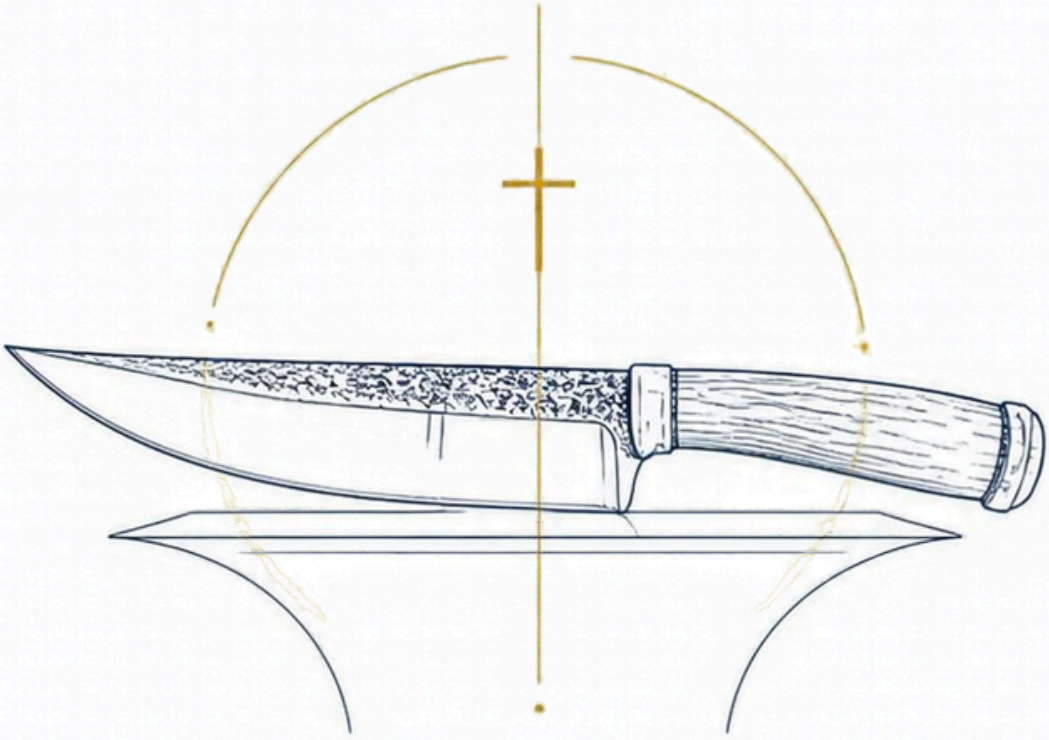
Identity Workbook

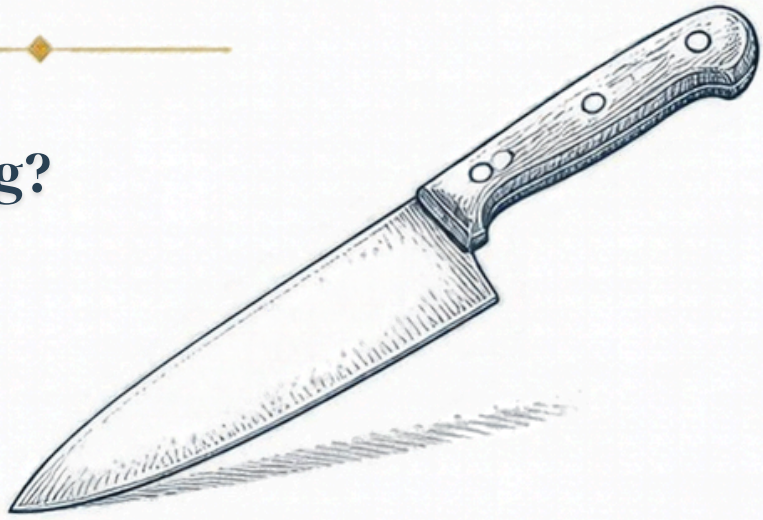
Who am I becoming, and whose am I?

A study of identity, sonship, formation and legacy



David Connell

WHAT MAKES A THING A THING?



What makes a thing a thing?

- what makes this knife a knife
- shape, function or purpose
- steel
- blacksmith

Function

Imagine this knife no longer functions as a knife:

- removing the sharp edge
- becoming blunt
- opening a tin of paint
- never cutting anything
- sitting in a display cabinet

Its identity is not created by its performance. Its performance is an expression of what it is.

