

# CORE: HEART-SET



**To effectively lead or influence** for Christ as a redemptive influencer or change agent, we need to have our hearts and heads aligned with His. We need to be solid at our core by being rooted in Him. Paul told the Colossians, “Therefore, just as you have received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him, established in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, which are based on human tradition and the spiritual forces of the world rather than on Christ. For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity dwells in bodily form. And you have been made complete in Christ, who is the head over every ruler and authority.” (Colossians 2:6-10)

re-demp-tive  
saving someone or  
something from evil,  
suffering, etc.

*core*  
central to the existence  
or character of someone  
or something

Developing a strong core in Christ will help you to grow from adversity, more effectively deal with (and reduce) anxiety, seize the benefits of failure, and enjoy sabbath rest through increased trust in God. A strong core enables you to leverage the power of hospitality, enjoy the cumulative impact of living generously, and develop confidence in the reasons and relevancy of your faith. We are told to, “Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.” (Proverbs 4:23 ESV)

## Personal Foundations

We know that God created humans in perfect relationship with Him, each other, and themselves. Brokenness in those relationships occurred when they decided to do things their way rather than God’s

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way. People have been hurting themselves and others ever since. Because “hurt people hurt people,” and leaders have an amplification affect as they grow in influence, it’s important that young leaders heal from the wounds of the past so that they can lead more effectively in the future. Your 20s are a perfect time to pause and allow God to bring healing, to restore any broken foundations. David, who came into leadership roles as a 20-Something under Israel’s King Saul, cried out, “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.” (Psalm 51:10, ESV) He understood the necessity of heart work of God working in him. Of renewing personal foundations, God’s word for the Israelites is His desire for us too, “And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.” (Ezekiel 36:26)

***Some hurt is because of what others have done: Forgive.***

The Bible says that God sees the pain of those who have been treated unjustly, who have been wronged, and can bring comfort to them. “The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.” (Psalm 34:18 ESV) Also, Isaiah 30:18.

It even shares how Jesus Himself experienced pain and suffering unjustly at the hands of others. “He was despised and rejected— a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care.” (Isaiah 53:3 NLT)

And it teaches that God is just (Isaiah 61:8), cares about justice (Zechariah 7:10), and because of His justice will hold those accountable who wrong us (Colossians 3:25, Romans 12:19, Hebrews 4:13, Matthew 12:36, Jeremiah 17:9-10). Though just, He has mercifully made a way to make restitution on behalf of those who can’t repay for the wrongs they have done to others or to God (1 Peter 3:18).

God provides a way forward in restoring our personal foundations by calling us to forgive others who have wronged us, demonstrating it to us by example. “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” (Ephesians 4:32). He called us to it in Matthew 6:14-15 when He said, “For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.” Jesus illustrated this in his parable of the unforgiving servant (Matthew 18:21-35). Also see (Colossians 3:13, Luke 17:3-4, Proverbs 17:9.)

Combining the voice of God the Holy Spirit as Counselor, a gifted Christian counselor or therapist to help us unravel deep wounds when needed, and a heart posture of forgiveness can be a powerful combination in our journey to wholeness and flourishing.

***Some hurt is because of our own choices: Confess.***

Just as others have the capacity to hurt us, we too have the capacity to hurt ourselves and others through our choices. We’re lying to ourselves if we think we don’t have this capacity. “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” (1 John 1:8) For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard.” (Romans 3:23, NLT) Just as God will hold others accountable for their wrongs to us, He will of us to others, ourselves, and Him. “So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God.” (Romans 14:12) Also, 2 Corinthians 5:10. The wounds we cause can be physical, emotional, relational, and spiritual. “Desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is full grown brings forth death”—James 1:15. “Everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin”—John 8:34. (Also, Romans 6:23) If we don’t deal with it, we won’t be able to receive the healing that we need to be all God has purposed for us as emerging leaders. “Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.” (Proverbs 28:13)

As mentioned above, though, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9 ESV) Also see Isaiah 55:7 and 2 Chronicles 7:14. Healing comes by confession, “Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.” (James 5:16, ESV) As we repent and confess to God the wrongs we’ve done against others, God, and ourselves, we will experience freedom (Luke 4:18), peace (John 14:27), healing (Psalm 147:3, Psalm 30:2), restoration (Jeremiah 30:17), confidence (Hebrews 4:15-16), and ultimately in the end no more pain (Revelation 21:4.)

So, important parts of restoring personal foundations are forgiveness and repentance. Practicing these things can bring clarity, healing, and freedom. You’ll increase your capacity to lead, to love, and to serve in the workplace, community, and the family.

