

Who Am I?
“Discover Who God Says I Can Be”
Part 2

Intro: One of the phrases that has always stuck with me from my mentor is this: “We are human “beings” not human “doings.” (My mentor knew I was wired to do! He knew I needed to understand this phrase if I was ever going to be the person God wanted me to be) WHY?

- Who we ARE is always more important than what we DO. WHY? Because what we do is controlled and influenced by who we are. Character is what influences our behavior. Therefore, “being” precedes “doing.” Often we put way more significance on the doing rather than the becoming. We define ourselves by what we do instead of who we are...instead of becoming who God says I can be. We put all our emphasis and energy on growing our skills for doing while neglecting the internal qualities that define who we are.
- Why is this so important? Our internal character functions much like roots on a tree. If the roots are shallow, the tree just can’t grow tall...it will eventually topple. If the roots are deep and strong, it creates a massive tree that stands up to anything. (Talk about oak tree) If our skills / success outgrows our character, we will eventually fall.

If we are ever to discover our real worth, we must become the people God calls us to be. We must let God not only transform our doing, but we must allow God to transform our being...our character as well. We must become who God says we can be, growing the roots of our character deep, so we can do what He calls us to do. HOW? 5 “Be” statements.

1. Be Transformed

Rom. 12:2 “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind...” (NIV)

So how do I become a person who is being transformed?

- Stop resisting God’s process of change
When we give our lives to Christ, His desire is to radically change us in every way imaginable. He doesn’t invade our lives to simply forgive our sins. His desire is total transformation. “*transform you into a new person*” Why so important?
 - If you do not cooperate with Him you will make yourself miserable (You are making the internal struggle between the flesh and the Holy Spirit worse. – Resisting the Holy Spirit in your life makes you miserable. This is why so many followers of Jesus have little joy in their lives.) Tug-A-War
 - If we refuse to cooperate with God’s process of change there are negative consequences. Like what? The internal struggle is multiplied / missed blessings / missed opportunities / miss out on experiencing God’s will / no joy.
 - What are the areas of your life you are refusing to let God transform? (Your attitudes / your relationships / your unforgiveness / your past / some behaviors from your old life? Where are you telling God to leave that area alone?

- Let God change how you think (renewing your mind)

We all have a lot of wrong thinking. We all interpret life through a worldly set of glasses that God wants to change. Having our thinking changed is like getting new lenses to see with.

- About 10 years ago it was obvious I needed bifocals. Of course, I lived in denial as long as I could. The one day while I was fishing, I couldn't tie a hook. (explain) Now I have multi-focal contacts. Amazing! But I had to admit my vision needed it.
- You and I have to admit our vision of life needs to be changed as well. We need the lenses of the word of God and the wisdom of the HS to see and interpret life correctly. Living in denial only prolongs the frustration. Are you allowing God to change how you think or are you resisting this process?

(This is why daily reading the Bible and listening to the HS is so critical. It will change how we think in every arena of life) BUT, it's not simply a cognitive exercise. The thinking has to be combined with experience. I didn't just agree that my eyesight needed help, I actually experienced it. This is how you LET God make you into a new person.

You read God's word – The HS gives you perspective and application – you follow through with obedience and you have a light bulb moment.

- Let God make you to look like Jesus

Rom. 8:29 "For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son..."

(NLT) We need to know that this is God's goal in our transformation. He is not wanting to simply change us...He wants us to look like His Son.

If we will allow the first 2 to be accomplished in us, this will be the result. God will progressively make our lives to look more and more like Jesus.

- In the first century in Antioch, the term "Christian" was first used as a derogatory term for the followers of Jesus. It literally means "little Christ." It is a pretty accurate term for what God wants to do with our lives. We are to become like Jesus in every way. This is "being transformed."

2. Be Humble

Phil. 2:3 "Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. (NLT)

- By far, one of the greatest character struggles is pride. In fact, I believe the most destructive character flaw we can possess is pride. Pride literally destroys everything God wants to do in a person's life. I do not believe there is a more toxic poison we can put in our character. I believe God agrees....

James 4:6-7 "God opposes the proud but favors the humble. ⁷So humble yourselves before God...." (NLT) God literally opposes proud people. Think about this!

- Someone who walks in humility can be entrusted with great things from God. Someone who doesn't will ruin great things. If you want to be used by God and see great blessing from the hand of God, it is the character quality of humility you must seek after.

Sometimes God will allow painful events to cultivate humility. In fact, pain can cultivate either one. Sometimes pain can galvanize pride in people. It's our choice.

- Someone asked me a while ago; "Pastor, how do you stay humble?" All the blessing that is upon Foothills...(Show your window cleaning gear. - Explain)

How can we be people of humility? (Humility is dependence on God not independence)

- Pray against pride every day (I ask God for the right balance and blend of humility / confidence and courage. Pride will destroy your marriage / relationships / your future / unity / churches / communities / Pray against it every day.
- Daily surrender your will to God. Example: Jesus before His crucifixion – "Lord, not my will but Yours be done." Probably one of the best prayers you can offer in the midst of stress and painful circumstances. Surrender cultivates humility.
- Remember you are a servant We are called to serve one another. Whenever we want to BE served instead of serve, pride is taking root. Humility's response is always to serve first. If you struggle with pride go serve somewhere.
- Gratitude – stay thankful – Pride takes root when we think we deserve certain results / accolades / blessings / circumstances or positions. Pride is entitled. Humility is grateful.

