Summary of Faith, Identity, and Living from Grace

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Action Items

Reflect on Key Scriptures

Write down and review the scriptures discussed to reinforce faith and identity in Christ.

Evaluate Influences

Assess which voices and influences (online and offline) are shaping your self-identity.

Practice Discernment

Ask God for guidance in daily decisions, including relationships and responses to situations.

Exercise Self-Control

Respond to provocation or bullying with patience and self-control, counting the potential cost.

Remain Connected to Christ

Prioritize spiritual practices that keep you dependent on Christ rather than self-effort.

Monitor Your Algorithm

Review your online and real-life habits to ensure they reflect your identity and values in Christ.

Faith, Identity, and Living from Grace

Language: English

Meeting Overview

This session, addressed primarily to youth and young adults, centers on the Christian walk of faith, focusing on how to live from the finished work of Jesus rather than striving to earn God’s promises. The speaker encourages attendees

to see themselves as active participants ("the experience") in their faith journey, emphasizing dependence on God rather than on personal effort. The session is structured as a blend of teaching, interactive discussion, personal anecdotes, and scriptural study.

Main Topics and Key Points

1. Introduction & Series Context

- The session is part of a series titled **"Faith: Living from Promise Instead of Perception."**
- Recap of previous weeks: Faith is dependence on God, not self-confidence; God's promises reveal his unchanging character; faith responds while fear reacts; faith gives God's word the final say, not circumstances.
- Central question: Why do Christians struggle to experience what Jesus has already provided?

2. Main Message: Live From It, Not For It

- **Thesis:** Many Christians strive for things (acceptance, righteousness, approval) that Jesus has already secured through grace.
- Faith is not about convincing God to act, but about receiving what grace has already provided.
- Key phrase: "Live from it, not for it."
- Faith is defined as dependence on God, not self-reliance or striving.

Supporting Scriptures:

- **Hebrews 11:1-3:** Faith makes real the things we hope for and is proof of what we cannot see; God created the world by command, showing the power of dependence on Him.
- **Ephesians 2:8-10:** Salvation is by grace through faith, not by works—nothing to boast about. God has already prepared good works for us.
- **Romans 4:16:** God's promises are received by faith (dependence/trust), not by works, and are available to all who believe like Abraham.

3. Faith as Receiving, Not Producing

- Faith is the “receiver,” not the “producer.”
- Grace (through Jesus) has already made God’s promises available; faith is how we take ownership.
- Illustration: Achieving goals like a 4.0 GPA is about walking into what is already available, not creating it from scratch.
- “Grace makes, faith takes.”

4. Faith Begins with Identity

- You will never consistently live beyond the identity you believe about yourself.
- The enemy attacks by undermining identity, sowing insecurity and self-doubt.
- Scriptural foundation:
  - **2 Corinthians 5:17:** In Christ, believers are new creations—everything old is gone, everything is new.
  - **Ephesians 1:5-6:** God’s plan is to adopt us as his children; His love and grace are for us as they are for Jesus.
  - **Romans 8:1:** In Christ, all condemnation is canceled; believers are righteous and innocent.
- Importance of discerning the voices we listen to—God’s voice vs. voices of condemnation or insecurity.

Practical Discussion:

- Natural consequences still exist for choices, even though spiritual identity is secure.
- Obedience is a personal choice, not something God forces on us.
- Struggles with temptation and the pull of the “flesh” are common, but do not define the believer’s true nature.
- Old, negative identities are replaced, not just improved; the challenge is not to let carnal senses resurrect what’s been replaced.

5. Faith Lives from (Not for) Victory

- Believers are called to live from the finished work of Christ, not to strive toward victory.
- **John 19:30:** Jesus declared, “It is finished.”

- **Colossians 2:10:** Completeness is found in Christ, not in external validation (social media, substances, others' approval).
- **Hebrews 10:14:** Christ's sacrifice makes believers holy and complete for all time.
- Reading scripture in context is emphasized for deeper understanding and application.

6. Handling Adversity and External Voices

- Bullying and negative comments (in person or online) can shape self-identity if internalized.
- The power of repetition: Hearing lies repeatedly can lead to believing them, even if initially rejected.
- The enemy's lies are often mixed with partial truths to make them more believable.
- Example from Genesis: God asked Adam and Eve, "Who told you that?"—challenging the source of negative identity.
- The importance of believing God's report over others' opinions.

7. Practical Application: Self-Control, Consequences, and Representation

- Responding to provocation (e.g., insults or bullying) is a test of character and identity.
- Counting the cost: Is it worth reacting violently or emotionally to challenges?
- Actions create reputation, which can precede and define how others (including authority figures) perceive you.
- Believers represent not just themselves, but also Christ and their families.
- The fruit of the Spirit, particularly self-control, is essential.

8. Remain Connected to the Source (Christ)

- **John 15:4-5:** The branch (believer) must remain in union with the vine (Christ) to bear fruit.
- Dependence, not striving, is the pathway to fruitfulness.
- The speaker notes that "trying" is often a sign of self-effort; true growth comes from remaining connected to Christ.

- The Holy Spirit guides, convicts, and reveals, even in practical, everyday situations.

9. Modern Distractions and Identity

- Distractions like social media can pull attention from God and distort self-identity.
- Algorithms (both online and in life) reflect what we focus on; spending time with certain content or people shapes who we become.
- The call is to display Christ "from the inside out" in actions, words, and even online presence.

10. Encouragement to Patience and Consistency

- Patience is not just enduring but remaining steadfast in dependence on God.
- Branches "remain"—they don't strain to bear fruit.
- The speaker wraps up by encouraging youth to remain dependent on Christ and not get distracted by self-effort or external validation.

Key Questions from the Discussion

- Why do Christians still struggle with fear, condemnation, or feeling abandoned, despite knowing God's promises?
- Could it be that we are striving for what's already been completed in Christ?
- How do we discern the voices that shape our identity and beliefs?
- Is it worth responding to provocation or letting others' opinions control our actions?
- What does your "algorithm" (focus and attention) say about your true values and identity?

Decisions Made

- The group is encouraged to shift mindset from striving for God's approval or blessings to living from the assurance that these are already theirs in Christ.
- Identity in Christ is to be the foundation for all actions and decisions.

- Remaining connected to Christ is the primary goal, rather than focusing on self-effort or external validation.

Action Plans and Practical Takeaways

- Write down key scriptures and revisit them for personal study.
- Monitor and evaluate the voices and influences shaping your self-perception.
- Cultivate discernment—ask God for direction in decisions, relationships, and even seemingly small choices.
- Practice self-control and patience in response to provocation, remembering the broader consequences.
- Regularly “count the cost” before reacting to situations that could impact reputation or spiritual growth.
- Focus on remaining connected to Christ daily through prayer, scripture, and dependence on the Holy Spirit.
- Reflect on what your online and real-life actions display about your identity in Christ.

Additional Notes

- The speaker uses humor, personal stories, and interactive questions to engage the youth.
- The session concludes by affirming the youth as the “now generation”—empowered and capable of living out their faith today, not waiting for some future moment.

Summary Language: English