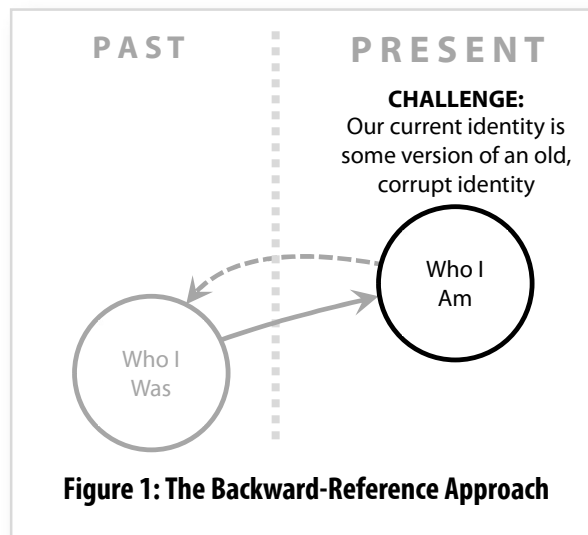


In *Are You Who You Want to Be* (Chapter 15) and *The Field Guide for Are You Who You Want to Be* (Chapter/Step 2, we used a series of illustrations to walk through the key parts of identity transformation. These are helpful to demonstrate:

- The differences between Outside-In and Inside-Out approaches.
- The impact of the Change-Trust-Practice steps to move toward Inside-Out.

Where We Start: Backward Referencing

First, we have to break from our default tendency to utilize a **Backward-Reference Approach** (see Figure 1). This approach forces us to see ourselves in light of who we were in the past: an old identity that's corrupted, incomplete and aligned with a spiritual enemy whose purpose is to keep us blinded and imprisoned.



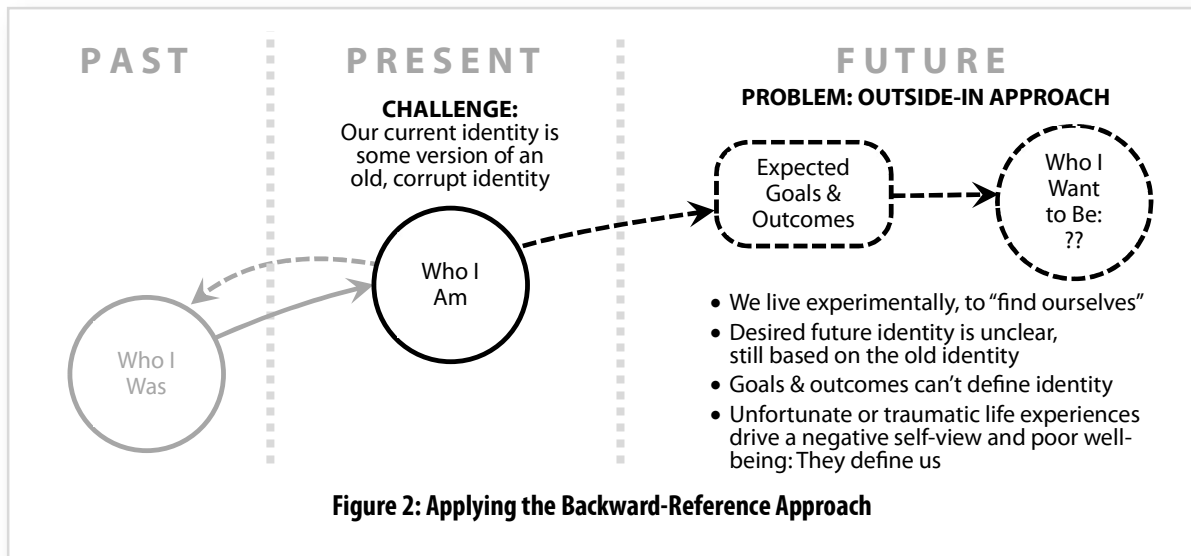
This approach includes a couple of important perspectives:

1. **We See Our Identity As a Fixed, Permanent Reality.**
This makes it virtually impossible to see ourselves any differently than we always have. This is an identity prison of our own making.
2. **We Use Our Past Identity As a Reference Point When Practicing Any Identity Change.**
We experiment with things in life today to be different from who we were yesterday. But because we're not clear on who we want to be, who we were yesterday is still our primary reference point for measuring that change. And all of today's experiments will be part of yesterday's identity when tomorrow comes.

