

# Identity Theft: Reclaiming What Was Stolen

July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023

## Outline

- Introduction
  - Identity theft affects millions of people worldwide every year.
    - So far in 2023 the FTC (Federal Trade Commission) has received 1.4 million complaints of identity theft.
      - Median impact per victim is \$500.
      - Total losses \$10.2 billion
      - Georgia is the worst state.
    - It is a relatively new form of crime, coinciding with the advancement of technology.
      - The more people use on-line accounts, the more exposed they are.
    - With the crime comes the need for protection, which costs the average family \$150 - \$350 annually.
  - The devil has been waging his own campaign of identity theft against mankind since the dawn of creation.
    - Gen. 3:1-4 -*Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?"*<sup>2</sup> *And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden;*<sup>3</sup> *but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'*<sup>4</sup> *Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die.*<sup>5</sup> *For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."*
    - He twisted God's Word so that Adam and Eve would question the identity God had established for them.
      - *"You will be like God."*
    - Satan has not stopped hijacking the truth since then, and the methods he employs to steal our identities have only gotten more sophisticated (and no less perverse) with time. He does this by attacking our identity:
      - In the womb.
      - In our uniqueness in creation.

- In our faith through false doctrines.
    - Through guilt and condemnation.
  - Just like with on-line identity theft, we need protection!
    - The only way we can buffer further attacks and reclaim what he's already stolen is to know who we are in Christ, and we do that by applying Scripture to each attack.
- Identity theft no. 1: The enemy attacks our identity in the womb.
  - The lie: "Pre-born babies are irrelevant."
    - More than 63 million babies have been killed in the womb since 1973 and 30,000 happen every year in MI alone (source: RTL of MI).
    - Satan tries to convince us that the baby is not valuable.
      - "It's just a clump of cells."
      - "It's just an obstacle to overcome."
      - "My body, my choice."
    - This is obviously our most vulnerable point of existence, and he hates that we are image-bearers of God.
  - The Truth: You are made in the image of God and are His special creation from the time of conception!
    - Gen. 1:26 - *Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.*
    - Psalm 139:13, 15-16 - *<sup>13</sup> For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. <sup>15</sup> My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. <sup>16</sup> Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them.*
      - God made you through the process of conception and birth, and has a destiny planned out for you.
    - How important is the unborn to God? So important that He chose this method for His Son, our Savior, to come into earthly existence. And now we celebrate Christmas because of it!
      - Isaiah 7:14 - *Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.*
      - Yes, God likes babies!

- Identity theft no. 2: The enemy attacks our uniqueness in creation.
  - The lies: “You are not in the right body” and “you are no better, and actually worse, than the animals.”
    - Our culture is a confused mess, worshipping self and creation.
      - Romans 1:21-25 -*Because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. <sup>22</sup> Professing to be wise, they became fools, <sup>23</sup> and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man— and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. <sup>24</sup> Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, <sup>25</sup> who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.*
    - The LGBTQI+ ideology has crept into every aspect of society in the enemy’s attempt to normalize it.
      - Movies, commercials, corporate marketing
    - Transgenderism has reached a religious fervor.
      - “Gender dysphoria” - the feeling that you are the gender opposite what your body is - is no longer something to be treated, but an “idol” to be embraced and celebrated.
      - Children and teachers are encouraged to lie to parents about transitioning to the opposite sex.
        - Punishment for failure to adhere to the tenants of this “faith”. (Firings, suspensions, etc.)
      - Girls’ safe spaces being eliminated in the name of “equality.”
        - Sports teams, shelters, prisons
      - Terminology created and/or erased (i.e., “cis-gender”, “birthing-person”)
      - Forget science, it’s all about feelings.
      - Laws passed to make “gender identity” a protected class.
    - Species confusion (anthropomorphism) is even a thing.
      - Coming to a school near you: “Furries”.
      - Animal rights’ activism places animals at a greater importance than humans.
        - PETA – “A rat is a pig is a dog is a boy.”
      - Humans bash humans as the problem plaguing this planet!
        - Climate change craziness, deforestation, etc.

- The truth: You are who God created you to be, and you are unique in all creation!
  - Psalm 139:14 - *I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well.*
    - You are “wonderfully made” and as work of God, you are “marvelous”.
    - There’s only one of you, and you are “spot on” in the body God put you in!
  - Genesis 1:26-28 - *Then God said, “**Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.**”* <sup>27</sup> *So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; **male and female He created them.*** <sup>28</sup> *Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; **have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.**”*
    - Male and Female – two genders only for the purpose of filling the earth.
    - Mankind has dominion over the rest of creation – from the Hebrew word “radah,” it means to have dominance over, not equal to.
      - Genesis 2:18-20 - <sup>18</sup> *And the Lord God said, “It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.”* <sup>19</sup> *Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name.* <sup>20</sup> *So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. **But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.***
    - We must always be good stewards of God’s creation, but animals are not equal to us, and we are most definitely not inferior to them!
- Identity theft no. 3: The enemy attacks us in our faith through false doctrines.
  - The lie: “You are a close-minded bigot for believing Jesus is the only way.”
    - Christians are considered “hateful” for holding to the Truth of the Gospel.

