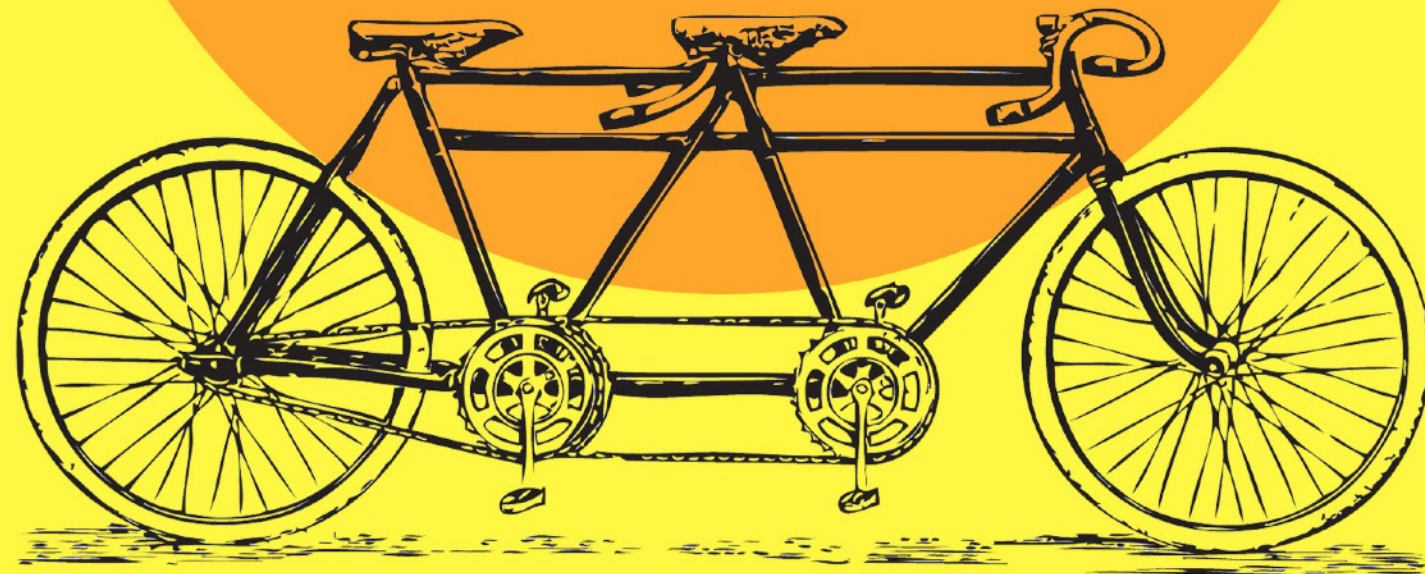


BETTER
TOGETHER



- We are all struggling to figure out who we are or want someone to tell us who we are
- The modern world wages an assault on the imago dei/image of God
- Identity: a fundamental understanding of and love for who I am
- 4 problems for modern man:
 1. Sin distorts our understanding of identity
 2. We are unhinged from traditional avenues of discovering
 3. We are told to self-mold our identities
 4. We live in a culture that is violently anti-Christian



- Our identity must come from an outside source
 - We need selah, shalom, a centered peace
- The source must be something that I find to be most praiseworthy, beautiful, amazing



Colossians 3:3

3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.



- Our identities are in Christ, but we are mostly separated from that identity
- We end up with a “I am what I do/have/role performed” belief
- Scripture says we are complete in Christ!
 - Our purpose, passion and what we do with life flows from that
 - I don't DO in order to define who I am
 - I DO because I am complete in Christ!
- Many of us are trying to backtrack our way into identity through activity and passion



Colossians 2:8-15

8 See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. 9 For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, 10 and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. 11 In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 12 having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. 13 And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, 14 by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. 15 He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.



- Since we are complete in Christ, that means:
 1. Who we are is revealed in relationship, roles, passions and pursuits—they are part of the definition of who we are
 2. We pursue maturity from our completeness, not for it
 3. We are complete through Jesus, which means we don't have to earn approval through perfection
 4. God is working out this completeness in us until we are functionally complete
 5. This is not an excuse to wallow in sin ("that's just the way God made me")



- All of this springs from the Gospel
 - "...we are in the sight of God the Father as the very Son of God himself."
- Our identity comes from this vertical relationship, not our horizontal ones
- Our souls must be anchored in something that is MUCH larger and more eternal than horizontal connections



Colossians 3:11

11 Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.



- Does your identity come from your ethnicity? Your sexuality?
 - We have a NEW identity as chosen ones
 - We have value and identity because we are chosen
- Ethnicity, social standing, relative wealth, are all still true, but they do not ultimately define who I am



- Colossians 3:1-11 talks to us about our old selves; about putting off our old identities (behavior flows from belief!)
 - Part of our problem is that we like to hold on to our old identities, even if they are destructive
- “If you have died and been raised”
 1. Set your mind on things above
 2. Consider yourself dead to what used to rule you
 3. Put all of those old things aside
 4. Put on the new self who is being renewed
- What are you holding on to that you are so desperate to have define you?
- Where are you trying to fill something up that is already filled up in Christ?



- This is under a demonic attack
- Our enemy knows that if you can identify yourself apart from Christ, you will be trapped
 - In sadness
 - Failure
 - Empty relationships



- I am this car, family, job _____
 - I am not something because of _____
 - I am something because I am in Christ



- I matter because because I am Joe Sanders, child of God, complete in Jesus. I am filled up full in Christ.
- I am seeking how best to display that fullness.
- I don't need to find fulfillment in anyone/anything else.
- I am free to pursue excellence and crazy creativity and to risk failure because I am complete.
- God will reveal and finish his fulness in me and I pursue my God-given passions.

