

3. Be True

Colossians 1:15-20

A few years ago, in preparation for speaking at a church camp, I was asked to write a short introduction for the camp brochure. In 100 words or less what would I say about myself? What information was essential and what should I wisely leave out? Did I lead with my credentials or something more personal? What should I say about my relationship with God? Did I need to include some pithy comments about loving reading and long walks on the beach? Would my bio be good enough for people to want to come along?

What seemed like a small task became a much deeper moment of reflection about identity and an opportunity for God to remind me of who I am in His eyes. In fact, He knows the complex layers of my identity, history and relationships – a daughter, sister, colleague, friend, follower, leader, learner, teacher, stranger... (the list goes on). It is no surprise that our true selves are complex – we are created in the image of a God after all!

I am preparing to speak at another camp in a few months and as I look back on the bio from a few years ago, I realised again how much of our selves can't be grasped in 100 words (or even 1000). It is somewhat like a photo – capturing a moment in time and place. So, I am back to pausing at the keyboard wondering what to write. It is a good opportunity to be reminded that my truest understanding of myself (and others) comes through the steady revelation and realisation of what it means for us to be His image bearer, with all its complexity and purpose.

“Being true to who Jesus really is helps us to BE TRUE to who we really are as God’s image-bearers. It is in this way that we can learn to become better colleagues, better spouses, better friends and better parents. Being true to who Jesus really is should help us in the big issues surrounding identity as well as helping us in the nitty-gritty decisions of time management, of professional ethics, and of relational integrity...” (p. 28)

BE: Meditate on Bonhoeffer’s thoughts. Where do you struggle most with fitting in?

“Who am I? This or the other?

Am I one person today and tomorrow another?

Am I both at once?

A hypocrite before others, and before myself a contemptibly woebegone weakling?

Or is something within me still like a beaten army, fleeing in disorder from victory already achieved?

Who am I?

They mock me, these lonely questions of mine.

Whoever I am, you know, O God, I am yours!”

-- Dietrich Bonhoeffer

SAY: How does rebooting our image of Jesus help give us the integrity to be true to him and true to ourselves?

DO: What practical thing can you do to remind yourself to be true to Jesus, wherever you are?