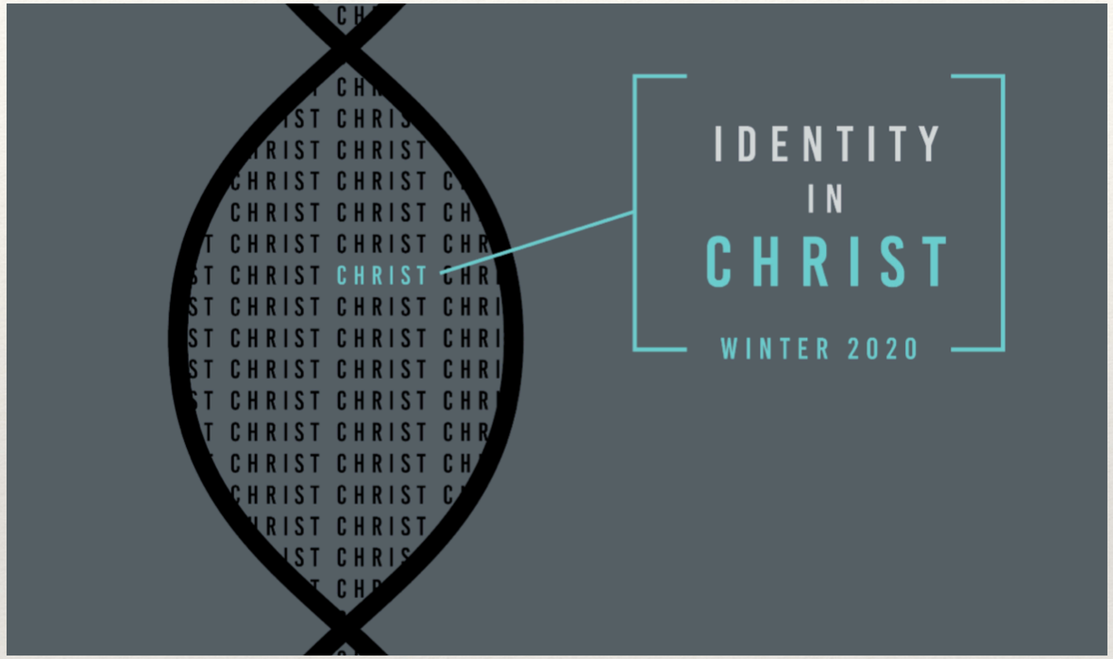
Identity in Christ



I Have a New Purpose

Introduction

- In Christ, we have been given a whole new purpose.
- First and foremost, our purpose is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.
- Related to that, our purpose is to love other people the way God loves them and to share the Gospel, which is the greatest way we can love people.

In Christ, our ultimate purpose is to glorify God

Glorify God

- In Christ, our ultimate purpose is to glorify God.
- 1 Corinthians 6:19–20
- Colossians 3:12–17
- The Bible makes it clear that God created man for His glory (Isa. 43:7).
- What does that look like in our everyday living? Are Christians supposed to sing worship music and talk about God all day? Or is it something deeper and broader than that?

Glorify God

- C. S. Lewis wrote that “men spontaneously praise whatever they value.”
- In the same way a man who is madly in love with a woman can’t help but say to his friends, “Isn’t she just amazing?” so we can’t help but praise Him.
- But the Bible describes worship and glorifying God as so much more than what we say.
- It’s the way we live our whole lives. It’s the way we love God and love others through our actions.

Glorify God

- God tells the Israelites that He rejects their words of praise and worship because their lives don't reflect His character (Isaiah 29:13; Amos 5:21–24).
- Instead, God calls for justice and righteousness (Amos 5:24).
- James says true worship is caring for the poor and living lives that are holy, set apart from the world (James 1:27).
- Paul writes that everything we do—in word or in deed—should bring glory to God, showing people how amazing He is (Colossians 3:17).

Glorify God

- In Deuteronomy, God told the Israelites that if they would follow His law, it would cause the nations around them to praise God.
- When those nations saw that the Israelites were kind to one another, there were no poor among them (Deut. 15:4), their leaders were humble servant leaders who cared for the people rather than using them for their own gain, their court system was fair to everyone, and the Lord was near and heard their prayers, they would see how amazing God is (Deut. 4:6–8).

Glorify God

- When we do what Paul says in Colossians, our lives will bring glory to God.
  - When we "put on" love like we put on our clothes (Colossians 3:14).
  - When we let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts (Colossians 3:15).
  - When we submit to His authority and His rules and don't let anything else take control.
  - When we let the Word of Christ dwell in us richly (Colossians 3:16).

Our secondary purpose, loving others, is part of how we glorify God

Loving Others

- Our secondary purpose, loving others, is part of how we glorify God.
- Matthew 22:34–40
- Matthew 25:31–40
- When an expert in the law asked Jesus which commandment was the greatest, Jesus responded with two: to love God and to love others.
- If you really love God, you will love others. John wrote that if someone says he loves God but doesn't love his brother, he is a liar (1 John 4:19–21).

Loving Others

- On the shore of the Sea of Galilee, when Jesus appeared to His disciples after He was raised from the dead, He asked Peter three times, “Do you love me?”
- Each time, when Peter answered yes, Jesus said, “Feed my sheep/tend my lambs” (John 21:15–19).
- Jesus was saying, if you love Me, you will care for My people as I care for them.
- If you have the Holy Spirit living in you, you will have the heart of God for other people. You will want to love them and serve them as Jesus did.

