



# WHAT DEFINES YOU?

*And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying out, 'Abba, Father!'*

*Galatians 4:6 (New King James Version)*

**W**ho do you think you are? The question can be a challenge, a put down, or an invitation into life transforming truth. It is a crucial question for us to answer, for what we believe about ourselves will influence how we behave.<sup>1</sup> As a doctor, medical leader, husband, father, colleague, preacher, I have many roles and expectations upon me. But which of these define me? What is the order of priority? What does 'success' or 'failure' in these realms look like?

If I ascribe my primary identity to any particular role, I risk confusion over my true priorities. I also become vulnerable to assaults on my spiritual integrity by failure or success in these areas. My sense of worth can become hostage to how I perform. For doctors this is a particular danger: we work in a highly-respected profession; we carry life and death responsibility; the rewards for high performers can be lucrative; we are often under enormous pressure; and our work can easily become all-consuming.

As Christians we may 'justify' the latter by the call to lay down our lives for others, which our profession gives ample opportunity to do.

Yet the life-transforming truth is that we are sons and daughters of the Father.<sup>2</sup> We are dearly loved, fully accepted, outrageously forgiven, extravagantly blessed and eternally secure. Therein lies our identity. Because we are in Christ, God speaks over each of us, 'This is my beloved son/daughter, in whom I am well pleased'.<sup>3</sup>

I am a child of God. That is what defines me, sets my perspective, and orders my priorities. It is a truth that our enemy will challenge at every opportunity, as he did to Jesus immediately after those words were spoken over him.<sup>4</sup> I must hold fast to what God says about me, rather than be led down a path of identity crisis that can be destructive to me and to others.

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## references

1. Proverbs 23:7a
2. John 1:12; Romans 8:16
3. Matthew 3:17
4. Matthew 4:3, 4:6