

Identity Theft Devotion 1 - Mr. Macho

OPENING PRAYER: O Lord, open my eyes that I might see wonderful things in your Word. Amen.

(based on Psalm 119:18)

Today's identity thief is Mr. Macho. He tries to get us to believe that we don't need anyone else or that if our life was different everything would be fine. While God does tell us to "be strong and courageous" throughout Scripture, Mr. Macho tries to get us to just ignore that the hard stuff is even there and says that's what this looks like. He says that we don't need God, or church, or anyone else; we can be strong on our own.

Mr. Macho's Lies:

- You just need to be strong.
- Life just happens. Your problems are smaller than other people, just don't worry about it.
- Nothing can impact you. Don't let it, you're stronger than that!
- You'll get by. You're fine. Life is fine. Everything is just fine. You're overreacting.
- You don't need anyone else's help. You can do life on my own.
- Guys don't cry, buck up! Girls are too emotional, just get over it!

How These Lies May Impact Us If We Believe They Are True:

- We tend to bottle up emotions, feeling the pressure to be "fine" even when we're not.
- Sometimes keeping things inside and not finding an outlet for them can lead to physical symptoms.
- We may struggle with depression, anxiety, anger, or low self-esteem.
- We might get mad or frustrated with other people more easily.
- If we believe these lies while struggling with something that we can't keep secret, we experience great shame and embarrassment.
- It can be hard to express emotions or thoughts about what's going on in our lives which also makes it hard to create meaningful and honest relationships with other people.
- We struggle to connect with God and look to him for help and guidance because we're convinced we don't need him.

Truth from God's Word:

- *"Jesus wept." John 11:35*
Even Jesus cried. He understands when we struggle with things and doesn't expect us to hide our emotions. He wants us to share them with him and maybe some friends or adults in our lives to be able to process life together.
- *"But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest upon me." – 2 Corinthians 12:8-9*
We don't have to be afraid of being "weak". When we are weak, God's strength

shines through, and He's is infinitely stronger and more powerful than we could ever dream of being. Rest in His strength.

- *"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."* – Joshua 1:9
There may be times in life when God does call us to be brave and stand strong in hard times. The difference between this truth and the lie that Satan whispers to us is where we are finding that strength. If we look for it in ourselves, we will never be strong enough. God reminds us in this verse that strength is found in the fact that He is with us always, HE gives us the strength we need to do what He calls us to do; we don't have to muster it up on our own.

Questions to Consider or Discuss:

- What statements might you add to the first list above? What things do you hear from other people or in your own mind that suggest we need to "be strong and have it all together"?
- Where do you hear these ideas? (Media? Family? Friends? Situations?)
- Is there one of these lies that you struggle with or an area of life where you feel pressure to hide it from others acting like things are okay even if they're not? Why do you think that is?
If not, what has helped you be able to be honest about struggles in your life?
- Which truth from God's word was most encouraging you today and why?

Closing Prayer:

Jesus, when life is hard, help me to remember I can come to you. Surround me also with friends and adults that can help me figure out life. Help me be strong and courageous, knowing you are always with me whatever is going on in. Lead me into your truth when Satan tries to get me to believe these lies. Teach me to depend on your strength and not my own. In Jesus' Name, Amen.