

# Who We Are

“...for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.”~ Romans 11:29

Over the years, it has become more and more clear that the key to life is knowing that who we are and what we do are really two different concepts. We are much more than the job we perform, and God helps us find the key to discovering our identity.

If we work at a factory and make oil filters, and someone asks us what we do, we may say we are a factory worker. This happens on the job, but we are much more than that. We may be a parent, a child, a church member, a friend, a person who lives in our corner of the world, we can be all these and more.

Ultimately, no matter what we do, we are a child of God. We are a created being, blessed and given specific gifts and insights that only we have, and we must celebrate all of who we are, or risk being chopped up by the world and dependent on what we do to give us value.

A farmer is a person who grows crops, produce, or livestock, but they are a child of God. An accountant is good with numbers, but a father or mother or friend as well.

Our job can be the particular thing we are called to do at the time. It may change over time, so we can do different things at various stages of our lives, but these occupations are not what we are, only what we do when we are at work.

Wendell Berry writes, “The old and honorable idea of 'vocation' is simply that we each are called, by God, or by our gifts, or by our preference, to a kind of good work for which we are particularly fitted.” We are all God’s children, whether we realize it or not, so God calls us and equips us to do certain things well. The caution is that we must never consider that who we are, so when it is taken away, or when we retire, or when we do something different for a time, who we are never changes.

One of the keys to being happy and fulfilled in what we do, is that whatever we do, we seek to do the best we can possibly do at it. If we are a pastor, we preach, teach, and lead to the best of our ability. If we are a government official, we seek to live higher, think better, and make a better world. If we are a businessperson, we seek to do good work, lift up others, and do the best job we possibly can. “Whatever your life's work is,” said Martin Luther King, Jr., “do it well. A man should do his job so well that the living, the dead, and the unborn could do it no better.”

All of these things can happen just because of our personality or skills, but for a Christian there is the added dimension of God’s Holy Spirit making us able to do more than we could ever do on our own. As we ponder the connection between who we are and what we do, God leads us

to determine our self worth not by our particular circumstances, but by the blessed creation of God that we are. We find perspective in the big picture as it intersects with the little picture.

Still another insight on who we are is the result of what we do. If we do a good job, that history will follow us. If we spend our lives taking from others and doing little on our own, that will follow us as well.

Tyler Perry, a very successful actor and director among other things, says that “developing a good work ethic is key. Apply yourself at whatever you do, whether you're a janitor or taking your first summer job, because that work ethic will be reflected in everything you do in life.”

In all of this we must never forget God's part in giving us meaning, hope, and strength. Tyler Perry is a Christian, and tries to get the faith message through in a medium where standing up for God is very difficult. He writes, in a moment about faith, that, “it doesn't matter if a million people tell you what you can't do, or if ten million people tell you no. If you get one YES from God, that's ALL you need.”

So let's all take a moment today, dear reader, to reflect on exactly who we are. No matter where we work, no matter the time of our lives, from cradle to retirement and beyond, we are a child of God, called to be a Christian who blesses this world. Who we are has everything to do with Whose we are.