

IDENTITY

Live from Sisterhood One Day

Welcome to this special edition of the Sisterhood Lounge Room recorded live from Sisterhood One Day.

We have highlighted the key scriptures, thoughts shared, as well as a few questions you can use in discussion with your group, or in your own devotions ... enjoy.

Your real, new self will not come if you are looking for it. It will only come when you are looking for Him.

CS Lewis

Nicola began by saying that our identity is constantly reforming and reshaping as we grow closer to Jesus. The topic of identity cannot be covered in one conversation. Identity is not just about who we are, but what we do, and what our motivations are.

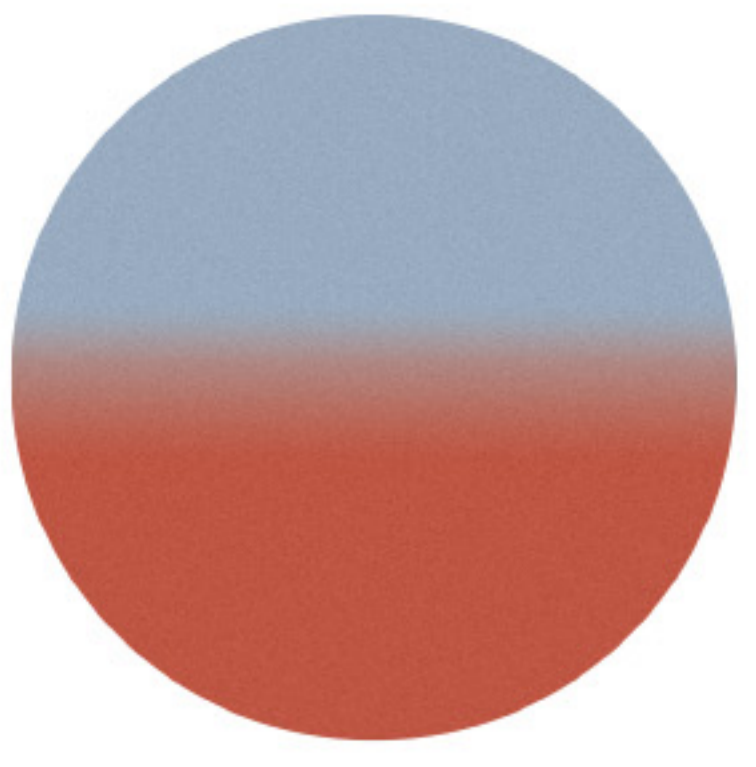
Nicola invited Ana to explain why identity is so important. Ana said that identity is the mental model that we have of ourselves. It is the idea of who we are that we hold in our minds about what makes us unique. Identity can be shaped by our environment, how we we're raised, who we surround ourselves with, what people say about us and to us, and although this can sometimes hurt, the fact is that our identity is mouldable, which can allow the Holy Spirit to work in us and on our character.

Nicola said that although our identities can be formed by what people say about us, it just takes one spoken word from God to change everything. When God speaks, He creates, and if He is speaking something else over our lives, our lives can be changed in a moment.

Q- How often do you reflect on your identity?

Q- What aspects of your mental model are unhelpful or harmful to you?

Q- What aspects of your mental model are helpful and biblical?



