

Finding Identity in the Right Place - Contentment

Tuesday, January 6th, 2009

READY:

"But the LORD said to Samuel, 'Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.'"

-1 Samuel 16:7 (NIV)

SET:

All my friends and I are turning 16 this year and, let me tell you, that's a big one. I always know who's just had a birthday, not because their school locker is decorated or because of that faint scent of butter cream frosting on their breath, but because of something far more significant: that shiny new driver's license burning a hole in their wallet! Hey, that is a milestone in a kid's life. And that little piece of plastic pretty much tells it all. I mean, it tells your height, your weight, your eye color—everything you'd need to know about a person. But, if you ask me, even with all that information, a lot of kids in my generation are having a serious Identity crisis!

It seems like we're all pretty tuned in to what's the latest with our favorite athlete or the coolest movie stars. We know what they wear, where they live and who they're voting for. Our friends are also pretty important to us. I know that I like to be liked, included and invited to be a part of what's going on in their lives. And, of course, our families are always right there, speaking into our lives day-in and day-out. But here's the problem: That athlete whose jersey I'm wearing is often self-centered and immoral. That actor, who is so awesome in the latest action movie, usually has a private life full of trouble. Then, I also may choose friends who don't stand for what's right, and sometimes family life is a disaster.

If I choose to define who I am by their standards, I'm never going to keep up, measure up or find any peace in life. Trust me, I've toured the country and met a lot of kids my age who are truly hurting from trying to be like or please these types of role models!

So, what do we need to do? Where do we find our identity? Take a look at the Good News: Titus 3:5-7 says, "He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to his mercy... that being justified by his grace we may be heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Can you believe that? God calls us heirs! Listen, we don't have to believe what the world is screaming at us, that we need to be cool or thin or athletic or smart to be important or loved. We don't need to act a certain way for our friends, give in to our girlfriend's or boyfriend's requests, or look like the magazine covers to feel good or have worth. Because of what Christ has already done for us, we are forgiven and set free. We are loved and accepted by God, and our lives have value and worth no matter what we look like, how athletic we are or what grades we get! Check out 2 Corinthians 5:17. It says, "If any man is in Christ, he's a new creature; the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come." The only information my ID card really needs is to say that I'm saved by the blood of Christ. That's my identity, and that changes everything.

GO:

1. Who do you try to please in life?
2. What makes you feel important?
3. How does being an heir of God change how you view yourself?