



Faith Aflame: 360 Degrees

Living as God's Child: Identity

"...human life cannot be lived without a source of security, a sense of meaning, and a personal identity..." Robert Kolb in *Speaking the Gospel Today* (pages 23 and 25)

The movie *Nanny Diaries* is the story of the journey of Annie Braddock, a young woman from a working-class neighborhood in New Jersey, struggling to understand her place in the world. She goes to a job interview and is asked simply to "Tell me in your own words, who is Annie Braddock?" She thinks for a while and finally says, "I have absolutely no idea!" She knew her birth date, her home town and her socio-economic make up, but who she was, where she fit in, and where she was going was a mystery she feared she might never solve.

Stewardship Prayer

Gracious Lord, there are many people who spend a lifetime trying to figure out who they are. In Baptism You have given me a wonderful identity – I am Yours. Always. Forever.

Forgive me when I fail to live up to that identity.

In Jesus Name, Amen.

How would you answer that question, "Tell me in your own words, who is (put your name here)?"

Read the following passages and reflect on what they say about your identity.

- Exodus 19:5-6
- Psalm 139:13-14
- 1 John 3:1
- Matthew 10:29-31
- Galatians 3:26-29
- Romans 12:5-6a

The Congregational Stewardship Workbook makes the following point:

"Our stewardship does not begin with our behavior, but with the identity God has given us when He adopted us into His family. Recall the first LCMS biblical Stewardship Principle: 'God's stewards are God's stewards.' All our stewardship flows from this source; and however we define stewardship, it must be possible for every single baptized person to do, regardless of sex, age, gifts, graces, health, wealth, nation or circumstance. Who I am can't be

separated from what I do. We begin our discussion of stewardship by talking about being, identity, character and all this as a gift from God." (*Growing Christian Stewards*, page 6)

We find our true identity in God. It is also true, as Robert Kolb writes in *The Christian Faith*, that God has fashioned His human creatures to find some identity, security, and meaning in other persons and places than in himself. Human life is structured in such a way that humans find this in secondary levels such as family members, work, accomplishments in the community, service in church. (page 9)

Give examples of how people find secondary levels of identity in...

- Family
- Work
- Accomplishments
- Service

Remember, these are secondary levels of identity—not the primary level. Kolb notes that people can and do pervert secondary sources of identity, security and meaning into gods.

- Give examples of how this is done.

"What we do as Christians is always secondary to and a result of, who we are as children of God. Our actions flow from our attitude, an attitude of trust in Jesus Christ. To try to establish our ultimate identity upon what we do, rather than upon what God has done for us, always ends up in idolatry."
(Kolb, page 10)

- What are some ways we can guard against establishing our ultimate identity upon what we do?

Closing Prayer:

Close with a prayer thanking God for making you His child through Holy Baptism. Ask for strength to live as His child and courage to tell others about His great love.

