

Who do you see when you look in the mirror?

It is a good question to ask yourself and one that we all need to look at

Who you see really affects where you go in life

And how you relate to the world around you

Who you see is more important because that is who comes up when God calls you

When God speaks to us we often respond the same way Moses did

☞ Moses is out for a walk one day looking after his father in law's sheep

And while he was out walking he saw something unusual

We know the story

Moses saw a bush burning

But what was unusual is not that the bush was burning because that happened in the desert all the time

What was unusual was a burning bush that didn't turn to ash

☞ Exodus 3:3,4 MSG

***Moses said, “What’s going on here? I can’t believe this!  
Amazing! Why doesn’t the bush burn up?”***

***God saw that he had stopped to look. God called to him  
from out of the bush, “Moses! Moses!”***

***He said, “Yes? I’m right here!”***

In that moment Moses was introduced to the God he had heard so much about

Moses came to personally encounter the subject of the history and stories of Israel

He knew as all Hebrews did the stories of what God had done in the past

÷Which is why God introduced Himself as  
***“I am the God of your father: The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob.”***

Moses had been told the stories of what God had done and who God had shown Himself to be.

And what is interesting in our story is when God spoke to Moses he didn't question

He didn't ask for proof

He didn't think he was hearing things

He didn't question

There was simply a knowing he was  
listening to God speak and he responded  
accordingly

All of the hero's we have in scripture heard God speak

👉 Hebrews 11 lists them

22 people listed who heard God speak and  
followed what God said.

And there could be many many more but  
Paul ran out of time

People who simply responded to God's call

We as believers are able to hear God and know His voice  
as well.

👉 Jesus stated in John 10

My sheep hear my voice vs 16

Know my voice vs 4

Listen to and follow my voice vs 27

What is interesting for me in the hero's chapter is that  
when you read about them none of them were  
superhuman, and none of them got it all right.

All of the would be considered abysmal failures at  
times

So they had the same issues we face when  
we hear God

Many of them history records responded the same way that you and I respond when we hear God speak to us

Like Saul when he was anointed king of Israel we respond

1 Samuel 9:21 The Message (MSG)

***“Saul answered, ‘But I’m only a Benjaminite, from the smallest of Israel’s tribes, and from the most insignificant clan in the tribe at that. Why are you talking to me like this?’”***

Like many of the people listed in scripture who God spoke to we respond “whoa, wait a minute, slow down, Do you realize who your talking to?”

Like most of the people listed in scripture, both those who fulfilled God's plans, and those who missed them entirely,

And those we admire throughout history who answered the call when God spoke to them

☞ All of them struggled with an image problem

The image we have of ourselves is arrived at through many ways

And many different lenses and experiences which create the image of ourselves that we see or project

☞ The first way we interpret ourselves is through our families

The way we grew up, and the environment we

were raised in,

The way our siblings or lack of siblings  
treated us

The way we responded to the environment  
begins to form us from a very early age

And like Saul we respond to life around us  
based on the way we grew up

We don't have to respond like Saul  
but our family impacted our view of  
ourselves.

If your family told you that you were a  
mistake your whole life guess what you  
will believe about yourself

☝️Secondly with almost as big of an impact is we interpret  
ourselves through our friends.

The way we see ourselves often comes from the  
friends or even lack of friends we have

The way our peers treat us has a powerful  
impact on who we see ourselves to be

And the messages we hear growing up  
drive us forward in our lives

either to prove them wrong or to  
live up to them

Which is why Paul cautions people about the friends they keep

1 Corinthians 15:33 New Life Version (NLV)

33 Do not let anyone fool you. Bad people can make those who want to live good become bad.

The relationships we have impact the way we see ourselves

☝️ Thirdly we interpret ourselves through our feelings

We may not be willing to acknowledge we have them but they do play a role in how we see ourselves.

If we allow them they can cause us to simply see the negative side we have

Depression can be a result and then that feeling can deepen that cycle

Everything we experience in life creates a feeling

The feeling isn't bad it just is

But the way we respond to the feelings can alter the way we see ourselves

Norman Vincent Peal wrote

Once walking through the twisted little streets of

Kowloon in Hong Kong, I came upon a tattoo studio. In the window were displayed samples of the tattoos available. On the chest or arms you could have tattooed an anchor or flag or mermaid or whatever. But what struck me with force were three words that could be tattooed on one's flesh, Born to lose. I entered the shop in astonishment and pointing to those words, asked the Chinese tattoo artist, "Does anyone really have that terrible phrase, Born to lose, tattooed on his body." He replied, "Yes, sometimes." "But," I said, "I just can't believe that anyone in his right mind would do that." The Chinese man simply tapped his forehead and said in broken English, "Before tattoo on body, tattoo on mind."

It is really difficult at times to separate ourselves from our feelings so they don't define us

But if we are not careful they will

☹️ Linked to our feelings because it often is the cause of them we interpret ourselves through our failures

This can be one of the single most impactful elements on our lives

And when we link it to our feelings we can begin to not just see the failures, but begin to see ourselves as failures

☹️ And it can go from simply being something you have done, an experience you have had, to

something that you are, a part of  
your identity

And this can be very difficult to break free of

Failure can become our identity if we allow it to

Or it can become an effective teaching tool in our  
lives which compels us forward

How we handle and respond to it determines who  
we see ourselves to be

☝️ So we interpret ourselves through our  
Families  
Friends  
Feelings and  
Failures

