

Series:
#SELFIE
Identity Crisis



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Week beginning October 13, 2014

Selfie [sel-fee] – photograph that one takes of oneself with a digital camera or a front-facing smartphone, tablet or webcam, especially for posting on a social networking or photo-sharing website. (source: Dictionary.com)

Did you even need that definition? Odds are, you probably already know what a *selfie* is and have posted them all over social media. This word is so familiar and entrenched in our day to day life that we have trouble remembering what life was like before social media. Yes, that was all the way back to just 10 years ago!

Think about what a selfie really is: *a picture, perfectly crafted to present the very best image of ourselves.* We control the lighting and our expression. We can delete the image if the smile is wrong, hold the camera a little higher to make our eyes appear larger or add a filter to cover our imperfections. These pictures are way more than a self-portrait. They are a declaration of how we want others to see us and the ultimate publicity campaign for ourselves. When posted on social media, selfies translate into “likes” and “comments” and provide instant confirmation that we are accepted.

And if you’re not buying the story that selfies are a crafted image of yourself, when was the last time you posted a picture of yourself after too little sleep, with eyes

crossed or on the day you forgot to rinse the conditioner out of your hair? On the contrary, we post our “seatbelt selfies” from the front seat of the car right when we leave our house because it’s the best we’re going to look all day long.

Truth is, we take more selfies today than any other time in history. We are more in tune with our public image and presentation of that image than ever before. We’ve hired ourselves as chief publicity officer for our Facebook pages, Twitter handles, E-Harmony profiles and blogging platforms. We know that a happy, smiling selfie is the key to the illusion of a perfect life, but who are we really? Does a great public image with selfies and social media give us any more clarity on who we really are?

Good news. God makes the journey to discover your identity pretty simple for those who believe in Him. Scripture says that we were created in God’s own image. Our authentic self should be rooted in Christ and our actions should line up with God’s law. But, as sinful, imperfect beings we have a disconnect. Even after coming to faith in Christ, our lives reflect Titus 1:16, “*Such people claim they know God, but they deny him by the way they live. They are detestable and disobedient, worthless for doing anything good.*”

Pastor Craig Groeschel even goes so far to call himself a “Christian Atheist”. It’s what happens when you SAY you believe in God but act like He doesn’t exist. When actions and beliefs don’t line up, you have an identity crisis that no selfie can mask. You’re stuck and missing out on all the best that God has promised you.

Our identity is more than just a perfectly crafted picture of our outward selves. Your identity should be solely based on the fact that you are a child of God, created in His own image, and that He has claimed you for His own for all eternity!

I only got 10 likes in the last 5 minutes. Do you think I should take it down? Let me take another selfie.

–#SELFIE by The Chainsmokers

**THIS WEEK’S STUDY IS ABOUT HOW TO BE MORE LIKE
CHRIST AND LESS LIKE OUR SELFIE.**

MONDAY – Your Sin Problem Is Even Worse than You Think

Big Point: Sin is always present, regardless of its acknowledgement.

Have you ever done something you know you shouldn't have? Have you NOT done something when you know you should have? Of course, everyone has those moments. It's called sin. Sin is a problem for everyone because it separates you from God. Unfortunately, we don't realize that the magnitude of our sin is worse than we think.

Sin does not come from an outside source, it comes from within. That is a hard pill to swallow, but it's true. Unfortunately, many people believe they have a ticket to heaven because they're good people and do good works. These people operate under two false assumptions: 1) their sins are not that bad, and 2) their sin does not separate them from a holy God.

The truth is, you carry your sin around with you all the time. It slowly weakens the person you ought to be, and creates a presence that makes it harder to do the right thing. Even Paul, the author of the majority of the New Testament, said, "I have discovered this principle of life—that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong." (Romans 7:21)

Paul wanted to do right according to God's law, but the sin within him resisted. Likewise, God's law has been given for everyone to follow, but human nature is defiant. When you're told specific moral code or rules to follow, you immediately think, "Nobody tells me what to do!" or, "Only I know what's best for me!" Nothing could be further from the truth. God knows what's going on inside of you. He knows what's best for you because He made you. Sin is sin, and no amount of good deeds will ever make up for it.

*A thin veneer of religion
cannot cover the darkness
of our hearts. The sins that
can destroy you seem
rather harmless.*

—Timothy Keller

READ and THINK... What does the Bible say?

1. In his time, Jeremiah was a man who stood alone. He declared God's law, but those around him continued to sin. These people had the law, the prophets of God and a history filled with God's miracles, yet they cherished sin.

