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**Key Texts:** Matthew 3:13-16, 4:1-11

**Message Structure:**

1. Introduction

2. Grab the Audience Quote

3. Rhetorical Question(s)

4. Personal Story

5. Real Talk Statement

6. Teaching Content

7. Heart Appeal

8. Application Steps

9. Prayer

**1. Introduction:**

Today, we are continuing our teaching series called God-Sized Confidence. God calls us to a life of confidence in Him. We are not called to self-confidence, we are called to God-confidence believing, by faith, that God is who He says He is and will do what He has promised to do. This week, we will be talking about claiming your identity in God by choosing to believe what He says about you, while letting go of all other identity anchors in our life.

[Leader Note: This is a good time to pray with your audience as you start today’s teaching.]

As we start, let us take a moment and pray together, asking God to challenge us and grow us through this series while thanking Him in advance for what He will do.

**2: Grab the Audience Quote:**

“You and I are chosen for a purpose. We are healed for a purpose. We are called for a purpose, and that purpose always involves other people.” —Christine Caine (Founder of A21)

**3. Rhetorical Question(s)**

Why is it vitally important for us to know who we are and what difference would it make if we were absolutely confident in our identity as a young adult?

**3. Personal Story: “**Your story here”

[Leader Note: Tell a personal story about a time when a life event temporarily stole your identity (job loss, breakup with a significant other, regretful decision). As you look back on this event, share what you learned as it relates to the importance of having a secure identity in God. Another option would be a story in your life when your identity from God gave you the confidence to step through an open door of opportunity with success. As with all the teachings in this series, try to connect stories to your own “young adult journey” whenever possible.]

**4. Real Talk Statement:** Knowing your true identity in God releases you to be whom He has chosen, healed, and called you to be with great impact on this world for His glory.

**5. Message Content:**

Open Bibles: Matthew 3:13-16

As we jump into today’s teaching, let’s look at the context for our main passage. Jesus was about to launch into His public ministry. In the years leading up to this moment, Jesus had been growing, developing, and learning in preparation for this most important chapter of His life. The Scripture references this in Luke 2:52 (NIV) in noting, *“And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man”.* Now, Jesus came to John the Baptist and asked to be baptized. Why would Jesus need to be baptized? Baptism is an outward expression of one’s inward commitment to follow and live for God with your whole life. Jesus is offering us an example to follow, while also securing His own identity for the challenging journey ahead.

Matthew 3:13-16 (NIV) reads:

*“13Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. 14But John tried to deter him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?”*

*15Jesus replied, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.” Then John consented.*

*16As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. 17And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”*

No one standing by watching this moment probably knew just how significant this was for Jesus. As Jesus came out of the water, God the Father spoke words of life, confidence, and identity into His Son. God claimed Jesus as His own, and told Him that He loves Him. Up until now, Jesus had not preached any moving sermons, calmed any storms, or healed huge crowds of people. This is a really important point for us to understand. Jesus had not earned His identity or value from what He had done.

Can you imagine what would happen if all the young adults in our community knew with confidence that God wanted them, loved them, and had an incredible plan for their lives? I believe today’s young adult generation is the most gifted, networked, and passionate generation to ever walk the face of this Earth. Young adults today have more potential for impacting our world than ever before. If young adults today can receive the words of God into their life like Jesus did, there is no limit to what they can and will do. Sorry, sometimes I get passionate about this stuff.

So many of us miss out on a secure identity because we believe that we have to earn it. Somehow, we have come to believe that our worth, value, and identity are earned by us, when in reality it’s all based completely on who God is. God calls Jesus “Son” because Jesus is His. God loved Jesus, not because of what Jesus had done or would do, but because Jesus belonged to Him, Jesus was part of His family.

Immediately after His baptism, Jesus head out into the wilderness, as noted in Matthew 4:1-11. Here is where the identity of Jesus came under direct attack. Jesus was alone in the wilderness, when Satan showed up directly attacking His identity with seeds of doubt. Satan tempted Jesus to begin questioning Hs identity. How ironic that just a short time earlier God called Jesus his Son whom He loved at His baptism, and now Satan was calling His identity into question.

Jesus’ identity was secure in God. At Jesus’ baptism, He heard the voice of His Father claiming Him and valuing Him. Here in the wilderness, Jesus responded confidently to Satan with the words of Scripture, “It is written…” He had nothing to prove, He knew *whose* He was.

Know that as a follower of Jesus your identity will be targeted. Satan knows that, just like with Jesus, if he can undermine your identity, causing you to doubt your true identity in God, he can cripple your calling, influence, and impact. In our weaker moments, we must know where our identity comes from, giving seeds of doubt no space and time to take root in our life.

