

Who Do You Think You Are Anyway?

That sounds like a negative question, doesn't it—like one your parents might have asked when you took the law into your own hands and did what you wanted, instead of what your parents told you? Well, I don't mean it to be negative, although that's a good question when you apply it to your heavenly Father's instructions also, but I want to be more fundamental than that. Just who do you think you are anyway?

You are a person. You were created by God. "In him we live, move, and have our being," we are told (Acts 17: 28). That's not just a general statement concerning all of mankind, either. It means that every person, every individual, is the product of God's ingenuity and wisdom. That, in turn, implies that He had a purpose in mind when He created you, for God does nothing without intention. Every person is part of His plan, a part of something He seeks to accomplish.

You are a person with capabilities. First, you're special. God never made another person exactly like you. Your personality is peculiarly yours, just as are your fingerprints or your voice graphics. What's yours is yours. As a result you have very personal responsibilities. Although some obligations are assigned to all of us for "together" functions, some are specially yours. For instance, if you have capabilities to serve a people as an Elder, you have an obligation to develop what God has given you so that you can help lead His people. If you have some special talent as a singer, you are responsible for using yourself to help His people worship in song. And if you couldn't lead a song if you tried, but you have a special ability to fix things, you are responsible for fixing things, so that those who can't do what you can benefit for your talent. God describes the local church as a body. Every part serves to help the entire body function. "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (I Corinthians 12:27), and "For the body is not one member, but many" (Verse 14). There are no vestigial organs in the body of Christ. Everyone is important. I said every one. You are one.

You are a person with the right of choice. Every man is born with a sense of ought, with an inherent ability to recognize a difference between right and wrong. Even as a small child we quickly learn that we're going to be faced with choices. That responsibility never goes away, no matter your age or your abilities. Sin is a selfish choice of one's own person in preference to God. God has spoken. When we choose to disobey His will, we sin. "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4). "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). God has made Himself known to man (II Timothy 3:16-17), and "He hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world..." (Acts 17:30). This right of choice is not just a privilege—a privilege related to glorifying God—it is a God-given responsibility, one to which every man is related and for which every man will be held responsible.

You are a person with a future. Every person is going somewhere. This world is not the end of matters. It's ultimately up to you where you go once you're finished here. There are only two roads given in life, and you can use the aforementioned freedom of choice to decide which one you will trod. There's a wide road, one that is well-lighted and easily traveled, and you can choose to take that easy way, if you want. You may like it, because most people are on that same road. It will take you to worldly pleasures and present considerable thrills, but the end of that road is desperation and loss. It's ultimately a foolish course. Or, there is a road that is narrow and straitened by responsibilities and difficulties, one that is not easily traversed, albeit one that ends up at the city of eternal joy (see Matthew 7:13-14). It's your future. You control your own destiny.

You are a person in time. Time was created for man and man for time. Each man has time. You have so much, so do I. We don't have ultimate control over how much we have, however. It may be much, or it may be little, but we all have time to make ourselves fit for eternal life. Please be advised that eternal life is not merely elongated time, either, but a life where the quality is so very precious that it actually defies adequate description (see Revelation 21). "This world is not my home, I'm just a passing through," says Mr. Albert Brumley's song. And it's true—no matter whether the end of life is a heavenly home, or an eternity of regret and horror.

It's up to you. You must decide your own course of activity. You can choose to follow a course of worldly pleasure, or you can choose to follow a course of peace, knowing that the future is secure. "It is appointed to men once to die, and after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27).

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