

Discovering Your Self-Worth

Regina Boyd

Hi, I'm Regina Boyd, licensed therapist, and we're going to be talking about self-identity and self-worth. Let's start with a prayer.

Opening Prayer

In the name of the father, and of the son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen. Lord we come to you with open hearts, ready to receive whatever it is that you have for us today. And Lord, we ask that as we hear the words that you are my beloved son, you are my beloved daughter in whom I am well-pleased, that if that pierces any area of our heart, that touches any area of our hearts that make us want to shy or shrink away from this, that we can be put at peace and ease as we journey together and explore our identities. We ask all of this through Christ our Lord, Amen. In the name of the father, and of the son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

We are Beloved Sons and Daughters of God

What I hope we can learn from our time today is to reinforce the idea that we are beloved sons and daughters of God, that we really are children of God, because God, our Father, sent Jesus His son. And through that relationship, we are also co-heirs, we have become made children of God because of His ultimate plan.

And so who do we say that we are? What do you say about yourself when others ask you, who you are? How do you self describe yourself? Are you possibly a stay-at-home mom who's frustrated or feeling like there's not a lot of value or worth to being home all day with your children, doing a very hidden work worth that's not seen in the public eye, at least not immediately until your children are much older. Or are you at a stage in your life where you're aging. Maybe you're home alone and you're just wondering, what is the purpose of my life at this point? Or perhaps you're somebody who is having a health concern and some type of disability. And maybe you're wondering again, about your worth and your value.

You know, I think about The Chosen series, I don't know if you've watched the series at all, but what comes to mind as I'm talking about this and reflecting on identity, is those scenes in season two, which, spoiler alert well, hopefully not too much of a spoiler, but if you haven't watched there are these scenes of Jesus encountering either an apostle or someone that He has a message of hope to give. And what's really interesting about what ties a lot of these people in common is that they're usually at their last rope. They've had some type of plan and something in their life has completely fallen apart and Jesus shows up just in time. Or they're the person who's, as we know, is the outcast and rejected by society for whatever reason, whether they have some ailment, or they did some type of criminal activity, or whatever it is that's rejected by the culture at that time. And Jesus goes out of His way to spend time with them.

And what I love about this series, The Chosen series, is how much it brings those gospel stories to life in a way that I couldn't even have imagine or heard before. And so they just touch my

heart in such a unique way and reminding me to reflect on my own identity of what that means. If He can continually go after each person individually, in such a passionate way for each person that He encounters, then what does that mean for me?

What is Identity?

And so what is identity? I mean, when we think about those ideas of how we describe ourselves, where do they come from? They can't be of God. And what does the word identity mean? I looked it up in the Oxford dictionary and it says, "the fact of being who or what a person or thing is." The fact of being who or what a person or thing is. And I love this definition because it's just stated so simply. It is the fact of being who you are. And who does God say that we are? We're going to take a look at Psalm 23, to reflect on that together.

Psalm 23

Psalm 23, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside still waters, He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies. Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

What is so beautiful about this psalm is the tenderness and the love of God. The tenderness of which He wants to come alongside and be with us and give us rest and care for us in such a loving, fatherly way, in a brotherly way. And when we think about our identity, when we think about all those parts about ourselves, that we might not like that we feel aren't worthy of love. Think about the care that God goes to make sure that we feel at rest and that we feel restored. And can we draw some strength from that, knowing that my worth must be worth enough for the Lord of the universe to come and make sure that I have time to rest and be restored by those still waters.

The Eucharistic Prayer

I want to think about the Eucharistic prayer too in Mass. The Eucharist. And so we know that during the Mass, when the priest is offering up the Eucharist, he is standing in the place of Christ. So Christ Jesus is the High Priest during our Mass, during every Mass. He is offering not only himself, but he is offering us alongside with him as one body. So, when he presents himself to the father in that moment, we are being presented alongside him, with him, and being presented with him in that moment. And how beautiful is that? Because we are good. We are worthy of being presented to God alongside Jesus.

And when we think about that identity, I mean, it's mind blowing. I mean, how can we even fathom being worthy of this title? We're not, but because of God's love, we are.

