



THE GIFT OF BEING YOU (Part 1)

Long ago God gave your parents a one-of-a-kind gift. He created you and recorded each day of your life before He gave you your first breath. God wrapped you up in a special birthday suit and gave your parents the opportunity to name you and to help shape you. You did not have input into who your parents were and how they treated you. But the words that God used to describe you were **“fearfully and wonderfully made”** (Psalm 139-NIV) and **“masterpiece.”** (Ephesians 2:10-NLT) Your parents probably had other words they used to describe you. Their words either made you feel important, made you feel bad, or they left you with a lot of confusion and questions about you.

As you have journeyed through good and bad relationships and experiences, somewhere along the way someone may have stolen your identity and you may not even be aware of it. While identity theft could easily happen today, your true identity may have been lost long ago. You may have been told there’s something wrong with you. You may have been told you are bad. You may believe your value is related to pleasing people or by performing well. Your price tag may have been switched from “made in God’s image” to “damaged goods.” **Many people forget that they are made and loved by God, but they remember the labels offered by parents, peers, or our sexualized culture.** It’s not uncommon for people to think: “if you really knew me you probably wouldn’t like me.”

Today during our health talk we are going to uncover and rediscover the truth about who you really are. We are giving you permission to be yourself. We all have a desire to be known and to be loved for who we are. So here is the truth about you that may take some time to digest and believe:

Your life is a gift created by God. He designed you just the way He wanted you to be. You were created in His good image. And no matter what others have told you, God made you just the way He wants you to be. His special design for your life matches the way He made you.

- Can you remember a time in your life when someone treated you in a way that **made you feel important and special**? Who was it and what did they do?
- How would you complete the following sentence: **During my growing up years I loved to...**
- If people really knew and understood me they would discover some of my hidden passions, strengths, and dreams. **If given the right opportunities and support, I can make a difference in my world by...**
- **What holds me back from being real with people is...**
- **Sometimes I act _____ on the outside but on the inside I’m _____ .**

I get tired of people wearing masks and putting up facades. I would like to have one real friendship where I can just be myself and not worry about people telling me I’m too _____ or too _____. I want to feel good about myself but sometimes it’s just easier to pretend than to deal with pain and disappointment. Is there really anyone here who would really love me if I drop my guard and just be real? Sometimes it’s hard to believe being myself can be good. I’ve been told there are so many things that are wrong with me. Sometimes my head just spins with all the lies I’ve been told. If only I could find a trustworthy person who would love me and discover my heart and my potential. Is there anywhere I can go and be myself and not have people make fun of me? Maybe if I muster up the courage to take some risks and be myself then maybe there might be some other people around me who also want to be real.

Can we be real with each other?

“Health Talks” are designed to help us learn to talk and deal with one another in ways that build understanding and a healthy, growing, supportive, Christian community.