Identity Determines Activity!

*– Dr. Jay Jackson*

Who we are determines how we behave in life. Identity determines activity. For example, if you saw a bird about to be pounced on by a cat and the bird starts barking like a dog, what would you think? Would you say that critter is a dog, or a bird acting weird? If we allow the world, other people, or our performance to “tell” us who we are, then we might not act as the Bible describes for the believer.

Paul calls the Corinthians “saints.” I Corinthians 1:2 states, “To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus; saints by calling . . .” (NASB). The amazing truth here is that this declaration of “sainthood” applies to the worst acting Christians in the New Testament. The Corinthian church engaged in immorality (5:1-2), had pride over spiritual gifts (12:1-13:13), and was divided over who was the greatest Christian leader – Paul, Apollos, Peter, or Jesus (1:10-17). Some even participated in the Lord’s Supper drunk (11:17-22). Yet Paul calls them “saints,” a word which means “holy ones.”

How can anyone be called “holy ones” who sins as *this* church? Should not Paul open with, “You dirty rotten sinners in Corinth?” Salvation involves a change of identity. When we were physically born into this world we came connected to Adam and we were sinners, spiritually dead, and condemned before God. Salvation means death to our old identity (Romans 5:12-6:6) because we have been born again into union with Christ. We have spiritual life, forgiveness and acceptance with God, *AND HE CALLS US “SAINTS.”*  Being united with Christ changes us from sinners to saints. Nowhere in the New Testament does God call believers “sinners.” The one who possesses the Holy Spirit has indeed been made a NEW CREATION and that is WHO WE REALLY ARE! We must no longer think of ourselves as sinners, *but saints.*

Paul’s challenge for the Corinthians: “You are SAINTS who act weird! Start behaving according to your true identity in Christ! You ARE saints, NOW ACT LIKE IT!” Remember the story of the ugly duckling? This poor creature thought he was weird and ugly because of the “ducks” who kept telling him so. However, when he discovered who he REALLY was, *a beautiful swan,* he began ACTING like a swan.

Most Christians today know nothing of their true identity in Christ. One man struggled for years with his alcohol problem because at every support group meeting he would declare, “My name is Joe (not his real name) and I AM A DRUNK!” After many rehabs and meetings, he attended a conference where someone taught on this truth of our identity in Christ. God used that to set him free. He saw that GOD called him a saint, NOT a “drunk.” When he began believing this truth this brother experienced freedom from alcohol.

Today, if you know Christ, you are a saint. *Believing you are a saint* impacts how you behave. If you believe you are a dirty rotten sinner, then your behavior will reflect that. As a saint, or “holy one,” you can live out the truth of who you are IN CHRIST. God calls us saints if we know Christ, so start believing the truth and behaving according to WHO YOU REALLY ARE!