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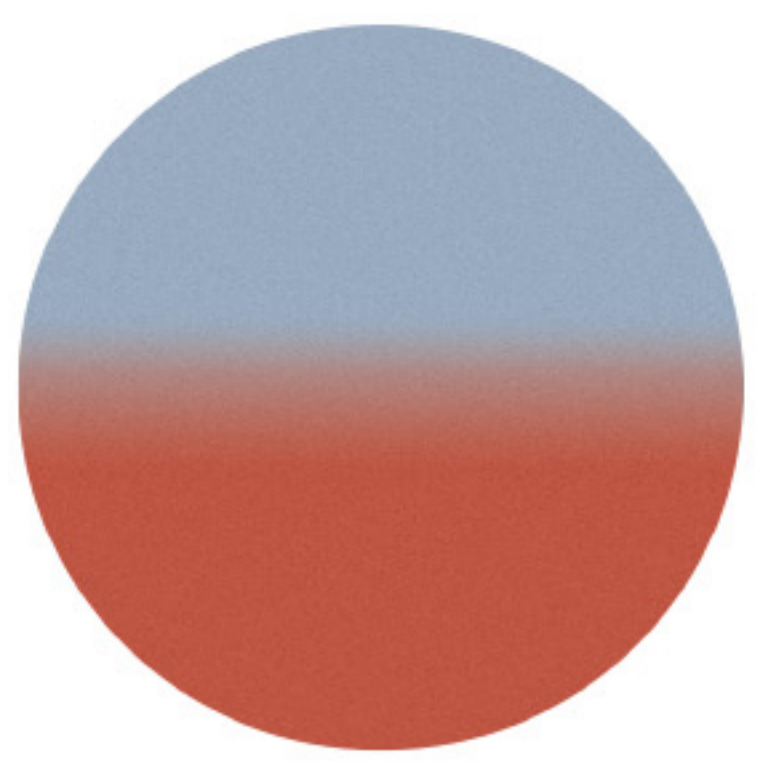
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Nicola invited Julie to share some of her story on identity. Julie said that growing up her home life was void of nurture in word and physicality. In later years her family began learning there were better ways of relating, but by then her identity reflected in her beliefs and self-worth was set. Julie anchored her identity on having the right friends, the right look, and eventually in the right job and positions. The lousy stuff on the inside revealed itself when she started experiencing success and through insecurity and controlling behaviour, she was ultimately stripped of the things that she obtained her identity in and she experienced crisis. Julie spoke about the pain of the season, losing friends, loss of self-worth, and questioning God on why she was being tested so severely. He answered her through his word:

God tested us thoroughly to make sure we were qualified to be trusted with this Message. Be assured that when we speak to you we're not after crowd approval—only God approval. Since we've been put through that battery of tests, you're guaranteed that both we and the Message are free of error, mixed motives, or hidden agendas. We never used words to butter you up. No one knows that better than you. And God knows we never used words as a smoke screen to take advantage of you.

1 Thessalonians 2:3-5

Julie said that although the season was painful, it was foundational, and without it she would have continued to live a life that was limited, frustrated and hurting by her insecurity.



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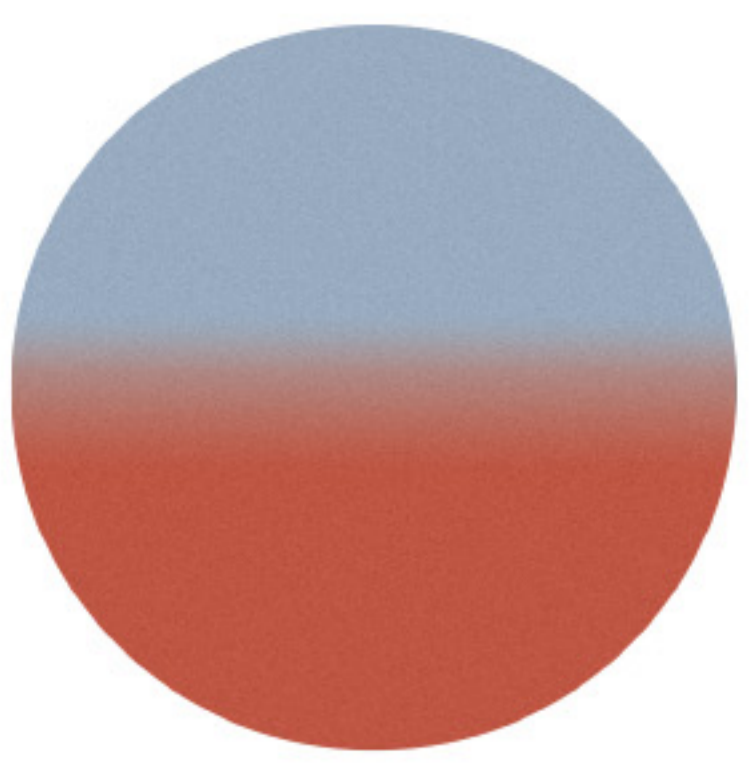
Julie explained that we all tend to measure our worth. Seeing our lives as a scoreboard, but when we do that, we sell our souls to the score givers. Our identity can be formed not just through achievements but through loss. Both pride and regret are deceptions, and they will keep you blinded to your true value which is only found in Christ. She ended by quoting the Talmud that says that we don't see things the way they are, we see things the way we are. We must learn to deal with our insecurities, or our insecurities will deal with us.

