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You are NOT What You Repeatedly Do!

Who are you? Aristotle is credited with saying “You are what you repeatedly do.” But the Gospel says that it is your identity in Jesus that defines who you are. In other words, **You are NOT What You Repeatedly Do!**

First and most obviously, YOU are a Who and NOT a what! Right?! If you are anything like me, you probably do not take kindly to being introduced as “What’s-his-face,” as if YOU were just a face!

Isn’t this what is so discouraging and demeaning to many of the Father’s pretty daughters who stroll our universe; being seen as “just another pretty face” rather than for the PERSON they *really* are?

It also works in the opposite way. A person may equate a beautiful face for a beautiful personality, only to find out the hard way that there is more to a person than looks, hence the expression, “She’s *just* another pretty face.”

Let’s consider these same dynamics in our family. Again, if you are like me (and I am being VERY facetious here!), you would not dare label your child a thief because they’ve made a habit of stealing things, would you? Most parents, in my opinion (sarcasm again), are more inclined to see their children for who their children really are, and not describe them by their deeds, right? (Wink, Wink.)

For instance, when it is discovered that their daughter has made a habit of lying to other people, parents do not now tend to think of her as a liar. It seems to me most parents confront such a situation by saying something wise like this, “Daughter, we are sooo disappointed in you because lying is not who you really are! You are good and right and holy and blameless in Jesus, and it grieves us to see you live in a way alien to who you really are in Him!” (I’m in full blown winking mode with both eyes now as I write this!)

In all seriousness, we are all a little too guilty of naming others (including ourselves) according to our deeds rather than for who we *really* are IN Jesus! The Apostle Paul understood and taught that humanity’s real identity (YOUR identity) is firmly rooted in the Son of God made human - in Jesus! Specifically, he puts it this way in 2 Corinthians chapter 5:14-16:

“For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them. From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way.”

Hey believers! - those of you that embrace Jesus as the One in Whom all live, move and have their being? Did you notice that we believers embrace that whatever happened to Jesus, happened to everyone in Him, WHEN it happened to him (nearly 2000 years ago)?! When Jesus died, humanity

died! When Jesus rose, everyone rose! Therefore, we no longer look at anyone from a human point of view, or from a view that is not equal to who they are in Jesus!

Putting it in the context of this article, we no longer look at a “thief” and fundamentally call him (the REAL him) a thief. Rather, he is who he is in Jesus, but he has acted in a way alien to who he really is in Him!

I don’t know about you (and I did not intend to write this as a parenting article), but perhaps if we called out our children a little more for who they *really* are, rather than by their deeds, we actually might see some positive, long-term transformation occur in their lives!! Yes, I am writing and taking personal notes at the same time!

Actually, I don’t have to make too much of an argument for the reality of this true principle in Jesus. Many of us have actually had our mistakes, deeds and misdeeds, leveled at us in ways that made us feel as if *we* were our deeds! In fact, the very thought of those deeds and words exploding toward us still make some of us cringe and sting, and we haven’t heard those words for years! This is not only NOT funny, this is downright painful, and hurts, doesn’t it?!

But *WHY* did it hurt then, and why does it still hurt now, even at the very thought of those memories? Good question!

Answer: **Because you are not your deeds, and you are NOT what you repeatedly do! You ARE, presently, who you are in Jesus Christ!**

In fact, you and I are so adopted, included, and filled with the presence of the Triune God, **in Jesus**, that we somehow know, deep in our beings, that WE are not *really* the things we repeatedly do!

And how do we *know* that?!

Because Jesus is sharing even *His* knowing with us! Check out these verses in 1 Corinthians 2:9-16 (especially verses 10-11, 16!):

9 But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him"— 10 these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 11 For what human being knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. 13 And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual. 14 Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. 15 Those who are spiritual discern all things, and they are themselves subject to no one else's scrutiny. 16 "For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

In conclusion, you now know the REAL answer to the question, “Who are You?” You also know the answer to the question, “Who is everyone else?” Now you can stop describing yourself and others by superficial things like dysfunctional family heritage and culture.

I no longer have to strictly think of myself as a Brassell (filled with all of those unwelcome Brassell idiosyncrasies!) You can stop naming yourself by your career role, “I am a janitor”, or by your favorite hobby, “I’m a Dallas Cowboys freak”, or “I’m a Dancing with the Stars Fanatic”!!

No-No-No-No-No!!!

YOU may *do* those things, *enjoy* those things, or even *hate* some of those things, but the Revelation of Jesus Christ is clear about who *you* REALLY are! You ARE who you are in Jesus, RIGHT NOW! Somehow mysteriously present on earth, and in Him at the same time - in His Divine Earthliness!! Somehow in sin and in Him at the same time! (Col 3:1-4). Only the Father, Son and Spirit could pull that off, and it has to be all of grace!!

As we continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, I hope that we will learn to say more things like this (even as we sometimes continue to offend and hurt our neighbors and ourselves in the alien part of our natures):

“I AM who I am in Jesus, and thank you for sharing in His patience and forgiveness toward me as he helps me to embrace and trust him even more for who I really am and who you really are in Him!”

Now that is the Good News! The Gospel!

~ *Tim Brassell*