



This summer's series looks at the foundations of faith and grapples with some of the basics. This series will cover areas you may have looked at before but it is always good to check your foundations and go deeper in some of these fundamentals. This study uses the story of the prodigal son to consider our new identity as a child of God.

1. Where have you seen evidence of God in your life this week? Are there any stories you might share?

STARTERS: Give everyone a pen and paper

2. (Make this a fun activity)

Write down 5 nouns that describe you, and share with the group.

Write down 5 adjectives that describe you?

Write down 5 things (other than God) that have shaped your identity.

Explain that today we're going to be thinking about 5 ways in which God shapes our identity. You might like to write them on the paper (see Q14) as you work through the study.

Read Luke 15:11-24

3. Have you ever had a time when you've needed to 'come to your senses' v17? When you've realised your life needed to change somehow? How did that happen? What might you be able to share?
4. As the son decides to go home, how do you think he is feeling? V17-19.
5. Have you ever had to apologise for something? Was that easy? How did it go? Did you feel like you were forgiven?
6. In v20, the Father embraces the son. He is declaring that this child is loved and delighted in. Is this a common understanding of how God views us? Why or why not?
7. V22, the son is given 'the best robe' signifying his restoration and reconnection into the family. What helps you feel connected to God and his family?
8. V22 the son is given 'a ring' of authority and purpose. It enabled him to act on the Father's behalf. Why was this so shocking for Jesus' hearers? Why is this still shocking for us today?
9. Do you feel like you have authority and purpose from God?
10. V22, the son is given sandals – marking again his place as belonging in the family as a son rather than a servant. Offering a new hope for both today and forever. The son was going to ask to be treated as a servant, v19, and didn't feel worthy to be a son, v21. What makes it easy or hard to accept 'the sandals' from the Father?
11. V23. The Father publicly celebrates the son. Take a look at the words you used to describe yourself (Q2 above). Imagine God celebrating this in you? Is that possible? What does that feel like?
12. The Father has a different perspective on his child than the son. How would you describe their different attitudes and perspectives.
13. What stops you viewing yourself like the Father views the son?
14. Consider our other words of identity – you might like to write them on your paper, or on a large piece for everyone to see:
Child of God:
Loved and Delighted in
Restored and Reconnected
Given authority and purpose
Belonging and Hope
Celebrated.

If you were to pick one that you wanted to make more dominant in how you view yourself, which would it be?

Final Prayers:

- Is there anything else that today's study has thrown up that you need to pray into?
- Are there any other things for which people would like prayer?
- Lift one another up to God for the week ahead.