Loving Others

- Jesus demonstrated that to love is to serve.
- After He washed their feet at the Last Supper, He said, “I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you” (13:15).
- Love is a verb, an action word. Love is feeding the hungry, taking care of the sick, visiting the lonely.
- These acts of kindness reflect what God said was the right way to honor Him as opposed to empty ritual (Isaiah 58:7).

Our secondary purpose, sharing the Gospel, is the best way to love people

Sharing Gospel

- Our secondary purpose, sharing the Gospel, is the best way to love people.
- Acts 1:6–9
- 2 Corinthians 5:14–20
- After Jesus was raised from the dead, He spent 40 days teaching the disciples about the kingdom of God.
- He gave them their mission: to be His witnesses in Jerusalem (chapters 1–7), then Judea and Samaria (8–12), and finally to the ends of the earth (13–28).

Sharing Gospel

- It’s not just a mission; it’s part of our new identity in Christ. We are now His ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:17–20).
- If you have been reconciled to God through Christ, you now have the ministry of reconciliation.
- Helping to reconcile the world to Christ is your ministry, your calling, your mission (2 Corinthians 5:18).
- We share the message of reconciliation (Romans 10:14–15).

Sharing Gospel

- Perhaps our modern view of the word “ambassador” get in the way of Paul’s meaning here. We might think of permanent embassies in other countries.
- Originally, an embassy wasn’t a building. It was a group of people who were sent to another country as an envoy or delegation to make peace.
- That is what we do when we share the Gospel with those who are far from God? We act as representatives of God’s kingdom.
- As citizens of heaven (Philippians 3:20), we go to a “foreign kingdom,” bringing a message of peace and reconciliation from our king.

Sharing Gospel

- Paul writes that it is the love of Christ that motivates us to share the Gospel (2 Corinthians 5:14).
- This is how sharing the Gospel is connected to the first two points of our purpose as believers: to glorify God and to love others.
- Sharing the Gospel is the best way to love people, because the Gospel reconciles them to God, saves them from their sin, and rescues them from eternal punishment.
- What more loving thing could we do for people?

Sharing Gospel

- All of us are called to be evangelists, to be ambassadors for Christ, to be His witnesses.
- A witness in court just shares what he has seen and heard.
- All you have to do is share what Jesus has done for you: how He has reconciled you to God (2 Corinthians 5:18), how He has made you a new creation (5:17).
- Our mission is to share the message. The Holy Spirit is responsible for whether people accept it or not (1 Corinthians 3:7).

Application:

What is an ambassador for Christ?

Ambassador

- Knowledge – an accurate mind
- Wisdom – an artful method
- Character – an attractive manner

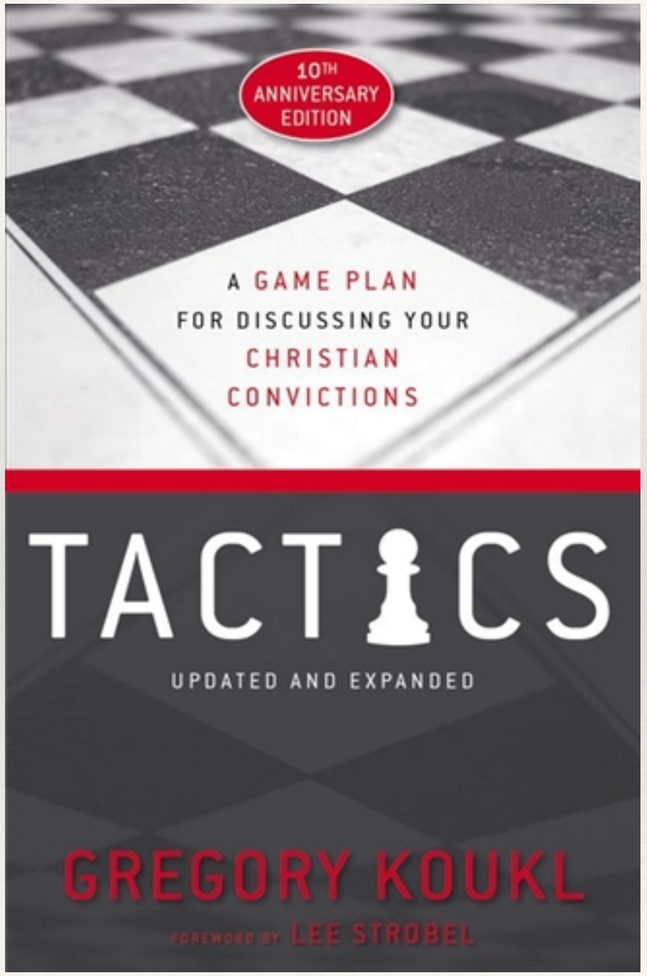
Knowledge

- Knowledge - an accurate mind.
- An Ambassador must have some basic knowledge.
- An Ambassador must know the character, mind, and purposes of his king.
- We should have a basic understanding of God's Word and be able to give an account for the hope that is in us.

Wisdom

- Wisdom – an artful method.
- An Ambassador must be able to use knowledge in a skillful way.
- There's an element of wisdom, a tactical and artful diplomacy that makes a message persuasive.
- We should learn the art of asking questions and use that to help others see the implications of their worldview.

Character

- Character – an attractive manner.
- An Ambassador must be a person of integrity and character.
- Because an ambassador meets others, his or her personal maturity and individual virtue can either make or break the message.
- Much of what we learn is “more caught than taught.”
- Often our demeanor and character are as important as our message.

Stand to Reason