And failure can become so powerful in our lives  
that we actually fear it

☝️ And we also interpret and see ourselves through our  
fears

The things we fear become a limit and a barrier to  
us moving forward

Those fears can be logical and founded

Or they can be irrational and unfounded

Whatever form they take they have a powerful  
impact on who we see ourselves to be and what we



believe we are capable of doing or not doing

Fear can become so powerful that it becomes our identity

And everything is seen through the lens of fear until we cannot function at all

We have all heard of people like Howard Hendricks who locked himself up inside a sealed room because he couldn't handle germs

no one went in or out

Or people who cannot go outside because of the crowds of people

Or the open spaces

Our fears can become our identity and render us powerless

And as Christians we can be rendered powerless by our fears

Fear of offending people

Fear of failing

Fear of sin

Fear of what people will think

So many fears that the power that created the universe and raised Jesus from the dead becomes useless and we become immobilized

☪️ I pray a similar prayer for myself as Jim Elliot when he

prayed

***“Forgive me for being so ordinary while claiming to know so extraordinary a God.”***

***— Jim Elliot***

Or being a Christian Athiest, believing in a powerful God but living like He doesn't exist

The problem is Our identity and the way we see ourselves when God calls determines how we respond Him

Will we respond like Saul and miss out

Saul who never got over the insecurities and fears

Or will we respond like Moses and move forward

Both of these men has insecurities and questions when God called them

The problem isn't the questions everyone has them

When God calls us it is human response to ask those questions

And natural to apply human reasoning to the situation

Moses in our story had all of these questions and doubts

He had fears and failures which he allowed  
to define him for years

Getting past those questions is what is important

And we don't get past them simply by redefining our  
image

How we see ourselves is important but it isn't what  
allows us to launch forward into what God wants  
to do

Because the will of God always drastically  
exceeds our expectations

So how do we move forward into what God wants to do?

I believe we need to see ourselves differently and not  
because of who we are

Who you are is an important question to answer

But it isn't what moves you forward into all  
that God wants

☞ What is most important for us a Christians to answer is  
not who you are, but whose you are.

It sounds like a trivial statement but it holds real kingdom  
significance

All of the fears and failures and things we have in  
our lives that we see ourselves through revolve  
completely around us

Our limits  
Our failures  
And our fears  
Our insecurities  
Our strengths  
Our weakness

And God doesn't call us into who we are

God calls us into who He is and that allows us to  
get our identity in Him

And then our strength  
our security  
our peace  
our life

is all based on the unending unchanging  
faithfulness of who God is

Answering the question for yourself of Whose are you  
gives you a totally different outlook

Once we begin to see Jesus within we begin to see what  
God sees in us

When He calls us into something it isn't because of  
our abilities and qualifications

Because we can do nothing of any kingdom  
value by ourselves

Everything God asks and calls us into is because of

whose we are and whose life is within us

This is what the writer to the Hebrews was reminding them of

Hebrews 11 lists all of the people in scripture who saw God do powerful things

It is often referred to as the hero's chapter

And immediately after the list of people who God used powerfully closed the very next statement is

**☞ *Hebrews 12:1-2 The Voice (VOICE)***

***So since we stand surrounded by all those who have gone before, an enormous cloud of witnesses, let us drop every extra weight, every sin that clings to us and slackens our pace, and let us run with endurance the long race set before us.***

***We may feel alone, but we aren't. We are surrounded by an army of witnesses. They have run the race of faith and finished well. It is now our turn.***

**☞ *Now stay focused on Jesus, who designed and perfected our faith. He endured the cross and ignored the shame of that death because He focused on the joy that was set before Him; and now He is seated beside God on the throne, a place of honor.***

Notice the key to our life with God and all He wants to do

**☞ *Now stay focused on Jesus***

That is really what all this is about

It really becomes that simple and when we really  
get a hold of that we can change the world

Whose we are is what allows us to live the what God  
desires

Because the focus is then on Him and who He is  
and not on us and who we are

And then our identity is wrapped up in Him  
and who He calls us to be and not in any of  
the other ways we build our identity

Tony Compalo is a sociology professor. He is also an  
ordained Baptist minister. One day he takes a late-night  
flight, and the passenger next to him wants to talk. He  
brags about how important he is, and goes on for what  
seems to be an eternity. Finally, the passenger asks  
Compalo, "So, who are you?"

"Oh, I am someone very important."

"Really, what's your name?"

"My name is Tony Compalo."

"Huh...never heard of you."

"Oh, it's not me that's really well-known. It's my father."

"Yeah...well, who's your father?"

"Mister, I am the son of God!"

The man looks at him as if he had just escaped from an  
asylum, and asks, "Are you okay?"

Compalo explains that as a Christian, he is a brother of  
Jesus and a son of Almighty God.

we too bare the image of God in us

☞ Whose we are is of eternal value

***1 John 3:1-2***

***See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!"***

***John 1:12***

***Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God***

***Ephesians 1:5***

***He predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will***

I once read an article and I couldn't find it again to quote it to you but the author shared his experience of meeting Prince Philip

He had come to petition for funding for a program he was running

and the prince had granted him a 30 min audience

The author states that as he was presenting his case the prince's son came running into the room with a broken toy

The prince stopped the meeting and took a few minutes to repair the toy before they continued. Once the toy was fixed and the son ran away to play the prince stated as his schedule was very full there was now only 15 min available for the presentation.

After the presentation was over the author of the article

who was a Christian, stated in that moment he came to understand the difference between petitioner and son.

☞“I pray for you, that all your misgivings will be melted to thanksgivings. Remember that the shadow a thing casts often far exceeds the size of the thing itself (especially if the light be low on the horizon) and though some future fear may strut brave darkness as you approach, the thing itself will be but a speck when seen from beyond. Oh that He would restore us often with that 'aspect from beyond,' to see a thing as He sees it, to remember that He dealeth with us as with sons.”

— Jim Elliot

We don't come to God because of who we are but because of whose we are

☞So when you look in the mirror who do you see?