

Of the highlighted qualities above, which would you consider a strength in your life? How has it shown itself in your day-to-day living? This is not a time for modesty. Instead, honesty will help you understand your true self.

Of this same list of qualities, where do you find yourself lacking? How has it shown itself in your day-to-day living?

God loves us just the way we are, but He wants us to be more like Jesus. The questions above are the Lord's tender way of giving guidance to bring this about.

If we belong to Jesus, our identity comes only from Him. Our minds are bombarded by what others say about us, and even by what we say about ourselves. Sometimes we think this is our real identity. In the verses above it says, "Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives."

Do you hear the leading of the Spirit in regards to the identity that God has given you? What would be different about your life if this new identity from God is what truly defines who you are?

Lauren Daigle gets it right when she looks to God for answers about her identity. She sings, "In You I find my worth, in You I find my identity."

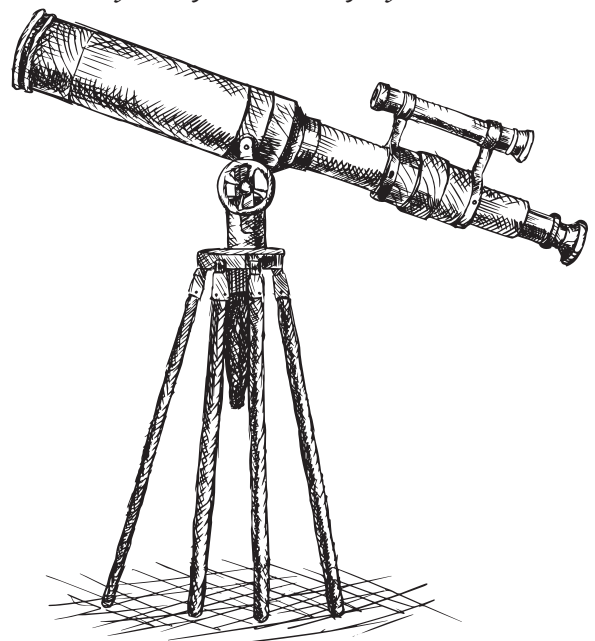
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sIaT8Jl2zpI>

Reflect

With the enlightenment that the Lord has graciously given you, journal your thoughts, your desires, your dreams for who you are and who He has for you to become.

Prayer

"O God, Our Father, we know our own weakness,
Our minds are darkened,
and by ourselves we cannot find and know the truth.
Our wills are weak,
and by ourselves we cannot resist temptation,
or bring it to its completion that
which we resolve to do.
Our hearts are fickle,
and by ourselves we cannot give to you
the loyalty which is your due.
Our steps are faltering,
and by ourselves we cannot walk in your straight way.
So this day we ask you,
To enlighten us;
To strengthen us;
To guide us,
that we may know you, love you,
and follow you all the days of our lives."¹



¹ Barclay, William. *Prayers for the Christian Year*. SCM, 1964.



I do not at all understand the mystery of grace – only that it meets us where we are but does not leave us where it found us.

Anne Lamott

“The greatest trap of life is not success, popularity or power, but self–rejection.”

Henri Nouwen

For those who find the origin of idioms interesting, “off the hook” is traced back to the sport of fishing. When a fish is on a hook, the creature is obviously considered to be out of options; it’s trapped unless it is released. Just like a fish off the hook, someone who’s “off the hook” has been released from obligations or commitments.

“The meeting’s been cancelled, you’re off the hook.”

“No cooking tonight, we’ve been invited out, you’re off the hook.”

“My sister broke up with her fiancé, so I’m off the hook for buying her a wedding present.”

Receiving God’s grace means we are off the hook in payment for our sins. This is not some flippant remark like we’re in a Monopoly Game and just received a “Get Out of Jail Free” card. When we embrace the limitless kindness of God through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, we receive what we do not deserve, while at the same time, we do not receive what we so justly deserve. Christ erases our debt and our sin is stamped “paid in full.”

Kari Jobe’s “Revelation Song” is all about worshipping God in response Jesus paying the price for our sin.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8-Gxjtd6Wp4>

Why is it that we, as daughters of the King, often cannot forgive ourselves? We feel we need to go through some kind of spiritual hoop jumping until we think we’ve done enough to cancel the heavy weight of our transgression. That kind of thinking makes us “junior saviors” and nullifies Christ’s sacrifice. How long is long enough to wallow in guilt? One day? Two days? Do you grade the sin to see how long you flounder in a state of perpetual penance? This is when we need to have a clear understanding of the difference between conviction and condemnation.

We are acquainted with condemnation because we see it and hear it all around us in our fallen world. Being belittled, bullied, harassed, mocked... you can fill in your own personalized condemnation. But words of condemnation are never spoken to us by God, and the voice in our heads that continually tries to shame and discourage us is not the voice of God’s Truth. Romans 8:1 should be on constant replay in our brains, “So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus.” (NLT). It is also important to remember that the following was written for believers and seekers alike, “But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.” (1 John 1:9 NLT). So come freely, confess openly, and believe confidently no matter where you are on your journey of faith.

Biblical conviction is a whole other story. Conviction from the Holy Spirit is the product of three characteristics at work in a Child of God:

- a) “a commitment to Scripture as one’s authority,
- b) the construction of specific beliefs and convictions based on that authority, and
- c) the courage to act on those beliefs in faith.”²

This is the Holy Spirit’s way of saying to us, “OK, you stumbled. Talk to me, let’s deal with it together. I am here not only to lift you up, but to help you go even higher.”