



**Lesson Title:** Loss and Grief—Identity



**Key Concept:** In a broken world, loss and grief are inevitable. The loss of our past identity is a continual struggle, but our new identity is found in God.



**Scriptures:**

But Moses protested to God, “Who am I . . . ?”  
(Exodus 3:11 *New Living Translation*)

<sup>21</sup> After he was placed outside, Pharaoh's daughter took him and brought him up as her own son. <sup>22</sup> Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was powerful in his words and actions.  
(Acts 7:21–22 *Evangelical Heritage Version*)

<sup>8</sup> But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. <sup>9</sup> Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices <sup>10</sup> and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.  
(Colossians 3:8–10 *New International Version*)

**Context Scriptures:** Exodus 2, 3; Acts 7:20–23; Colossians 3:8–10; 1 Corinthians 15



**Lesson Thoughts:**

Moses sees the burning bush, moves closer, and finds the God of his ancestors. God commands him to free his people, and Moses’ question to his Creator is, “Who am I to do this?” Moses was saved out of the water by Pharaoh’s daughter to live in Pharaoh’s house. He “was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was powerful in his words and actions” (Acts 7:22). Since Scripture plainly gives this insight into Moses’ education, his question to God is perplexing. Who would be more qualified than Moses?

Moses’ response is rooted in his identity crisis after leaving the high society of Egyptian life. Moses has been a shepherd for forty years, an occupation abhorred

*Jacob's Well*

by the Egyptians, and now finds the God of his parents in the desert. This challenges his identity. Moses is dealing with two worlds: the Egyptian and the Israelite. Moses knows he was born an Israelite, but he was raised as an Egyptian. He was in fact identified as an Egyptian, not a Hebrew, when he saved the seven daughters of the Midian priest from shepherds at the well. This conflict of identity is reflected in naming his first son "Gershom," which means "a foreigner in a foreign land." Moses had two identities, and as he followed the God who called him, he was going to suffer the loss of one identity.

This struggle with identity is something all disciples encounter as we follow God. Who we were in the past and who we are in the present are two identities that conflict. A part of the difficulty of this conflict is that we may miss parts of our past, whether good or bad. The pain of losing our past identity is real. The complicated myriad of our experiences makes up our story and gives a fuller picture of who we are today. To ignore it would be an injustice to God's grace.

Even with the pain of loss, our present self is better since we have connected our identity to the identity of God. "Who am I?" is a question not only asked by Moses, but also asked and answered by Paul, who writes, "you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator" (Colossians 3:9–10). Our identity is tied to our Creator, and the loss of our past self is worth the gain both now and in the life to come.

### ? Discussion Questions:

- 1) What are some things that made Moses feel like a foreigner? What was a time when you felt like a foreigner or outsider?
- 2) How have the rougher parts of your past contributed to your current identity and testimony as a Christian?
- 3) Why do we struggle with identity on a continual basis?
- 4) What is meant by "renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator"?
- 5) Read 1 Corinthians 15:35–55. What is meant by "spiritual bodies"?

**Notes and Reflections**

- 1) Read 1 Corinthians 15 and reflect on Paul's words. What will your future self look like?
  
- 2) What are some personal losses you have experienced by following God? What are some personal gains since you have started following God? What are some personal gains you will have in the life to come?

**Notes and Reflections, cont.**