

Who Am I? (Part One)



To all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.

(John 1:12)

REVIEW

In Chapter One, we looked at the importance of being connected to the right power source and how this affects our power to face up to and deal effectively with destructive emotions. What was the most important principle you learned from this?

The memory verse was 2 Peter 1:3. Try writing this out from memory in the space below.

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Many years ago, a group of psychologists asked people to write down twenty statements in response to the question “Who am I?” Children tended to say things like “I am a girl/boy”; “I am ten years old”; “I am blonde”; etc. Adults were more inclined to include things like “I am a teacher/secretary/manager”; “I am a mother/father/daughter/son”; “I am a good friend”; etc. Children were more likely to answer the question “Who am I?” in purely descriptive terms, while adults’ answers were more in terms of social roles and relationships. If we were to consider who we are as Christians, what sorts of things could we say? Do we appreciate all that we have as a result of being children of God? Do we really know the difference that being a Christian makes to our identity? Have a go at filling in the following table, where there’s space for up to ten answers. I’ve given three responses to get you started.

| My Identity as a Christian: Who Am I? | |
|--|--|
| I am a child of God. | |
| I am a citizen of heaven. | |
| I am God’s workmanship. | |
| | |
| | |

How did you get on? Don’t worry if you found this difficult and weren’t able to write down many answers. In this chapter and the next, we’ll spend time looking at who we really are as Christians.

Each of my three answers to “Who am I?” represents a different aspect of being a Christian. We read about the first one (I am a child of God) in John 1:12, and this reminds us of the great price he paid in order to bring us into his family. That price was the blood of Christ and shows that he thought we were worth dying for. This demonstrates we are valuable and precious to him. My second answer (I am a citizen of heaven) can be found in Philippians 3:20, and confirms that as Christians we belong to God for all time and eternity. This gives us security. The third answer I gave (I am God’s workmanship) is seen in Ephesians 2:10, and indicates we are significant to him. This gives purpose to our lives. When we realize that our identity lies not primarily in what we’ve done, but in what Jesus Christ has done for us, we’ll begin to appreciate how valuable, secure, and significant we really are. Let’s look at this in more detail.

Many Christians are living in defeat and not enjoying all God has for them because they don’t know who they are. Perhaps negative events in their past have eroded any sense of self-worth they might have had. They blame themselves for any rejection they’ve experienced and believe if they could only perform better or please a particular person more, they could earn acceptance.

Others think that their value or self-worth can be measured in terms of successes they’ve already achieved. Isn’t it good to know that, as Christians, our value is not determined by what we do or don’t

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do, but is based on what God has done for us: he has rescued, redeemed, and forgiven us (Colossians 1:13 and 14), and we are complete in him (Colossians 2:10). Likewise, our security as Christians doesn't depend on what other people do or say about us.

If we are genuine believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, then our security is non-negotiable. We are completely free from condemnation (Romans 8:1) and nothing can ever separate us from the love of God (Romans 8:38 and 39). A lot of Christians are also unclear about their purpose in life and often measure their significance in terms of temporal goals, e.g., marital status, work promotions, bank balance, etc. However, these things don't define who we are, nor do they give us the purpose for which we were created. Have you ever considered that one of your purposes in life is to bear witness to Jesus Christ (Acts 1:8) while another purpose is to live as God's co-worker (1 Corinthians 3:9)?

So, what does all of this have to do with facing up to destructive emotions? Why, you might ask, can we not start right away with the chapters that relate directly to our emotions? Look at it this way: no builder starts building a house without first laying a proper foundation. If there were no foundation, the house would collapse through lack of firm support. In the same way, the first few chapters in this book are laying a foundation on which the later chapters on emotions can stand. You see, our identity in Christ is such an important foundation to lay because *what we believe determines the way we think, which influences how we feel and subsequently act.*

GRACE NOTES

We can spend our whole lives standing in front of the mirror, looking into our own eyes and asking, "Who am I?" but never receive an answer. But, a few minutes spent looking in the mirror of God's Word gives us the clearest possible picture of who we are. That's because it is written by the One who knows us perfectly: our heavenly Father.

As we go through this chapter and the next, we'll focus on who we are as Christians by considering Bible verses that speak directly to the issues of self-worth (value), security (belonging), and significance (purpose).

Self-worth

Have you ever doubted your value to God? Is your view of yourself discolored and distorted because you don't know what God thinks of you? If so, then perhaps it's time to look more closely at what he says about this in his Word, the Bible. Look up the verses in the following table and, in the space beside each one, write down what it says about your value to God. The first one has been done for you.

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| Verses | I Am Valuable Because... |
|------------------|----------------------------------|
| Psalm 100:3 | God made me and I belong to him. |
| Isaiah 43:4 | |
| Jeremiah 31:3 | |
| Matthew 10:29-31 | |
| John 15:15 | |
| Romans 5:1 | |

Which of these verses did you find particularly encouraging?

Which, if any, of the verses in the table did you have difficulty with?

Pause for reflection

Why do you think these verses cause you difficulty? Give examples from your own experience to illustrate your answer.

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Remind yourself that as a Christian all the verses in the above table are true of you. You might want to read them once or twice every day until these truths are firmly established in your mind.

SUGGESTED PRAYER

Dear Lord, thank you for showing me who I am in Christ. I know from your Word, the Bible, that I am valuable. You made me so wonderfully complex and I am precious and honored in your sight. Thank you that your love for me is everlasting. You pay attention even to sparrows, yet your Word tells me that I am worth more than many sparrows. You call me your friend and justify me through faith in you. Thank you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

MEMORY VERSE

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(John 1:12)