Personal reflection

What have I allowed my performance to say about who I am?

What is the difference between what I am, what I do, and what I was created to do?

Aristotle's Four Causes

Aristotle explored the nature and existence of things more than 2,300 years ago.

1	**Material Cause — what is it made of**	? **What am I made of?**
2	**Formal Cause — what makes it the kind of thing it is**	? **What is my nature?**
3	**Efficient Cause — what brought it into existence**	? **Where did I come from?**
4	**Final Cause — telos, end, goal or purpose**	? **Why do I exist?**

SCRIPTURE CONNECTION

God is the ultimate cause in all four. He formed us from the dust **(Genesis 2:7)**, designed us in His image **(Genesis 1:26-27)**, brought us to life by His breath, and made us for relationship and glory **(Psalm 139)**.

MY FOUR ANSWERS

1

2

3

4

PART ONE

The Difference Between a Knife and a Human Being

A FORGED KNIFE

A knife is forged with a purpose. It can be sharpened, become blunt, damaged, or even broken. It can be repaired, reshaping, and made useful again.
Its value is tied to its function.



A HUMAN BEING

A human life begins as an embryo.
From that first moment, a person is on a continuous journey of development through infancy, childhood, adolescence, and adulthood.

A person is not merely a tool for a future purpose.
We have value before usefulness.
Our worth is not earned; it is inherent.

There is continuity and progression. Each stage builds on the last, shaping who we are and who we can become. *I am not what I was, nor am I yet the fullness of what I am becoming.*

> **Who I am today is not the final expression of who I will become.**





REFLECTION

What part of my present stage am I treating as a permanent definition?

What is God forming in me?

– PART ONE

The Fifth Question — Whose Am I?



Aristotle identified four questions that philosophy and life continually ask:

1. What is it? (What is real?)
2. How does it work?
3. What is it for?
4. How can I know?

But beneath all four lies a deeper, more personal question: **Whose am I?**

A craftsman asks what he can produce.
A father asks who you are.
A craftsman measures by output.
A father defines by belonging.

A son belongs before he achieves.
Relationship before responsibility.
Place in the family before capability.

God is not merely the Creator who made us; He is the true Father who brings us into sonship through Jesus Christ.

PART TWO

THE REVELATION OF SONSHIP

Created in His Image, Received as His Children

Genesis 1:26–27
"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness…' So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."

John 1:12
"Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he **gave the right to become children of God** — children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God."

Romans 8
"You did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, 'Abba! Father!'"

Christian identity begins not with self-improvement but with grace bringing us into **God's family through Christ.**

Where do I belong?

The Father's Declaration



MATTHEW 3

As Jesus was coming up out of the water,
he saw heaven being torn open and the
Spirit descending on him like a dove.
And a voice from heaven said,

"This is My beloved Son,
in whom I am well pleased."

The Father's declaration came before Jesus' public ministry, miracles, crowds, and demonstrations of the Kingdom.
His identity was established in the Father's love, not in His performance.

Identity is not established by ministry; ministry flows from identity.

We do not work to become sons; we learn to live and work as sons.

ACHIEVEMENT-BASED SECURITY	LIVING FROM ACCEPTANCE IN CHRIST
I must prove my worth.	I am already loved and accepted.
My value depends on success.	My value is secure in Christ.
I fear failure and rejection.	I rest in His approval.
I earn approval.	I receive grace.
I am driven by pressure.	I am empowered by love.
Ministry is a way to be seen.	Ministry flows from identity.

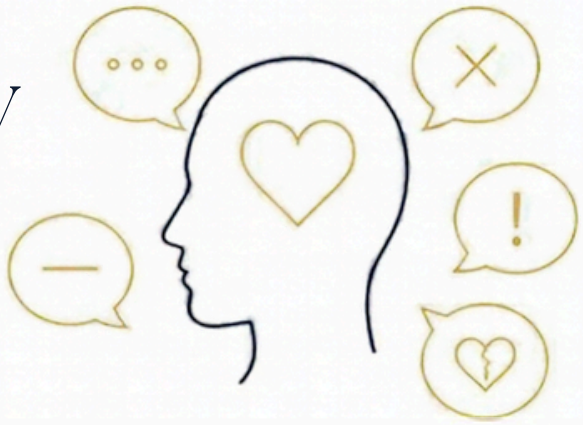
Living from acceptance

Where do I work to be recognised?

