

# LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION

- 1 How does knowing more about God's love and His plans for you make you stronger when the devil tries to make you doubt who you are?
- 2 What lessons can you draw from the sermon message to better equip yourself for future challenges?
- 3 In what ways have you experienced subtle attacks on your identity, making you question your worth and value as a child of God?

## WE DO LIFE TOGETHER!



SCAN QR

If you haven't been involved in a LIFE Group yet, send us a message us thru Fb, and we will get you connected to a small group.

[www.facebook.com/wwcfcebu](https://www.facebook.com/wwcfcebu)

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# SUNDAY WORD

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## WHEN THE ENEMY ATTACKS YOUR IDENTITY

Our generation today suffers from a massive identity crisis. The mobile phone has something to do with this generation's mental health state. Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, YouTube. They remind you, 24/7, of all you're missing out on and all the ways you don't measure up, forcing you to compare your life to the filtered and highlighted version of everyone else's life you see on SOCIAL MEDIA. You're comparing your "real" life to everyone else's highlight reel. Comparing ourselves to others brings emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual danger.

### WORD

When Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, the Spirit of God descended upon Him and the Heavenly Father affirmed Jesus by saying in Matthew 3:17 - "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." (NIV) There's the Father declaring Jesus' identity. "This is my Son." In Matthew 4, it says: Matthew 4:1,3 - "1 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil... 3 The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." (NIV)

Notice the word IF. The devil said, "If you are the Son of God." Isn't that exactly what the Father had just said about Jesus in Matthew 3:17? "This is my Son, whom I love." Satan is challenging Jesus to do something to prove He is what God has just declared Him to be. He's attempting to inject doubt into how Jesus believes the Father feels about him. The devil said to Jesus, "If you actually are who God says you are, you have to prove it by doing this."

The same thing is at work in the second temptation: Matthew 4:5-6 - "5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of

the temple. 6 “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written: “‘He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone (NIV).’” In this one, Satan even twists the Scripture in his attack on Jesus’ identity. If you really are the Son of God, God wouldn’t let you get hurt, so you can throw yourself off of here.”

In the third temptation, Satan doesn’t repeat the phrase “If you are the Son of God,” but this one is all about identity too. Satan takes Jesus high up in the Temple and says, Matthew 4:9 - “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me (NIV).” He’s offering to give Jesus something God had already promised to give Him. Satan is saying, ‘You say you are the Son of God, but you don’t have all the power and privilege that should go with that title. I can give you that power and privilege RIGHT NOW!’

At the root of so many of Satan’s temptations is the question of who you are and how God feels about you. The rest of the temptations are secondary. Satan wasn’t out in the wilderness showing Jesus pictures of naked women or offering Him drugs. Satan starts by making Jesus question who He is and how God feels about Him. And you’d better believe that’s where Satan starts with you. I’m speaking to the parents: That’s where Satan starts with your kids. These are the first fiery darts he throws into our consciousness.

**SATAN’S TRAPS:**

**1. Trap of Circumstances**

Hear these words of doubt and confusion: “If God really loved you, Jesus, your life would be different.” “If God really loved you, you could throw yourself down from the top of the temple and He’d protect you, or You’d be able to make these stones into bread.” Satan wants to take the focus off of what God has just declared over Him at His baptism and put it on to what is going on in His life.

This is what Satan does with us: “If God really loves you, would He let this happen?” Take Joseph, betrayed by his brothers, falsely accused, sitting in prison, then Satan whispers, “Does this feel like love? Like God is for you? Then, why are you suffering?” Or Eve in the Garden of Eden, when Satan whispers, “Why would God tell you not to eat from this tree? He’s obviously trying to hold back something good from you.” Or Jesus’ disciples wondering why, if Jesus is really the Messiah, the Roman soldiers still abuse and oppress God’s people with seemingly no punishment or even rescue from God.

How did Jesus respond to this? Matthew 4:7 - “Do not put the Lord your God to the test (NIV).” In other words, we should not doubt God’s character or demand extra proof from Him beyond what He has already provided. Didn’t He die on the cross? Hasn’t He risen from the dead so that we could gain salvation? God’s word is true and His character is unchanging even when we don’t understand all that He’s doing. You will have to decide if you will judge God’s character based on circumstances in life or on what He says about Himself in the Bible and what Jesus has done on the cross for us.

