

Praying at the Stop Sign:

Spiritual Preparation for Major Life Change

WEEK TWO – Claiming True Identity

March 24

*“Your purpose is not the thing you do.
It is the thing that happens in others when you do the thing you do.”*

Dr. Caroline Leaf

How do you understand time – what’s the metanarrative?

- In Eastern religions and some new age philosophies, time is an unending circle
 - Time is like a wheel that keeps revolving
 - There is no beginning and there is no end
 - Life has no urgency because time is infinite
- In secular humanism, time is like a wall that has a definite (likely catastrophic) end
 - Something will eventually destroy the earth as we know it
 - Human life will end and be forgotten
 - Life is determined by YOLO decisions
- For apprentices of Jesus, time is linear—a story authored by God in which we have a definite place and purpose
 - Beginning with the creation of the world, culminating in the return of Christ
 - Eventually transitioning to the new heaven and the new earth
 - Our actions will have ripple effects long-term so we take time seriously
 - We also know how / with Whom our story continues so we can have peace
 - Ultimately, time is a gift to be treasured

Where are you/who are you in your own story? Are you

- in the early stages of your current season, working at figuring things out?
- in the middle stages of your current season, dealing with ordinary day-to-day repetition, and does it bring monotony? excitement? discouragement? exhilaration?
- nearing the end of your current season, dealing with disappointed? relief? nervousness? indifference? Is this season ending the way you thought it would?

Your TRUE Identity



Prayer

O let me feel thee near me, the world is ever near;
I see the sights that dazzle, the tempting sounds I hear;
my foes are ever near me, around me and within;
but, Jesus, draw thou nearer, and shield my soul from sin.

John Bode

Spiritual Practice

Name your current narrative (this is not the same as explaining your life circumstance)

- Is there a hurt you haven't let go of?
- Is there something exciting you haven't given yourself permission to explore?
- Is there a regret that's been following you so long you think it's normal?
- Is there a dream you haven't dared to consider?
- Are you the one responsible for helping someone else in your family through a significant transition that also impacts you?
- Is there someone you know who is celebrating a success you wish was yours?

Be willing to listen to the names God brings to your mind, even if you think you won't like what you hear. Carry them into the presence of Jesus whose very name is hope.

Now consider how you choose to "name" yourself

- What's the first thing you disclose in an introduction?
- How do you choose your adjectives?
 - When you speak to other people
 - When you think about yourself

Some ideas for further reading:

Tim Keller, *Every Good Endeavor*, © 2012, Dutton

Jill Haanen, *An Uncommon Guide to Retirement*, © 2019, Moody