Where do I achieve to feel valued?

What would change if I began from the assurance that I am already loved and accepted in Christ?

7. The Voices That Shape Identity



From childhood, we absorb voices that shape how we see ourselves. Some build us up, while others tear us down. The question is: whose voice will we finally believe?

The Voices We Hear

- Voice of Father: “You’ll never amount to anything.”
- Voice of Mother: “You’re not good enough.”
- Voice of Teachers: “You’re just like your father.”
- Voice of Peers: “You’re a disappointment.”
- Voice of Culture: “You are what you achieve.”
- Voice of Failure: “You always mess up.”
- Voice of Shame: “You don’t deserve love.”

The Effect of Absent Affirmation

Without words of affirmation, a man may believe lies about his worth, struggle with performance, and live in constant insecurity—always trying to prove himself but never feeling enough.

Whose voice has authority to define a man?

Only the Father’s voice establishes identity.

NAME REFLECTION: DAVID	NAME REFLECTION: JONATHAN
David — beloved, deeply loved.	Jonathan — gift of God, Yahweh has given.

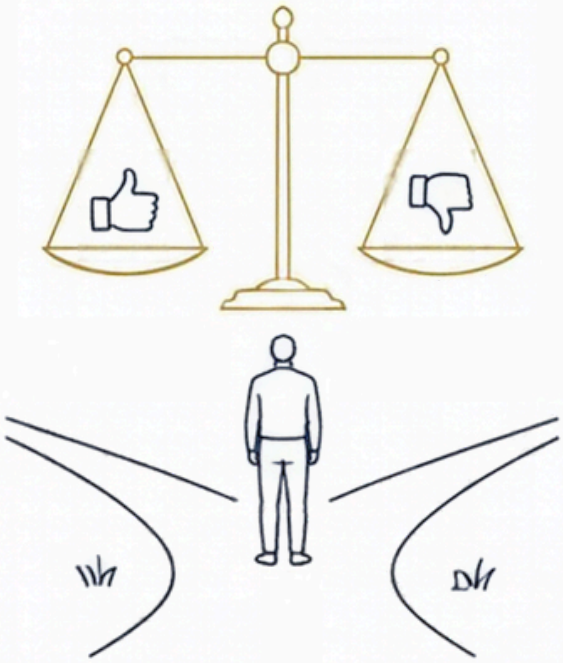
Reflection

Which voices have shaped my self-understanding?

Whose voice have I given authority to define me?

8 Living from Identity Rather Than Striving for It

When a man is not secure in his identity, he lives at the mercy of circumstances and people.



WHEN HE IS NOT SECURE	WHEN HE IS SECURE
When things go well, he feels valuable.	He rests in his worth because he is loved.
When things go badly, he feels worthless.	He remains steady when things go well or badly.
He is deeply affected by praise and criticism.	He is anchored in truth, not applause.
His confidence depends on success and failure.	His confidence rests in God's acceptance.

Secure identity produces freedom from the constant need to prove ourselves.

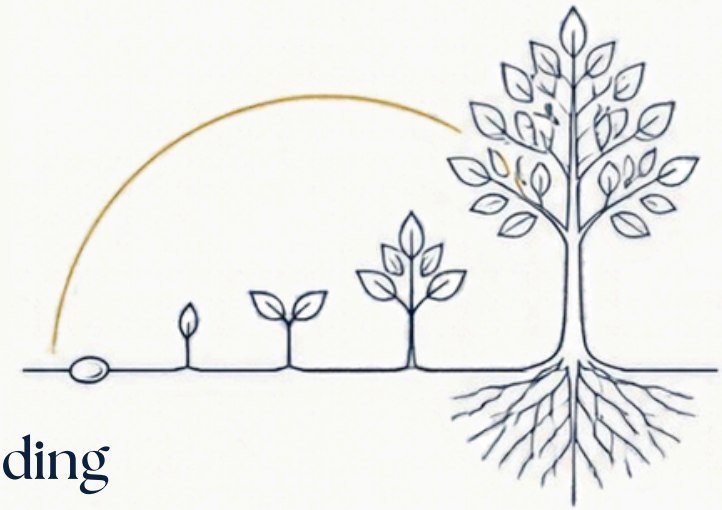
We are free to live, love and lead from who we are, not to earn who we are.

What am I still trying to prove?

