

Who Am I?

By Alissa Skarin

Who am I? Am I helpless, condemned, hopeless, rejected, inadequate, ugly, unsure, despised? Am I tarnished and dirty, controlled by my desires, and dead to God? Am I in bondage and undisciplined? Am I discouraged and lacking all good things? Am I filled with sorrow and desperate for love? Am I stupid and useless, lacking gifts? Am I without hope, without help, without a future? Am I destructible, separated from His love? Am I dishonored and lost in the wilderness? Am I forsaken and unclean, unable to be used by a Righteous King? Am I a fearful slave to sin, belonging only to myself and this world? Have God's eyes passed over me in my darkness and left me unprotected and susceptible to being tossed to and fro? Am I poor, in chains, unvalued, deserving death, walking down a road to nowhere with no hope of salvation? NO!

These are all lies of the enemy. Satan doesn't want you to know who you really are. If you were to find out what you are capable of when you realize your identity in Christ, then you would no longer be in bondage to this world, for you *"can do all things through Christ"* who strengthens you. This truth would set you free and he would lose another captive. Rather, he wants you to go through life trying to please others: your friends, your family, authority figures, significant others. He wants you to think that your self-worth is determined by what others think of you.

This is no way to live. Sorry to break it to you, but you will never please people, but it's easy to please God. He just wants to see you happy and comfortable in the skin he put you in. This is the only way that you will ever be truly fulfilled!! The enemy seeks to tear you down, whereas God seeks to build you up (1 Peter 2:5). He wants to see you come to the fullness of yourself. God doesn't make mistakes, He doesn't make imperfect people, He only makes masterpieces. You must begin to see yourself as a masterpiece and let Him mold you like clay. He even says, "can I not do with you as this potter does? ...Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand." (Jeremiah 18:6 NIV) Stop relying on your own understanding, stop trying to be an ashtray when he wants to make you a beautiful monument of His love and glory.

Personally, for many years I lived for others, not even myself. I prided myself on being chameleon like, able to change who I was to fit in with others. You want a party girl? You got one. You want someone tough and unfeeling because my tears offend you? No problem, I don't know how to cry. You want someone who cares about no one and nothing but you? Done, you are my world. This went on for so long that I began to lose a sense of who I really was, if I even knew in the first place. One day, it hit me. I am bits and pieces of people that I don't even recognize. When I looked in the mirror my eyes seemed empty and cold. I had pretended for so long to be all these different people that I had lost the one that really mattered—the me that GOD made! I must stop changing who God created me to be in order to make others comfortable and that I will stop manipulating my character because someone might not like the real me. And I urge you, proverbial reader, to do the same.

You see, I have found the reason we tend to do these things. We all fear rejection. And if you get rejected for something that's not really you, it stings a lot less than to show someone who you really are and be rejected. It's hard to show someone the very essence of you and to have them say it's not good

enough. So you try to change that essence. It's almost as if to say—If you don't like me, that's okay...it's not the real me. This is definitely a defense technique that does more to damage than protect. It's important to realize that "Body and soul, [you are] marvelously made!" (Psalm 139:14 The Message) Refuse to see yourself through your own eyes or anyone else's and make a concrete decision to see yourself as Jesus does, for his eyesight is perfect and not blurred by the beliefs and standards of this world. "For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church." And knowing "that the God who started this great work in you would keep at it and bring it to a flourishing finish on the very day Christ Jesus appears." (Ephesians 5:29 The Message)

Who are you will never change, no matter how hard you try. You can bury it, cover it up, try you hardest to keep others from seeing the beautiful person you really are, but at the deepest core of yourself you CANNOT change who God made you no matter how hard you try. Rather than try and change your stripes, wear them proudly. Remember that every aspect of your personality and character was handpicked and breathed into you by God Himself. To deny a part of yourself is to say that what He has given you is not good enough. For He has said, "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last." (John 15:16 NIV) Facades only last for so long, this mask that we wear to conceal who we are will burn in the fire.

Do not seek the approval of others, for their opinions do not matter. Rather, rest in the promise that, "the King will greatly desire your beauty; because He is your Lord, worship Him." (Psalm 45:11 NKJ) He made you just the way you are and absolutely loves everything that He made! He loves the outside, He loves the inside, He loves the hopes and dreams and desires of your heart, He loves your quirks and abnormalities because they are all things that HE has given you.