Question: How does Jeremiah 17:9 contradict those who say, "I need to follow my heart"?

Jeremiah 17:9 (New Living Translation)

The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?

Answer:

2. Sin makes us unclean so that we cannot approach God any more than a beggar could dine at a king's table. It doesn't mean God will reject us or that He despises our efforts to please Him; it means that if we demand acceptance on the basis of our "good" conduct, God will point out that our righteousness is nothing compared to His infinite righteousness.

Question: Why are the righteous deeds of people like filthy rags? What does this passage say about what our sins do to us?

Isaiah 64:6 (New Living Translation)

We are all infected and impure with sin.

***When we display our righteous deeds,
they are nothing but filthy rags.***

***Like autumn leaves, we wither and fall,
and our sins sweep us away like the wind.***

Answer:

3. Sin is never harmless. In this verse, God speaks directly to Cain right before he murders Abel. Cain's jealousy was like a crouching animal and hadn't yet caused harm. But when it strikes, it's deadly. Sin is deadly to everyone who chooses to live in it.

Question: According to Genesis 4:7, what is sin trying to do to you? What must one do to counter this?

Genesis 4:7 (New Living Translation)

You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master.

Answer:

LIVE... What will you do now?

Have you ever compared your sins with another person's and thought, "Well, I'm not as bad as they are"? Why did it bring you comfort when you know that all sin separates you from God? How can you work to remember that the next time you're faced with the choice to sin or not?

Do you ever resist God's law because you don't want to be told what to do? Why do you think God created rules for you to follow? How would reading the Bible help maintain an awareness of sin's presence and the need to follow His law?

Describe the last time you were tempted to sin and resisted. What allowed you to follow God's law in that moment of temptation?

PRAY... God, what do you want me to know and do?

Take a moment and thank God for His laws for you to follow. Ask Him to make you aware of the sins that you might think are harmless, so that they don't turn into something more. Pray for the will to follow God, even when your heart rebels.

TUESDAY – Holiness Is Worth Fighting For

Big Point: God wants you to be holy, not necessarily happy!

After you realize that you are utterly lost and that life is pointless without the higher purpose of God, **everything changes**. You have taken the first step of a changed life. It's a life of immeasurable worth - a life of meaning and inconceivable joy. But what happens to all the scars, hurts and bad habits from years of sinful living? What happens to all the dark areas of life that you have kept locked away? Unfortunately, they don't just vanish.

Instead, God wants you to take ownership of all of it. He wants you to throw open the windows and let in the light. This can take years of struggle. Thankfully, God is patient and walks with His children through every challenge they face.

This process can be compared to an iceberg, 90% of which is underwater. As the sun shines on the exposed surface, it begins to melt, moving the rest of the

iceberg ever closer to the light at the surface. In the same way, we are usually aware of only a small part of our sinfulness and need, which is all we can deal with at any one time. However, as the light of God's work in our lives changes us in the areas we know about, we become aware of new areas needing God's help and the work of becoming more like Christ continues.

To become more like Christ means growing in your desire to devote your life to loving others and living for him. It is being cleansed AND prepared for God's service. Give the Holy Spirit access to all areas of your life and blessings will come.

So how does this work? Jesus, while preaching the Sermon on the Mount, said "...blessed are the peace makers..." **not** the peace lovers. You need to go to war with those areas of your life that are in direct opposition to the will of God. Face the sins you are still allowing in your life. Make war with your flesh and watch God change your life.

READ and THINK... What does the Bible say?

1. The Apostle Paul is writing to believers in Rome and explaining how he has a spiritual nature and a sinful nature, both constantly warring with one another.

Question: What does this reveal about the struggles believers continue to have after becoming saved if they are not relying on Christ in all things?

Romans 7:18-19 (New Living Translation)

18 And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. 19 I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway.

Answer:

2. Peter pointed out to his original audience that God is merciful, just and loving, in contrast to the gods of Rome and paganism. He used the word "holy" here to say that the Christians needed to be completely free from sin and set apart for God's service.

If you think you can walk in holiness without keeping up perpetual fellowship with Christ, you have made a great mistake.

If you would be holy, you must live close to Jesus.

—**Charles Spurgeon**

Question: What exactly is Peter encouraging his readers, God's children, to be on guard against?

1 Peter 1:14-16 (New Living Translation)

14 So you must live as God's obedient children. Don't slip back into your old ways of living to satisfy your own desires. You didn't know any better then. 15 But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God who chose you is holy. 16 For the Scriptures say, "You must be holy because I am holy."

