

There are two main parts to this discussion:

- I. 1. You
- II. 2. Testimony

We cannot unlock our testimony without first understanding our personal identity.

Throughout my whole life, I spent my psychic energy on being on top. I wanted to be “the guy.” I was always competing for my status. I grew up with two brothers, racing dirt bikes, and I am the youngest child. Therefore, I competed to make myself feel better. This is, I found out at 19 years old, insecurity branching from the root of my identity. I was not naming my struggles as an identity crisis, but that is exactly what I was dealing with. I grew up in church and so I had always heard of the verses that I am valuable, beautiful, and enough, but these had not sunk into my soul to bring conviction of those truths.

Your identity is not found within yourself, but it is found within the truth of the Word.

John 8:32 says “you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.” I had heard the truth of the Word but had not known the truths about myself. When dealing with your identity, you can try to find it in every area of your life. Most often, people register their personal identity with their job or education status.

“Hello, my name is Lane, I go to Drury University.”

“Hello, my name is Lane, I am a bass fisherman.”

These occupations are not inherently wrong to introduce ourselves with. When it comes to our internal value of ourselves, does that value come from our job or from the spoken Word of God? This is what I dealt with: a fallen value of myself.

Once God revealed to me that I wasn't valuing myself in accordance to His Truth, I began to dive into the cliché verses in Psalms 139 and First Corinthians Six.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 “Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.”

Psalms 139:13-18 “For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are your works, and *that* my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance yet unformed. And in Your book, they were all written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them.”

Each person you encounter, including yourself, is unique.

It is easy to, in our consumerist culture, to overlook the people we encounter daily. My brother lives in New York City. The streets, train stations, and businesses are constantly full of people. I am from a small town in Northern Arkansas where we have significantly less people. So, the culture Logan describes to me is completely foreign. People walk down the sidewalks on their phone or wearing their headphones – with no concern for anyone else in the world. It's not just a big city culture though. Consumerist culture creates an atmosphere where everyone is a means to an end. When we are being served a sandwich at Subway or someone is rotating our car tires, the interaction normally goes like this:

“What can I get for you today?”

“Can I get a _____?”

“Is that all for you?”

“Yes”

Jesus called us to love our neighbors as ourselves. Love people as people. Treat people how we want to be treated (Matthew 7:12). The sermon on the mount speaks a lifestyle of proactivity. Christ followers are to make the conscious effort to bring light to the world around them. Rather than having everyone serve you, try to serve others. What does this look like?

“What can I get for you today?”

** makes eye contact with them with a compassionate smile **

“How are you today?”

When we treat people with love and care, the culture may not change, but their day will change. I've seen this time and time again since I began doing this. Caring for someone that has no expectation of compassion catches them off guard. In the culture of phones, eye contact is a long-for desire. This is not behavioral modification. Rather, this is a gospel-oriented heart-change. It is about seeing every person as a fearfully and wonderfully made creation. Every person you encounter in life has a call of God on them, whether they know it or not.

Your *testimony* is for the world, not for you to hide within yourself.

Luke 8:35-39 “Then they went out to see what had happened, and came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. They also, who had seen it told them by what means he who had been demon-possessed was healed. . . Now the man from whom the demons had departed begged Him that he might be with Him. But Jesus sent him away, saying, “Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you.” And he went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.”

The man who was healed wanted to stay with Jesus. The man wanted to follow Jesus; He wanted to leave his hometown where the people were afraid and rejected Jesus. Jesus, being full of wisdom, rejected that the man follow Him. Why? The man had a story that would change the lives of people in his hometown.

When we go through a trying season, receive deliverance, or get healed, sometimes our response is to praise God in secret but refrain from telling those around us. This man from Luke Eight was commanded by Jesus to tell those people in his home of the story of Jesus in his life. Our immediate impact from the salvation of Jesus is those who know us the best. This man’s family knew the hell he was going through. While it wouldn’t have been easy to return home, the man needed to go home to show the world of the power of Jesus. His family would know the change and be transformed by it.

Jesus saw the testimony that this man was going to carry home. He valued the story and identity of the man who was probably rejected by others. Just like my story and your story, Jesus saw the potential change through the power we carry in our testimony.

Don’t secretly be thankful for your testimony but *go and tell* what God has done for you.

Our story is unique. It is because we are unique that our story is unique, and that story is told best by you and me.