



Part 1: “The Hand You’re Dealt”

Introduction

Our identities are naturally shaped by the hands we’ve been dealt in life—our personalities, ethnicities, birth order, childhood experiences, and so on. Even those drivers of identity that we can influence—our achievements and the roles we play—are subject to change. When all of these influences define who we are and how we see ourselves, our identities become unstable, even fragile. What if the cards we’ve been dealt were not limitations and liabilities but instead were potentials and possibilities? The apostle Paul provides insight that can help us anchor our identities to something secure and stable.

Discussion Questions

1. What is your favorite card game? What do you like about it?
2. Have you ever known someone to whom life dealt a difficult hand but whose identity is not defined by that hand? What made them different?
3. Are there any cards life has dealt you that have particularly shaped your identity? What danger is there in allowing them to define you?
4. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17. How could seeing yourself as a “new creation” affect your identity and self-worth?
5. In the message, Elaine explained that being “in Christ” does not *remove* the hand we were dealt but rather gives us a new way of *viewing* our cards. How does that make you feel?
6. Think of one of the cards you’re holding that is holding you. How do you think your life might change if Christ held that card instead of you? What is a practical way you could begin to hand that card to Christ?

Changing Your Mind

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!
2 Corinthians 5:17