Whose approval am I trying to obtain?

> One of the great marks of maturity in a man is not how much he can accomplish, but how little he needs to prove.

THE DYNAMIC NATURE OF IDENTITY



9 Identity Is Both Established and Unfolding

Human identity develops from embryo through childhood and adulthood.
God knits us together in the womb (Psalm 139:13-16), and we grow in understanding, character, and calling over time.

In Christ, there is a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17).
When we trust in Jesus, our identity is made new—old things pass away, and all things become new.

Transformation is ongoing (2 Corinthians 3:18).
We are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another by the Spirit of the Lord.

Romans 8:29 speaks of being conformed to the image of God's Son.
This is God's purpose for us—our identity is being shaped to reflect the character and likeness of Jesus.

Identity in Christ is received; its mature expression is progressively formed.

From Telos to Teleios — Purpose and Maturity

Telos means end or purpose—God's intention for our lives.
Teleios means maturity, completeness, and full development.
God's goal is our wholeness in Christ (Ephesians 4:13):

"until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

What is God forming me to become?

10. Four Dimensions of Identity



> "You do not become a son through maturity. You mature because you are a son."

1 Received

who I am in Christ and relationship with the Father established through grace.

2 Revealed

what I am learning to understand through Scripture and the Holy Spirit.

3 Formed

how truth shapes character, thinking, values and behaviour.

4 Expressed

how identity is lived through relationships, work, leadership, decisions and service.

Received. Revealed. Formed. Expressed.

How do these four dimensions shape your life right now?

1. Received	2. Revealed
3. Formed	4. Expressed

11 The Danger of Defining Yourself by Your Present Stage



Do not define a person by their present weakness,
immaturity or failure.
Just as an embryo does not reveal the full person to come,
your current condition does not reveal
who God is forming you to be.
You have present limitations, mistakes and struggles.
These are real. But they are not the whole story.
Your present condition is real,
but it is not necessarily your final expression.

> “Your present condition is real,
> but it is not necessarily your final expression.”

This is not permission to ignore sin, avoid responsibility or pretend weaknesses do not matter.
Transformation is not a denial of reality.
It is a commitment to face it honestly
while trusting God to change what He has not yet finished in you.

Reflection

Where have I mistaken my present stage for my permanent identity?

What future does God see that I cannot yet see?

The Environment of Becoming



12 THE ENVIRONMENT OF BECOMING

Development does not happen in isolation; relationships, habits, choices, voices and attention shape us.

Jesus' words in John 15:

"Abide in Me, and I in you."

"Without Me you can do nothing."

Our formation happens through God's Word, prayer, obedience, the Holy Spirit, and relationships within His body.

The environment we continually live in influences what we progressively become.

ROMANS 12:2

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

COLOSSIANS 3:2

Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

My environment of becoming

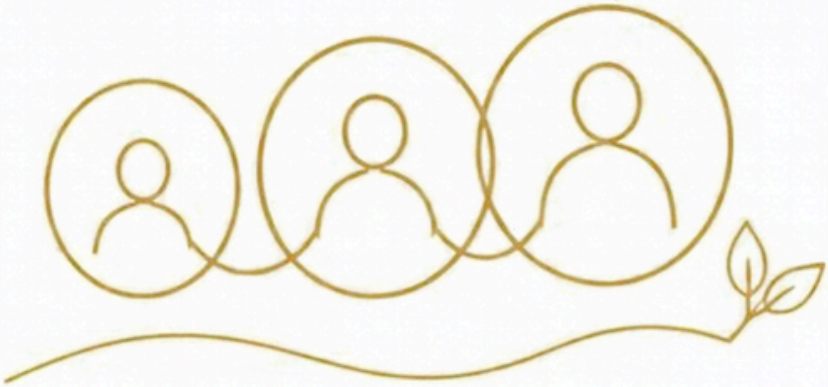
What relationships shape me?

What voices do I repeatedly listen to?

What do I give my attention to?

How am I abiding in Christ?

From Becoming to Legacy



13 FROM BECOMING TO LEGACY

Identity develops from embryo through growth, learning, choices, relationships and responsibility.

Jesus' words in 1 John 3:

"Beloved, now we are children of God."

Legacy is more than possessions and achievements. It includes influence, values, relationships, wisdom, examples and the effect a life has on others.

