

## Children and Identity | the biggest parenting challenges you will face, Part 9

### I. What is identity?

- According to Psychology Today, “Identity encompasses the values people hold, which dictate the choices they make.” We could say that identity encompasses what people believe which dictates the choices they make.
- Your children’s identity will perfectly align with their beliefs about themselves, the world, God, and everything else.

### II. Our children must discover and develop their potential.

- Genesis 1:26; Psalm 127:3-5
- Your children were born into this world with amazing potential.
- Our kids are packed with potential such that they are compared to weapons and parents are blessed to have them in their lives.
- We know that when we depend on God and His strength, we can move mountains and win victories we could never accomplish on our own.
- And it’s every parent’s responsibility to help their child understand their God-given potential. And we really have to start with God. It’s destructive to ground your child’s potential in themselves.
- On the other hand, we must take our kids to the Scriptures so they can learn about the amazing things they can accomplish in the name of the Lord.
- Hebrews 11 presents a concise list of just some of the spiritual and physical triumphs God’s people have experienced when they relied on God’s empowerment.
- Their natural instinct will be to see the source of their potential as themselves and to develop whatever they believe it may be. But when we introduce them to the reality that their potential doesn’t lie in themselves — its source is God — they’re going to need a lot of help developing that.
- Remember, they’re born into this world as unsaved idolaters. All they know how to do is worship self. After they have put their trust in God and been born again, learning to sacrifice their satisfaction to God instead of self is a life-long pursuit. And they’re going to need your help every step of the way.

### III. Our children must choose their life purpose.

- Psalm 139:13; I Corinthians 6:19-20; Joshua 24:15; Romans 1:21-23; I Peter 2:9
- It’s accurate to say that neither you nor your children have the right to *invent* your life’s purpose, but God does give us the free will to reject the purpose He’s already created for us.
- Your kids aren’t robots. That means that your children will either continue *rejecting* or start *embracing* God’s purpose for their lives.
- However, children are not consciously aware of the fact that they have a purpose and must choose to embrace it. All babies know is that they’re either currently satisfied or dissatisfied. They don’t have a functioning belief system concerning who God is, who they are, and what all of that means for them.
- This is why we parents must start as early as possible helping our kids understand their life purpose — understand who God created them to be.
- Without this information, all they know is that they’re searching for satisfaction, but they don’t realize that their Creator has a plan for that satisfaction.
- When we don’t expose our kids to the reality of their creation, we’re leaving them in a deserted wasteland of searching for answers they can never find on their own.

- “But, Aaron, can’t I just let me child experience the world and find God’s purpose on their own? Doesn’t the Bible say that God can be seen in the creation?”
- Yes, the heavens declare the glory of God, but without the special revelation of God’s Word, they will never be able to have a personal relationship with the God the heavens introduce.
- They would never discover what I Peter 2:9 tells us, “*But you are A chosen race, A royal priesthood, A holy nation, A people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.*”
- So, either you’re going to have to introduce them to Him through the pages of the Scripture, or you’re going to have to hope that someone else will.
- But no loving parent would ever do that. “Sorry, kids, I know you need food, but I’m going to trust that someone else will give it to you today.”
- No, loving parents provide for their children’s physical and spiritual health. That requires that we introduce our kids not only to God’s potential in their lives, but also God’s purpose for their lives.

#### **IV. Our children must find opportunities to exercise that potential and purpose.**

- Practice makes progress. If we want our children to identify in Christ-honoring ways, then they need to daily find opportunities to exercise their God-given potential to fulfill their God-given purpose.
- And what does it look like to exercise that potential and purpose? Well, it looks like choosing to be satisfied in Christ instead of satisfied in self. It looks like using their technologies to pursue that which glorifies God. It looks like understanding that they are anything but autonomous.
- Allow me to park on this one for a moment. If my potential can only be fulfilled through Christ, and my purpose is only found in God’s will for my life, then I am anything but autonomous. I am wholly and completely dependent on God for my potential and purpose.
- That means that exercising my potential and purpose will also look like me submitting to the authorities in my life who are leading me to fulfill my God-given potential and purpose. It will also look like me allowing God to define what’s moral and embracing His view of sexuality and family.
- And therefore my identity — what I believe (which always requires behavior that supports it) — will align perfectly with God’s whole purpose for creating me.
- That’s why Paul could confidently say in Galatians 2:19, “*I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.*”
- Because of his identity in Christ, his whole life would need to be lived differently.
- But . . . if your child doesn’t believe that their potential and purpose are found in God, if they identify themselves outside of God’s will for their lives, they will always choose to find their potential and purpose in self, and they will walk the destructive journey of self-satisfaction.
- Who are your kids? Why did God give them to you? What’s their purpose? How should they identify? It’s your job to help your children know, understand, and believe that their identity will only ever be found in a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.