



more

GROUP STUDY GUIDE

WEEK FIVE

UNIQUELY MADE

UNIQUE IDENTITY



GOAL FOR WEEK FIVE

Over the last few weeks we discussed our core identity (to be a disciple), our core mission (who makes disciples), and core position (wherever you are). This week we shift our focus to our unique personal calling that makes us different from every other person on earth. The first element of our unique calling—the BE element in our framework—is our unique identity or how we are uniquely made.



WEEK FIVE: WE ARE UNIQUELY MADE

Secondary Calling = $\overset{\text{BE}}{\text{uI}} + \overset{\text{DO}}{\text{uM}} + \overset{\text{GO}}{\text{uP}}$



GETTING STARTED

ASK: Just for fun, if your life were a book, which section of the bookstore would it be in and why?

DRAMA	ACTION	ADVENTURE	ROMANCE
TRAGIC COMEDY	FANTASY	MYSTERY	HORROR
CLASSIC	SUSPENSE	FAIRY TALE	SCIENCE FICTION



MORE OF THE STORY

The author of *More* uses the metaphor of a book to describe our lives. Our story has themes and sub-themes, chapters and sections, major and minor characters, and different contexts or settings. The book God continues to write is the narrative of our life and like a great mystery novel, every page is filled with clues. In our case, the clues point to and reveal our unique identity.

In His greatness, God has embedded our story within His own. We are a part of His plan. We are uniquely made. Our birth was not an accident. God designed us for a specific purpose long ago and He gave each of us gifts to do those good things he has planned.

Our first step is to examine the story God has already written in our lives.

ASK & DISCUSS: Why do you think this is a necessary step?

THE BIG POINTS OF WEEK FIVE

- 1. GOD'S WORD TELLS ME THAT I AM HIS HANDIWORK, UNIQUELY MADE, WITH STRENGTHS AND TALENTS, MAKING ME DIFFERENT FROM EVERYONE ELSE.**
- 2. MY UNIQUE STRENGTHS AND TALENTS ARE GIVEN BY JESUS FOR THE PURPOSE OF BUILDING UP THE CHURCH AND CARRYING HIS FULLNESS TO THE WORLD.**
- 3. CLUES EMBEDDED THROUGHOUT MY LIFE POINT TO AND REVEAL MY UNIQUE STRENGTHS AND TALENTS THAT MAKE UP MY CORE IDENTITY.**
- 4. I CAN EXPRESS MY OWN UNIQUE IDENTITY IN A FEW WORDS OR A SHORT PHRASE.**

POINT
1

GOD'S WORD TELLS ME THAT I AM HIS HANDIWORK, UNIQUELY MADE, WITH STRENGTHS AND TALENTS, MAKING ME DIFFERENT FROM EVERYONE ELSE.



ASK: What is one thing that makes you unique? Remember, others might share the same talent (i.e. singing) or strength (i.e. detail-oriented), but no one experiences or expresses it exactly as you do. You are unique!

BREAKOUT: Break into two groups. One group read Psalm 139:1-18. The second group read Ephesians 2:8-10, Isaiah 64:8 and Job 10:8-9. After reading, take five minutes to work together to write one sentence that summarizes the passages you read.

SHARE: In the larger group ask one person from each group to share your group's sentence.

ASK: What else did you learn as you helped create your group's sentence?

POINT
2

MY UNIQUE STRENGTHS AND TALENTS ARE GIVEN BY JESUS FOR THE PURPOSE OF BUILDING UP THE CHURCH AND CARRYING HIS FULLNESS TO THE WORLD.



When Jesus was asked about the greatest commandments, He said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself'" (Matthew 22:37-39). Our love relationship with Jesus leads us to put love into action by loving other people. The overflow of Jesus' love for us (and ours for him) should result in love for other people.

READ: 2 Thessalonians 1:11. What does it mean for us to be made worthy of our calling? What should our faith produce?

Recall from Ephesians 1:22-23 (previous lesson) that one key purpose of the church is to carry the fullness of Jesus into every corner of society. Ephesians 4:11 tells us that Jesus himself equips us to play our part in this mission.

READ: Ephesians 4:11-16. Discuss why Jesus personally equips us. What should our unique gifting produce? What are the consequences to the church and the church's mission if followers of Jesus do not use their gifts?

POINT 3

CLUES EMBEDDED THROUGHOUT MY LIFE POINT TO AND REVEAL MY UNIQUE STRENGTHS AND TALENTS THAT MAKE UP MY CORE IDENTITY.



Our unique identity is made up of the combination of our unique gifts and strengths that are embedded in our DNA. These traits show up in everything we do and across all domains of life, including our personal interests, our family, our work, our church, our community activities and relationships. They are difficult to turn on or off. They are just a part of us. They energize us and bring us to life.

SHARE: Take one minute to think of a personal strength that shows up across all domains of your life. A trait that you'd have to try hard to "shut off". Share the trait with the group and give an example of how it shows itself in your life.

DISCUSS: Brainstorm some practical ways a person might discover clues from their story that reveal their core identity.

READ: *More* shares the three practical tips for discerning unique identity. Read about those on page 146 (note: more expanded explanations of the tips are on pages 146-156 for your review at home).

POINT 4

I CAN EXPRESS MY OWN UNIQUE IDENTITY IN A FEW WORDS OR A SHORT PHRASE.



The author of *More* makes a distinction between who we are created to BE and what we are made to DO. He notes that our core identity of BE is always with us across all domains of life regardless of the roles and responsibilities we have during our lives.