Where We End Up: Outside-In

Backward-Referencing results in a number of problems as we try to discover who we want to be (see **Figure 2**):

1. **Discovering a new identity is impossible.**
Any concept of a new identity is a rehashed, made-over version of our old identity that, at best, we can only tweak or compensate for.
2. **We live experimentally.**
Since we can't envision the identity we're searching for, we end up experimenting with life in an attempt to "find ourselves." We grab onto anything we believe will help define us: achievement, relationships, accumulation, status, power, gender change, career change, marriage change, etc. Continued experimenting brings anxiety and a troubling lack of assurance.
3. **We Default To an Outside-In Approach.**
This reliance upon worldly standards and identity categories is an Outside-In approach that can't confirm who we are. Things like status, achievement and preferences are not who we are, they're what we do. They are merely the caramel coating over the old identity.



The Alternative: Forward Referencing & Inside-Out

To discover the identity we’ve always longed for, we must abandon all attempts at Backward Referencing and instead use a **Forward-Reference approach** that takes us in a radically different direction than we’ve ever gone before (see **Figure 3**).

1. **Jesus Is The Model For Our New Identity.**
 Not that we can be divine, but Jesus’ life, his character and values, his relationship with God and devotion to doing God’s will are the restoration of humanity’s original, created identity..
2. **We Live Purposefully.**
 Our purpose in life becomes straightforward, a by-product of knowing who we want to be. Instead of searching for an identity we can’t define and have no hope of achieving, we apply ourselves toward living out who we know we are. The goals we set and the things we do flow out of our identity, fulfilling our deepest desires in a way that leverages our unique gifts and experiences.
3. **We Choose an Inside-Out Approach.**
 We no longer have to rely upon worldly criteria or achievement. The security, confidence and peace that come from knowing we are God’s restored children allow us to focus on applying ourselves to make our world better. In a biblical perspective, we can work to bring God’s righteousness to our surroundings: doing God’s will, “on earth as it is in heaven.”

