

Identity

Reading and Sharing

Who Am I?

This session is all about who you are – who God created you to be, and how to get to know yourself better.

One of the main ways the Devil attacks us is by sowing doubt and confusion about our identity.

Even with Jesus, that was his main direction of attack, “if you are the Son of God ...”

To be worth attacking it must be important to us, and we know it is. Often we ask questions like “who am I?” “Who did God make me to be?”

We might define ourselves by our jobs (“I’m an auto mechanic”), our relationships (“I’m married to Debbie”) or our hobbies (“I’m a cyclist”).

But these are usually not what the Devil attacks – he doesn’t want you to know God’s plan for you.

God’s View of You

Once again we must go back to what God says. He made us, and he knows us better than we know ourselves.



What the Bible says about us is powerful and encouraging. Here is a quick summary ...

We are God’s handiwork:

EPHESIANS 2:10 *New International Version (NIV)*

For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Created in God's image and being transformed into that image:

GENESIS 1:27 *New International Version (NIV)*

So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

ROMANS 8:29 *New International Version (NIV)*

For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

A new creation:

EZEKIEL 36:26 *New International Version (NIV)*

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 *New International Version (NIV)*

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

Overcomers:

1 JOHN 4:4 *New International Version (NIV)*

You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

LUKE 10:19 *New International Version (NIV)*

I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.

Sons of God and heirs:

ROMANS 8:14-17 *New International Version (NIV)*

For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

HEBREWS 2:10-11 *New International Version (NIV)*

In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered. Both the one who makes people holy and those who are

made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters.

Kings, ruling in life:

1 PETER 2:9 *New International Version (NIV)*

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

ROMANS 5:17 *New International Version (NIV)*

For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ!

These scriptures and many more (see this week's scripture references) are given to us to encourage, strengthen and embolden us to tackle life with the confidence that God is for us

Which of God's views of you makes the biggest difference to you?

Understanding Your Nature

There is another side to our identity, and that is understanding how we are uniquely different to every other person around us.

We all differ in many ways, with different gifts (physical, mental and spiritual), different life experiences and different personalities.

Discovering more about these parts of our nature can help us know more about who God has made us to be, or even how the world has twisted that.

You might be very aware of your weaknesses – but often they are mirror opposites of strengths.
What weakness do you have that reveals one of your strengths?

What are you passionate about, what are you good at? This is also part of God's plan for your life. He is interested in our dreams and the desires of our heart.

PSALM 37:4 *New International Version (NIV)*

Take delight in the Lord,

and he will give you the desires of your heart.

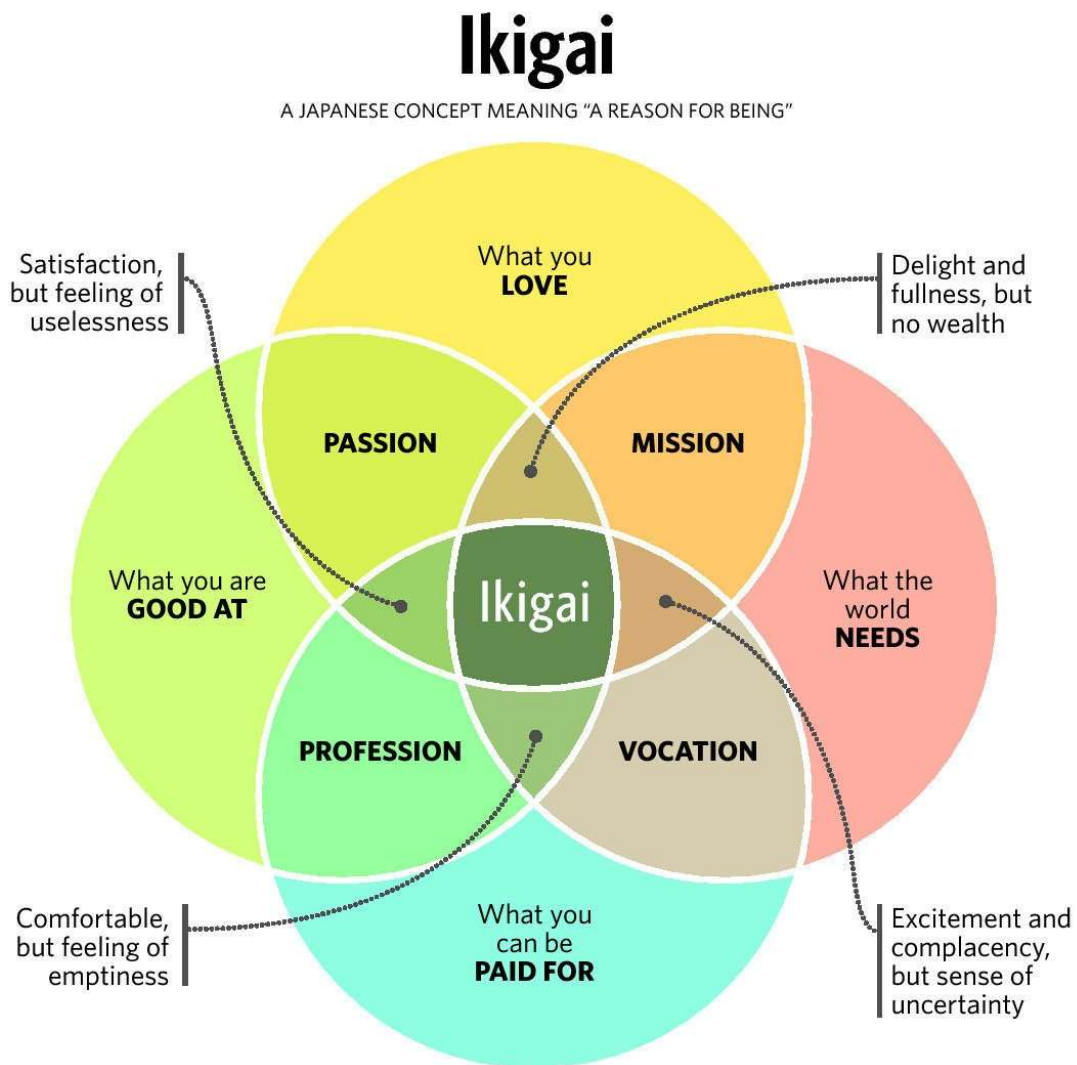
A good way of helping us think about our nature, and a useful tool in reviewing our career choices is to consider our purpose, found by using a Japanese concept called *Ikigai*.

