



## Will the Real You Please Stand Up?

*“But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.” (John 1:12, NLT)*

If someone asked, “Who are you?” What would you say? “I’m a freshman.” “I’m a cheerleader.” “I’m a football player.” “I’m a straight-A student.” If you respond that way, do you realize what you have done? You have based your identity on what you do! Adults do this, too. One of the first things two men will do when they meet is to ask, “What do you do?” But if you identify yourself by what you do, who are you when you quit doing it? All through life you will be changing identities!

### ***Your real identity***

Basing your identity on your performance, appearance, abilities or anything else may sound good, but it is a false identity. God wants you to know your true identity – the real you! So who are you? You may have trouble believing this, but if you received Jesus Christ into your life, you became a new and different person, a child of God! (Think about how special that makes you!) Why is this so important? If you don’t know who you are, how can you ever act like the real you?

### ***Determining your identity***

How do you determine who you are? Your physical identity is determined by birth. Physically, you were born to two parents. On your birth certificate you are identified by their name. You can change your name because you don’t like it or them, or when another family adopts you, or by marriage, but your birth parents never change.

Your spiritual identity (the new you) also is determined by birth. In God’s eyes there are two families: Adam’s family (under Satan’s rule) and Christ’s family (under God’s rule). The Bible says, *“Everyone dies because all of us are **related to Adam** [in Adam], the first man. But all who are **related to Christ** [in Christ], the other man, will be given new life.”* (1 Corinthians 15:22, NLT)

So what does it mean when God says you are “related to” or “in” someone? It means that that person is head of the family. You were born into the Adam family (spiritually separated from God), but when you believed in Jesus Christ, God transferred you from the Adam family into Christ’s family (spiritually alive to God). Free at last!

Now who are you? **You are a child of God!** That is your true identity – the real you. The Bible says: “*See how very much our heavenly Father loves us, for he allows us to be called his children, and we really are!*” (1 John 3:1a, NLT). Also read John 1:12.

You may be a child of God who is an athlete or a freshman, but your identity is based on whose family you are in. Do you ever feel as if you aren’t worth anything, that no one loves you and that you are a failure? You need to know how God feels about you. He is the one who matters. He sees you as his chosen child, totally forgiven, and clothed with the perfection of Christ. He loves you with a passion just as much as he loves Jesus. Wow! Think about that when you feel unloved!

### ***A new birth***

How did this new birth happen? The Bible says: “*But we have all been baptized into Christ’s body by one [Holy] Spirit, and we have all received the same Spirit.*” (1 Corinthians 12:13b, NLT) To baptize means to dip or immerse in. If you had a white cloth and “baptized” it into red dye, it would come out a red cloth. When you believed in Jesus, the Holy Spirit spiritually baptized you into Jesus, and you were resurrected into a new person, God’s child, with God the Holy Spirit living in you. Your identity changed as God placed you into his family. Jesus called this event being born again. Awesome!

One night, a very important Jewish religious leader, Nicodemus, came to talk to Jesus. Jesus explained this new birth to him. He bluntly told him, “Nicodemus, unless you are born again (born from above), you can never get into the kingdom of God.” Shocked, Nicodemus said, “*How can an old man like me go back into my mother’s womb and be born again?*” (John 3:4b, NLT) Good question, but this smart religious leader should have known the answer from prophecies in the Old Testament. (Jeremiah 31:31-33; Ezekiel 11:19) Jesus answered, “*Humans can only give human life, but the Holy Spirit gives new life from heaven. It is a gift from God!*” (John 3:1-7 NLT) In other words, there is a physical birth, and there is a spiritual birth. “*They are reborn! This is not a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan – this rebirth comes from God.*” (John 1:13, NLT) What a fantastic gift!

Apparently Nicodemus became a secret believer. At one point, in an argument among the ruling leaders, he defended Jesus against unproved accusations. After Jesus’ crucifixion, Nicodemus bought spices and helped to prepare the body of our Lord for burial. (John 19:38-42)

### ***A new life***

The apostle Paul describes what happened at your new birth this way: “*What this means is that those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun!*” (2 Corinthians 5:17, NLT)

A new person or new creation does not refer to your behavior, but to your identity. Think of the colorful butterfly. Have you ever chased a butterfly as it soared above the earth? Once it was an earthbound creeping caterpillar – a worm. After weaving a cocoon around itself, a marvelous process took place, called metamorphosis. (*Meta* means beyond; *morphe* means form – beyond form or transform.) In the cocoon the butterfly totally changes its physical form and structure, coming out a gorgeous butterfly! You might say it has been “born again.” It is a new creation.

Now when have you ever looked at a butterfly and said, “There goes a “born again” worm!” Probably never! Neither does God look at you and think of you as a born again sinner. He sees you as a new person, a new member of his family. In fact, from the time you were born again, he calls you a “saint,” which means “holy one or set apart for God.” You may forget you are a saint, go places you shouldn’t, do things you shouldn’t (sin), and even join your ‘worm buddies’ and get into real trouble, but you are still a saint!<sup>1</sup> So when someone puts you down or you feel a failure at school, in sports or at home, don’t let it make you feel you aren’t worth anything. Remember who you are! A beloved child of God! That’s your proper self-image. Let the real you please stand up!

**Attitude Check:**

- What changes in your thinking and feelings do you need to make to live like the real you?

**Explore:**

- Read, “Recognize That You Are a New Creation.” (2 Corinthians 5:14-17)
- Each morning for the next thirty days, look in the mirror and say, “I’m a chosen child of God. God loves me just as he loves Jesus.”
- Write in your journal what this means to you. Record any new things you have learned about God.

**Talking with God:**

- Thank you, God, that you chose me to be your child. Teach me how to live like the “real” me.

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<sup>1</sup> *Classic Christianity, “Toward a Proper Self-Image”* by Bob George, Harvest House Publishers, Inc. 1989, p. 78.