Answer:

3. *"We all have areas where temptation is strong and habits are hard to conquer but there is a difference between committing a sin and continuing to sin. A true believer who commits a sin repents, confesses and receives forgiveness. A person who continues to sin, by contrast, is not sorry for what he or she is doing. Thus this person never confesses and never receives forgiveness. Such a person is in opposition to God, no matter what religious claims he or she makes." --NIV Life Application Study Bible.*

Question: What was John saying about those that call themselves Christ-followers but don't address ongoing patterns of sin?

1 John 3:4-6 (New Living Translation)

4 Everyone who sins is breaking God's law, for all sin is contrary to the law of God. 5 And you know that Jesus came to take away our sins, and there is no sin in him. 6 Anyone who continues to live in him will not sin. But anyone who keeps on sinning does not know him or understand who he is.

Answer:

LIVE... What will you do now?

Do you have any ongoing patterns of sin from which you've been unwilling or unable to turn away? Describe this struggle. What impact is this struggle having on your relationship with God?

Talk about your feelings after you fail (sin) in an area where God wants you to think or live differently. Why is it impossible to rationalize bad behavior to yourself?

What can you do to finally turn from this sin so you can continue to grow in your faith?

PRAY... God, what do you want me to know and do?

Thank God for your faith and His grace. Thank Him for loving you so much He sent Jesus to rescue you from eternal separation from Him and a life without meaning. Ask Him to help you to stay close to Him every minute of every day. Ask Him to guide you with His wisdom through His Word and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

WEDNESDAY – Allowing God to Release You From Your Past

Big Point: Becoming the person God wants you to be means moving past your sinful past.

As mentioned on Monday and Tuesday, the first part of our faith journey is acknowledging our need for Christ. The next key step to becoming more Christ-like is stepping out from under the weight of the guilt of sin. Many Christians struggle to see themselves the way God sees us, as His precious and sanctified children. After our initial beginning of a relationship with Jesus, we have been forgiven and made right with God. That does not mean that we will never slip up and have a moment of weakness, but we are striving for perfection. A stumbling block for many of us is to see ourselves as Christ sees us.

In his book, *Christian Atheist*, Pastor Craig Groeschel says, “As a pastor, I’ve

discovered that many people are dying slowly in a secret tomb of shame. Some are ashamed of their poor financial condition, plagued with guilt about their irresponsible spending and debt. Others are ashamed about sexual sin from their past. Many carry extreme guilt with them into their future relationships. Countless people are crippled by the shame of secret addictions. Some people even live with false guilt after suffering as victims of sexual abuse. Shame usually follows a pattern— a cycle of self-recrimination and lies— that claims life after life. First, we experience an intensely painful event. Second, we believe the lie that our pain and failure is who we are—not just something we’ve done, or had done to us— and we experience shame. And finally, our feelings of shame trap us into thinking that we can never recover— that, in fact, we don’t even deserve to.”

Nobody can produce new evidence of your depravity that will make God change His mind. For God justified you with (so to speak) His eyes open. He knew the worst about you at the time when He accepted you for Jesus' sake; and the verdict which He passed then was, and is, final.

—**J.I. Packer**

READ and THINK... What does the Bible say?

1. In the following verses, the Apostle Paul discusses his struggles to fight for perfection. He is open and honest about his struggles here. He had a history of doing this in his letters, as evidenced by chapters such as Romans 7.

Question: According to verse 13, what is one stumbling block on the way to possessing the perfection granted by a relationship with Jesus?

Philippians 3:12-14 (New Living Translation)

12 I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me. 13 No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.

Answer:

2. In the following verse, Paul wants believers to understand the culmination of grace. Their salvation was a free gift from God but they were saved for a purpose.

Question: According to Ephesians 2:10, why were you saved from destruction, otherwise known as “created anew in Christ Jesus”?

Ephesians 2:10 (New Living Translation)

For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

Answer:

3. Our acceptance of Jesus marks a turning point in our life’s journey. Conversion, the moment when someone accepts Jesus as his or her Lord and Savior, marks complete spiritual regeneration. The Holy Spirit enters into that person and indwells in him or her permanently.

Question: According to this verse, what is true once you accept Jesus? What does this imply for your past and future as a Christ-follower?

2 Corinthians 5:17 (New Living Translation)

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

Answer:

LIVE... What will you do now?

Do you have anything from your past which you still need to work through? What past sins still seem to haunt you?

