

Learning to Hear Father's Voice Tell You Who You Really Are

When did you find out who you really are?

If so, who was the person most responsible for communicating that to you?

Most honest people have no answer to this question.

That is because identity is meant to be spoken, confirmed and validated from those in our tribe. It should begin with our parents and be reinforced by our particular circle of overseers.

This is why you and I wrestle so much with insecurity in our lives. Very few have memories of being told who they are. Therefore, that emptiness gets attacked all the time.

Identity security is best reinforced through verbal affirmation. Those who play crucial roles in our life use significant moments to speak and affirm blessing over who God made us to be. Words are critical during key transitions in life, where at each stage of growing up, we hear edifying words that guide us into the next stage.

The Lack of Transition Moments

Very few initiations exist in our modern society. The best Western culture can offer are the stages of getting a license to drive, being old enough to vote in elections and arriving at the age to drink alcohol. Not an impressive list.

Therefore, most people are left to leap out and figure life out 100 percent on our own with little to no understanding of who we are. Instead of building our lives upon the foundation

of an affirmed identity, we spend our lives living out of insecurity and fault coping mechanisms.

Ask a woman, “When did you first feel like a woman?” You will often hear of moments when a man whistled at her from a construction site, a boy showed her special attention or she’s forced to grow up prematurely through the absence of a parent’s presence.

Most men think of their manhood being established when they had to move out on their own, chase a girl to feel validated or the moment they were initiated into a fraternity of some kind. These frat clubs and gangs are offering to people what was never offered in the family culture—an establishment of identity, acceptance and value.

Without being told who you are, we are left to chase appealing options the world has to offer, usually based on status, success and achievement. We wander through life until we get the signal that our paths driven by insecurity need to be healed.

A Needed Experience

Even our Lord Jesus needed to have His identity spoken and affirmed. His example is a template our tribes need to follow. Before officially launching His ministry, Jesus went to be baptized. It was at this event where His identity was verbally affirmed by the Father.

We rarely see God the Father’s audible words recorded in Scripture. But when deciding to speak, He uses the occasion, not to place the spotlight on Himself, but to affirm His Son. One sentence summarizes what every human heart needs to hear, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I’m well pleased” (Matt. 3:17).

All who were present had the opportunity of bearing witness to the divine exchange involved in this declaration: “This is my

Son! I love Him! I am pleased with Him! I approve Him!"

These words are what every person on the planet needs to hear over and over again.

You need to know who you are.

You need to know you are loved.

You need to know you are approved.

The Father's Voice

Growing up, our dads are the ones assigned to initiate this process. Without the earthly father's identity affirmation, we are left to flounder in the storms of life. The enemy's work festers when there is little identity validation set in place. Furthermore, we all hear Father God's voice through the template of our earthly father's voice. This is the reason why many struggle to hear anything from God.

The plague of the world involves the absence of the father's voice. Most of us never had a relationship with our father where he regularly spoke identity affirming words, while showing us our potential. Even if dad was around, he was often distracted with financial burdens or chasing achievement. He lacked the fathering abilities mostly because it was never demonstrated for him.

One of the greatest responsibilities of a parent is to equip their children to experience the power of who they are. Remember when your mom would call you by your full name, middle name and suffix included. Mark Timothy DeJesus the first! Get over here! This is done to clearly remind you of who you are, whatever that means to you. But what association are parents establishing with the mention of your name?

The Power of Your Name

When my children were born, I wanted to take my role as a

father seriously. In learning the power of identity, I wanted to start off with bestowing names for my children that would follow them and remind them of the power they possess in their identity.

Melissa and I took prayerful time to consider our children's names. Our first-born son's name Maximus John DeJesus. *Maximus* mean "the greatest." We found it especially fitting because it is a warrior name, and that would be a part of Max's spiritual makeup. The name *John, the beloved*, speaks of grace. Our last name is the Spanish name *DeJesus*, meaning "of Jesus." So in essence, Max's name means "The Greatest Beloved Disciple with Grace of Jesus." What a name!

Now let me help you understand that the power of a name is not a performance pressure. One day while standing in an elevator, a woman observed me holding Max as a newborn and delightfully exclaimed, "He's so cute! What's his name?"

"Maximus. His name means the greatest." She quickly replied, "Oh boy, he's got a lot to live up to." Without hesitation I shared, "He doesn't, because I already think he's the greatest." Since Day One, I have sought to pray and speak over him a sense of identity that he doesn't have to earn. He just needs to develop and protect what he already has.

Our daughter is the absolute delight of our heart. Her name is Abigail Hope DeJesus. "Abigail" means "the father is rejoicing." "Hope" speaks of a "divine vision and great expectancy for the future." So her full name means she is "One who makes the father rejoice with hope of Jesus!"

Abby's name is significant and so is her life. Even at the time of this writing, she exudes joy and hope every single day. The impact of Abby's name was seen upon her arrival. She doesn't have to do anything but be herself, and we are blessed with joy and hope.

I will always look back at our children's lives as

significant. The names we chose for them were intentionally designed to build security into their hearts. Our intention is that every time they hear their name, they may be reminded of the identity God sees in them.

Girls were born to be treated as princesses. Boys were born to slay dragons and save the princess. In other words, the beauty of a woman needs to be called out while she is young. Words expressing her beauty are so key to helping her see who she is. Every man needs to get in touch with the mighty warrior that he was destined to be. When this identity is not called out by our parents and mentors, the story of our life can become skewed toward great insecurity and instability.

Secure to Overcome

After receiving love, approval and validation from His Father, Jesus was equipped to enter the wilderness, where he would be tempted by the devil. What the Father had just established in Jesus, Satan came immediately to challenge: "If you are the Son of God ..." (Matt 4:3). "If you really are who you say you are . . ."

The devil wanted to see if Jesus was truly secure in who He was. If Jesus had been insecure or had rejection in His life, He could have easily been swayed by the temptations that were thrown His way.

Yet our Lord's response came from identity. "*It is written!*" was not just what He did, but who He was. He was and is the walking talking Word of God and calls us to live in the same manner.

Yet He needed to hear the love and approval of His Father to imbed the word of God into His being. You cannot learn identity in a classroom. It must be imparted through a fathering relationship. Otherwise we live in shallow theory and not depth of experience. Unlike many who quote the word of God as a theory, but have no identity connection to it, Jesus

simply manifested what was imparted to Him by the Father.

What God says about you, thinks about you and what His ways mean to you, needs to be your identity security. But have you been able to hear that for yourself?

Identity will certainly be tested, as Satan seeks to steal, kill and destroy who you are. Those challenges can be invitations for you to further stabilize who God says that you are. But many people don't stand a chance if they have not moved into healing the fatherless wound of not being told who you are and what you are capable of.

The core identity you carry is being a child of God. You are son, a daughter—one who is loved and dearly cherished by God. Yet we must remove the blinders that prevent us from seeing and experiencing this. {eoa}

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