



INTRODUCTION - Week 2

What roles, fears and narratives do you carry around in life that lead you back, again and again, to a seemingly endless striving for perfection in every part of your life – and the resulting exhaustion, isolation and inadequacy that comes with it? God's grace overrules any message we might carry with us.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Over the past two weeks, Pastor Hans has talked about how from the moment we come into this world we are on a "Perfect Over Present" journey. As you look at your life, share moments where this was reinforced? How can this be helpful in life? When does the "Perfect Over Present" journey become harmful?
2. We all play certain roles in the various groups we are a part of. What role do you play among your siblings? ...your friends? ...colleagues or at work? What adjectives would the people in these various groups use to describe you?
3. We are on this "Perfect Over Present" journey, often not because we chose it, but because we carry with us a suitcase full of roles, fears and narratives that have been given to us. Some of these come with benefits, but others come with sacrifices and pain. What messages fill your suitcase? Growing up, what messages did you hear about who you are — positive and negative — that stick with you today? How have the messages you mentioned above shaped your "Perfect Over Present" journey?
4. **Read Genesis 20:1-18.** This is a strange story where Abraham lies to a king about who his wife is, putting the king's life at risk. What fears do you think led Abraham to ask Sarah to play a role she never should have played? **Consider this:** Motivated by his own suitcase of fears, Abraham's scheming nearly brought death to Abimelech. And yet, God continued to use Abraham as the means by which God promises to give life and blessing to God's people. Get this: In the verses that follow this story, Abraham and Sarah, at 100 and 90 years of age, are given a child through which God's promise to create a great nation continues!? God's grace overrules all the roles, fears and narratives that fill the suitcases of our lives!
5. Surveying the landscape of your own life, what worries or concerns do you have about letting go of some of the roles you're known for, even if the cons of continuing to play those roles clearly outweigh the pros? How might you begin to replace those harmful messages you carry around in your suitcase with God's messages and what God says, sees and believes about you?

MOVING FORWARD

You are what God says you are. You are what God sees in you. You are what God *believes* you to be. The Bible says: *"I breathed into your nostrils the breath of life (Genesis 2:7). I created you in my own image (Genesis 1:27). I knit you together in your mother's womb (Psalm 139:13). I know the number of hairs on your head, and before a word is on your tongue I know it (Matthew 10:30; Psalm 139:4). You are fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14). I have crowned you as the pinnacle and final act of the six days of creation (Psalm 8:5; Genesis 1:26).*

TRADE IN PERFECTION

God's grace overrules any message you might carry around in your suitcase! *"He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy."* – Titus 3:5