

## Defining Who You Are

Imagine yourself at a reception. Someone introduces you to their friend and then they immediately get pulled into a conversation with another person. Now you try to carry on a conversation with someone you just met 10 seconds ago. After the typical innocuous comment about the weather or traffic you start to probe for common ground. “So, what do you do?” That is an easy question. As adults we all work, are retired or are a stay-at-home parent. If we are a student the question may be “where do you go to school?” or “what are you studying to be?” In today’s world our identity is based on our employment or school. As we exchange employment or educational goals we unconsciously start to make conclusions about the other person. In our eyes, the conversation becomes the basis for their worth as a person. How unfair, but it is often how the world defines people.

The more important defining characteristic is “whose you are.” You might think of this as a tough conversation starter with strangers, but think of the opportunity you have. When you are a believer, what you do as a follower of Christ is everything – the kind of person you are at work, within your family and in your community. Where you go each day is merely the setting in which you interact with people in a Christian manner. Your co-workers either become a support base for living a Christian life, or the mission field where you can inspire non-believers to come to faith. You can demonstrate that there is a more peaceful, fulfilling way of life than what you do at work or school. That can be life-changing to others as you share your rich life as a believer.

Where you go to work or school is significant because it allows you to use your God-given skills. God gifted you with abilities so you could be productive, a good manager or a good mechanic. Your job may be to sweep the floors, but it is done in a loving way towards everyone around you. You are surrounded by people who need positive interaction.

Terry Spillman is one of those people who radiates his faith in the workplace. He does an excellent job as the property manager at the YMCA. But, he is much more than that. He is an ambassador for Christ. He doesn’t have to preach as his actions speak louder than his words. His inner motivation is to serve God by serving others, and Terry will do anything to help others. In fact, he often takes his God-given skills – those that make him successful at the Y -- to help people out in the community. God’s plan is for you, also, to use your gifts to help others.

We also show “whose we are” in our families. We show it by how we live our faith. Are we patient and kind? Do we avoid being envious of others? Do we avoid boasting and being prideful about accomplishments, and instead, give all the glory to God? Do we honor others, forgiving and forgetting when others wrong us? Do we seek truth and avoid spreading evil, hurtful thoughts? Do we have confidence that God will see us through the difficult times? Do we have the attitude to persevere against wrongs so that God’s will is done? All are characteristics of love, and God *is* love. Think about what a great work, family and community environment it would be if we could all make our identity one of sharing God’s love.

Show your love for God in how you love others. Use God’s gifts and don’t be afraid to tell others God loves them, too. Make your life – at work, home or school – a testimony to your faith. Make “whose you are” to be more important than what you do. You don’t have to be the “life of the party;” just show how a life with Jesus is fulfilling. In that party-time conversation your faithful motivation may help others to realize that their own identity is not where they work, but whom they serve.

**Scripture:** *Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres (1 Corinthians 13:4-10).*

**Question:** When asked the question, whom do you say you serve?

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father. Being one of your children gives us the opportunity to have a higher purpose in life. We pray that will show in all we do – at work, at home and in the community, that we are yours. Amen.

### **For Additional Study** **Characteristics of a Person Who the Spirit of God Dwells Within Them**

Picture yourself with these characteristics as your identity:

- **Christ lives within you.** *You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world (1 John 4:4).*
- **Instead of a life of fear you have God's power, love and self-discipline.** *For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline. (2 Timothy 1:7).*
- **You are God's co-worker.** *As God's co-workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain (2 Corinthians 6:1).*
- **Your agenda is God's agenda.** *Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ (Ephesians 5:21).*
- **You have a different attitude and lifestyle.** *When you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need. Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you (Ephesians 4:21-32).*
- **You belong to Christ.** *Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).*
- **I know all things can work together for good.** *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose (Romans 8:28).*
- **You have purpose.** *And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ (Ephesians 1:9. According to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord (Ephesians 3:11).*
- **You have peace.** *For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility (Ephesians 2:14).*

- **You have compassion for others.** *Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you* (Ephesians 4:32).
- **You are forgiving of others** (Ephesians 4:32) (same as above)
- **You help others to see goodness, righteousness and truth.** *For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth)* Eph 5:8-9
- **You can parent your children with composure.** Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4).
- **You can be a good marriage partner to your spouse.** *Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body. “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband* (Ephesians 5:22-33).

No one is perfect, but God is willing to help us strive toward these.