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WHO AM I?

Richard Fox

Who am I? It's either one of the greatest questions of all time, or the start of a quiz question!

I enjoy 'Who am I?' quizzes, especially when you're given a series of clues to work out the answer. I remember doing 'Who am I?' quizzes with the wrappers from Fantale lollies. Eating a packet of Fantales with a friend and guessing which famous person had their biography on the wrapper was fun. Reading the list of what the person had done and why they were famous was interesting too. The person who would guess who it was with the least amount of clues was the winner. It was lots of fun.

The famous biographies often included things that they'd achieved, a list of their awards and maybe where they were from. It may have also included a bit about their family too. Reading these bios makes me think what might be on my Fantale wrapper. What would be my biography?

Mine might go something like;

Born in 1974 on a dairy farm in Lobethal in the Adelaide Hills. Grew up in the Lutheran Church and attended Lutheran schools. Studied accountancy. An active church youth leader and studied at Australian Lutheran College. Backpacked Europe and became an AFL field umpire. I am the eldest of three children, married and have two children. I was the Business Manager at Lutheran Community Care in South Australia and the pastor at Waikerie and surrounds. I'm currently the director of Lutheran Media.

Amongst all of that information there are many stories of failure and success, happiness and sadness, and struggle and enjoyment.

Most of this information isn't well known and it definitely wouldn't make me famous! Some might say it's even a little boring?

What would you include on your Fantale wrapper? How would it compare to mine?

We all like to compare ourselves to each other these days. Especially in the age of social media. It's the new way of trying to keep up with the Jones's. We might read someone else's post or see someone else's picture and think that their life is so much better than ours. We don't even have to be on social media to have these feelings.

Comparing ourselves to others can make us feel insignificant and worthless and can cause us to lose hope.

Something that helped me with comparing myself to others, especially through my teenage years, was a poem my parents gave me called, Desiderata. The opening lines gave me wise instruction and encouragement. And it reads,

“Go placidly amid the noise and haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence.

As far as possible without surrender be on good terms with all persons.

Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even the dull and ignorant; they too have their story.

Avoid loud and aggressive persons, they are vexations to the spirit.

If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain and bitter;

for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.”

The poem goes on but those opening words helped prepare me for life’s journey ahead. They taught me to value other people, treat them well, and not compare myself to them. Comparing myself to others either gave me an inflated ego because I thought I was better than them or a depressed feeling of unworthiness because I thought I wasn’t as good as them. By reading this poem I could learn to be content with who I am and what I was doing and that gave me a great sense of peace.

You’re listening to Face to Face. Feel free to like our Facebook page at Face to Face Radio where you can like and share a post about today’s message and encourage others. That’s Face to Face Radio. I’ve been talking about identity and the struggle of comparing ourselves to others. How do we find contentment and peace with who we are?

Another poem that helped me with the Who am I question was Psalm 139 from the bible. A section in the middle of it reads,

*You have looked deep
into my heart, Lord,
and you know all about me.*

*² You know when I am resting
or when I am working,
and from heaven
you discover my thoughts.*

*³ You notice everything I do
and everywhere I go.*

*⁴ Before I even speak a word,
you know what I will say,*

*⁵ and with your powerful arm
you protect me
from every side.*

*You are the one
who knit me together
inside my mother's womb,
¹⁴ and I praise you
because of
the wonderful way
you created me.
Everything you do is marvellous!
Of this I have no doubt.
¹⁵ Nothing about me
is hidden from you!
I was secretly woven together
deep in the earth below,
¹⁶ but with your own eyes
you saw
my body being formed.
Even before I was born,
you had written in your book
everything I would do.*

This poem or psalm, speaks of how God sees us and what he has done for us.

God created me and knitted me together. My mum taught me how to knit and it's quite an intricate activity and can be very fiddly. It's a very tactile hobby that involves getting your fingers amongst the needle and wool. Needless to say that what I knitted didn't look that great. But in this poem, we hear that God is the one who puts us together. He knits us together in our mother's wombs. And God, being God, makes beautiful things. He knitted us together in his wisdom, love and intimacy. This means that we are very special. No matter who we are, we matter to God. Even when we don't do what God has asked us to do, or neglect or reject him, he still loves us and wants to care and look after us. Nothing is hidden from God. He even sees our insides and what makes us tick. Including what we are thinking. He sees and knows us, intimately. He loves us and forgives us when we muck up, hurt others, and don't trust in him.

God cared for us from the beginning and hasn't stopped. Our days were already written in his book.

Perhaps the most impressive way God has shown his care for us, and how special we are to him, is through his only son Jesus Christ.

Jesus is God's only son whom he loves, but because of his great love for us, he was willing to sacrifice him on a cross so that we could be set free. Because we do muck up, have bad thoughts, and don't always love others as we should, we need God's forgiveness. Thankfully, because of his great love and for sacrificing Jesus on the cross for us, we are now free to live in a wonderful and loving relationship with God once again.

Because of Jesus, we really get to see who we are, how special we are, and more importantly, whose we are.

In Jesus we find our own identity. We discover that we are a loved child of God. We belong to God. Not like a possession or a thing, but in a relationship with him where we can talk with him, listen to him and enjoy being in his company.

I don't need a biography like the ones we find on Fantale wrappers to show me who I am or make me famous. I'm famous in God's eyes, he knows everything about me and has made me his child in the biggest family of all time.

Who am I?

In Jesus I know who I am. I'm loved by God, saved by Jesus Christ, and I'm his child.

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