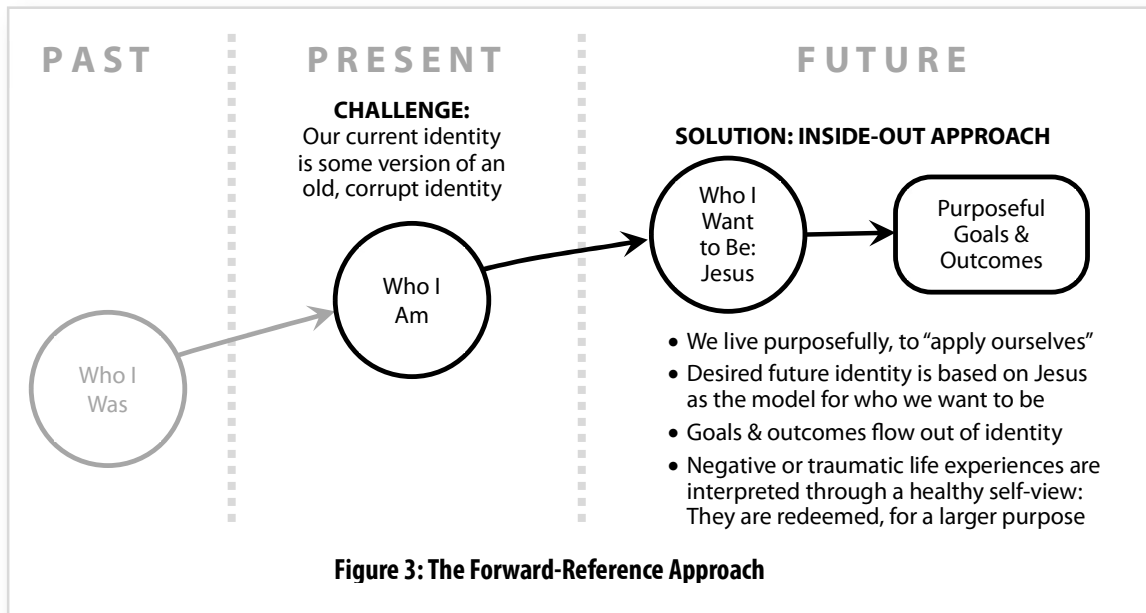


Figure 3: The Forward-Reference Approach

How We Get There: Change-Trust-Practice

Discovering and living out this new Jesus-modeled identity doesn't just happen, because our default is to rely on what we've used all our lives: the externally focused, Outside-In approach that's built around our old identity. Breaking away from this approach requires taking three intentional, volitional action steps. Each of us needs to take these steps for ourselves; no one can take them for us (see **Figure 4**).

1. **Change.**

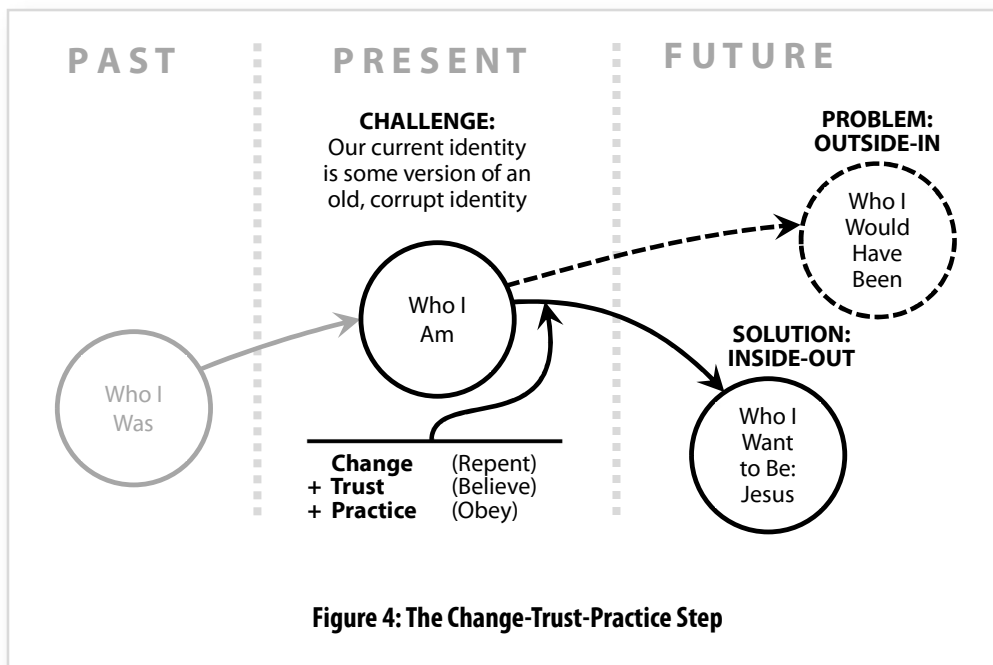
The biblical word for change is "repentance": the act of letting go of the old identity and all its associations. It is abandoning the attempt to remake, build upon or improve the old identity and way of life. It is a complete change of identity.

2. **Trust.**

Trust is belief: the act of reorienting our minds to what we understand to be true, without doubting or hedging. It often involves faith: seeing what is not visibly present or has not yet occurred, and behaving as if it *is* present and *has already* occurred. In regard to spiritual faith, it is living in this world according to what is true in God's kingdom.

3. **Practice.**

Practice is described in the Bible as "obedience" (along with other words like "keep", "observe" and "follow"). It means keeping to what we trust/believe, and then living accordingly. Continuity and consistency are what's emphasized here. It is both actively decoupling ourselves from who we were and continually coupling ourselves to our new identity.



The Big Picture

The entire process can be seen in **Figure 5**