Unfortunately, we can easily mistake our BE for our DO, mistakenly embracing our DO as our BE. Our unique BE (core identity) should continually overflow to shape our DO and GO.

DISCUSS: Spend several minutes discussing the differences between our BE (our unique identity) and our DO (our unique mission or purpose) and why its vitally important not to mistake the two.

READ: Take a moment to read the last paragraph on page 145 and first paragraph on page 146 of *More*. The author describes his core identity as "entrepreneurial engineer."

Are you confused by that phrase? No worries. Your unique words or phrase need only be meaningful to you. They should be descriptive of your core gifts.

For the author, an entrepreneur is someone who starts new things and an engineer is someone who designs things. Combine the two and we see that an "entrepreneurial engineer" is someone who designs new opportunities. If we were a fly on the wall of his life, we'd see this core identity continually reveals itself in the form of continuous ideas for new opportunities.

Ephesians 1:1 says, "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus." He could have said "entrepreneur" or "catalytic starter". We can each seek to fill in our unique word(s) of identity. For example, the author of *More* would say, "Todd, an entrepreneurial engineer of Christ Jesus." You might say, "Paul, a teacher of Christ Jesus."

DISCOVER: Now it's your chance. Spend the next 15 minutes following the steps on the back cover of this guide. Your first draft might be something like "inquisitive teacher" or "player coach." Don't worry about getting this perfect right now. Your words will likely evolve and change with time as you get more clarity.

SHARE: Once each person has completed the exercise, take turns sharing your Ephesians 1:1 sentence.



1-THING SHARE



What is one thing that you heard, said, or thought today that you want to keep in the forefront of your mind all this week?

This week dig into the expanded explanation of each of the three tips starting on page 146 and continuing to page 156. Consider how you might act on one of these tips to begin your own journey to discovering your unique identity. For instance, you might plan time to do one of these:

IDEA 1: Begin your own "I remember when..." list. Use pages 147-149 to help you get started

IDEA 2: Put time on your calendar to jot down the core characteristics of your design that jumps into action across of areas of your life. You'll see the same ideas transcend your personal life, family life, work life, church role, and broader engagement in the community. (149-150)

IDEA 3: Research and select an assessment that might give you more insight. We recommend APEST and Gallup StrengthsFinder as good tools for revealing insights into your unique identity. Remember, some of the descriptive characteristics will match you perfectly while others won't; the key is to extract the parts that do match and ignore the rest. (150-156)

IDEA 4: Follow the steps 1-5 to draw up a list of words to begin building a comprehensive picture using key word and phrase descriptors then focus them to reveal your unique identity. (157-160)



TAKING MORE HOME

A.P.E.S.T. Core Identity Exercise

Discover your “word”

The author of More worked through each of these processes on his journey. The clarity he was seeking was not hard to discover when he was willing look more deliberately at the part of his story that had already been lived.

Like the author, the Apostle Paul, defined who he was in Christ every chance he got. In fact, he started his letters with that very definition. 1 Corinthians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Colossians and Ephesians all begin with Paul’s statement of unique identity. “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus...” (Ephesians 1:1)

Now it’s your chance. Spend the next fifteen minutes working through the following steps.

STEP 1: Read the descriptive words/phrases associated with each of the five A.P.E.S.T. heading in the table. Check off every word/phrase that your spouse, friends and co-workers would agree strongly describe you (e.g. “that is exactly Bill”).

STEP 2: Add up the number of check boxes under each of the five A.P.E.S.T. headings. Circle the two headings with the most checked boxes.

STEP 3: Identify one of those A.P.E.S.T. headings to fill in your own statement. If one of the descriptive words fits you best, or you feel that one of the A.P.E.S.T. headings feels too big, come up with your own word/phrase instead.

Use the example from Ephesians 1:1 to write your own definition of who you are in Christ. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus...

If you chose a descriptive word, adjust the word/phrase to fit well within the sentence. For example: Jane, a nurturer (someone who nurtures) of Christ Jesus. Or Mike, a vision sharer of Christ Jesus.”

APOSTLE	Drives progress Establishes direction Creates sustainability Designs process Conveys information	Provokes actions Strategizes Pioneers Drives movement Activates change	Explores options Overcomes obstacles Innovates Arranges Ventures
PROPHET	Challenges status quo Corrects misplaced ideas Discerns truth Envisions possibilities Perceives Observes Predicts future circumstances	Brings light to Reveals truth Shapes the future Proclaims the truth Points out truth	Assesses situations Pioneers based on vision for future Diagnoses Aligns Speaks for justice
EVANGELIST	Recruits for purpose Partners with Seeks out Promotes Champions Invites Connects	Inspires Influences Shares the vision Shouts from the mountain tops Moves the mission forward Creates excitement	Persuades using reason Prompts action Encourages ownership Advertises benefits Entrepreneurial Provokes interest
SHEPHERD	Nurtures Protects Counsels Builds up Serves where there is a need Produces results	Takes care of Behaves with loyalty Manages outcomes Feeds literally and figuratively Develops people, things, and ideas	Calms Comforts Empathizes Supports Helps Operates
TEACHER	Explains Enlightens Comprehends easily Applies truths Transfers knowledge Bridges ideas with reality	Understands Models Instructs Defines Guides others Extracts information	Simplifies Illustrates Demonstrates Shows and tells Instills value Clarifies Imparts wisdom

_____, (fill in your name), a(n) _____ (fill in word) of Christ Jesus...

***Keep in mind that this sentence is just a place to start. It can (and should) change as you repeat this process and get to know your calling more intimately.*