In what ways is your past a stumbling block for you? Do you find yourself coming back to the same place of blame or shame? How can you be rid of it for good?

God has created us to do His good works. What does that look like in your life?

When you came to faith in Christ, you became “new”. What elements in your past has God re-written? How have you seen God bless you or others as a result of your decision to become a Christ-follower?

PRAY... God, what do you want me to know and do?

Thank God once again for His wonderful forgiveness. Ask God to search your mind and heart for any remaining shame or regret over your past. Rest in His love and ask Him to reveal the good things He planned for you long ago.

THURSDAY— The Freedom of Integrity

Big Point: *A secret life weighs heavy on one's soul.*

Imagine if you had no deep, dark secrets. What if everything you said was righteous and pure? How would you feel if all of your relationships were completely free of strife? Sound like a pipe dream? Maybe. But still worth pursuing!

The Apostle Paul talked about living this type of life when he wrote the book of Galatians. In what has come to be known as the Fruit of the Spirit, Paul talked about the type of life that is good and pure and pleasing to all. It is a life dominated by the Holy Spirit. Galatians 5:22-23 says:

²² But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

Integrity is keeping a commitment even after circumstances have changed.

—David Jeremiah

This is what a life of integrity looks like! It's a life without double talk or regrets. It is a life without apologies or arguments. No more blaming. No more complaining.

Here's a question: Who are you when no one is watching?

The answer to that question, largely, speaks to your integrity. Are you the same person, regardless of who is with you? Is your private life and your public life one in the same? If not, that simply means you have some work to do. You need to circle back to God's laws and embrace His way of living.

Many people believe that God's laws exist to limit their own freedom. This could not be further from the truth! God's laws are in place so that His people don't have to live a duplicitous, guilt-ridden, double-sided life! He wants you to feel peace within yourself. He wants your every thought, belief and action to be completely pure.

READ and THINK... What does the Bible say?

1. James, the half-brother of Jesus, did not believe in Christ's divinity during his ministry, but became a believer and leader of the early church after Jesus' resurrection. During this time period, the church was under immense persecution and James was writing, among other things, to show the importance of community for those within the church.

Question: God has given you two main weapons to fight hypocrisy. What are they?

James 5:16 (New Living Translation)

Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.

Answer:

2. The writer of 1 John was John the apostle. He also wrote the gospel of John and was a first hand witness to the ministry, teaching and miracles of Jesus. The Christians that he was writing to were under attack by false teachers.

Question: When Christians sin, what does it say about their allegiance to God?

1 John 3:7-8 (New Living Translation)

7 Dear children, don't let anyone deceive you about this: When people do what is right, it shows that they are righteous, even as Christ is righteous. 8 But when people keep on sinning, it shows that they belong to the devil, who has been sinning since the beginning. But the Son of God came to destroy the works of the devil.

Answer:

3. Luke 16:10 comes from Jesus' parable (story) of the shrewd manager, one of Jesus' many teaching stories. The manager realizes he's about to be fired so he cuts deals with his master's debtors so that they will treat him favorably after he's out of a job. Even though he acted deceptively, the master applauds his shrewdness because he proved himself to be wise with details.

Question: How does this verse apply to the matter of holiness and living righteously?

Luke 16:10 (English Standard Version)

One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much.

Answer:

LIVE... What will you do now?

What small sins are you currently justifying? Do you have anything in your life that you know is less than pleasing to God? What is God calling you to do about it?

In your opinion, what makes a person someone of integrity? Would you use the word integrity to describe yourself? Why or why not?

What troubles you the most about your own struggle to act in a way that is consistent with your beliefs?

PRAY... God, what do you want me to know and do?

Thank God for His laws and principles. Ask Him to give you the wisdom and strength to follow them completely. Ask God to bless you with an undivided life, one that honors Him in every social situation.

FRIDAY – Seeing Yourself as Christ Sees You

Big Point: *You are worth more to God than you can even imagine.*

Self-deprecation has become somewhat of a trend these days. Some Christians think they are being spiritual by beating themselves up. And although Paul said, “If I must boast, I would rather boast about the things that show how weak I am” (2 Corinthians 11:30), it’s important for Christians to realize that God made them just as He did for a purpose. God does not make mistakes, so no matter what weaknesses you may have, you are not a mistake. You are created in His own image. You are beautiful, unique and God’s holy precious child. He has counted all the hairs on your head. That’s how special YOU are to Him!

