

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!

Who Are You? part 2

Last week, in the first of this two-part message titled “Who Are You?”, I ended it with this sentence: *“If the brothers of Jesus were humble enough to consider themselves servants shouldn’t we as well?”*

This week I want to discuss another title that the Apostle Paul discusses in the second book of Corinthians. It’s a bit more upscale, so to speak than the lowly title of servant, but this doesn’t mean we stop being servants.

After all, the best servants make the best Ambassadors...

2 Corinthians 5: 16 So we have stopped evaluating others from a human point of view. At one time we thought of Christ merely from a human point of view. How differently we know him now! 17 This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

18 And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. 19 For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people’s sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. 20 So we are Christ’s ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, “Come back to God!” 21 For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

When we see ourselves as ambassadors for Christ, we shouldn't concern ourselves so much about what to say to someone. What matters most is that we seek God at that moment, knowing that He will give us the words to say. He will also fill you with love that you do not have naturally when you seek Him first.

This motive and intention of serving God changes everything in the conversation. Here you are, a "servant of the Most High God", aiming to please the Father.

Remember, "whatever you do"...

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

So it's no longer "Billy the salesman, just trying to make the sale." it's "Billy the servant of God, serving the customers to meet their needs." (Perhaps the customer doesn't need the product.) And if the customer or stranger has an unbearable burden on their heart, perhaps God is giving you the opportunity to introduce them to the One who can actually meet their desperate needs, as He met yours.

Ambassadorship is a full-time (all the time) position. With this title there is no "hat" that comes off after the Sunday message. Although the auto mechanic uniform comes on Monday morning, we're still wearing the invisible ambassador cap issued by God.

Would you like to excel in this position and perhaps be a more effective ambassador?

John 15: 5 "Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. *6* Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. *7* But if you remain in me and my words remain in you,

you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! 8 When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.

Have you read the entire Ambassador Manual yet?

I've found that in any position, regardless of industry, what makes for a successful term of employment is to be very knowledgeable and understand what the employer requires, the history of the organization, and generally what makes the boss happy. I'd think to myself, *"If I can please the Boss, I'm doing OK and He'll let me keep working."*

As you know, the Master has provided for us a Manual that is timeless and very helpful when it comes to fulfilling our duties. Your performance in the role of ambassador will be greatly enhanced when you regularly seek the Father's heart through His Book. For those that need help with the Book, see below.

Just remember that the wages are good...

***John 4: 34** Then Jesus explained: "My nourishment comes from doing the will of God, who sent me, and from finishing his work. **35** You know the saying, 'Four months between planting and harvest.' **But I say, wake up and look around. The fields are already ripe for harvest. 36**The harvesters are paid good wages, and the fruit they harvest is people brought to eternal life. What joy awaits both the planter and the harvester alike! **37** You know the saying, 'One plants and another harvests.' And it's true. **38** I sent you to harvest where you didn't plant; others had already done the work, and now you will get to gather the harvest."*

"Oh Lord, thank you for giving us life so that we can be set free to love you and serve you and enjoy the fellowship with you that you had intended from the very beginning. Help us to

know what pleases you and teach us your ways. We want to serve you wholeheartedly Lord, please guide us in this life of service. In Jesus' name, amen"

Are You Hoping For A Breakthrough? part 2

In light of everything mentioned in the previous post, Are You Hoping For A Breakthrough? part 1, let's briefly review King David's journey to becoming king of Israel...

He was anointed by Samuel at a young age, but he wasn't crowned until the age of 30. Do you realize all that he endured throughout those years?

Hunted and harassed

He was harassed by his brothers and attacked by someone that was like a father to him. He was hunted and relentlessly pursued by the king of Israel (the same father figure, King Saul). Eventually, he had had enough to the extreme measure that he joined ranks with Israel's enemy almost fighting against his own people.

Throughout this distressing period of his life, David was given charge of hundreds of men. It started out as a small group of family and followers and later grew to be 600 prior to his reign. He did not recruit or pursue these followers, they joined him voluntarily.

It wasn't until King Saul was killed and David went through a terrifying test which proved to be his "final exam". That was arguably the most stressful test of that period of his life, when his town of Ziklag, was razed by the enemy who kidnapped

the wives and children of him and his men.

1 Samuel 30: 1 Three days later, when David and his men arrived home at their town of Ziklag, they found that the Amalekites had made a raid into the Negev and Ziklag; they had crushed Ziklag and burned it to the ground. 2 They had carried off the women and children and everyone else but without killing anyone.

This monumental test causes his most beloved followers to turn on him. Picking it up in verse 6...

6 David was now in great danger because all his men were very bitter about losing their sons and daughters, and they began to talk of stoning him.

With God's help and guidance...

But David found strength in the Lord his God.

7 Then he said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring me the ephod!" So Abiathar brought it. 8 Then David asked the Lord, "Should I chase after this band of raiders? Will I catch them?"

And the Lord told him, "Yes, go after them. You will surely recover everything that was taken from you!"

They were able to retrieve their wives and children...

18 David got back everything the Amalekites had taken, and he rescued his two wives. 19 Nothing was missing: small or great, son or daughter, nor anything else that had been taken. David brought everything back. 20 He also recovered all the flocks and herds, and his men drove them ahead of the other livestock. "This plunder belongs to David!" they said.

And all was restored!

(Isn't cool how God allowed him to be tested in this way, yet all was restored and no one was killed? Can you say "Hand of protection"? Note that this "hand of protection", was there not only for David, but also his followers, for David's sake.)

Shortly after this we read that David was made king. It wasn't David's decision, but the people of Judah chose him.

2 Samuel 2: 2...So David and his wives 3 and his men and their families all moved to Judah, and they settled in the villages near Hebron. 4 Then the men of Judah came to David and crowned him king over the people of Judah.

God prepared him from a small boy and now he was ready. Not only that, through this process he established solid relationships within his team that yielded an undying loyalty towards him. These same people matured as he matured and they worked together with David in his new role as king.

Don't give up hope!

This may be a good time to reflect on your own life and consider the trials and challenges you've endured. Think about how God has been molding you with skills, talents, and abilities. If you are sincerely seeking after God's heart you can be rest assured that He is preparing you for something greater, and should you persevere, God will use you in a great and mighty way!

So remember to remain faithful to the responsibility that God's already given you and thank Him for the opportunity of serving Him in that role today.

Galatians 6: ⁹ So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up.

“Dear Lord, you are good. Thank you for the wisdom you give us in serving others around us. Help us to stay focused on your Word and the daily tasks you’ve put before us. Give us the patience we need to endure so that we can excel in peace. You are so good, thank you for giving me this opportunity to serve you. In Jesus’ name, amen”

Photo by [Sergey Turkin](#) on [Unsplash](#)