

Lesson 2 Show Your I.D.

Earning the right to carry a valid driver's license represents many different things for a new driver. It implies a degree of maturity, independence and responsibility.

But a license holds more significance than that. It also verifies important personal information about you and what qualifications you have to drive. As a legal document, it may be needed to prove residency, citizenship, date of birth, or physical appearance. Put simply, it is a symbol of belonging. For most people, a driver's license is the most important form of identification they carry with them on a regular basis. What forms of identification do you carry with you to prove who you are?

Think about it

Carrying an ID from anywhere implies relationship. An issuing institution or group has to know who you are, and there is usually some requirement on your part to be an active partner. This is also true of a spiritual identity. Belonging to God means being connected together in a significant way.

The opening chapter of Genesis (Genesis 1:26-27) explains that, beginning with Adam and Eve, humankind was made in God's likeness. This is known as *imago dei*, the image of God.

Even though you may be like your earthly family in many ways, you are first of all God's,



created in the *imago dei* and known from eternity. God loves you and you have an earthly purpose to fulfill. In a very real sense, your spiritual identity is dependent on how secure and connected you feel to God. According to Scripture (Col. 3:1-4), it's impossible to fully know yourself outside of a relationship with the One who made you. God desires to fellowship with you as you mature in order to build relationship. Trust in God is the result of experience and the work of the Holy Spirit.

You are an individual, but at the same time rooted in relationship with God and others. Human relationships are part of the eternal plan to experience Divine love. Each family member is given a name that distinguishes him or her from others. Within a safe and loving household, family members develop mutual trust. The pathway for giving and receiving love opens. The same is true for members of God's family. In order for you to experience the giving and receiving of divine gift-love, you must first understand that you belong to God and are known by name.



In depth

To accept your spiritual identity, each person must answer three very important questions: "Who am I?", "Who is God?", and "What is the relationship between us?"

Good relationships begin with individuals who have a clear understanding of who they are. Only then is it possible to connect in a positive way with others. The following exercise will help you reflect on what you know and like about both yourself and God.

Take a few minutes to explore the ways in which you are similar to God's image, and the ways in which your humanity separates you from that image.

WHO AM I?

1a. These three words describe something about my characteristics:

WHO IS GOD?

1b. These three words describe something about God's characteristics:

2a. I express my creativity by:

.....

2b. Examples of God's creativity are:

.....

3a. I demonstrate love by:

.....

3b. I experience God's love by:

.....

4a. Something I wish others knew about me is:

.....

4b. Something I would like to know about God is:

.....

What does the Bible say?

You will limit the joy of the love relationships intended for you if you do not spend time with God.



“Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life full of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God” (Ephesians 5: 1-2)

You must have a clear understanding of what it is to love and be loved by God before you can successfully complete the journey of truly loving another person. Only then is it possible to experience the fullness of the blessings God wants to provide in your life.

For a love relationship to grow, both people must contribute to its success and health. A relationship with God is no different. Scripture states that God loved humankind first: *“We love because he first loved us”* (1 John 4:19). Also see Jeremiah 31:3 and Psalm 118:1.

God is showing you the different faces of love through your family, friends, and the people who touch your life in significant ways. In order to love them and God better, you must know God. Personally experiencing God's presence will give you a different and deeper understanding of your role in relationship with others. Take a closer look.

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT

1. What part of *beginning* a relationship with God is your responsibility? (Prov. 8:17, Rom. 10:9-13)

2. What part of a *lasting* relationship with God is your responsibility? (Rom. 12:1-2, 9-13)

3. What is God's response to your action of beginning a relationship with God?

4. In your experience and in your reading of the Bible, how does God respond:
 - a.) when you have done something well? (Matt. 25:14-23)

 - b.) when you have messed up in some way? (Ps. 32:1-7)

 - c.) when you have been ignored or mistreated by someone who matters to you? (Ps. 30:1-3)

 - d.) when you cry to God for help? (Ps. 34:1-10; Ps. 126:1-6)