

Jacob's Well

Lesson Title: Biblical Principles—Guarding Your Identity



Key Concept: Applications may change, but biblical principles are useful in all times and locations. When we guard our identity, we anchor ourselves to the stabilizing truth of how God made us.



Scriptures:

Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.
(Proverbs 4:23 *New Living Translation*)

³We are human, but we don't wage war as humans do. ⁴We use God's mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments. ⁵We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ.

(2 Corinthians 10:3–5 *New Living Translation*)

Context Scriptures: Genesis 1:27; 1:31; Acts 17:28; Isaiah 64: 8; Ephesian 6:10–20



Lesson Thoughts:

Knowing our identity is one thing, but securing our identity is another. In 2021, the identity theft protection industry raked in a whopping \$9.3 billion dollars to guard consumers against fraud. This number is expected to double in the next five years. If we give such attention to protecting and valuing our physical identity, we should invest even more care in protecting our spiritual identity. Guarding our spiritual identity is a principle that must be exercised with great intentionality. So how can we practice this principle?

The primary way to put this principle into play is by knowing who our creator is and who he has created us to be. In Genesis, we learn that God formed man from the dust of the earth and gave his stamp of approval to all his creation, humanity

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included. After this perfect image was disfigured through sin, God launched his plan of restoration which we are made privy to through his Word. The enemy, however, also unleashed his plan to distort our identity, a host of influences that seek to hijack and redefine who God designed us to be.

Gender-reassignment, medical body alterations, and cosmetic appearance modifications are only a few of the means by which the role of the creator has been commandeered by the created! With practices like these becoming culturally acceptable, it is our job to drown out the voices that attempt to taint our perspective and to remind ourselves of who we *truly* are. Isaiah helps us in this endeavor by writing, "And yet, O Lord, you are our Father. We are the clay, and you are the potter. We all are formed by your hand" (Isaiah 64:8).

The influence of social media, false teachings, and vain philosophies will never be in short supply in our world. Therefore, living in obedience to Christ requires us to constantly guard ourselves. Proverbs 4:23 urges us, "Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life." By sifting every conflicting notion through the filter of God's word, we reject the world's attempts to redefine us, and allow God's transforming power to restore us back to his image. In the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson: "To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment." And what an accomplishment it is to stand firm in our God-given authenticity!

**Discussion Questions:**

- 1) In what ways does our culture attack our identity?
- 2) Think of a time when you allowed the world to define your identity. What was the outcome?
- 3) What signs can help us recognize that our God-given identity is under attack? Why are these signs important?
- 4) What trusted voices lead you to adopt a distorted self-image? What voices in your life lead you to adopt a healthy self-image?

Next Lesson: Modesty

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Notes and Reflections

- 1) Examine your own opinion of who you are (inside and out). Is your opinion distorted? How can you know?
- 2) Consider the way God made you. What things have you changed about yourself deliberately? Why? If those changes conflict with how God made you, prayerfully consider allowing God to restore you.
- 3) Read Ephesians 6:10–20 and devise a strategy of defense to prepare against the next time your identity is under attack.
- 4) 2 Kings 17:15 reads: “They worshiped worthless idols, so they became worthless themselves.” Reflect on this passage and how our value is assigned by the God who gives us value.

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Notes and Reflections, cont.