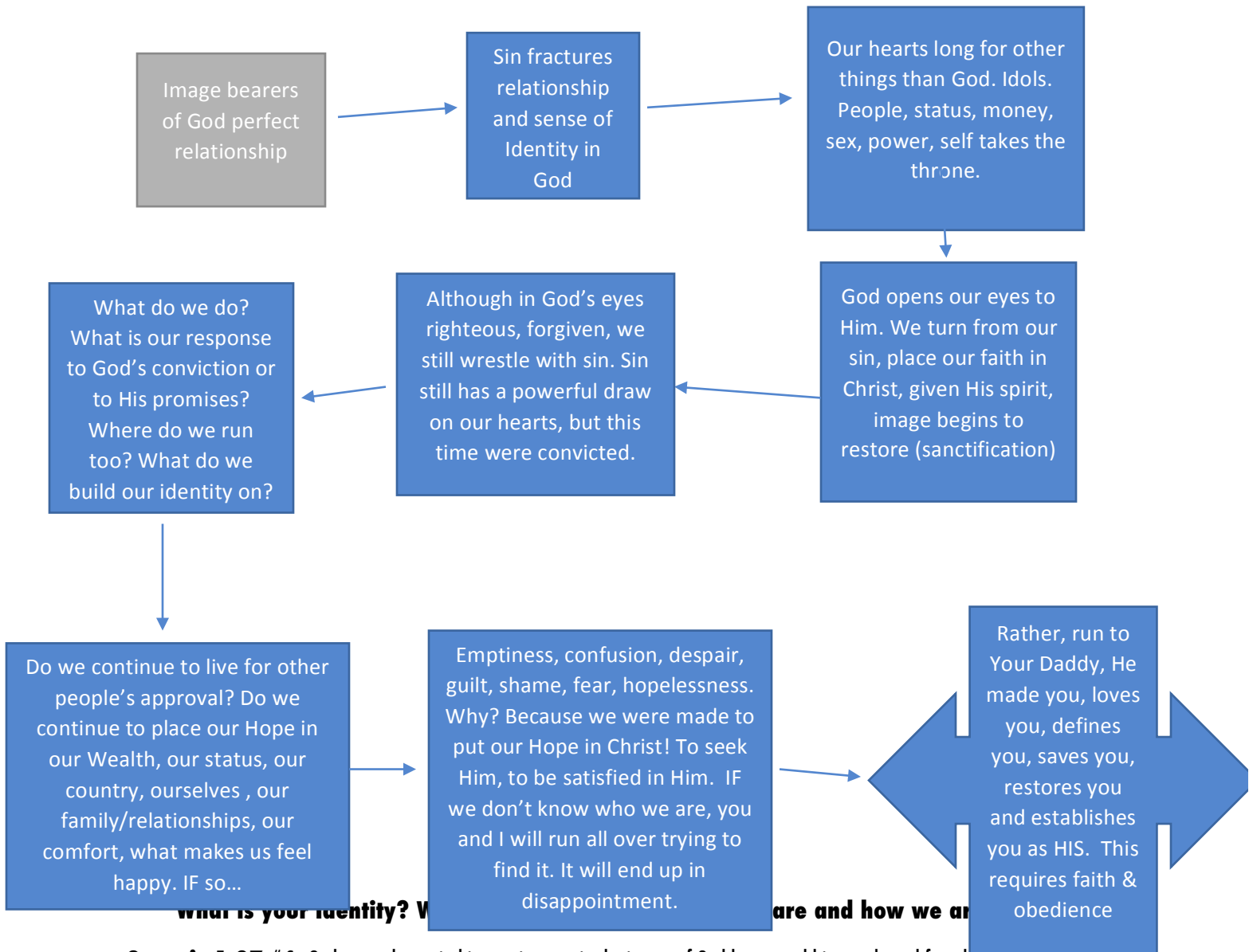


Last Things: Identity, Purpose & Hope

Identity defined: Identity is the qualities, beliefs, personality, looks and/or expressions that make a person or group.

Biblical Identity: Image bearers of God. Everyone reflects his qualities, character, moral compass, rational thinking, which separates us from other created things, but sin not only separated us from God, but distorted or marred His likeness. So only through faith in Christ, can we be fully restored to our identity as true image bearers.



Genesis:1:27: " So God created man in his own image,; in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Psalms 139: 13-16. You are fearfully and wonderfully made by God and he knows all of your days.

Ephesians 1:4-5: He chose you, predestined you to be adopted in His family through Jesus Christ, but his will and grace.

2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The Old has passed away and the new has come."

Galatians 2:20. "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

Romans 6:6, 11: We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin...So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

2 Timothy 1:7: "For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control."

1 Peter 2:9-10: But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Ephesians 2:10: For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20: Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

1 John 3:1-2: See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.

Romans 8:14-15: For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"

Purpose: Why do we suffer through despair or grief? Does God's Word give insight?

2 Corinthians 1: 3-10: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the **Father of mercies** and **God of *all comfort***,⁴ who **comforts** us in **all our affliction**, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves **are comforted by God**.⁵ For as we share abundantly **in Christ's sufferings**, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too.^[a] **6** If **we are afflicted**, it is for your **comfort and salvation**; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you **patiently endure** the same sufferings that we suffer. **7** Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort.

⁸ For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers,^[b] of the **affliction we experienced** in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that **we despaired of life itself**. ⁹ Indeed, **we felt** that we had received the **sentence of death**. But that was **to make us rely not on ourselves but on God** who raises the dead. ¹⁰ **He delivered** us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us **again**.

2 Corinthians: 4:16-18: ¹⁶ So we **do not lose heart**. Though our outer self is **wasting away**, our **inner self is being renewed day by day**. ¹⁷ For this light momentary affliction is **preparing** for us an **eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison**, ¹⁸ as we look not to the **things that are seen** but to the **things that are unseen**. For the things that are seen are temporary, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

Observations:

- God in his character is a God of Mercy, Comfort and Compassion:
- God is a God who comforts us in ALL OF OUR AFFLICTIONS (persistent pain/distress)
- Our afflictions have **purpose**:
 - Too comfort others with the comfort God has given us.
 - Too understand Christ's sufferings, sharing in them and His comfort in their midst
 - So others can come to salvation
 - Too make us rely no longer on ourselves but on God
 - For the purpose of sanctification, being restored in His image and likeness
 - To prepare us for our eternal glory that places our trials in perspective.
 - To fix our eyes on eternal things. Loving God and others!

1 Peter 5:10: And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

- ❖ **Your hardships, your suffering, your grief, your despair, although not fully understood this side of heaven have a purpose. God is using your life and your situations to draw you closer to Him and to reach others with the Hope we have in Him. Perspective is KEY**

Final Resources:

Brad Hambrick: <http://bradhambrick.com/>

CCEF: <https://www.ccef.org/>

Ed Welch: *Running Scared*

Ed Welch: *Shame Interrupted*

Brian Borgman: *Faith and Feelings*

David Murray: *Christians Get Depressed Too*

Darby Strickland: *Is it Abuse: A Biblical Guide to Identifying Domestic Abuse and Helping Victims*

Alasdair Groves: *Untangling Emotions*