



A weekly resource to spark biblically-centered conversations with your kids about the issues they face in today's youth culture.

IDENTITY

BY: Kyle Fulks, CPYU Research Fellow and Assistant Pastor at Hope Community Church, Gilbertsville, PA and **Josh Good**, CPYU Research Fellow and Ministry Director, Christian Endeavor USA, Gilbertsville, PA

Every person is masterfully designed by God for a unique purpose. God has a special calling on each of your children - to use them in mighty ways to build His Kingdom! Helping your kids step into, embrace, and live out this God-given identity is a critical role for parents. Doing this well equips children to embrace their unique calling and live boldly for Christ.



WORLD

What is Happening?

- Finding our place as an individual is a natural part of adolescent development. We shouldn't be surprised when our teens start to wrestle with questions related to identity. We should expect and encourage these questions while also remaining diligent.
- Our world offers many things that distract us and keep us from rooting our identity in Christ. Young people face pressure to conform, fit in, and go along with their peers and the culture at large. This type of pressure has always existed, but it has ramped up in part due to the ever increasing flow of information and the power of social media algorithms.
- Because of these pressures, teens may be tempted to (or caught up in) finding their identity in the following ways, rather than in Christ. Which of these do you see in your children? In those around you? In yourself?
 - » "I am anxious" - the world is chaotic, broken and hopeless...and so am I.
 - » "I am the victim" - Other individuals, or societal systems and structures, are to blame for the challenging & difficult aspects of life that I'm facing.
 - » "I am the center" - I am the most important character in the story of the world and deserve to be treated as such in terms of my emotions, internal longings, possessions, and lifestyle.
 - » "I am at home" - I fully fit into the lifestyle and thought patterns of the culture around me. My highest aim is to be comfortable and accepted above all else.





WORD

What Does God's Word Say?

There are many aspects of biblical identity and how this is communicated throughout scripture that can be explored with our teens. God's Word reveals significant truths about who we are and how we can rightly understand ourselves in relationship to Him.

One particularly poignant and succinct description of identity comes from I Peter 1:1. Here Peter addresses his letter to the "elect exiles" of the surrounding regions. This is an incredibly fitting description for how young people can understand themselves!

- We are **elect** - chosen by God to accomplish His mighty purposes & plans (Psalm 138:8, John 15:16, Romans 8:28, Ephesians 2:10).
- We are also **exiles** - foreigners in a land that is not our home and one that we should not be totally comfortable with or conformed to (John 17:16, Romans 12:2, Philippians 3:20, Hebrews 13:14, I John 2:15-16).

This "elect exile" identity, described by Peter, is brought into living detail through the life of Daniel. Daniel showcases what it means to be chosen by God (Daniel 1:17-18) and live boldly for Him in the midst of a culture that is unfamiliar with and antagonistic to the ways of God (Daniel 2:27-28, 6:10). Daniel had numerous opportunities to live as an elect exile as he navigated expectations from authority, idolatry, daily habits, and friendships. Daniel acts with purpose and clarity - recognizing that He's called by God to live to a different standard than those around him. The way in which Daniel lives a life of faithful focus on God is a model for how we can encourage our children to live out their faith in the midst of today's cultural climate.





WALK

Conversation Starters and Questions:

Find ways to model for, and discuss with, your teens how they can live out their identity as elect exiles. Helping them see ways this can be applied to their everyday lives will equip them to remain focused on Christ throughout every circumstance and situation. Use the following actions and questions to bring this concept to life with your family!

Elect

- Act - find one unique way to express your love for your kid(s) this week. Through modeling Christ's extravagant love in this way, your kids will experience the reality of their election in fresh and new ways at home.
- Discuss - "how can God use your unique giftings in this situation?" Ask your kids this question in fun, creative, and developmentally appropriate ways as they're processing tough situations.
- Discuss - Find seven scripture passages that talk about identity. Discuss one of these each night over the course of a week as a family.

Exile

- Act - Find a small but intentional way that your family can "go against the flow" of what is popular or common (but not necessarily God-honoring). Cell phone/technology usage can be a powerful place to start. Be intentional in explaining to your children the reasons why you're making these choices as a family. Give your kids the opportunity to give input into how the family can live differently and make choices that help them pursue Christ rather than things of this world.
- Act - Find a way to help your kids get uncomfortable or do something difficult. Serving on short-term missions or being asked to pray out loud at group gatherings are great examples.
- Discuss - Who do you know that's an example of a follower of Christ who's faith impacts their lifestyle and life choices?

*"But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light."
(1 Peter 2:9)*



Phone: (717) 361-8429
E-Mail: CPYU@CPYU.ORG
Web: WWW.CPYU.ORG

Mail: PO BOX 414,
ELIZABETHTOWN
PA 17022, USA