6:15-20
 - ¹⁵ Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never!
 - ¹⁶ Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two will become one flesh."
 - ¹⁷ But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with Him.
 - ¹⁸ Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.
 - ¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within

you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,
²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

B. Believers have to guard our sphere of influence.

1. We have an inescapable mandate to be holy.

a) Leviticus 20:26

You shall be holy to me, for I the LORD am holy and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine.

b) 1 Peter 1:15

But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

2. Holiness extends to the nature of our relationships.

3. That holiness comes with the benefits of a deeper relationship with God.

C. If we guard our relationship with God by guarding our relationships with others, God blesses us and compensates us beyond anything that we might have missed out on.

III. We have been given a path to consider.

A. Paul concludes this section by calling the Corinthians to the place of decision.

1. He called them to cleanse themselves.

2. Become completely holy.

B. We have to make some decisions about our relationships.

1. Every relationship in our lives has a spiritual impact.

2. Some relationships drain us while others nourish us.

C. Be wise about your earthly relationships for the sake of your heavenly relationship.