

## Behind the Mask

Known, Loved and Accepted

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Week 5

John 8:32; Psalms 139:1-3, 13-14; Hebrews 4:15;  
Romans 5:8; Ephesians 1:3-5

If you've been with us over the past four weeks, you might remember that we've talked about how there are four root causes to our mental and emotional health:

- Situational (what's happening around me)
- Biological (what happened before me in my family)
- Clinical (what's happening in me physically)
- Spiritual (what's happening in my heart)

What we're taking a look at in this message deals with the spiritual cause of mental health—what's happening in our hearts. Not just our emotions, but about the core of our being; our identity. Ultimately, what is happening in our minds is what leads us to how we think and feel about ourselves, others, and our relationship with God.

Jesus tells us in the book of John that our enemy, Satan, is a liar. *"For he is a liar and the father of lies."* (**John 8:44, ESV**). That's his defining characteristic. He lies to us about who we are. He lies to us about others. He lies to us about God. He lies to us about our circumstances. He lies to us about the consequences of our actions and behavior.

And it's a struggle to know the truth sometimes. We have so many different things telling us what is "true," telling us what we should believe. It could be something we read or saw or were told or experienced. Maybe it's trauma from our past or some kind of pain or disappointment in life. It could just be culture or social media. Who knows what's gotten into our heads with all the Facebook, Instagram and TikTok videos we've watched. There is so much swirling around us trying to tell us what is "true." And there is a very real enemy attempting to use it all against us.

1. **What do you struggle with when it comes to knowing truth?**
2. **Do you believe there is an enemy that is using lies to cause confusion?**
3. **What lie has the enemy attempted to convince you that is true about yourself?**

Often when one lie gets a hold of our mind it can not only be difficult to get rid of, but it can also make us vulnerable to believing other lies. And a spiral begins. And when the foundation of what we think is a lie, things

get blurred and distorted very quickly. What ends up happening is... What we thought to be true causes to think in a way that compelled us to act in a way that led us to become someone we didn't want to become.

Jesus said, “*You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free*” (**John 8:32, ESV**). But if we don't start with what we believe, and what we believe isn't truth, we aren't starting in the right place. And if we aren't starting in the right place, it's almost impossible to get to the right place.

When it comes to the spiritual root of mental health, some of our challenges come from a lack of truth. We forget who we are and who we were made to be. We believe lies about ourselves. Our enemy has warped and distorted who we think we are. In our struggle with mental health, we need truth. We need the truth about who we are. If we know the truth, we can begin to live out of the truth. And when we know and believe the truth about who we are, we'll begin to think differently and act differently.

To be clear, just understanding more about the truth won't immediately fix all our mental health struggles and issues. They are not going to just disappear. But if the truth is our foundation, we can better begin to challenge the thoughts that aren't true, and we can better know our next steps as we work through the struggles.

#### 4. **Why do you think just “knowing” the truth doesn't always feel like enough?**

So, where do we find TRUTH?

Truth is found in what Jesus says. Jesus has the final say about us. And Jesus says in Him, we are something brand new. In Him we have a new identity. And because of Him we can find hope, help, and healing.

Truth is found in Scripture. The Scriptures offer us truth in a way that helps us better understand who we are and helps us to process even our most difficult struggles in light of that. And in that identity is hope, because our identity is not in our mental well-being but in Christ. And who Christ has made us does not change.

Three facts about who we are in Christ:

##### 1. **Truth # 1: We are KNOWN.**

We are fully known by God. J.I. Packer said, “What matters supremely, therefore, is not, in the last analysis, the fact that I know God, but the larger fact which underlies it—the fact that He knows me. I am graven on the palms of His hands. I am never out of His mind. All my knowledge of Him depends on His sustained initiative in knowing me. I know Him because He first knew me and continues to know me.” (J.I. Packer)

You are seen and known by the God of the universe. The God who speaks and planets appear. The God who holds the molecules together. The God who controls it all knows who you are. David put it this way in Psalm 139—*O Lord, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways.* (**Psalm 139:1-3, ESV**)

God doesn't just know of you, He knows it all. Even the small seemingly insignificant parts of our life are known by the God of the universe. And He wants to know. Later in the psalm he says this: *For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.* (**Psalm 139:13-14, ESV**)

God formed your every part. He knows your personality, your thoughts, your hurts, your joys. Nothing is a mystery to him. You are never unseen or unknown. He knows what you are going through. And even more he knows what that struggle you are going through is like.

Jesus went through it too. The writer of Hebrews states, *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin*(**Hebrews 4:15, ESV**). Jesus was STRESSED, Sad, tired, hungry, thirsty. He struggled like we do. He knows about every ache, every wound, every thought and emotion. And since he knows that means, God isn't surprised by our struggles. He is not afraid of our brokenness. He's not shocked by our pain.

**5. What is your biggest struggle that you are going through right now? How is the truth that you are known by God bring you comfort through you struggle?**

We can trust the God who knows us and is aware of all our circumstances. He knows the good the bad and the UGLY. And we all have some ugliness to who we are. Those thoughts? Yes, He knows. That thing you've been hiding and feel like no one knows? He does. Every part of you that you feel falls short? He's aware. He knows.

**Truth # 2: We are LOVED.**

We are fully loved by God, which, after realizing we are fully known, makes the loved part all the more impressive. Tim Keller says it this way: "To be loved but not known is comforting but superficial. To be known and not loved is our greatest fear. But to be fully known and truly loved is, well, a lot like being loved by God. It is what we need more than anything." (Tim Keller)

In Christ, we are FULLY known, and FULLY loved. God knows our every flaw, struggle, and failure. Yet He loves us just as we are. We have no earthly reason He should look at us, but He does. And we don't have to earn it or work for it. There are no hoops to jump through. Sometimes we get it in our heads that we have to do an overhaul of our hearts and lives before God will even look at us let alone love us.

God put it all on the line by showing us just how loved we are! *But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us* (**Romans 5:8, ESV**). God showed and proved his love for us by sending Jesus into our mess to clean it for us. To rescue and heal and restore. He knew we would never be able to clean it up on our own. So, He did it for us. God loves us so much He was willing to pay the ultimate price for us. That's real love. This kind of love for us is UNREAL. It's like nothing we've ever seen or experienced.

**Truth # 3: We are ACCEPTED.**

God loves us so much He gave everything for us. And He did so that we can be accepted. There is something about feeling accepted. There is something about knowing you belong. Paul says it like this: *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly*

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*places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will. (Ephesians 1:1-5, ESV)*

We aren't just chosen; we are adopted into the family! We are loved children in the family of God. We have a place. And that place is with the God of the universe who knows and loves us. The truest thing about us is not our struggle with anxiety, stress or depression. Instead, the truest thing about us is our status as a known, loved and accepted child of God!

**6. Do you believe you are KNOWN, LOVED, and ACCEPTED by God? What next step will you take to live known, loved, and accepted?**

Even in my worry, I will trust Him. Even in my anxiety, I choose to follow Him.  
Even in my depression, I will still give Him glory. Even in my pain, I will praise Him.  
I know what's true—that no matter what, I am known, loved and accepted in Christ Jesus.

Resources:

- Come to our Behind the Mask small group

[e91church.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/3405286](http://e91church.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/3405286)

- Check out: [e91church.com/mask](http://e91church.com/mask)