

An Identity Crisis

I have just finished reading "Gigi: God's Little Princess" by Sheila Walsh. It is actually intended to be a children's story, but I've shared it with many of my adult clients and they have really appreciated the insight. Many of my clients suffer from a poor self-image and depression. Oddly enough the author of this story has suffered from the bondage of fear and depression as well.

Gigi, the story's main character, is blessed to live in a Christian home with her mother and father. Her parents understand the value of human life and of children. Her daddy would kiss her forehead every night and say, "Goodnight, princess. Sweet dreams!" Like most children, and many adults for that matter, she believed what she was told. She literally believed that she would some day have everything a traditional princess had - a castle, royal jewels, people bowing to her and of course a crown. This seemingly innocent greeting determined her identity and how she perceived her future.

Gigi became filled with pride and arrogance as she paraded her royal heritage in front of her cat and playmate, Frances. Gigi really never gave much thought to what made her a princess. She was just thrilled that she was a "princess."

One day Gigi's friend, Frances, confronted her about her royal heritage. She asked Gigi what made her a princess and why she was not a "princess" as well. Gigi did not know how to respond to this question from Frances. Gigi decided to ask her mom for an explanation. She was shocked when her mom told her that Frances was a "princess" too.

The revelation that Frances was a "princess" too really got the questions rolling. Why had Frances' parents never told her about her royal heritage? Was Gigi's daddy a king? If he was not a king, how could she be a "princess?"

As the story ends, Gigi asks her daddy if he is a "king." There is more confusion as he tells her that she is the daughter of a very great "king." Gigi, for a moment, is at a loss for words as she thinks that she may be adopted.

Her father confirms that he is her father, but adds something very important. He tells her that "... we are children of the greatest King of all. This king rules over everything there is, and you (Gigi) are His daughter."

This story probably struck a chord with me since every August for six years, in the 1980's, I competed in a state pageant.

I lived and breathed for this pageant all of my teen years. Somehow I thought as Gigi did, that when the crown was placed on my head, my whole world would change and I would become special.

I did not understand that I was already special and that I did not have to win a title to prove my worth. I never did win that crown, and in retrospect that was a good thing. God was beginning my journey to learn of my identity in him.

Winning would have been fun, but it would not have helped me to learn balance in my identity. I am sure that winning would have caused me to become arrogant. I would not have acknowledged Christ's role in my win. I would have seen it as ME! ME! ME!

As only God could plan it, one of my younger sisters won this state pageant the very first year she entered.

Unlike me, my sister had learned of her identity in Christ at a young age. She was already a princess before that crown was placed on her head. She had already learned that it was the Christ in her that made her special.

Wearing that crown and banner throughout the state only gave her another opportunity to shine for "Him."

Identity issues are a huge part of spiritual and mental health. Balance is the key. Christians must be careful to not think too negatively of themselves and mistake this wrong thinking for "humility." This low thinking is an insult to the artist who individually designed each and every one of us with a special purpose.

Christians must also be careful to not think too highly of themselves and fall to the sin of "pride."

We must opt to search the Bible for a list of scriptures which define us and accept them as our identity. Neil Anderson, author of "Victory Over Darkness" has composed a great list of the Christian's Scriptural Identity and Position. Understanding our identity in Christ lays a foundation for spiritual freedom and allows damaged emotions and damaged identity to begin the healing process.

As another school year begins with all the opportunities to compete in sports, pageants and classroom honors, I encourage you to remind your children that it is important to be a good steward of their God-given talents.

Remind them that they have been created for a purpose. Help them to know that they are already princes and princesses. Teach them that their classmates are royalty too. As we start this school year, may we always see in ourselves and others "what Christ sees."