

"Compelling People: The Allure of Christlikeness in an Identity-Confused Age"

Sam Ferguson

Sam Ferguson's message explores how Jesus models authentic humanity and how believers can grow into His likeness in a world struggling with identity, purpose, and meaning.

1. **The Crisis of Identity:** Ferguson observes that our culture is confused about what it means to be human, with competing ideas about identity, purpose, and embodiment. He identifies this as a unique opportunity for Christians to present a clear and compelling vision rooted in Christ.
2. **Jesus as the Model Human:** Jesus is both fully God and fully human, showing us what it means to live as God intended. Ferguson highlights three key aspects of Jesus' humanity that believers are called to emulate:
 - **Sonship:** Jesus' identity is rooted in being the Son of God, reminding us that to be human is to come from God as Creator and Father. Our identity is God-given, not self-made.
 - **Holiness:** Jesus lived a life set apart for God, demonstrating that true humanity involves reflecting God's character. Holiness is not optional but essential to being human.
 - **Servanthood:** Jesus served God and others sacrificially, culminating in the cross. Servanthood transforms even the smallest tasks into acts of worship.
3. **Growing in Christlikeness:** Ferguson emphasizes that spiritual growth happens within the body of Christ. He uses three analogies to illustrate how Christians mature in their faith:
 - **Team:** Like athletes, Christians grow through active participation in a local church, learning to live out Scripture in community.
 - **Ecosystem:** Believers thrive in a healthy spiritual environment where relationships and practices nurture their faith.
 - **Craft:** Spiritual growth requires discipline, practice, and persistence, much like mastering an instrument or a skill.
4. **A Compelling Life:** Ferguson calls Christians to pursue secure identity as children of God, holiness that reflects His character, and servant-minded purpose. Such lives offer a compelling witness to a world searching for meaning.

Small Group Questions

1. Identity in Christ: Read Luke 3:21-22. At Jesus' baptism, God declares Him the beloved Son. How does understanding your identity as a child of God shape the way you view yourself and others?
2. Rooted in God: Read Luke 3:38. Ferguson notes that Jesus' genealogy connects Him to Adam and ultimately to God. How does knowing you are "from God" (Genesis 1:27) provide clarity in a culture confused about identity?
3. Holiness as Humanity: Read 1 Peter 1:15-16. Jesus lived a holy life, reflecting God's character. How can you pursue holiness in practical ways this week?
4. Servanthood in Action: Read Mark 10:45. Jesus came to serve, not to be served. What opportunities has God given you to serve others, and how can you adopt a Christlike attitude in doing so?
5. Spiritual Ecosystem: Read John 15:5. Ferguson compares spiritual growth to thriving in the right ecosystem. How does being part of a church community help you stay connected to Christ and grow in your faith?
6. The Practice of Faith: Read 1 Timothy 4:7-8. Spiritual growth requires effort and discipline. What "habits of grace" (e.g., prayer, Scripture reading, service) can you cultivate to grow more like Christ?
7. Teamwork in the Church: Read Romans 12:4-5. Ferguson describes the church as a team. How can you better contribute to the life of your church and encourage others in their faith journey?
8. Living a Compelling Life: Read Matthew 5:16. Jesus' life was compelling because it reflected God's glory. In what ways can your life demonstrate the love and character of Christ to those around you?