Instead of looking at what you don't have, focus rather on what you do. What are your strong points? What gifts has He given to you? And how can you use them to glorify Him? Make a list of them, put them somewhere you can see them every day and refuse to listen to the lies the enemy tells you about yourself. "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you." (James 4:7-8a NKJ) "So let God work his will in you. Yell a loud no to the Devil and watch him scamper. Say a quiet yes to God and he'll be there in no time. Quit dabbling in sin. Purify your inner life. Quit playing the field. Hit bottom, and cry your eyes out. The fun and games are over. Get serious, really serious. Get down on your knees before the Master; it's the only way you'll get on your feet." (James 4:7-10 The Message)

I can't stress enough the importance of being true to yourself and discovering who you really are in Christ, because anything apart from this is deceit. If it is not true to you, it's a lie. If it's not light, it is dark. Don't sell yourself short because who you are is amazing! Consider this: "For those whom He foreknew [of whom He was [a]ware and [b]loved beforehand], He also destined from the beginning [foreordaining them] to be molded into the image of His Son [and share inwardly His likeness]." (Romans 8:29a) Do you get it? You were created in his image! He already had you all figured out before you were a glimmer in your parents' eyes. You are special to Him in more ways that you can even know. When you veer off that path He has set for you, you aren't just hurting yourself, you're hurting Him because He cares for you and wants to see you succeed, where this world would have you fall flat on your face. "For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even to the end." (Psalm 48:14 NIV)

"God does both the making and saving. He creates each of us by Christ Jesus to join him in the work he does, the good work he has gotten ready for us to do, work we had better be doing." (Ephesians 2:10)

The Message) “For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” (Ephesians 2:10 NIV)

“Friends, this world is not your home, so don't make yourselves cozy in it. Don't indulge your ego at the expense of your soul. Live an exemplary life among the natives so that your actions will refute their prejudices. Then they'll be won over to God's side and be there to join in the celebration when he arrives.” (1 Peter 2:11 The Message)

So when you ask the question “Who Am I?” I hope that by now you have some new answers and you can boldly proclaim:

I am Able to do all things. I am Accepted, Adequate, Beautiful and Belonging to God. I am Blessed, Bold and Confident, Born Again and Bought with a Price. I am Called and Cared for. I am Chosen and Cherished. I am Cleansed, Confident, and Controlled by the love of Christ. I am Delivered, Desired, Disciplined, and able to draw near to Him with Confidence. I am Encouraged, Enlightened, and Equipped for good works. I am Favored, filled with Joy, and Forgiven of my sins. I am a Finished product in Progress. I am Free and my Future is Assured. I am Gifted, Guided, and Helped by Him. I am Holy and Blameless and Inseparable from His love. And I know that ALL things will be worked for Good. I am laying aside my old self and being clothed with Christ. I am Loved constantly and Unconditionally. I am NEVER forsaken and Not My Own. I am Protected and Provided for. I am Reconciled to God, Redeemed, Refined, Renewed, and Rewarded. I am Saved and Set free, and Sharing in His Glory. I am Standing firm in His Grace. I am Treasured and Valued. I am Washed, Sanctified, and Justified. But most importantly I AM HIS!

“What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs. Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell...” (Mathew 10: 27-28 NIV) Don't be intimidated. Eventually everything is going to be out in the open, and everyone will know how things really are. So don't hesitate to go public now. Don't be bluffed into silence or by the threats of bullies. There's nothing they can do to your soul, your core being. Save your fear for God, who holds your entire life—body and soul—in his hands.” (Mathew 10: 26-28 The Message) Be yourself, at all costs! To lose yourself, is to lose the most precious gift you have been given.

Psalm 139 (The Message)

GOD, investigate my life; get all the facts firsthand.
I'm an open book to you; even from a distance, you know what I'm thinking.
You know when I leave and when I get back; I'm never out of your sight.
You know everything I'm going to say before I start the first sentence.
I look behind me and you're there, then up ahead and you're there, too—
your reassuring presence, coming and going.
This is too much, too wonderful—I can't take it all in!

Is there any place I can go to avoid your Spirit? ... to be out of your sight?
If I climb to the sky, you're there! If I go underground, you're there!
If I flew on morning's wings to the far western horizon,
You'd find me in a minute— you're already there waiting!
Then I said to myself, "Oh, he even sees me in the dark! At night I'm immersed in the light!"

It's a fact: darkness isn't dark to you; night and day, darkness and light, they're all the same to you.

Oh yes, you shaped me first inside, then out; you formed me in my mother's womb.
I thank you, High God—you're breathtaking! Body and soul, I am marvelously made!

I worship in adoration—what a creation!

You know me inside and out, you know every bone in my body;
You know exactly how I was made, bit by bit, how I was sculpted from nothing into something.
Like an open book, you watched me grow from conception to birth;
all the stages of my life were spread out before you,
The days of my life all prepared before I'd even lived one day.

Your thoughts—how rare, how beautiful! God, I'll never comprehend them!
I couldn't even begin to count them—any more than I could count the sand of the sea.

Oh, let me rise in the morning and live always with you!

And please, God, do away with wickedness for good!

And you murderers—out of here! — all the men and women who belittle you, God,
infatuated with cheap god-imitations.

See how I hate those who hate you, God, see how I loathe all this godless arrogance;
I hate it with pure, unadulterated hatred. Your enemies are my enemies!

Investigate my life, O God, find out everything about me;

Cross-examine and test me, get a clear picture of what I'm about;

See for yourself whether I've done anything wrong—then guide me on the road to eternal life.