

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR *Real Life*

26. Who Do You Think You Are?

You are listening to episode 26 of the Encouragement for Real Life podcast, "Who Do You Think You Are?" Thank you for joining me today. The title of this episode could be taken a number of ways. Because have you ever heard someone say, "Who do you think you are, anyway?" Or, "Who does she think she is?" The tone in which the question is spoken makes all the difference, doesn't it? Today we're asking ourselves this question without the accusatory tone and with a whole lot of love. We're asking it not to question who we are, but to remind us who we really are. Because who we think we are matters greatly. It affects our thoughts, our actions, our very lives. Who we think we are matters and it makes a difference. So, let's get into this episode and find some encouragement along the way.

Who are you? Who do you think you are?

How do you describe yourself?

Are you a talented singer? A committed employee? Or maybe a good cook?

Are you a mom, a wife, a daughter, a sister, a friend?

Are you a member of a certain club, group, or political party affiliation?

Do you describe yourself by your job, your religion, or your position in life?

Or do you describe yourself by what you've accomplished, or a title, or what someone else has said of you?

Who do you say you are?

Think about the last few days. Think about the words you've said to yourself about yourself. About the thoughts you've allowed to enter your mind about who you are. Were they more negative or positive? We recently discussed our thoughts in episode 24 of the podcast. Feel free to pause for a moment and ponder your thoughts and words.

You know? Just the other day I called myself an idiot for making a mistake. I labeled myself as "old" just a couple days ago when I was talking to my son. In a conversation with my daughter, I called myself a mess. Do you call yourself names too? (I hope not.) But what we call ourselves and what we say about ourselves is powerful. Those words originate in our thoughts, and when we hear ourselves call ourselves names, either positively or negatively, they cement in our minds. And the more we say them, the more we believe them.

So, were the thoughts and words you recently thought and said about yourself positive and helpful? Were they uplifting and hopeful? I pray they were. If they weren't, however, sometimes adjustments

begin in acknowledging reality. Because sometimes we aren't aware of what we're thinking and saying until we pause to ponder.

God's Word is very clear about who you and I are. And "idiot" is not a word He ever uses to describe us. Neither is "a mess up," or "a failure," or "old," or "unworthy." Or any other word we can come up with. We'll look at a few examples in God's Word here in a minute.

But sometimes our thoughts and words follow what we've been told.

Sometimes it's the labels we remember. Oftentimes it's the labels that influence who we think we are.

Think back to a time in your life when long ago someone labeled you. Or described you in a certain way. Or voiced words over you. Were they positive words or negative words? Did they encourage you or discourage you? Did they change the way you felt about yourself or did they confirm how you already viewed yourself?

Sure, I remember the encouraging words my assistant high school basketball coach shared with me my senior year, and the many times my parents told me they believed in me. But what stands out to me is the time as a young adult I was told I had "thunder thighs." When a boy I liked in high school told me I wasn't pretty enough. When my boss at my first big girl job said I talked too much.

I remember these almost as if they happened last week.

Some researchers believe our brains retain and recall more often the negative experiences rather than the positive ones. Some say that's how our brain is wired. I'm no scientist, but I believe this is a tool the enemy of our soul uses to try to prevent you and me from becoming all God created us to be. This enemy knows our weak points. He knows where and how to push our buttons. If he can keep us labeled with lies and distracted with discouragement, we are less likely to thrive and flourish and bloom in the ways God desires and has designed us to.

This enemy even uses the negative words of others to affect us, sometimes for many years.

He's also good at whispering in our ears lies such as,

"You're a terrible mother. You're messing up your kids."

"You can't do anything right."

"That woman over there is skinnier than you. And her hair is prettier too."

"Don't bother applying for that job. You won't get it. Just spare yourself the rejection."

"You're a failure. You always have been and always will be."

Have you heard similar whispers recently? When you and I think of the question, "who do you think you are?" could our answers be based on a label or a lie?

Lysa TerKeurst, in her book, *Uninvited*, wrote this, "Rejection isn't just an emotion we feel. It's a message that's sent to the core of who we are, causing us to believe lies about ourselves, others, and God. We connect an event from today to something harsh someone once said. That person's line

becomes a label. The label becomes a lie. And the lie becomes a liability in how we think about ourselves and interact in every future relationship."

Labels, both good and bad, are powerful.

When we hear them often enough and loud enough, we begin to believe them. We begin to believe the lies are who we are.

What label, or lie have you believed and said to yourself recently? Quite possibly you weren't aware of it until now. And that's okay. Take a moment here to write this word or words down on a piece of paper if you're at a place to do so. And just hang on to it for a moment. Pause this episode if you need to.

