

First Monday Prayer and Fasting, June 2018

IDX

IDX is the name of our youth ministry at Intown. It stands for Identity in Christ. Becca and Steve are outstanding leaders of this ministry and we can thank God for them and pray for their work, and many other volunteers, as they minister to our children.

We are going to pray about our identity in Christ today. Identity is an important feature of our culture. Social media has exploded around the tools and means for people to express their identity. We all crave it, in part to know the identity of others and in part to express our own. “Self-Identifying” is becoming a common term in our culture, especially among people wishing to express their identity in a new or public way. Some of these topics and others will be explored in our summer, joint life-group series.

Every time we answer the questions: “What do you do for a living?” “What do you do for fun?” “What’s your passion?” “What makes you angry?” “Who do you root for?” – we are marking a part of our identity.

What about our identity in Christ? What was our identity before Christ? How does it change our identity now? How has God created and differentiated each of us, with our own identities, for His glory? These are questions we can explore in God’s Word and reflect on as we compare and contrast our identity in Christ with the culture around us.

As always, if you are new to or nervous about fasting, see our guide on fasting here: <http://intown.org/worship/prayer>. Begin your time by coming to the Father with an open heart and open hands, making yourself ready to receive His Word and wisdom. We will read through a lot of scripture today and one way of praying is to read scripture back to God, accepting His Word and making it relevant to your life, asking Him to let it seep deep into your soul. You can try this by reading the passage once at speed to understand the passage as a whole, and then again, much, much slower, praying along the way as the Holy Spirit works through His Word. Examine each word and each phrase and talk to God about it as you do. In this way, the Word of God directs our prayer so that we don’t have to think about what to say or create different words of our own. It becomes a conversation with our Lord.

Our First Identity - Romans 6:1-23

Our primary identity before Christ was sin. While it might take many different forms, our primary sin is putting our self before Christ on the throne of our heart. In our “not yet fully redeemed” bodies, we still sin in this way, putting our identities in our jobs, relationships, politics, hobbies, pleasures, bodies before Christ. Paul’s constant message throughout each of his letters is that we are now “in Christ” and therefore have a new identity.

Read through Romans 6:1-23. Notice how our old identity is removed, by force and by grace. Notice how Christ is present the entire way and that we are not alone as He changes our identity. See how we are to pray and work to live in our new identity, in Christ.

Our identity now - Ephesians 5:1-21

Our new identity means shedding our old ways and becoming a new creation in Christ. In this passage, Paul points out the difference between our old self and our new self. In three sections of this passage, he urges us to now walk in love, light and wisdom. In each section he points out how we should walk in love, light and wisdom, in Christ and contrasts that with how we walked with our old identities.

Can you identify ways that God is asking you to take on a new identity with different behaviors?

Do you see His renovation in process or do you feel His urging for you to begin?

As you reflect on this passage, give thanks for the “better” that God is offering you.

How does God use our identity for His glory? - I Corinthians 12:1-30

God has a purpose for changing our identity: His glory. Our greatest joy can be found in living that new identity to the fullest. The great part is that God has specially equipped you to do just that! It isn't that you must become something unnatural or awkward but actually quite the opposite. We put away those unnatural and awkward things to find out who God truly made us to be. In his letter to Corinth, Paul uses an analogy of the body to illustrate that we put away our self to become one in Christ. We lose our self-identity, our autonomy, to join the body of Christ, along with our other brothers and sisters in Christ. We do not have the same form or function; each of us is uniquely gifted in our own way. But we are united with Christ as our identity and our differences serve to bring glory to Him.

How does your new identity in Christ compare and contrast to the current culture around you?

How has God given you a part to play that is yours and yours alone for His glory?