

## Half Truths: Hearing Grace in a World of Noise

### Identity is a Secret Puzzle

It's easy to feel overwhelmed by the competing voices and narratives that shape our lives. Often, these cultural messages—while well-intentioned—can leave us feeling burdened, anxious, or disconnected. We will explore seven pervasive cultural “half truths” that mislead our understanding of life, identity, and purpose.

This series of Small Group studies isn't about proving who's “right.” Instead, the goal is to discover how Jesus is the truth, and to step into reality where his gospel liberates us from all the little lies that cling so closely. And his gospel is the best tool for healing our bad theology and tendencies to make ourselves little gods.

? Did you ever go by any nicknames? Who did you allow to call you by these nicknames?

#### The Half-Truth: Identity is a Secret Puzzle

Who I am is up to me. This means I need to discover my passions, gender, sexuality, religious and political beliefs. When I do, you need to affirm them.

? What has helped you understand who you are?

*Possible answers: Parents, siblings, friends, personality assessments*

? How has the impact of the above influences affected your self view?

*Possible answers: Answers will vary from fully embracing these trusted voices to being skeptical to questioning or pushing back in the places that seem uncomfortable or misunderstood.*

? When do you feel like you change who you are?

*Possible answers: different friend groups, co-workers, “church friends”, certain family members, etc.*

#### Where Do We See This In Scripture?

As you read these scripture passages, consider what they say about this half-truth: identity is a secret puzzle.

### **Ecclesiastes 6:12 (NIV)**

For who knows what is good for a person in life, during the few and meaningless days they pass through like a shadow? Who can tell them what will happen under the sun after they are gone?

### **Luke 19:1-10 (NIV)**

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. <sup>2</sup> A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. <sup>3</sup> He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. <sup>4</sup> So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

<sup>5</sup> When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.” <sup>6</sup> So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

<sup>7</sup> All the people saw this and began to mutter, “He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.”

<sup>8</sup> But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.”

<sup>9</sup> Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham.

<sup>10</sup> For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

### **Galatians 2:20 (NIV)**

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

### **1 Peter 2:9 (NIV)**

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.



What do we see in these passages that tell us about our identity?

*Possible answers: our eternal identity carries much more weight than our mortal, earthly one. Jesus wants to claim us as family!*



Which aspect of your identity in Christ is your favorite to embrace? Bonus points for scripture references! Take some time today to remind one another of the truth of our gospel identities.

*Possible answers: I am a new creation in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17), I am a fellow citizen - a member of God’s household (Ephesians 2:19), I have access to God through the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 2:18)*

How can we draw closer to the one that is the Truth?

## For Discussion and Accountability

? When is it difficult to take on your gospel identity? How can we pray for you this week?

? How is your heart believing this half-truth right now? How can we come alongside you in this?