If you find yourself feeling worthless, you need to ask yourself, “What determines my self worth? Is it the world? Other people? My parents? Or is it the One True God?” You are not a culmination of your bad choices. You are not a culmination of your material possessions, your profile picture or the image you present to the world. You are a child of God.

God wanted you here for a purpose and Christ died so you could live out that purpose. To think you have no purpose on this earth is to deny the glory of God and the sacrifice of Jesus. It’s time to start seeing yourself as God sees you and start living the life that Christ made possible for you!

READ, THINK and LIVE... Read and apply the Bible.

God’s character goes into the creation of every person. When you feel worthless or even begin to hate yourself, remember that God’s spirit is ready and willing to work within you. You should have as much respect for yourself as your Maker has for you.

Question: How does it make you feel that God carefully knit you together? Do you see yourself as a precious child of God?

How does reading this verse help you to realize your worth? How should this verse change the way you feel about yourself?

Psalm 139:13-15 (New Living Translation)

13 You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother’s womb.

14 Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it.

15 You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb.

Answer:

PRAY... God, what do you want me to know and do?

Thank God for making you one of His valuable children. Thank Him for loving you and for creating you in His image. Thank Him for His reminders of your worth. Pray to be able to see and value yourself the way He does, and that others do the same.

Questions for Discussion— Try these in a group, with friends or at the dinner table.

1. What does it mean to have your identity rooted in Christ? What types of things have you previously looked at to find your identity?
2. Read Isaiah 64:6. What does this passage tell you about your good deeds? Why is performing good deeds an ineffective way to cleanse sins?
3. Kyle used the word “sanctification” this past weekend, meaning to become more like Christ and less like your old, sinful self. As it relates to becoming more Christ-like, what areas in your life currently need the most work?
4. What role does prayer play in overcoming sinfulness? For your answer, look to James 5:16.

October 2014 Memory Verse:

Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.

1 Corinthians 13:7 (New Living Translation)

Weekend Updates!

- **Saturday’s Daily Bible Reading Plan: Oct. 18—Hebrews 10:19-39**
- **Next Weekend:** Next week will continue the series, “Selfie”. Barb Roose will be speaking about “Improving your Selfie”. We hope that you’ll join us at one of our five locations or at the iCampus at CedarCreek.tv
- **Missional Membership Celebration!** On Thursday October 16th at the Perrysburg Campus, all CedarCreek members are invited to a celebration which is sure to make you smile. Nationally-renowned comedian Michael Jr. will be bringing the funny! RSVP for the Membership Celebration at CedarCreek.tv/rsvp
- **TONIGHT! Celebrate Recovery:** Worried about making bad choices tonight? Find support and encouragement at Celebrate Recovery tonight at 7pm at all campuses. (And you won’t have regrets tomorrow morning!) For more information, set your web browser to: CedarCreek.tv/celebraterecovery



Weekend Recap:

God has a plan for each and every one of us, just like God had a plan for Gideon.

Scripture:

The story of Gideon (**Judges 6 & 7**). Read this together as a family.

Judges 6:14

Then the Lord turned to him and said, "Go with the strength you have, and rescue Israel from the Midianites. I am sending you!"

Questions:

Was Gideon confident in God's plan from the beginning? Was Gideon a warrior or from a family of warriors? What did Gideon ask God to do to prove His promise would come true? How did Gideon choose who was in the army? What did Gideon's army do to fight in the battle? Who won the battle?

Family Activity:

Gideon knew that God would be with him and would help him but he would think about his own weaknesses. Talk with your family about some excuses you use to not do what God has planned for you. As a family, encourage each other to not listen to those excuses and help one another focus on God's perfect plan!

Memory Verse:

As a family, memorize this month's Memory Verse (the motions used in CedarVille are printed in the parentheses):

(wave hands back and forth in front of you) **Love never gives up**, (sign "faith" - tap forehead with pointer finger, then make two fists on top of each other) **never loses faith**, (put two thumbs up) **is always hopeful**, (place one flat hand inside the other palm, then scoop it around as if scraping out the inside of a bowl) **and endures through every circumstance.** -1 Corinthians 13:7

**Have your child memorize this verse and recite it to the room teacher for a prize.*

Have some feedback? Email questions or comments to LukeS@CedarCreek.tv

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RESOURCES:

NIV Application Study Bible

The Christian Atheist by Craig Groeschel

Want to find out more about the Living It Out? Check out tons of free resources or have this study sent directly to your daily email. Set your web browser to:
www.livingitout.tv

This week's Living It Out: Daily Bible Study written by:

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