3. Be Loving

I Cor. 14:1 "Let love be your highest goal!..." (NLT)

Why should it be our highest goal? It is the greatest commandment.

Mark 12:29-31 "Jesus replied, "The most important commandment is this: 'Listen, O Israel! The LORD our God is the one and only LORD. ³⁰And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.' ³¹The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' No other commandment is greater than these." (NLT)

- The most important character quality that God desires in each of us is love. God wants us to become loving people. Loving God and loving each other is the ultimate expression of what we are created for. There is nothing more important to God. There is no other quality that has more significance than this.
- I Cor. 13:2, God's word tells us that without love "I would BE nothing." This quality of love is so important that without it, we will literally waste our lives. I realize that is a strong statement, but listen to God's word.

I Cor. 13:3 "...So, no matter what I say, what I believe, and what I do, I'm bankrupt without love." (Message) This is not some optional quality. Love is who God is asking us to be!

- But, how does one go about cultivating a love for God and other people in a world that is so harsh / critical / calloused and filled with hatred?
 - Exposure – We are strongly influenced by those we spend time with. If you spend enough time with Jesus, His love for people will get "IN" you. Without spending enough time with Jesus our hearts grow cold and cynical. This world will drain the love right out of us. Exposure is what allows me to keep loving. I have to spend

enough time in God's presence. During these times God literally pours His love into my life so I can be a loving person. He gives it to you.

- **Opportunity** – When the opportunity comes to express your love for God or to express and demonstrate your love for others presents itself...choose it! Every time we choose love it will be multiplied in our lives. When I choose love I become more loving. Love is unleashed within us...it multiplies.
- Love God when you come to a worship service / when you see a sunset / experience a blessing / look at the night sky / consider the cross / spring flowers / your quiet time with God
 - Love others when you see a need / choose a loving response instead of being harsh / critical / unforgiving / resentful. It's the tough situations that give us the greatest opportunities to grow in love. Don't miss the chance to be a person who truly loves God and others.

4. Be Strong

Eph. 6:10 "A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power." (NLT)

- Be strong spiritually
 - Being spiritually strong is not being able to quote bible verses. It's not how long you've been a Christian or how often to you to church. Being strong spiritually is how you handle battle.
 - Who are you when the pressure of life gets intense? Who are you in a crisis? In stress? In uncertainty? In relational conflict? In pain? When things don't go your way? In unfairness? Anyone can appear strong when everything is going their way. BUT, it's who you are in the battles of life that reveal spiritual strength.
 - We live in a world that caters to weakness. I don't ever hear anyone talking about the need...the command to BE Strong as followers of Jesus. Strength should be an aspired quality. We should pursue spiritual strength. HOW?
 - Embrace hard things as an opportunity to grow strength.
God does not just zap us with strength. He develops it in our lives as we choose to follow Him in hard. Just as tension creates physical strength in the gym, so does the tension of life as you choose to follow Jesus in it. You choose to follow when it's hard not only when it's easy.
 - Satan will use your weaknesses.
This is why strength matters so much. If you refuse to grow strong, Satan will go after your weaknesses and you will be a pawn he will use. Eph 6 is in the context of spiritual warfare. The greatest battles in the church do not come from the world. They come from weak Christians Satan uses to divide the church.

- Be strong mentally
You can't be spiritually strong and mentally weak. These both go together. What does it mean to be mentally strong?
 - **We grow at taking thoughts captive**
What we think about has a tremendous impact on how we feel and what we do. Therefore, we learn to take our thoughts captive, so they don't take us captive. Your mind works much like a muscle. It can be trained and it can become stronger.
 - Learn what thoughts make you miserable, create anxiety, multiply self doubt, foster insecurities... THEN, replace these thoughts with ones that are true – foster courage – encourage action, confidence, trust in God
 - **We have our heads in the game**
My coach would say this to us a lot back when I was in HS. I think many Christians simply forget what team they're playing on and what competition they are engaged in.
 - Every follower of Jesus needs to be constantly aware they are playing for the Kingdom of light and they are actively engaged in a competition with the kingdom of darkness.

5. Be Ready

I Peter 3:15 "Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it." (NLT)

- Be spiritually ready to represent
Being ready is remembering we are always representing Jesus wherever we are at and whatever we are doing. We are not only the hands and feet of Jesus to this world, but we are also his heart. We represent his love, his mercy, his forgiveness, his grace, his patience. It means I represent Jesus in my words, my tones, my attention to others. It's reflected in how I treat people. This is why people ask about our hope. How do you treat people?
- Be spiritually ready to explain your hope
The bible doesn't tell us to share our faith. It tells us to be ready to explain our hope. Hope is experiential. Hope is a heart thing. Hope is more than facts and information. Hope is more powerful. People can argue against your facts, but they can't argue why you have hope.
 - If you want to be spiritually ready, be prepared to talk about how Jesus helps you experience hope. Stop thinking it's your job to tell people how to get to heaven. Your job is to be ready to explain your hope as a believer.

- Be transformed
- Be humble
- Be loving
- Be strong
- Be ready

These five “being” qualities give us the deeper roots so our lives grow strong. If we become people like this, God will entrust to us what He wants us to do even more. That’s next week!