

Who Are You? part 1

Colossians 3: 23 Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people.

What is your life's purpose? What is it that you do?

For many of us, primarily with men, at least in our North American culture our identity is what our profession or title is. For women, their identity generally relates to their family, such as mother or wife, or of course they can be career-minded as well. When you meet someone for the first time, how do you identify yourself? Who do you say that you are? When you part ways, what is it that you want them to remember you by? Is it "Oh, that was John the accountant.", "That was Mary an Orthopedic Surgeon.", Or "Did you know that Jonas is a regional vice president?" Is your main focus on communicating to people what you do or who you are?

Have you ever thought about it? Or is that just what you learned how to say to people from spending time with others?

As a man who spent many hours in business networking, this is something I'm very familiar with. In business networking, the name of the game is to promote what you do, the niche that you fit, and to make sure that you communicate it well so that the other person would leave the conversation knowing what you can do for them. Can you relate to this?

Are you ready to be challenged?

Knowing how popular this is, even within the Christian business community, what I'm writing about today might challenge some of you, which is good. We never grow unless we're challenged. My hope is that this message will inspire you to embrace the roles that I believe God wants us to walk

in. I think the core of this concept goes back to the message last week about becoming more and more like God and less and less like ourselves, dying to self, and becoming a new creation.

Galatians 6: 15b ... What counts is whether we have been transformed into a new creation.

As each of the disciples are introduced in the gospels, we know them as fishermen, tax collector, zealot, and the others that are seemingly ordinary men. Now that you've read the gospels and New Testament books what is your first thought when someone mentions "Peter" or "John", I'm guessing that you'd say "apostle" or "disciple of Christ" and not a "fisherman".

Matthew 4: 19 And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. (KJV)

No turning back

I think one of the underlying messages that is not to be overlooked is the transformation that took place in these ordinary men. They met Jesus as a "fisherman, tax collector, etc..." and after spending time with Jesus day in and day out over the course of three years they are changed individuals in every way. They were never the same again and they did not go back to what they were doing prior to meeting Jesus.

Jesus not only taught God's ways and how to live their lives, but also left them with a directive that would consume them for the rest of their lives. His last commands weren't "Live a morally successful life after I'm gone." If you can remember it was:

Matthew 28: 18 Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. 19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all the

nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. 20 Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

It is all about the responsibility that a believer has after they've learned the good news and how they've been entrusted to teach others.

How do you identify yourself? In your heart, who are you?

How you identify yourself, in your heart, will determine how you come across to others. How you define yourself will determine your motives for serving others. For example, if I am simply a 'businessman', my objective is to make a profit, and that's my motive, but if I am a disciple of Christ first, my motive is serving others in love and loving the customer in a way that honors the Lord. I know that God is my provider, not my customer. It doesn't matter what you do, whether it be a student, mom, housewife, insurance salesman, jack of all trades, business owner, or waitress, what matters most is knowing who you are in God's eyes. Allow these verses to serve as a reminder...

1 Corinthians 6: 20 for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body.

Romans 8: 17 And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God's glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering.

Here is a great summary of both verses:

Ephesians 1: 3 All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual

blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. 4 Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. 5 God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. 6 So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. 7 He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins. 8 He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding.

Isn't it great to be adopted into God's family?

From these scriptures, we can deduce that we are servants (slaves), children, brothers and sisters in Christ, heirs of the Father. All of these terms can be used at one time or another in relation to God as our identity. In many of the books of the New Testament, the authors define themselves very clearly. For example:

***James 1: 1** This letter is from James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

***Jude 1: 1** This letter is from Jude, a slave of Jesus Christ and a brother of James.*

Note that these are Jesus' brothers. Although they are actually half-brothers of the risen Savior, they chose to take a much more humble approach when they referred to themselves. This is a great lesson to learn.

If the brothers of Jesus were humble enough to consider themselves servants shouldn't we as well?

There's more to follow, come back next week for part 2!

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