### **Identity Traps, Identity Truths**

What you think about yourself- whether lies or truths- impacts how you relate to yourself, others, and God. Believe it or not, where you root your identity can impact how you use money, the friends or spouse you choose, the jobs you take, your emotional health, how you raise kids, the risks you take or don’t take, how you’ll lead, to what extent you serve, and much more. Uncovering any identity lies you may be believing and replacing them with an understanding of Christ’s view of you and who He says you are as His creation is *extremely foundational* for setting yourself up for a life that flourishes relationally, professionally, and influentially. We’re told in the bible, “if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!” (2 Corinthians 5:17) God also says, “I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.” (2 Corinthians 6:18, NIV) From the very beginning, we are told that we are created in God’s image, created “very good,” with the purpose to steward His creation and glorify Him.

Part of God’s identity is that He is Creator. But that isn’t all He is. He is much more. As image bearers, we too in a sense have a part of our identity reflected in our work, but we are much more than what we do, what we create, or how well we excel in what we do. We must resist placing our core identity in our occupation. Work is important and in a sense is part of your identity, what you may be known for (at least while you are working.) But your true identity is in Christ, not in your work. (Galatians 3:27-28)

First focus on developing into who I want to be, not what I want to do. What do you want to be known for? A Personal mission statement can be helpful. Place your identity in what can’t be taken from you. Whose I Am, a child of God, is more stable than the other identities which all can be taken from me.

*What do you value in life? What one thing, if suddenly lost, would cause you deep concern about what people may think of you? The answer may be an indicator of where you anchor your identity.*

My identity, success, fulfillment, and joy can’t be anchored in what I can’t control. My professional identity is only a part of my personal identity. My value as a person has nothing to do with: the size of my paycheck, professional title, family I came from, what I’ve done or others have done to me, whether I’m single or married, am a parent or not, or how physically fit I am- or not. We’re valuable because God made us valuable. If I can view myself properly, I will be better able to view and value others properly. But it’s hard to keep this perspective when emotions are ebbing and flowing! So, continue to make deposits in all the core life areas (spiritual, physical, intellectual, relational, occupational, emotional), which will help offset emotional withdrawals that might occur in your professional identity (like a job loss.)

On his reflection of identity in the passage of 1 Peter 2:9-11, Eric Geiger, author of Identity: Who You Are In Christ reminds us: As a child of God, trust your perfect Father; As a priest, enter the presence of God anytime, anywhere; As His bride, live pure because He declares you pure; As His servant, serve gratefully; As God's friend, enjoy being with God; As an alien in this culture, live differently; and As God's ambassador, represent Him in this world.

These are only a few of many things our Creator and Redeemer has to say about our identity. Dig in and discover God's truths about you, "And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:32 ESV)

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### **Ask Your Mentor**

1. How might our view of our self (personal identity) influence how we lead? Why is it important to know this?
2. Have you recently learned anything about professional and personal identity you wish you would have known earlier? If so, what?
3. Have you seen God restoring personal foundations through forgiveness or confession played out in your life or someone you know? What's that story?
4. What has God showed you about identity? Have you ever struggled with your work being your primary source of identity? How has (or is) God helping you with that?
5. What's it looked like to trust God through restoring personal foundations or placing your identity in Christ?

### **Go Do**

1. Journal. What do you value in life? What one thing, if suddenly lost, would cause you deep concern about what people may think of you? The answer may be an indicator of where you anchor your identity.
2. Pause and reflect: is there anyone God is asking me to forgive or something that I need to confess? What would it look like to trust in Him with that as you obey?

### **Go Deeper: Further Conversation & Study**

1. What emotions, if any, did you have from what you learned in this session? Was there anything that surprised, excited, or angered you?
2. How might having an accurate understanding of our relationship to God the Father be an important element of a solid leadership foundation?

### **Sources & Resources**

Book- Identity: Who You Are In Christ by Eric Geiger

Article- Your Identity in Christ: How God Sees You, Brittany Yesudasan,

<https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/spiritual-growth/core-christian-beliefs/identity-in-christ.html>

Video- The Christian's True Identity, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=35LxZ0BoseQ>

Video- Discover Who You Are In Christ | Christain Identity-Priscilla Shirer,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rODtYT6-7Ei>

Podcast- The Puddcast, Finding Your Identity (with Priscilla Shirer)

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Video- Christine Caine: How Knowing Your Identity In Christ Protects You | Testimony,

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Article: 7 Truths to Tell Yourself, Louie Giglio, <https://www.familychristian.com/home/7-truths-to-tell-yourself/>