We are His Adopted Children

So, we'll read one quote from the catechism. Catechism paragraph 460 talks about God becoming man in order that man might become God. And, let me read this here, and share in His divinity. God became man in order that we might become God and share in His divinity. And so thinking about this, what our mission is, our purpose, our self-worth our identity, so that we can share in God's divinity. That is the ultimate purpose of where we're headed, and where we're going, and what God's designed and planned for us. And when you want to talk about worth, as far as a mission and a calling, I don't know what could be better than that.

So, what do we do, how do we handle this if we don't feel like God's child, if we don't feel like, we don't believe the words, we don't feel them to be true, how do we get there, how do we get to a place where we can start convincing ourselves? I think about scripture again. ***“See what the Father has for us, that we should be called the children of God.”***

I have a friend who is a religious sister, she's a long-term childhood friend. And she was sharing with me recently about some of those scripture references about when God talks about us being His adopted children. And she said at that time there was a cultural practice, in some of the cultures at that time, that parents could reject their children.

So, if there was something they were unhappy with a child, they could say, I disown you, I am no longer your parent, you were no longer my child, we will go our separate ways. But if a parent adopted a child, it was irrevocable. It was saying we are permanently establishing this bond. And so, when we think to those scripture verses that talk about being adopted children of God, it means I'm not going anywhere. No matter what you do, there's nothing you can do that would make me want to revoke being your father. And I think that is a beautiful thing to reflect on if we're struggling. Remembering, going back to those scriptures that say we are his adopted children, not just his children who can be denounced, but we are his adopted children.

Discerning of Spirits

The other thing I would suggest. is getting familiar with discernment of spirits. Saint Ignatius's discernment of spirits. It's a beautiful practice of recognizing when the Lord is speaking to us, when the Holy Spirit is pulling us and uplifting us towards God, and when the enemy might be tempting us, dragging us down, pulling us away from him. And sometimes when we question our self-worth, when we're not sure if we can really claim that title of being a child of God, that is the enemy talking. And discernment of spirits is a beautiful practice, to help us learn to recognize the difference between the good spirit and the bad spirit, and how to reject those lies that might be presented to us from the bad spirit, how to make sure that we reject, and accept the truth of the reality that we are God's children.

A Journaling Exercise

And so, one really interesting thing to do as well is perhaps journal that. So, whenever you're having a thought, having some doubt about yourself, you can write it down in your journal, you can write what the thought is of, I was so frustrated with my health condition, I wish I wasn't a stay-at-home mom, I wish I could have a job or whatever it might be, or our family doesn't have much money. Write that thought down and then write next to it on a scale of one to 10, how upset that thought or statement makes you feel, one being not that upset to 10 being very upset. And then I want you to think about is this truth? Is this from God or not? And meditating, and maybe going back to some of these scriptures, Psalm 23, or scriptures about being children of God, reflect on that. And then after reflecting on that, go back to your journal and say how you feel again.

So, reflecting and saying, is this a lie that I need to reject, or a truth that I need to accept? And after we reflect on the scripture, put it on a scale of one to 10, how you feel after doing that. And sometimes that can be a way to slowly observe your progress over time, the more often you do that, you can look back in your journal and see how far you've grown in that area, as far as believing that truth.

Luke 15:1-7

And so I want to leave you with a scripture verse to reflect on. It is Luke 15:1-7. I'll read it for you now. Luke chapter 15. *"Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to him and the Pharisees and the scribes murmured saying, 'This man receives sinners and eats with them.' So he told them this parable. What man of you having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the 99 in the wilderness and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the sheep which was lost.' Just so I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven, over one sinner who repents than over 99 righteous persons who need no repentance."*

See how precious you are. And so I want to leave you with that verse, read it, sit with it, pray with it, and see what the Lord has to say to you about your worth and about your identity. And now we'll close with a prayer.

Closing Prayer

In the name of the father, and of the son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen. Good and gracious God, we thank you so much for this time together for this retreat, for an opportunity to grow closer to you and reflect on you. We just stand in awe of you father. Carry us close, we are your children. Help us to rest in your arms. We carry all of these burdens Lord, and we just need you to pick us up. Let us know that you love us. Look into our eyes and help us to see and believe that we are your children. And to know it. We ask all of this through Christ our Lord, Amen. In the name of the father, and of the son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

God bless you.