

Your Identity in Jesus Christ

By Jeff Arnette

Do not forget these words: You are not who people say you are and not even who you feel you are! You are who God says you are!

Few things in life shape a person like the words used to describe them. I will never forget the first time someone called me a preacher. I almost panicked and was visibly shaken by those words. I will always remember being told that I was a loser and would never amount to anything. Words have a way of changing the way we see ourselves that is both good and bad.

To make matters worse, we cannot unhear the things that people have said about us, but we can choose to replace those words with what God says about us. As soon as you can, take some time and meditate on these passages. Each one speaks powerfully to your identity in Jesus Christ.

You are royalty – 1 John 3:1-2. In this passage, we see our new standing given to us in Jesus Christ. You are the Child of God, who has been lavished with all of His love and blessings. Do not ever accept that you are anything less than royalty, meant to rule this life as conquerors (Rom. 8:37).

You are righteous – 2 Corinthians 5:21. Maybe people do not see you as special, as this great, holy Christian. Perhaps you don't see yourself as some great Christian. Perhaps you've had a long history of being less than Christ-like (join the crowd), but God looks at you and says that you have become His Righteousness. He sees you as special, righteous, and holy.

You are wonderfully made – Psalm 139:13-16. When God looks at you, He sees you as beautiful and perfect in every way. You do not need to impress anyone with your looks or accomplishments. You are His creation, and that makes you the most important person in this world. Do not let anything take that away from you.

You are His masterpiece (Eph. 2:10), Heirs to God's Kingdom (James 2:5), and have been given every Spiritual Blessing in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:3). You have been gifted and empowered by God (1 Peter 4:10-11) so that you lack nothing in this life. You have everything needed to be a great Child of God (2 Peter 1:3-4).

You have invaluable in Christ, not because of what you have done but because of what Jesus did for you. When it comes to understanding and

owning your identity in Christ, the biggest roadblock will be your own feelings. Just remember...

You are not who people say you are!

You are not who you feel you are!

You are who He says you are!

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Love People; Use Things

By Joe Slater

I expect you've seen the title of this article practiced in reverse, as I have: "Use People; Love Things." Sad, but true. King Solomon observed, "The poor man is hated even by his own neighbor. But the rich has many friends" (Proverbs 14:20). Now, why would a poor man's neighbors hate him? And why would a rich man have many friends? The poor man doesn't have much to offer materially, so his neighbors can't use him. The rich man's "friends," however, see opportunity to use him to their advantage. "Many entreat the favor of nobility, and every man is a friend to one who gives gifts" (Proverbs 19:6).

Solomon's half-brother, Absalom used people to acquire the power he wanted. See how he buttered up the citizens who came to King David with legal issues: "Look, your case is good and right; but there is no deputy of the king to hear you . . . Oh, that I were made judge in the land, and everyone who has any suit or cause would come to me; then I would give him justice" (2 Samuel 15:3-4). In short order, he conned them into proclaiming him king!

The Pharisees in John 8 used the woman taken in adultery to try to put Jesus into a dilemma. They cared nothing for her soul. All they wanted was to have an excuse to criticize the Lord. By contrast, Jesus loved her and sought her redemption.

The "good Samaritan" in Luke 10 loved his neighbor and used his money and other possessions to help him. Love people; use things. The man who had been robbed and beaten could do nothing materially for the Samaritan. But he needed help, and the Samaritan provided it.

As Jesus said, "Go and do likewise" (Lk. 10:37).

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