

SISTERHOOD LOUNGE ROOM

From our lounge room to yours

Identity: Voices That Shape Us - Part 2

Loved part one of our identity conversation? Well so did we! In part two we explore words. His words, our words, and the effect of other people's words on our life. As you watch this episode, we have highlighted the key scriptures and thoughts shared as well as questions to use in your group discussion or in your own personal devotions ... enjoy!

"Furthermore, because we are united with Christ, we have received an inheritance from God, for he chose us in advance, and he makes everything work out according to his plan." – Ephesians 1:11 (NLT)

His words

"He who looks outside dreams and he who looks inside awakes." – Carl Jung

Nicola began by reminding us that we need to allow the word of God to frame our identity and renew our mind. Christine added that the Bible is like a mirror: it reads us as we read it – in other words, it is transformative. When you receive the Word in your heart, it reaffirms your identity, however when you allow the patterns of the world into your heart, untruths will shape your life.

Our strength is found in God and not in ourselves, and we need to learn to be confident in God, and not ourselves. Ana explained that to make this change a reality we need to fix our eyes on God and take them off ourselves. It is harder than it may seem and requires intentionality. To practice mindful awareness is important - we can accidentally or unmindfully live out people's and cultures expectations of us. Awareness requires us to take the time to reflect and write our own story – to take ownership and responsibility over who we are becoming. We can't sit back and

idly hope to become who God created us to be, it requires intentionality.

"Take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." – 2 Corinthians 10:5

Q - What is a key scripture that has helped you discover who you truly are?

Q - What content do you regularly consume? The content you are consuming will be what you are calling to mind. Is it helpful?

Q - Knowing who God has called us to be should mark our decisions and convictions. Have you had to change any mindsets about yourself as you have become closer to God?

Our Words – Your Inner Voice.

Nicola said that we have approximately 50-70 thousand thoughts a day: our self-talk can be the loudest voice in our lives, and often it is a negative voice. Katie shared how she fell into the comparison trap and started to question her decisions when it came to home-schooling her children. It was only when she determined to let God's voice be louder than her doubts that true clarity and peace came into her heart and mind.

Ana explained that one of the ways to overcome the inner unhelpful thoughts is to first notice them and then not judge yourself. It is normal to have these thoughts, do not allow them to shame you - just bring them into the light. So, in essence you are thinking about what you are thinking about. The second step is to label or name the thought. Be aware of what is happening, name it, and then stop yourself. Manage your thoughts, don't let them manage you – renew your mind with the word of God.

"Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." – Romans 12:2

Q - If you find yourself thinking poorly in a situation do you tend to be hard on yourself and feel ashamed or do you justify your thought process?

Q - What questions can you ask yourself when your inner voice is speaking loudly?

For example: “Where is the evidence for this thought?”, “If a friend made this statement, what would I say?”, “Is this helpful and is this true?”

Q - Reflect back to 10 years ago: what do you wish you said to yourself 10 years ago?

The Words We Receive From Others

Nicola spoke about how words from others can either have an affirming or detrimental influence on us.

Natasha explained that we can create space for the right words to be spoken to us by the right people by staying self-aware and recognising when relationships aren't healthy and guarding our hearts.

Nicola gave three guidelines for determining what voices we allow to speak into our lives:

- Does it line up with the word from God?
- What is the intention they have approached you with?
- What's the fruit of their life? Are they themselves people with firm foundations?

Q - Do you have a person that you allow to speak into your life? If not, who is someone who could bring sound wisdom and encouragement to you? Why not reach out and ask for a coffee ;)

Q - Have you be hurt by words others have spoken over you? If you feel comfortable share this with the group or journal about it. How can you safeguard yourself against unhelpful words?

Final Thought

“Jesus came to announce to us that an identity based on success, popularity and power is a false identity- an illusion! Loudly and clearly, he says: 'You are not what the world makes you; but you are children of God.’ – Henri Nouwen

The question you need to ask yourself when it comes to identity is not who I am, but *whose* am I. Amen.