In order to walk with confidence, our identity must be anchored in who God is and what God says about us. When those doubts begin to creep in, recognize that in those moments, we are likely anchoring our identity in the wrong places. Here are three common dangerous places in which many of us can, at times, anchor our identity:

[Leader Note: As you dive into the following “identity options,” you might want to add an example from your own life that can draw the audience in and build the point. Just remember not to spend too much time on each example.]

**A. I am what people say about me.** Words are very powerful and have the ability to affirm, encourage, and build one’s self esteem. Hopefully you have not had this experience, but in some cases, people who speak highly of us can also be the same people who speak ill of us down the road. People’s impressions and opinions often change very quickly with different circumstances and situations. Our identity can’t be anchored in people’s opinions.

**B. I am what I own.** Have you ever had that, “I am feeling good because I just bought something new”, experience? This could be the temporary rush of getting a new car, the hottest pair of jeans, or latest MacBook Pro. The truth is, what is new will soon be older with less appeal. Those items we ownseem very secure initially. That car, condo, or house seem like they could be with us long term, but as you know, life is always changing. The economy fluctuates, family needs grow, car fender-benders happen, and a new job can move us all over the country. Our identity can’t be anchored securely in the stuff we own.

**C. I am what I can do.** You are a very gifted group of people with incredible talents and abilities.In this room, there probably are musicians, athletes, and artists to name a few. We often receive praise for the things we are good at and this praise can build our feelings of worth and value. When we experience great successes, it can be easy to put our identity in what we can do. Here is a question: would you receive the same praise if your talent or gift disappeared? What we are good at is not promised forever. Our identity can’t be anchored in talents and/or gifts we have in the moment.

The words of Matthew 3:13-16 are for us today. God calls us His sons and daughters, and He loves us, because we belong to him. Our value is not dependent on what we do, what we own, what others say about us, but upon who He is. God gives our true identity to us. No matter if this last year has been one of successes or failures, your identity is the same – God claims you as His. He loves you and He is pleased with you because you belong to Him.

You may have heard someone tell you before that God loves you and are wondering what that really means. 1 Peter 2:9-10 shares some more details about how God views and loves us all. When you begin to forget who you are, call a time out, and remind yourself of what God thinks about you from His Word:

**A. You are completely accepted.**

1Peter 2:9a (NIV)

*“But you are a chosen people”*

God wants you on His team. As a matter of fact, He picks you first each and every day. All your best qualities and growth areas come with the package. You are accepted.

**B. You are extremely valuable.**

1 Peter 2:9a (NIV)

*“A royal priesthood, a holy nation”*

There are no two people in this room who are the same. All of you are extremely unique in your giftedness, abilities, and wiring for God’s glory. He has set you apart with a unique plan and purpose for your life. You are one of a kind and valuable.

**C. You are eternally loved.**

1 Peter 2:10a (NIV)

*“Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God”*

When you are adopted into God’s family, you are loved forever. Unlike some family rhythms, God doesn’t want to have you during the school year and lose you over the summer or have to trade you on holidays. He wants you every single day for eternity.

**D. You are totally forgiven.**

1 Peter 2:10b (NIV)

*“Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”*

Anything you have ever done in your past is already forgiven by God, along with any negative thought or action that may happen today, as well as any mistake that might happen in the future. You are forgiven 100% right now.

Today, you can walk in confidence knowing your true identity comes from God, not from what people say about you, what you own, or what you can do well. You belong to God; He claims you as His own, and He is pleased with you because you belong to Him.

**7. Heart Appeal**

If we are honest, our hearts long to hear the words God spoke into Jesus’ life at His baptism. Know today that you are God’s son or daughter, you do belong to God, and God is pleased with you because you are His. This is an opportunity to let go of those identity anchors that are leaving us broken and insecure instead choosing to believe what God says about us, claiming His words over our lives. When you begin to doubt your worth, value, and identity, call a timeout and go back to what you know about God and what He thinks about you. Receive this identity, growing God-Sized Confidence in your life.

**8. Action Steps:**

**A. Own your identity.** Assess where your identity is anchored right now by listing what gives you the greatest sense of value and worth in your life. Honest assessment is crucial to moving toward a true identity in God. Write this list down on a piece of paper and own it.

**B.** **Go all in with God.** Jesus committed His life to God, and God reminded Jesus of His true identity in Him as His Son. Commit your life to God, whether that is in the privacy of your heart or publicly and claim the confidence you have knowing He is pleased with you because you belong to Him.

**C.** **Write a Daily Identity Declaration.** Start each day by writing a declaration statement about your true identity in God in your own handwriting. Carry this statement with you throughout the day as a reminder of who you are and whose you are.

**Example:** “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Name) is a child of God with incredible worth and value, created on purpose for his purpose.”

**9. Pray:** “Your prayer here”

[Leader Note: Pray here for your group of young adults to step into an authentic relationship with Jesus. Ask God to give them the courage and strength to own the fake areas in their lives and have an authentic conversation with Him. This can be a major turning point for your audience.]