Ikigai was popularized by a Japanese lady, Kamiya Mieko, who was a Christian and a psychologist. She felt that we were at our best when we matched our purpose to our activities.

She thought of this as four circles:

1. What you love
2. What the world needs
3. What you can be paid for
4. What you are good at

Where all four of those meet is your ikigai – the sweet spot where you do what you love, to answer a need in the world, in a way that is paid and you are good at. That is the reason God put you on the Earth.



Discussion Starters

Pair off and take a moment to think about each circle for you.
Discuss each circle between yourselves.

At Home Work

There is some work for you to do before the next meeting:

- Read and meditate daily on who you are in Christ.
- Try the personality test in the Discover More section.
- Fill in your own Venn diagram for your Ikigai.

Prayer

At the end of each topic we leave a space for prayer. It is important to remember that we are asking God to show us what we should do with this truth.

Discover More

For some more reading about your identity in Christ, try these books.

The Born Identity, Phil Pringle

For creative people it can help to have a godly idea of how their minds work, Jeff & Julie Crabtree have a great book and website about this:

Living with a Creative Mind, Jeff Crabtree & Julie Crabtree

<http://livingwithacreativemind.com/>

Another good book that looks at our negative behaviours and releases us is this one:

The Rewired Brain, Dr Ski Chilton with Dr Margaret Rukstalis and A. J. Gregory

Lastly, 16Personalities is a reliable, easy to understand and free online resource for checking out your current personality traits – have a go at it:

<https://www.16personalities.com/>

Scripture References

His handiwork:

EPHESIANS 2:10 *New International Version (NIV)*

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

His image:

GENESIS 1:27 *New International Version (NIV)*

So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

ROMANS 8:29 *New International Version (NIV)*

For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

2 CORINTHIANS 3:18 *New International Version (NIV)*

And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:47-49 *New International Version (NIV)*

The first man was of the dust of the earth; the second man is of heaven. As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man.

A new creation:

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 *New International Version (NIV)*

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

GALATIANS 6:15 *New International Version (NIV)*

Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is the new creation.

EZEKIEL 36:26 *New International Version (NIV)*

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

Overcomers:

1 JOHN 4:4 *New International Version (NIV)*

You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

1 JOHN 5:4 *New International Version (NIV)*

for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.

LUKE 10:19 *New International Version (NIV)*

I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.

Sons of God:

GALATIANS 3:26-27 *New International Version (NIV)*

So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, 27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

ROMANS 8:14-17 *New International Version (NIV)*

For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

GALATIANS 4:4-6 *New International Version (NIV)*

But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “Abba, Father.”

EPHESIANS 1:4-6 *New International Version (NIV)*

For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will — to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

HEBREWS 2:10-11 *New International Version (NIV)*

In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered. Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters.

Kings, ruling in life:

REVELATION 1:6 *New International Version (NIV)*

and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.

1 PETER 2:9 *New International Version (NIV)*

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

ROMANS 5:17 *New International Version (NIV)*

For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ!

REVELATION 5:9-11 *New International Version (NIV)*

And they sang a new song, saying:

“You are worthy to take the scroll

and to open its seals,

because you were slain,

and with your blood you purchased for God

persons from every tribe and language and people and nation.

You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.”
