



We tend to think of our baptism as the day of our “choosing.” For some, that has led to choosing the right actions, avoiding the wrong actions, choosing the right group, avoiding the wrong groups. But these identity markers tend to place pride or fear in the center, rather than Jesus. Our daily choice is between Jesus...and ourselves. Choose today. Choose wisely.

These questions are intended to deepen your experience of the message. Use them for your personal or family study time, or with an open Bible as you share the good news with your neighbor.

Group Ice-Breaker:

(1) Describe the day of your baptism.

(2) Is it easy to fall into thinking THAT was the day of our decision...the rest is just waiting it out til Jesus comes back?

CHOOSING OUR OWN IDENTITY.

Read Joshua 24:15. Recall those “choose your own adventure” books. Or in video games where you choose a new identity. What did we like about that? Why is that fine for books and games, but not so helpful in real life? (**See Jer 17:9; Rom 3:11-12**).

HOW WE DEFINE OURSELVES.

We tend to define ourselves in one of 4 ways. Each has something good and right about it, but also a trap:

(1) The right things I do. **Read Phil 3:4-9.** How can this be rooted in pride?

(2) The wrong things I avoid. **Read Col 2:20-23.** How can this be rooted in fear?

(3) Belonging to the right group. **Consider John 8:31-58.** How can this lead to “group-think”?

(4) Discounting every other group. **Read Mark 9:38-40.** How can this be rooted in sectarian thinking?

How are these icebergs not lifeboats?

TWO REAL OPTIONS: CHRIST OR SELF? Read 1 Samuel 1-2.

Compare Hannah with Eli’s two sons. What does it look like to choose God (total devotion)? Read Luke 18:9-14. Compare the tax collector and the Pharisee. How do we find the four traditional ways to identify ourselves in the Pharisee? What does choosing God look like in this story?

STAGES OF GROWTH. Christianity is a journey (Acts 9:2; 19:23; 24:14). What stage are you in?

(1) **Spiritual Infant.** (Needs attention, care, and feeding)

(2) **Spiritual child.** (Easily offended; must have my way)

(3) **Spiritual teenager.** (Good at serving, but achievement-oriented and group-focused; needs a parent)

(4) **Spiritual parent.** (Transparent, sacrificial, interested in the others more than self.)