

Your Ability to Withstand Sin Depends on Your Faith in This Truth

My first recollection of an identity crisis dates back to my childhood reading of the book titled, *Are You My Mother?* In this story, a baby bird hatched while its mother was away. This placed the little fledgling right into the middle of its own identity crisis.

Wandering all around his immediate world, this fearful feathered one asks, “Are you my mother?” He questions a dog, a swan, a heavy machinery crane, a bulldozer and anything else in his path. Each answer fails to provide the helpful information needed in his search for self-identity. Happily, at the conclusion of the tale, he does find his mother, and the story ends well.

Wandering and Wondering

In some sense, we all can understand the crisis of this little bird. Even though we have learned to ask in a more sophisticated manner, we still wonder: *Am I significant? Where do I belong?* and *Who am I?* Counselor Larry Crabb says, “The basic personal need of each person is to regard himself as a worthwhile human being.” Sooner or later, we all face these foundational questions: What is the basis of my self-identity? How do I come to regard myself as worthwhile? Am I like the little bird in trying to discover my identity within parentage or immediate surroundings? Or can something or someone more reliable help me discover who I am? Most importantly, will this discovery result in security—and integrity?

Pastor Mark Batterson framed it well: “Most of us live our entire lives as strangers to ourselves. We know more about others than we know about ourselves. Our true identities get

buried beneath the mistakes we've made, the insecurities we've acquired and the lies we've believed. We're held captive by others' expectations. We're uncomfortable in our own skin. And we spend far too much emotional, relational and spiritual energy trying to be who we're not." Regardless of our framework, I have found this premise to be true: We all spend our lives either searching for, attempting to prove or confidently expressing our identity.

The Basis of Your Identity

Some of us are still trying to figure out who we really are. Others have chosen a certain persona and are putting a great amount of time into establishing it before the watching world. We invest our energy in proving personal worth, acceptability and value. Whether it is our images and postings on Facebook or the cleverness of our tweets, we are prone to project an image that is more about insecurity than our true identity.

A truly secure person is free from making self the point of reference in both thought and conversation. They become free of self-defeating comparisons, self-centered stories and self-promoting actions. They are able to celebrate the worth and wins of other people with a genuine unselfishness. But, how to get there ...

True and Renewed

Wise Christians base their identity on the reliable foundation of biblical truth about God and what He says to be true. This becomes the key to a proper self-image. Our new and eternal life in Christ is the core of our true identity. Then, as we consistently renew our minds in His declarations of who we are, we can weather the skewed input of the world, our unreliable emotions, and the trials of this life with confidence.

When each of us comes to terms with the question, "Who am I?" from a biblical standpoint, "the joy of discovering who you

are and the freedom of discovering who you're not" becomes the new and abiding reality.

The New You

The good news is that in Christ, we can know our essential identity. This is who we are because of the transforming work of the gospel. As new creatures in Christ, we can then have an effective identity as we use our spiritual gifts, heartfelt desires and natural talents and aptitudes for His glory. Second Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things passed away. Look. all things have become new."

We are told that the power of Christ makes us new people. Colossians 3:3 confirms this: "For you are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." Our pre-Christian identity is gone, dead by the power of Christ's death. Our new life and core identity is a reality because of Christ's resurrection and victory over sin and death.

Receive and Renew

Fullness of identity begins when you receive the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ as your only hope of salvation and a new life. The truth is that you carry the worth of God's Son. He cared so much for you that Jesus came and gave His life in order to provide you with a totally new one. By trusting His life and message, you can experience the gift of a new life.

Colossians 3:10 tells us we are to "embrace the new nature, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him who created it." The key phrase is "renewed in knowledge." Paul reminded the Ephesian believers with a similar admonition to "be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new nature"(Ephesians 4:23–24a).

To renew means "to make new again." Our integrity in life and

nonconformity to the world depends on this commitment. “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Rom. 12:2). Transformation comes through renewing our mind according to God’s truth. More important than putting on fresh clothes at the beginning of each day is the need to be renewed and clothed with our new identity in Christ.

Fully Alive!

Irenaeus, the early church father, stated, “The glory of God is a human being fully alive.” A healthy self-image is seeing yourself as God sees you. No more. No less. In Christ, this is our new reality for His glory. {eoa}

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