We have a choice here. We have a choice what we will believe and whom we believe. Are we going to believe what others, or what the enemy says about us, or are we going to believe what God says about us?

Allow me to give a little insight on who God thinks you are...

As I read these words, one of them will likely capture your attention more than the others. Keep that one in the back of your mind.

You are worthy, wonderfully made, not alone, loved, chosen, forgiven, redeemed, cherished, gifted, Jesus' friend, strong, provided for, meant to shine, set apart, beautiful, blessed, a child of the King, secure, victorious. noticed, brave, the real deal, adventurous, not who you used to be, a difference maker, you matter.

Which word stood out to you? Which one caused you to pause?

You are the one God loves. He says so over and over again in His Word.

Romans 8:38-39 NLT - And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Nothing can separate you or me from God's love. He loves us. Period.

There's a saying that has stuck with me for years, and it goes like this. "There is nothing we can do to make God love us more and there is nothing we can do to make God love us less" (Philip Yancey). God loves us. Period.

And another verse that reminds us of God's love. It's a familiar one: John 3:16. But I'm going to read it in the WE translation:

God loved the world so very, very much that he gave his only Son. Because he did that, everyone who believes in him will not lose his life, but will live forever.

Now, let's make it personal. Substitute your name for the words "the world" and "everyone."

God loved Julie so very, very much that he gave his only Son. Because he did that, Julie, who believes in him will not lose her life, but will live forever.

God gave His only Son for you. God gave His only Son for me. That shows us just how much He loves us wholly and completely!

This helps answer the question, "Who do you think you are?"

If nothing else, we are loved by God. And that makes all the difference.

That piece of paper that you wrote the lie or label on? It's nothing but trash. Take it and crumble it up and then throw it in the trash. That is not who you are. Now, remember the word that stood out to you from the ones I read a few moments ago? Write that word down instead. Because we're trading our old labels and lies for new titles and truth.

And not only that, but the words I read are backed up with scripture. This printable called, "Embracing Who You Are," is available for you in my Free Resources on my site. (Link is in the show notes.) Print it off and put it where you'll see it often. We can remind ourselves who we are whenever we see the word or whenever we need a reminder.

So, who do you think you are?

God thinks you're amazing because He made you that way. He gifted you with gifts only you possess. He formed you like no one else. You are special, unique, and one-of-a-kind. He made you wonderful. And when we question that, we can remember the saying, "God doesn't make junk." Because He doesn't.

But don't take my word for it. We can take God's.

For You shaped me, inside *and out*. You knitted me together in my mother's womb *long before I took my first breath*. I will offer You my grateful heart, for I am Your *unique* creation, filled with wonder and awe. *You have approached even the smallest details with excellence*; Your works are wonderful; I carry this knowledge deep within my soul. Psalm 139:13-14 VOICE

I love the visual of God knitting each of us together in our mother's wombs, don't you? What a beautiful picture of how He created us! And He took His time. He wasn't in a rush... 40 weeks to be exact for most of us. He didn't miss a single detail.

God created us just the way He wanted, and He placed within us specific gifts and talents, dreams and desires. He not only formed us physically, but emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. And He placed a God-sized hole within us that only He can fill.

"There is a God shaped vacuum in the heart of every man which cannot be filled by any created thing, but only by God, the Creator, made known through Jesus."

Blaise Pascal

And in Genesis, we learn that God created us in His image.

So, God created human beings in his own likeness. He created them to be like himself. He created them as male and female.

Genesis 1:27 NIRV

Wow, God created us to be like Him.

If God created us in His image, to be like Him, that means we are created to resemble God, Himself! If that doesn't prove how special we each are, then I'm not sure what else will.

So, who do you think you are? You are special. You are a masterpiece. And it's okay to think so. Because God made you that way, and He thinks you're amazing.

I invite us to pause today and celebrate the unique creations we are. Then to take it one step further and thank God for making each one of us the way He did.

Come on over to our Encouragement for Real Life Community on Facebook. There we are digging into this subject a little deeper and embracing who we are according to God's Word. You'll find space on the internet uplifting and encouraging. The link in the show notes.

Again, that free printable, Embracing Who You Are, is waiting for you in my Resources on my site. The link for this is in the show notes as well.

Who do you think you are, friend? I pray this episode influenced your answer today. God created you magnificently. You are His masterpiece, and He loves you so very much. Live today like the amazing creation you are. Thanks for tuning in. God bless you!

Julie Lefebvre