Identity

I remember one moment when I was 18 years old and I had this sudden feeling of depravity. As I was talking to a friend, I remember feeling like a giant mirror, reflecting back a refactored image of a Frankenstein like concoction that had been manufactured by stealing bits and pieces of everyone I admired around me and presenting it my own. It was a weird feeling – something that made me sense that I was not being genuine to ‘me’. Albeit far from the abnormal to go through stages where we are searching for our identity but it led me through a sort of transition out of adolescence to young adult life. But again, and again I keep coming back to the simple question of define one’s identity. Identity is a slippery concept that seems to change shape as soon as you think you’ve got a grasp of it. But one thing’s for sure: identity is something we reconstruct again and again as we get older.

I don’t know. A lot of what has to do with this weighty matter can’t be discussed in some small blog post, but I felt it was necessary to jot down the thoughts I had on this topic before I forgot. Hopefully I’ll look back at this some time from now and have some more (better?) insight. As I’ve transitioned out of college and gone through the dreaded post-grad blues, it does seem as though we are again rebuilding our identity again. Some find their identity in relationships, significant others, being a teacher, a preacher, a student in grad school, a church serving member, a mother, etc. The more I grow older, the more I start to believe that we all belong to the school of “You are what you do”. At the end of the day, if you have nothing to show for the efforts you put in, did you accomplish anything?

Another thing I see more these days is the constant need to have proof that we exist via the approval of those around us. Again, social media is something I want to talk about more extensively, but in another post, promise. Even now I feel like I am constantly rebuild/rebranding ‘Josh Hwang’. But even the notion that we are a ‘brand’ is so off-putting because it leads to the thought that we ought to sell ourselves… That’s not what I want. But in today’s society, can we live our lives without being heavily influenced by social media? Can we survive without the approval of others?