**2. Trap of Comparison**

Satan urges Jesus, “You say you are the Son of God, but are you worthy of that title? Can you turn these stones into bread? Does the world acknowledge you as worthy?” “God’s word on your identity is not enough; you need to prove it.” This is one of Satan’s biggest traps for us: He will quietly attempt to get you to question your worth, your value, what you can do, and, specifically, how you measure up to others. Are you as smart as he is? Are you as pretty as she is? How much money do you make? How are your kids doing compared to his kids? How does your family compare to their family?

The snare of comparison. We often measure our own value by comparing ourselves to others, looking at their successes or mistakes, beating ourselves or one another down with it. God has everyone on different development timetables. You cannot compare yourself with others because God is writing a unique story in you. God has works specifically for you which He has determined a long time ago. You don’t even get to decide what they are. You’re made for a purpose that’s uniquely yours, so focus on discovering and fulfilling it rather than trying to create it yourself.

We tend to compare ourselves to others in terms of talents and blessings. Each of us is made to glorify God uniquely—someone may be creative, another may have a beautiful voice, and others may glorify God in various roles like being a CEO or doing cleaning work. It’s important to focus on glorifying Christ with the gifts we have, rather than trying to be something we were never meant to be. Don’t miss the blessing of serving Christ where you are with what He has chosen for you.

**3. Trap of Condemnation**

This is where Satan uses your personal failures and shortcomings to tear you down. Obviously, Jesus had no failures or shortcomings, but Satan is still urging Him to base His identity on what He has or has not accomplished, rather than what God says about Him. When Satan does that with us, the first thing he highlights is our shortcomings and failures.

Satan loves to make you feel bad about your sin. He’s called “the accuser of the brethren.” Through Satan’s accusations, he makes genuine Christians feel like they are not really Christians. This means he’s always there to remind you how you’ve messed up and where you don’t measure up. The things he often accuses you of are true, which is what makes his lies so deceptive! The sins and weaknesses that he identifies are real. The lie is that your identity becomes based on how you think God sees your failures and mistakes, rather than understanding your true identity in God’s love shown through the gospel. Satan is always saying “Prove yourself. God won’t love you until you prove you are worthy of love.”

Both the Holy Spirit and the Demons will point out your sin. The difference is that demons use your sin to make you question the love and acceptance of God. While the Holy Spirit corrects you when you sin and gives you the assurance of the love of God. Satan starts with what you did (sin) and tears down who you are. The Holy Spirit starts with who you are (in Christ) and repairs what you did (sin). Satan has one, primary goal for you: he wants you to remove your eyes from what God has declared over you, and build your identity on your circumstances, how you compare to others, or how well you’ve lived. And once you give in to that temptation, he’s got you.

Think about it: God declared Jesus’ identity over him in Matthew 3, before the temptation, before He’d been tested. Before He’d done anything! And that declaration was the strength by which Jesus overcame Satan’s temptation. Because Jesus knew God was his Father, and that God was with Him, He had the power to resist Satan in the wilderness. The Holy Spirit came upon Jesus as Jesus embraced His identity. The same thing is true for you. Knowing your identity before the Father is what gives you the power to overcome any sin! You see, awareness of God’s acceptance, awareness of your identity is what gives you the ability to live the Christian life.

The only thing that frees you from the devil’s traps is the assurance of how the Father feels about you. So, what’s your identity? If you are a believer, you can say: I am not how I compare myself to others. I am not my past, my mistakes, or my accomplishments. I am not my giftings and talents. I am not the number of my Facebook friends or TikTok followers. I am not where I got into school. I am not what my parents, my friends or others think about me. I am not how much money I make. I am not my sins, my failures or my shame. I am who the Father says I am! I am complete in Christ. I no longer have to prove I’m somebody when I’m already somebody to Him.

Where are you tempted to find your identity? If we don’t look to Christ alone for our identity, we’re searching for it in other things. But if we see ourselves as defined by what Christ has done for us, we will have a secure identity. We won’t feel crushed when we fail. We won’t be overly proud when we succeed by the standards of the world. We won’t be misled by the appealing but empty things the world offers because Christ gives us steady and lasting hope in a world where hope is often shaky.

If we’re at peace with God, we don’t have to be afraid of anything on Earth. Our eternal future is safe because we’re the sons and daughters of Christ. So, we don’t need to worry about money troubles, losing our jobs, getting sick, or facing criticism for our faith. These things can still be hard, but we can trust that God is in control of every part of our lives and will help us through whatever He allows to happen. God loves us enough to take our broken, rebellious hearts and, because of the sacrifice of His Son, offer us a new identity in Christ. Let’s not settle for anything less.