

Rockford Reformed Church
Matthew 1:18-25 - “Trading Reputation for Identity”
12/2/18 – Pastor Tim Meendering

Questions for family/small group discussions:

1. We talked about how we all work to manage our reputation through appearance, behavior, and the company we keep. What are some ways that you most often work to manage what others think of you?
2. What are the evaluations, validations, or affirmations that you most look for or most often drive you? Or how do you maybe often struggle with not getting the validation or affirmation?
3. Read Matthew 1:18-25. How would you describe the decision that Joseph had to make when he was told that Mary was pregnant? What would he have to give up?
4. We were challenged to think about what drives us more: My love for reputation and the approval of others? Or, my identity in Christ and the approval of my Father? When you look to others for your acceptance and value, whose acceptance/affirmation is often most important to you?
5. What does it mean for us to trade reputation for identity? What empowers you to make this trade?
6. Read Galatians 2:19-20 and Romans 8:15-17. We live and act by faith in who Jesus is for us. How does this change things for us?
7. In Philippians 2:7, we see that Jesus gave up his reputation for us. How would you describe the reputation that Jesus developed during his earthly ministry relating to his appearance (Isaiah 53), behavior, and company that he kept? What are some examples of how Jesus gave up reputation and what might be some examples of how you could do the same?
8. We said that identity compels you toward the will of God and reputation compels you toward the will of the crowd. What are some new ways that living out of your identity in Christ could change you? How could it be important or helpful to “be a sinner”—or a “mess” who shows weakness and need?

Additional resources to consider:

- [The Search for Significance](#) by Robert McGee. There is also a student edition of this book that is very helpful.
- [Transforming Grace: Living Confidently in God's Unfailing Love](#) by Jerry Bridges.
- The Gospel Coalition at thegospelcoalition.org, Desiring God Ministries at desiringgod.org, and Ligonier Ministries at ligonier.org provide a wealth of resources, articles, videos, sermons, blogs, etc. that are helpful for understanding how the gospel changes us and applies to various aspects of our lives. These organizations also provide a free and helpful phone/tablet app.

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