CAUTIONS

- ✕ Leaving financial inheritance without wisdom.
- ✕ Building an organisation without forming successors.
- ✕ Achieving recognition while neglecting close relationships.

Spiritual formation blesses:

CHILDREN | FAMILIES | COMMUNITIES | LEADERS | FUTURE GENERATIONS

Legacy is what a life is already reproducing.

Hope extends beyond death into resurrection and eternal life with Christ.

REFLECTION

Who am I becoming, and what will that person leave behind?

The Father's Declaration and the Enemy's Challenge

14 THE FATHER'S DECLARATION AND THE ENEMY'S CHALLENGE



At Jesus' baptism the Father declares,
"This is My beloved Son."

In the wilderness the tempter says,
"If You are the Son of God."



The contrast is clear:
Identity is affirmed by the Father.
Identity is challenged by the enemy.

Jesus refuses to prove Himself
on the enemy's terms.

His response from Scripture:
"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."



You do not need to prove to the enemy what the Father has already established.
Apply this to criticism, being overlooked, defensiveness and insecurity.

Where am I still trying to prove my identity?

Gideon — A Man Hiding from His Calling



15 GIDEON — A MAN HIDING FROM HIS CALLING

In Judges 6, Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to hide from the Midianites.

The angel of the Lord appeared to him and said,

> "The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valour."

Instead of seeing himself as God saw him, Gideon focused on his family, clan, position and limitations.

> "My clan is the weakest in Manasseh,"
> and I am the least in my father's house."

God's answer was simple and powerful:

> "Surely I will be with you."

SEEING MYSELF THROUGH CIRCUMSTANCES:	ACTING IN DEPENDENCE UPON GOD'S PRESENCE:
• I hide from what God has called me to.	• I step forward in faith.
• I focus on my weaknesses.	• I trust His strength, not my own.
• I doubt my worth and my place.	• I walk in confidence because He is with me.

Application

Like Gideon, we can be shaped by rejection, our family background, past mistakes, or words that told us we would never amount to anything.
But God sees our potential, not our past.
When we remember that He is with us, we can rise to the calling He has placed on our lives.

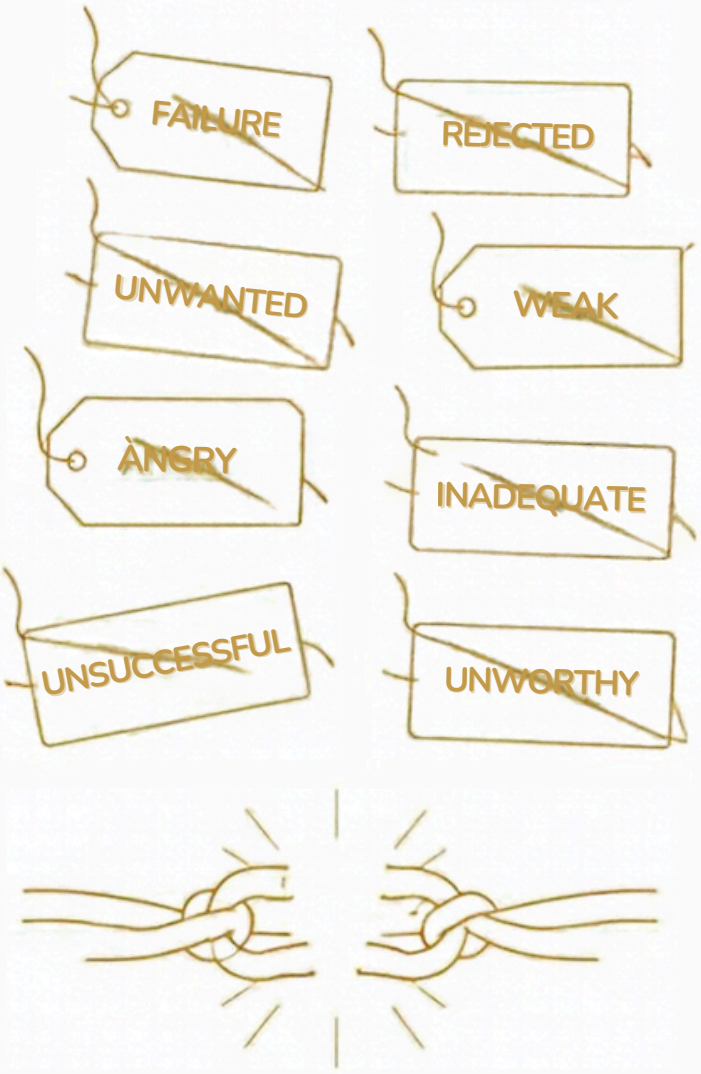
Reflection

What has caused me to disqualify myself?

