

YOU ARE WHO YOU ARE

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2 Corinthians 3:12-18

1. You are who you are, but in Christ you should not remain as you are.
2. Some questions we ought to ask ourselves:
 - a. When we look at ourselves in the mirror do we like the person we see?
 - b. What do others see and think about us?
 - c. What does God see and know about us?
 - d. What does God want to change about us?
3. The passage I just read states some important truths.
 - a. Most people have a vail over their hearts and minds when it comes to understanding the Word of God. 2 Cor 4:3-5
And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.
 - b. The vail remains unlifted until a person turns to the Lord.
 - c. Once a person turns to the Lord they can, with an unveiled face, behold as is in a mirror (the mirror of God's Word) the glory of the Lord.
 - d. Those who are thus enabled will find themselves being transformed into the image of Christ from glory to glory.
4. The question is have we surrendered our old nature to Christ, and are we cooperating with Him and trusting Him to subdue it so that we can experience the liberty that is promised here.
5. One of the glorious realities that we will experience is alluded to in Philippians 2:1-11.
Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, 2 make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. 3 **Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; 4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.** 5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
6. Jesus' earthly life was characterized by a selfless surrender to God so that He could be God's instrument in the lives of others.
7. We find in the writings of the Apostles that what was true of Jesus should be true of us.
 - a. 1 Cor 10:23-24
All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify. 24 Let no one seek his own good, but that of his neighbor.

b. Gal 6:9-10

Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.

10 So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

c. 1 Thess 5:15

See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people.

d. 1 Peter 1:22-23

Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, 23 for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God

8. This selfless, sacrificial attitude should be evident in every area of our lives.

9. Let's look at several passages of Scripture that illustrate this truth.

I. In family relationships. Ephesians 5:22-33

Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. 24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, 26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. 28 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; 29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, 30 because we are members of His body. 31 FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH. 32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.

A. Here we see that a wife is to respect her husband and a husband is to love his wife.

B. If things are as they ought to be the wife's respect will be in response to her husband's unselfish love for her.

C. Husbands are to nourish and cherish their wives, and wives are to respect and honor their husbands.

D. Where God's original intent for marriage is taken seriously marriage becomes a partnership and not a rivalry of conflicting wants and desires.

E. Sadly God's original intent is not often achieved in our selfish, self-centered society.

II. In church relationships.

A. Paul stated that we are to do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

B. Peter pointed out that we are to sincerely and fervently love one another with a heartfelt love.

C. John wrote, "Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you. 14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. 15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. 16 We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us;

and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 17 But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? 18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.”

1 John 3:13-18

D. My prayer is that PHBC will be an example of God’s original intent related to our love for one another.

III. In all relationships.

A. As stated before Paul pointed out that we are to do good to all people.

B. We are not to seek our own good but that of our neighbor.

C. We are to have a Christ-like concern for all people, even those whose lives are being lived outside of the will of God.

D. This does not mean that we condone or approve of lifestyle choices and practices that are outside the clearly revealed will of God, but it does mean that we care.

E. Our view of things should be Christ-like. Matt 9:35-38

Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. 36 Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd. 37 Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. 38 "Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."

F. Our goal must be to see people repent towards God and embrace Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, but our motivation must be love for God and love for people.

APPLICATION

1. We live in a world that is in rebellion against God.

2. We live in a world where, for most people, the teachings of God’s Word are irrelevant.

3. We live in a world where many who profess to be followers of Jesus Christ give little evidence that they actually are His followers.

4. We live in a world where sacrificial, Christ-like love is hard to find.

5. Yet we do not need to become discouraged; rather we are to follow the example of our Savior by living life before men even as He did.