- 2 Timothy 4:3-4 - <sup>3</sup>For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; <sup>4</sup>and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.
      - 1 Corinthians 2:14 - *But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*
    - Satan loves to twist and distort Scripture and, again, has been doing it from the beginning.
      - Genesis 3:1,5 - *“Has God indeed said”, and “you will be like God.”*
    - Works-based, or watered-down Christianity, is far more appealing to the world.
      - Various “Christian” cults emphasize works and de-emphasize Jesus. (Mormonism, Jehovah Witness, 7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventism, etc.)
      - “Love Wins” by Rob Bell – Everyone is saved (so, why was the cross necessary?)
      - Ecumenism – the belief that there should be cooperation among ALL religions (think: One-World Religion).
  - The truth: You are a lover of God and His Truth and you love people too much to let them believe a lie!
    - 2 Timothy 3:16 - *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*
    - Acts 4:12 - *Nor is there salvation in any other [than Jesus], for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”*
    - Psalm 119:105 - *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.*
    - John 3:16 - *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*
    - Just because you don’t agree with someone doesn’t mean you don’t care about them.
      - You know that truth is exclusive and that what you believe has eternal consequences. You don’t want someone lost for eternity, but to come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.
- Identity theft no. 4 – The enemy attacks us through guilt and condemnation.
  - The lie: “You are guilty because of \_\_\_\_\_.”

- “Cancel culture” dictates that if you disagree with the “societal norms”, you are guilty and worthy of whatever derogatory name is thrown at you.
  - 2 Timothy 3:1-4 - *But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: <sup>2</sup>For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, <sup>3</sup>unloving, unforgiving, **slanderers**, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, <sup>4</sup>traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.*
  - Slandering (labeling or name-calling) is a common attack in this present culture.
    - Misogynist, homophobe, transphobe, hater, etc.
  - Saying or posting the “wrong thing” gets you black-listed.
  - Boycotts and protests against anyone that disagrees is the new normal.
- Racism or class warfare has become acceptable again.
  - Guilty for being white or for not being ashamed because you are.
- The enemy’s favorite ploy is to guilt-shame.
  - 1 Peter 5:8 - *Your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*
    - “Walks about” – Strong’s 4043 peripatéō (per-ee-pat-eh’-o) to walk around in a complete circuit (to be so occupied) to get to you.
    - He sets the trap, then starts blaming and shaming.
  - He will label you to weigh you down with guilt.
    - Addict, over-weight, stupid, failure, lost cause, etc.
- The Truth: You are a redeemed child of God!
  - Romans 8:1 - *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.*
  - John 10:29 - *My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand.*
  - Romans 8:38-39 - *For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, <sup>39</sup>nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
    - Once you belong to Jesus, nothing will take you from Him!

- 1 Peter 2:9 - *But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.*
  - *You are chosen!*
  - *You are royalty!*
  - *You are Holy!*
  - *You are special!*
- Conclusion – Reclaim your true identity in Christ!
  - Satan wants you to identify as defeated, which is what he is, but we have the victory in Jesus Christ.
    - If you don't know Jesus as your Lord and Savior, call out to Him today!
      - Romans 10:9-10 – *If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup>For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*
    - When Jesus has paid for your sins, victory is yours!
      - 1 Corinthians 15:56-57 - *The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. <sup>57</sup>But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*
  - Identity is a big deal to superheroes.
    - Batman and Superman have the secret identities of Bruce Wayne and Clark Kent but know who they are and can use their skills and power at any time.
    - Thor didn't know who he was when he first came to Earth (comic book version).
      - He was turned into lame Donald Blake to learn humility and had no recollection of his real identity.
      - Once he learned his lesson, he tapped his cane and became Thor again.
    - Too many Christians are “Donald Blake” and don't realize (or won't use) the power and authority they have inside through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.
  - The most important thing you can do when the enemy tries to steal your identity is to remember who you are!
    - When persecution comes, and it will, remember who you are!
    - When failure comes, and it will, remember who you are!

- When the pressure gets to be just too much, and it will, remember who you are!
- You are a child of God!