What changes when I remember that God is with me?

The Labels We Carry

16 THE LABELS WE CARRY



We can carry labels from our past that shape how we see ourselves.

Failure • Rejected • Unwanted • Weak
Angry • Inadequate • Unsuccessful
Unworthy

There is a difference between acknowledging what has happened and allowing it to define who you are.

Failure may describe an event, but it does not have to become your identity.

In Christ, sin and shame can be brought into God's forgiveness and transforming grace.

Grace does not remove responsibility or excuse wrongdoing, but repentance and transformation are possible.

Our past need not have the final word.

Labels I have carried

A label or event	What God says is possible

Where Are You?



17 WHERE ARE YOU?

In Genesis 3, Adam and Eve disobedied God. They ate from the tree and suddenly realised they were naked.

They made coverings from leaves and hid themselves among the trees.

God came looking for them and asked,

> "Where are you?"

Adam replied,

> "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself."

We all hide in different ways.
Men often cover what feels unsafe:

Insecurity with achievement.	Fear with control.	Shame with distance.	Vulnerability with anger.	Inadequacy with performance.

God's question, "Where are you?" is still spoken today.
He invites us to come out of hiding and into the light.
To be known, to receive grace, and to be transformed.

What am I hiding behind?

What covering have I built?

What would it mean to come into the light?

From Hiding from God to Being Hidden in Christ



18 FROM HIDING FROM GOD TO BEING HIDDEN IN CHRIST

Redemption does not simply call us out of hiding; it brings us into the security of being hidden with Christ in God.

COLOSSIANS 3:3

"For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God."

ADAM HIDES IN SHAME

He runs from God.

Hiding brings fear, guilt and distance.

He tries to cover himself in his own strength.

THE BELIEVER IS HIDDEN IN CHRIST

He rests with God.

Hidden in Christ brings security, love and belonging.

He is covered by Christ's righteousness.

> The hiding of shame is not the security of belonging.

In Christ, you are not merely forgiven—you are hidden. Loved, known and accepted in Him, with nothing to prove and nowhere to run.

Where do I experience security in belonging to Christ?

My Name Is...

19 MY NAME IS...

What makes a thing a thing?
Its composition, its form, its origin,
its purpose.

You are a human being—created in the image of God.

**Through Jesus Christ,
you are invited into the Father's family.**



It is not earned; it is given.

IDENTITY IS REVEALED BY WORD AND SPIRIT.
It is spoken and shown.

IDENTITY IS FORMED BY TRANSFORMATION.
It is shaped within.

IDENTITY IS EXPRESSED THROUGH LIFE.
It is lived out.

"My name is..."

THE JOURNEY OF IDENTITY

BEGINNING OF LIFE
Known and held by God from the start.

CHILDHOOD
Learning who we are in His love.

ADULTHOOD
Choosing to live from His truth.

MATURITY
Becoming rooted and fruitful.

LEGACY
Leaving a trail of faith and love.

ETERNAL FUTURE
Living with Him forever.

Who are you?

Whose are you?

You are no longer defined by achievements, losses, suffering or other people's labels.

You are learning to live as sons and daughters. You will confront lies, come out from coverings, recognise the Father's voice, and live as sons—fully known and deeply loved.

Personal Response and Declaration

30 minutes

1. Quiet Reflection — 10 Minutes

- What has been defining me?
- What am I still trying to prove?
- What truth about my identity in Christ do I need to receive?
- Who am I becoming, and what kind of legacy am I creating?

Write your responses.

2. My Name Is... — 10 Minutes

Write a personal identity declaration beginning with "My name is..." Include the following:

- what they are choosing to stop allowing to define them
- what Scripture says about who they are in Christ
- what it means to belong to the Father
- what kind of man they are being formed to become
- what they want their lives to reproduce in others

3. Closing Declaration

I am not defined by what I have achieved,
what I have lost, what I have suffered, or
what others have called me.
My identity is found in Christ alone.
I am His, I am hidden with Him.
I am chosen, loved, and secure.
I walk in the freedom of His truth.
I live for His glory and the good of others.
My name is...

Amen.

