

A Different Perspective
Living Life to the Full by Knowing Who I Am
09-42-4
Enjoying Who I Am

As I look around at people – big, small, black white, young, old – what I see is an awful lot of people who aren't happy with their lot in life. And as you talk to them what it often comes down to is, not that their not happy with their lot and the things that are going on, although that's sometimes part of it, there's something much deeper than that. More often than not they're not happy with who they are.

Yesterday on the program we chatted about the fact that often we feel we don't measure up to what the world expects of us. But today I'd like to go even deeper than that again.

Let me ask you, forgetting everything that goes on around you, when you're alone in a quiet room, completely alone, do you like who you are? Are you excited about who you are, you're potential. Do you enjoy your own company or are you one of these people who can't stand to see themselves in a photograph or in the mirror. Because it turns out that what we think of ourselves has a huge impact, a huge impact on the life we're going to live.

Every now and then I think to myself, it's time to get right in your face about something. And today's one of those days. I mean, I don't mean to shove anything down anyone's throat, that's not my intention. But I don't know, I just feel that today it's time to really challenge you about how you see yourself.

I'm someone who for many, many years, in fact, for the first 36 years of my life, appeared so confident on the outside. I have to tell you, everyone who every met says, "Oh this guy's so confident". But on the inside (which after all is where we live and where we feel where we laugh and where we cry) I just wasn't happy with who I was.

People would never have guessed it, because in my confidence I used to roll over the top of people. I'm not talking about the things that I do, I'm talking about who I really am, or at least was. I didn't like my "who", I didn't like myself. And the more I tried to pump myself up in my own eyes and the eyes of other people, somehow the lower I sank in my estimation of myself.

Don't get me wrong. I mean, I was so blessed in so many ways, there were plenty of things I was good at, but I just never like

myself. And you know when that changed for me, it was the day, the very day, I gave myself, my whole life, every hope, every dream, everything to Jesus Christ. From that moment onward, on a bright sunny day at about 11.30 in the morning on the 15th October 1995 under a gum tree outside a church in my hometown aged 36 I knew I was okay.

Now, I thought a lot about that, and I thought why did it happen like that? It was one of those things that changed in an instant for me. Why? There's only one answer, because on that day I accepted how much God loved me. I heard Him calling me from the cross of Christ. Out of His suffering and out of His Pain I heard Him cry out, "Don't you realise how much I love you?" And that perfect love cast out all my fear.

That sacrifice was about paying for my sin. All the things I'd done wrong all my life and I have to tell you there were plenty to pay for. But the thing that did it for me was the whole point of Him dying on the cross was to pay the price for **my** sin, to make **me** whole, and that's the one thing that no one else could do for me. He did it for me. And sure, I will spend the rest of eternity coming to grips with the magnitude of His love – the greatest love of all.

But I began to wrap my heart around that. I just knew it was okay. If He loved me that much, maybe it was time to see myself through His eyes and not through the world's eyes. Don't get me wrong. I didn't become Mr Perfect overnight. And all my faults and all my failures and all my weaknesses didn't disappear in an instant. That's not how it works. It's a process.

I was this tough, hard-nosed, brutal businessman and when you're that, it takes time to develop compassion to learn to forgive and to learn to understand other people. That didn't happen overnight. But the thing that happened for me, I knew He accepted me just as I was. And even though I couldn't see all the things I had done wrong, that I was completely forgiven.

He came to me and said, "Now that you have a new beginning, let me help you to change." That's the thing. If God sees me that way, maybe it's time for me to see me that way. Maybe it's time for me to see myself through God's eyes. And still today there are some things I'm really good at and other things I am not so good at and I may never be. Some of the things you can do, I'll never be able to do.

But His love brought me to a point with all my heart I'm delighted to be who I am. I often say to my wife Jacqui, I'm so glad I'm me

and I never want to be anyone else. That's a gift from God, because I never liked me before that. And that gift was purchased at a price – the life of Jesus Christ.

Let me get in your face and ask you, is it time for you to ask yourself "Do I see myself the way God sees me?" Have a listen to this passage again from Ephesians chapter 2 verse 10. We've looked at it a couple of times this week. It says:

"For we are God's workmanship created, hand crafted in Christ Jesus, to do the good works which God prepared in advance for us to walk in."

Imagine, you and I, we are His workmanship, handcrafted lovingly by Him to be the person we are. And He loves who we are so much that He sent His beloved Son to the Cross to die for us. Do I love me the right way? Not a proud and arrogant way but in a humble delight in who He's made me to be and how much He loves me. Because how can you and I possibly ever be the person we were meant to be and live our lives to the full if we don't like who we are to start with.

"God, you created my innermost being, you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Your works are so wonderful. I wasn't hidden from you when I was made in that secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth Your eyes saw my unformed substance. All the days were deigned for me, they were already written in your book before one of them came to be. How precious are your thoughts oh God, how vast is the sum of them."

Father, We just want to pray right now and say that we need to know how much You love us. We want to see ourselves through Your eyes, because as we put our faith in Christ Jesus, dear God we believe that He died to pay for our sin on that Cross and that He rose again. And so we put our faith in Him and we know that we are whole and clean and pure and perfect in your sight because that's what Jesus purchased for us on the Cross.

Father, it can be such a huge leap for us to see ourselves that way and we need your help, we need your spirit to open our spiritual eyes so that we can see ourselves just the way you see us. Father I pray in Jesus name that you would make each one of us so delighted with who we are because that's what you chose us to be and Lord, we know we're making mistakes and we know that we need your help in those mistakes, but right now Father God, I pray

in the name of Jesus Christ, that each one of us here today, that you by the gift of the Cross, would make us so delighted with who you made us to be.