Q- Are there parts of your identity that are anchored in outward factors like things you have gained (success, education, things you own) or lost (relationships, innocence, money etc.)?

Q- Do you ever feel like your insecurities stop you anchoring your identity in God?

Q- What are some practices you will put in place to help remould your identity in God?

Nicola asked Folu to share on what it was like to grow up in a Christian household and how it shaped her identity. Folu explained that her parents were intense and radical in their faith and fondly recalled a moment she asked her mum for some new jeans. Her response was "we follow Jesus not fashion!" Her household was Nigerian so there were cultural aspects to family life that were upheld but ultimately her parents modelled and taught her how to put God first in all things. Her upbringing gave her a strong sense of calling and responsibility to steward her life well, fully understanding that she was a child of God.



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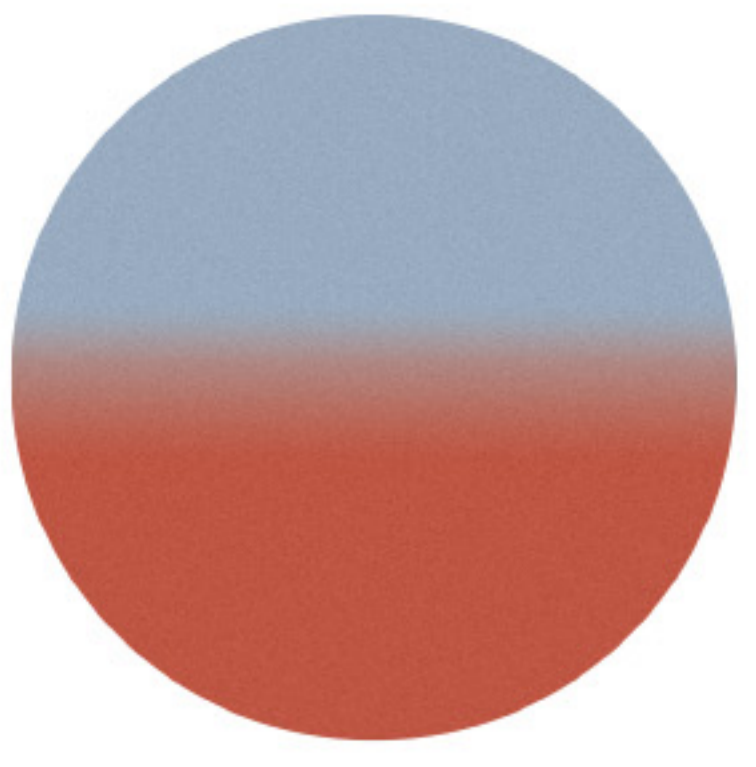
Nicola said that it can sound cliché being told you are a child of God, but when we truly grasp it and it forms our identity, we begin experience the wonder and awe of being a child of the creator of the heavens and the earth. We grow to understand that no one is an accident and that we have all been intentionally placed on this earth by our heavenly father for this time with plans and purposes. Nicola asked Folu if she ever had any identity crisis. Folu shared that when moving to London 12 years ago, she was faced with a choice regarding a job offer. It was in the field of interest she had but not what she had spent her time studying to become. Folu recalls having to lay down her desire to pursue a career path which to worldly standards would have been more prestigious, and instead follow where she felt she was being called. That moment of decision brought her to a place of awareness of where her identity was found.

So, in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.
Galatians 3:26-27

Q- Is God first in your life?

Q- Have you embraced what it means to be a child of God?

Q- Is there something you feel God is calling you into, but you have resisted because it doesn't look like success comparing to worldly standards?



