

## Establishing Our Spiritual Identity as the Beloved of God

### I. TWO EXAMPLES OF MEN WHO KNEW WHO THEY WERE: JOHN THE APOSTLE & KING DAVID

A. John - The Disciple whom Jesus loved (Jn. 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20):

**...the disciple (John) whom Jesus loved... (John 21:20)**

B. King David:

1. As God's Beloved

**That Your beloved may be delivered...hear me. (Ps 60:5)**

2. As the apple of God's eye

**Keep me as the apple of Your eye (Ps 17:8)**

3. As one God delighted in

**He delivered me because He delighted in me. (Ps. 18:19)**

4. As one treated with divine gentleness

**Your right hand has held me up, Your gentleness has made me great. (Ps. 18:35)**

5. As excellent in the eyes of God and as bringing pleasure to God's heart

**As for the saints ..., "they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight." (Ps. 16:3)**

C. We need to develop a long term vision for sowing much time, energy and finances into sorting out our identity before God and growing in the First Commandment (as opposed to spending our time, energy and money on things that will numb the pain of our inability to discern our identity and live confidently before God in love; finances isn't about buying

an identity, it's about not spending our money to establish an identity through illegitimate means).

**8 You number my wanderings; put my tears into Your bottle; are they not in Your book? 9 When I cry out to You, then my enemies will turn back; this I know, because God is for me. (Psalm 56:8)**

- D. A short term vision of obtaining depth is naive and insufficient and cannot serve our hearts. If we make our evaluations in the first few months and years we will come to inaccurate conclusions about ourselves and about God. There is no substitute for time. The renewal of our fallen minds and darkened hearts takes considerable amount of time:

**...you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. 18 They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. (Ephesians 4:17-18)**

**I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God.....be transformed by the renewal of your mind.... (Romans 12:1-2)**

**26 And he said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. 27 He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how. 28 The earth produces by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. 29 But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come." (Mark 4:26-29)**

## **II. THE FOUNDATION TO DAVID'S IDENTITY: GOD LOOKS ON THE HEART**

When they came [to Samuel], he looked on Eliab and thought, "**Surely the LORD's anointed is before him." But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance [externals: achievements, credentials, appearance, attainments, etc.] or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart." ...Then Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and get him, for we will not sit down till he comes here." And he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had**

beautiful eyes and was handsome. And the LORD said, "Arise, anoint him, for this is he." (1 Samuel 16:6-12)

- A. The Lord DOES NOT see [evaluate] as man sees [evaluates]
- B. Intention vs. Attainment
- C. The calling forth of budding virtues
- D. God defines us by the desire in our hearts not our level of maturity
- E. God sees things that we are unaware of:

**3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. 4 I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me [evaluates my life]. 5 Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the [secret] purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation/praise from God. (1 Cor. 4:3-5)**

### **III. THE FOUNDATION TO OUR PURSUIT OF INTIMACY - GOD'S MAGNIFICENT MERCY**

The Psalms are littered with statements concerning God's mercy. This was clearly David's primary reference point in His pursuit of intimacy: the fact that God doesn't treat us as we deserve to be treated (103:10).

**Ps. 13:5 I have trusted in Your mercy; My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation**

**Ps. 18:1 I will love You, O LORD...19. He delivered me because He delighted in me. 35 ...Your gentleness has made me great.**

**Ps. 103:2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: 3. Who forgives all your iniquities... 8. The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. 10. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities. 11. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy**

toward those who fear Him; 13. As a father pities his children, so the LORD pities those who fear Him. 14. For He knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust. 17. But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him...

Ps 119:132 Look upon me and be merciful to me, as Your custom is toward those who love Your name...159 Consider how I love Your precepts; revive me, O LORD, according to Your lovingkindness.

Mic. 7:18 Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights [enjoys showing] in mercy. 19 He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.

#### IV. HOW GOD DISMANTLES SHAME IN OUR HEARTS TO ESTABLISH US CONFIDENT BEFORE HIM IN LOVE - SIX DIVINE ACTIVITIES OF RESTORATION

Shame is the greatest hindrance to growing in intimacy with God. God attacks shame in our hearts by:

1. Affirming our budding virtues before they are mature (Matthew 26:41); (liberating us from giving up in the face of our profound frailty)
2. Defining us by inward intention not outward attainment (1 Sam. 16:7); (liberating us from religious externalism)
3. Rewarding us for the inner movements of our hearts even before they reach maturity (1 Cor. 4:3-5); (liberating us from self hatred in the face of our constant struggle)
4. Declaring His tender affections toward us in the face of our weakness, immaturity and failure (John 15:9 cf. 13:38); (liberating us from fear)
5. Assuring us of the difference between weakness and rebellion (liberating us from the self-condemnation of our assumed hypocrisy)
6. Encouraging us to run Him in our failure and not away from Him (liberating us from the false humility that would urge us to stay away until we work our way into maturity enough to be acceptable to Him)