

# I Do

Turning what **JESUS DID**  
into what **I DO** in marriage.

Week 5

## Identity in Marriage

**OUTLOOK CHURCH**

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Encourage the group to take turns reading and answering questions. It is best to ask the questions as they appear instead of waiting till the end

**TOPIC : Communicating Identity to Connect**

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**TIME TO PONDER:**

Today we are discussing communicating to connect, not just communicating but communicating identity to others, to bring security and life.

There are many steps we can take to add depth to our marriages. We have heard a few already but the challenge is to be doers of the Word and apply what we have heard to our lives and not just hearers of the Word.

First let's answer some leading questions. These questions we need to answer in relation to ourselves and our spouse.

Do I exist?

Do I exist to you? (Your spouse)

Do I matter?

Do I matter to you?

Do I have value?

Do I have value to you?

Am I good enough?

Am I good enough for you?

( We will come back to these questions later but keep them in mind as we go through the notes.)

There are no quick fixes in marriage. But in order to have a good starting point, we need to settle our identity first. We need to look at our lives through our identities and how we feel about ourselves. Then see how we feel about how our spouse sees us, and how that affects our identity.

Identity is the combination of the physical and behavioural traits that define us. People will judge us based on these traits. Thus our identity is also shaped and formed through our interactions with people. As God created us to be interdependent. We as children of

God need to draw our identities from Him first, but people also need people.

*Genesis 1:26-27*

*Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.*

In the beginning God adds priority to our identity. So much so that He desires us to take our identity from the Trinity. We were made in God's image.

## *Genesis 2:18.*

*The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”*

God also made us for community. Not to live in isolation. God declares regularly “I will be your God. You will be my people”. God speaks identity in community.

**Question 1: When you reflect on your identity, is it settled primarily in how God sees you?**

**Question 2: How interdependent are you on others for your identity? Is this a good or bad thing?**

How others see us should never supersede how God sees us.

## TIME TO REFLECT:

The Greatest commandment, is God's plan for us. To love God and to love one another. If we do this we will be settled in our identities. Rooted and established in His unconditional love.

God continues to place an emphasis on identity as we see how He speaks identity over Jesus at his baptism. This is my son, whom I love, with Him I am well pleased. God gave his son identity before he gave him function. God's love was not based on Jesus' abilities or function. Neither is His love for us based on what we can do, but on the fact that we too are His children.

We see that Jesus lived and led from this place of Identity and He sought to do the same for His disciples. He was all about shaping the disciples, forming their identities. Not just in their lives but in the message he was bringing across. Jesus lived the Gospel Identity. He came as a servant.

The disciples lived their lives as Jesus followers. The early believers were known as followers of **The Way**. Not as Christians. They were identified by the lives they lived and the message they brought.

Identity change was first God's idea before it was man's idea. The devil takes this and perverts it. Our identity change in God is one from death to life. From a sinner to a saint.



God wants to set us free from the identity of sin. To being identified by Jesus and life.

How does the gospel take us through an identity change?

*Romans 3:23*

*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of  
God*

*Romans 8:15*

*The Spirit you received does not make you  
slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather,  
the Spirit you received brought about your  
adoption to sonship. And by him we cry,  
“Abba, Father.”*

## *Galatians 5:16-23*

*So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.*

*The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*

As we come to Jesus our identity changes.  
From death to life, striving to security in Him.

**Question 3: How much have you allowed the Gospel to shape and mould your identity?**

### **TIME TO DISCUSS:**

Let us now, with the questions at the top of the notes in mind, reflect on this. Are we finding our identity in God and in our relationships? If we can answer yes to these questions. Our marriages and relationships will be in a good place.

When we can't answer yes to those questions at the start of the notes. What happens is we

start filling in the gaps in our identity with illegitimate things and we start losing our God given identity. You start running unreal scenarios in your head about situations. Because of what you are feeling. This causes disconnection between you and others, especially your spouse if you have one.

You can lose identity at work. Though running scenarios in your head.

You can lose identity in your families. Feeling overlooked. Feeling neglected.

When we lose identity we feel like we don't matter and are not valued. So you go looking for value elsewhere. In other friends, hobbies work, anywhere else where you feel a sense of identity.



## Four things to be aware of:

1. Recognise the moments in the day where you lose identity.
2. Learn to communicate that identity loss to your significant other. But be wise, don't do it in an accusing way. Listen without feeling the need to defend yourself.
3. When you begin to communicate, follow the energy. Ask the question - what happens to you when.....? Ask the question - what am I missing?
4. Take ownership of your situation and your role. Slow down, acknowledge what

has been said. Then choose how you respond, don't react. Is there a way you can adjust your behaviour or actions? To help your spouse stay open and communicative.

We need to be nurturing communication to help with our connections.

**Question 4: Identify which of the four things listed above you are weakest at. How can you work on being better in them?**

## **ACTION STEP**

Do this experimental assignment. By finishing these four statements:

- I receive identity when .....
- I lose identity when .....
- I receive a still face when .....
- I give a still face when .....

A still face is an emotionless or non response from those we are engaging.

Communicate these statements to your significant other.

As you apply these very practical things into your marriages and relationships trust God to open up the communication and establish identity and connection.

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