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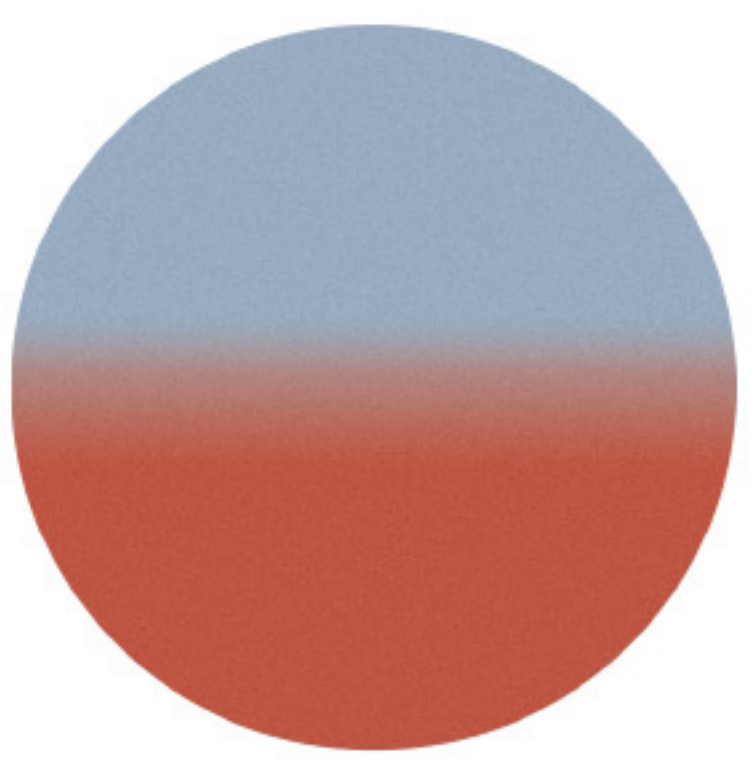
Nicola invited her daughter Leila to reflect on life as a teenager in this generation. Leila said that she navigates the pressure she feels to act, dress, and behave in the way that the world expects her to, by knowing that conforming to worldly standards does not bear any fruit. She sees others who conform to that type of pressure experience insecurity and a lack of fulfilment. She instead intentionally chooses to pursue kingdom behaviour. She shared how like Folu, she is also growing up in a strong Christian household. Being surrounded by adults who pursue kingdom behaviours has helped shape her response to external pressures.

Leila authentically and with strength expressed that she knows who she is: loved and chosen, and what she has been called to love and serve others. She said that we all have a choice to make, are we going left or right, are we going towards the kingdom or the world, and from a young age has chosen to pursue the kingdom and is seeing the fruit of this evidenced in her life and through her security in her identity.

Nicola asked her to expand on past experiences of toxic friendships. Leila shared how before moving to England she was surrounded by girls who were mean and she was pulled her into patterns of behaviour and thoughts that were toxic. When she moved to England three years ago, she committed to pursue friendships that demonstrated kingdom behaviour such as love and kindness.

Nicola asked her where she gets her confidence from. Leila said that she has been on a journey with this and can see how God has transformed her confidence from being prideful in her abilities and strength to relying on His alone and seeing the fruit from doing so.

When moving to England was completely new and unfamiliar to her. Not knowing a single person or even how to navigate her new environment meant that she had to trust and rely on God alone and through this process has grown a Godly confidence which has created a strong foundation of identity in her life.



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

Q- What pressure do you feel from worldly culture to conform to?

Q- Where might you need to pursue kingdom culture and behaviour in your life?

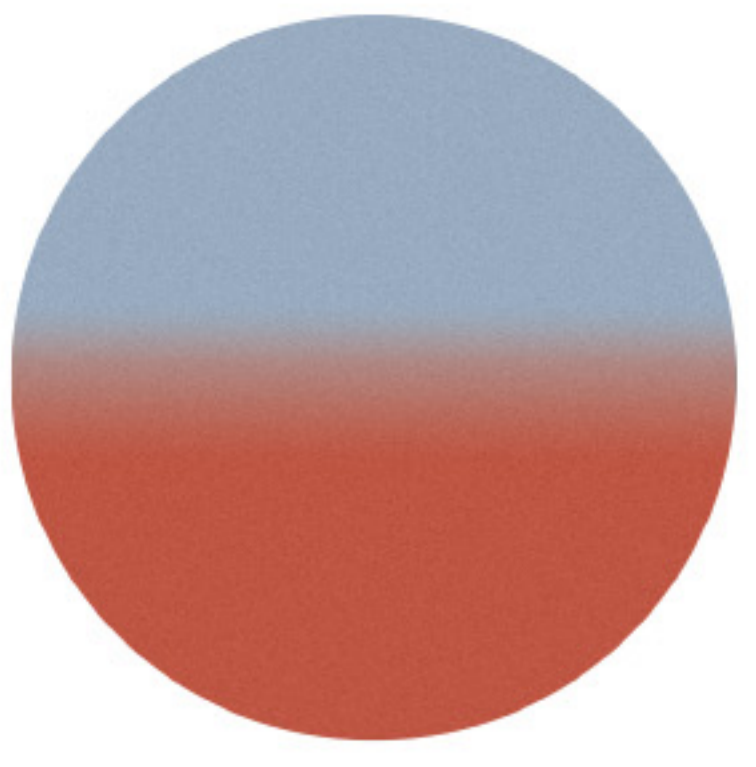
Q- Where might you be relying on your abilities and strength instead of God's?

