



A New Way of Living

Do You Realize Who You Are?

What makes you who you are? Is it your education? Your career path? Who likes you or doesn't? Is it the way you look or how popular you are? Are you defined by your marital status, your talents or how hard you work? Does your grade point average or your salary determine who you are? Is it how well your children are doing that defines you? How do you see yourself? A pop singer posted on her Instagram account and someone commented that the singer was bored and needed to have children. So, is that who she is? Bored? Childless? Or is she more than that? Have you ever had someone label you and you knew that wasn't you? But then, who are you? When Rafiki asked Simba in Lion King if he knew who he was, the very same question might be asked of you. There are a hundred different ways you might identify yourself. Spouse, Parent, Boyfriend, Girlfriend. Teen. Doctor. Pastor. Nurse. Cook. Gardener. Who though are you?

What we really are talking about is identity. Who you are is not the same as what you make of yourself or how you are viewed by your friends, your enemies, your peers, or your family members! It's part of it but not the most important part. When your faith in Christ takes place, your identity shifts into something completely different. It is like Pinocchio becoming a child or a sheep transforming into a racehorse. Let me remind you of what the Apostle Paul has to say about you when you become what Jesus called "born-again", when your faith is in Christ for your salvation. A conversion occurs where you are made into someone new, what would be called a new personality. **Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!** (2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV) So that is what you are, a new creation who is completely altered by being in Christ. But what does that mean for you?

The verse I am about to share may be quite familiar to you but that doesn't mean you have considered its implications. The Apostle Paul, who was personally trained by Christ (see Galatians 1:12), tells you this. **...the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.** (Colossians 1:26-27 NIV) So, that's it. Christ is in you. But you may ask, "What is the big deal about that?" Think about the ramifications. The God who is creator, the Lord who is Savior is part of you when you are born-again. It is not that He is nearby or even close enough to contact at any moment. He is part of you, His personality joined to yours. What happens when the number one is joined with three? One is now four and that is a completely new and different number. It is the same with you. Christ a part of you makes everything about you different than it was before...a new creation.

The problem you may have, and you are not alone in this, is that you don't see yourself this way, as someone completely new with Christ a part of your personality, who you are. Listen to what the Apostle Paul has to say about this common mistake. **You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the**

attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. (Ephesians 4:22-24 NIV) So, that is who you are. You are created with your new life in Christ to be like God, with true righteousness and holiness marking your way of doing and thinking. This may sound strange to you because you don't "feel it" but you are being transformed even now by Christ and developing true righteousness and holiness as today moves along.

You may not grasp who you are in Christ until you test drive the "new you". Like a Corvette that is never taken out on the freeway or a Range Rover never driven off road, you will not know what your capabilities are until you put them to use. So many of us are like Moses who when given by God an assignment, argued vehemently that he couldn't live up to it. God wanted Moses to move back to Egypt and lead his fellow Israelites out of the slavery and to the homeland the Lord had chosen for them. Moses was stunned by the assignment. How could he, a peasant now, get Pharaoh, the king of the greatest nation on earth, to just release the Israelites from their slavery? It was like expecting the government of the South to end slavery without a war. This was of course impossible to Moses. **But Moses said to God, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?"** (Exodus 3:11 NIV) Moses wasn't taking into consideration that one was not the same as four, that there was a new number in the equation that changed everything. Listen to what the Lord impressed on Moses. **And God said, "I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain."** (Exodus 3:12 NIV) It was not Moses; it was Moses and God on the assignment. This was an assignment Moses needed to take if he wanted to see what it was like to have God with him.

To see what your new you really is, there may be a habit you need to break. Jacob, who was the starting point for the nation of Israel, the father of the country was a liar. He lied to his father to get Isaac to bestow the blessing on him rather than his brother Esau. He lied to his brother Esau more than twenty years later, promising to go visit him yet having no intention of doing so. He passed the habit on to his children who lied to him about the fate of his son Joseph, claiming he had been killed by a wild animal when in fact out of jealousy, they sold him into slavery. His older son slept with one of his wives in a secret affair and two other sons deceived an entire village and killed all the men after the mayor's son slept with their sister. Remember what Jacob was told as he was fleeing his brother Esau's wrath for having stolen his blessing. **I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.**" (Genesis 28:15 NIV) I am guessing that it took a long time, maybe not until he was past one hundred before Jacob realized how terrible that habit of lying was for someone who had God with him wherever he went. There may be a habit of yours that is beneath you now that you have become Christian with Christ a part of you. For me it was swearing. Is there a habit you have that with Christ in you should go?

It also could be that for you there is a value you need to shake. The Apostle Paul confronted the Apostle Peter on the negative influence his friends had on his life with Christ. **When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong. Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group.** (Galatians 2:11-13 NIV) Peter valued the respect of his Jewish friends more than doing what was right. When you came to Christ for salvation, you may have put gathering up treasures on earth above treasures in heaven. Maybe you value safety and ease over sacrifice and faith. We all had a few or maybe more than a few values we needed to shake when we brought Christ into our lives. Perhaps its work over reading the Bible or watching TV over praying, keeping what you have over giving it away. Pray and see if there is an assignment you need to take or a habit you need to break. It might be there is a value you need to shake. Test drive your life with Jesus. Christ in you is the greatest opportunity you could ever have. Make the most of it!