



LOOKING TO DEVELOP YOUR FAITH?

Gather is a monthly resource from IPHC Women to help you connect women in your local church to Jesus Christ and each other.

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SINKING SANDS

by Kaleigh Hamilton

The world is always telling us who we should be, what we're allowed to look like, and what we can and can't do. As women, we tend to seek validation and assurance from our community, and that's ok! We were made to be in community with each other; of course, we want encouragement, and we should give that encouragement! We also tend to be more emotionally expressive than men, and when we feel good about ourselves, then we feel more confident. It's why I always call my sister after a hard day or do some online shopping when I'm feeling down. A little encouragement or a new pair of shoes never hurt anybody!

The problem is when we seek more than just encouragement, but our very identity, in our careers, our children, our relationships, and our appearance. These are all beautiful aspects of life, but they are not where your identity is found.

It's so easy to fall into the lies that the world will tell you, but it's a dangerous place to find yourself. Our identity cannot come from the world because the world is fleeting and flawed. Appearances fade, careers can change in the blink of an eye, children grow up, and relationships will disappoint you, hurt you, upset you, or leave you wanting more because we are all human and we all make mistakes.

In Matthew chapter seven, Jesus gives us a depiction of what life looks like with the wrong foundation. An identity built on the world's standards is like the house Jesus describes with a foundation on sand. "...and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash." When trials hit us, and we place our identity in anything other than Jesus Christ, we will inevitably find ourselves feeling lost.

An identity founded in Jesus, however, is like the house built on a rock. "The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock." I'm reminded of the hymn, "My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less." The song says, "My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame but wholly lean on Jesus' name. On Christ, the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand." If you don't know this song, look it up! It's worth reading the lyrics.

We are not guaranteed a life without trials. The rains will come, and life will send you difficult seasons. However, if your identity is found in Jesus and not in the world, then those hard seasons will hit you, but they won't break you. Paul understood this very well when he wrote to the church in Corinth: "But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard-pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed." 2 Corinthians 4:7-9

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- 1) Talk about a season that you experienced when you were unsure of your identity.
- 2) What are the common threats we face in our culture to our identity?
- 3) What songs, books, or bible verses have helped you stay strong during hard trials?
- 4) Discuss how you can help other women stay confident in their identity during a hard trial.

CALL TO ACTION:

- 1) Find three verses that describe who God has called you to be. Write them on sticky notes and place them in your bathroom, in your car, on your desk, somewhere that you will see them and be reminded of your true identity. (Jeremiah 1:5, 1 Peter 2:9, John 15:15, or Psalm 139:14 are great places to start!)
- 2) Send a text to a friend, reminding them of their own identity. You never know who may need that encouragement!