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

1 Corinthians 10:31

Nicola asked Ana to share what we should do if we are experiencing an identity crisis. Ana said that our attention is spent very quickly, so what we choose to focus on takes a lot of our energy. It is vital to firstly take note of what you choosing to focus on because whatever we focus on, grows. Ana encouraged us to renew our minds according to God's Word and shine a spotlight on who God says we are so we can focus on the right things and spend our attention on what will reinforce our identity for good.

Nicola asked Leila what she believes is one lie this culture wants you to believe? Leila said that as a young person there is pressure to know what you are going to do with the rest of your life from a young age. Choosing the right GCSE's, A Levels, and knowing what career path you want to take. All these things you may focus on are self-perspective.



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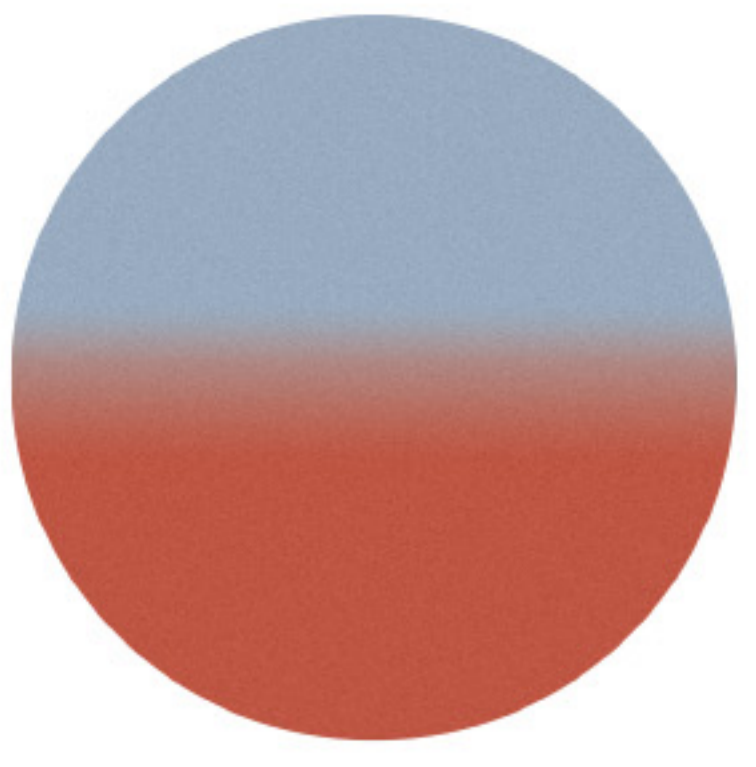
When you shift that perspective to the Lord, you see not only are called to live a bigger life than just our educational and job choices, but we are called to bring Glory to God and to His name, not ours. His plans are far greater than ours could ever be. Once we have that perspective shift the pressure is off us to perform and to instead experience freedom and joy on the journey with Christ.

Nicola asked Folu how we put all of this into practice. Folu gave us four things to help us grow in our Godly identity-

- Be consistent in your walk with God.
- Make sure you are not idolising what you have achieved.
- Remember we are made in His image, to bring Him glory, not ourselves, so steward what we have been given well.
- Remember it's a journey, so be kind to yourself and humble in the knowledge that God is shaping you.

Julie said the most important thing we can do in life is learn to receive the love of God because His love will set us free. And to know that He delights in us, in season and out of season, vomit and all. He is not like man.

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Colossians 3:12-14



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Q- What unhealthy thought patterns or beliefs have you been focusing on?

Q- Where does your perspective need to shift from yourself to God?

Q- Where might you need to be kind to yourself and humble in the knowledge that it is a journey where God is shaping us?