

Who Am I, Really?

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It's Monday – the start of a new work week. I got out of bed this morning at my usual early time and I made my family coffee and breakfast like I always do. I got myself ready for the day. Per our normal routine, my wife went in one direction to her job and the kids and I went in another. I dropped off one kid at school and the other at work.

Now what do I do?

Normally, I would head to my office for a full day's work. *Normally*, my day would be filled with meetings, new product development tasks, and various regulatory and marketing commitments. *Normally*, my day would follow the same patterns I've had for the past few years.

But I was let go from my company last week. I'm not *at* the office, and my *normal* routines have gone "poof!"

It's a bit ironic seeing as I started that company 12 years ago. As a former critical care RN, I had seen the need to revolutionize equipment that is used every day in patient care. As I saw it, the right equipment would have a high value proposition. It would be designed to improve the safety of patients *and* caregivers, improve nursing efficiency, and improve patient mobility.

Well – I ended up starting a company to do just that, and I've learned a ton since then. It was no easy task to raise millions of dollars in a historic economic downturn - and in hindsight, I admit it was no walk in the park to constantly adapt to the myriad changes that came with the company's growth and success.

My company's debut product won a couple of prestigious awards, and it was lauded in the healthcare industry as a much-needed breakthrough. More recently, as a major opportunity came our way, my company restructured in order to take advantage of it and to continue its upward ascent. That meant I'd reached the end of my run.

It's business; I get it. It's not like I didn't see it coming. I am moving on, and it is with my head held high that I do. I have other ideas I am eager to chase, and I wish those that remain a part of that company the greatest possible success.

But I confess, it's a surreal place to be – the spot I'm in now. Some of my friends say I'm "grieving." I'm not sure that's correct, but maybe that just confirms I'm in the first stage of denial.

I feel sort of detached from reality, like the ground is shifting under my feet. I've driven to a couple locations these last few days and I've not really recalled the drive there. I've left the refrigerator door open and I've misplaced things that I typically keep a close eye on. It's not like me. My family tells me I seem "quiet and sober," and I suppose they're right.

It's all to say I'm in a strange spot. It has me wondering, "Who am I, really?"

I've reviewed a checklist in my head multiple times the past few days:

Am I a failure? Nope. I'd built and sold two companies before this last one. Being let go the way I was last week is not an indication of shortcomings on my part, but rather an indication of my company's ongoing success. I'm good there. Check.

Am I directionless? Not at all. I'm a die-hard entrepreneur, and I have several other ideas "in the hopper," some of which are larger and more impactful than this last one. After a breather here, I'll probably hit "replay" and do it again. I have a great network and a lot of people that believe in me. Check.

Am I still being responsible to my wife and kids? Absolutely! The terms of my termination have enabled me to move forward without worrying about this issue. I am so grateful to God for that. Check.

Will others perceive me unjustly? Who knows? Some may, but that's not my problem – that's theirs. I've had sufficient chances to correct assumptions that did not tell the full story, but that's not always the wisest course.

I announced my change the right way to a large circle of friends and associates, and I've received an outpouring of praise and support since. I'm not responsible for how others may choose to see me. So, again – check.

That's all the head games stuff. Those are the easy things to wrestle with. But it's the checklist from my heart that I'm more concerned about these last few days:

Am I a failure? Are you kidding me? I am a child of God! He chose me from the beginning of time (Eph. 1:4), and He wove me together in my mother's womb (Ps. 139:13). He's numbered every one of my hairs (Luke 12:7) which – admittedly – is getting easier these days. God knows more about me than I know about myself. Any questions I have concerning my life and my direction already have answers that God is ready to provide to me.

He's also adopted me (Eph. 1:5), and so I am secure in that eternal honor because it comes by way of Jesus Christ who paid the penalty for my sins and who remains the only "way, truth and life" (John 14:6). My future as a child of God is guaranteed and glorious beyond my wildest imaginations (1 Cor. 2:9). Check.

Am I directionless? I am not. I am *"...pressing on toward the goal to win the prize of God's heavenly calling in Christ Jesus"* (Phil. 3:14). Let me put that another way: I am not pressing on towards the goal of winning man's accolades and the achievement of his ideals. If I was doing that, I'd be lost.

I recognize that I am on earth for a short while only, and everything I do and strive for here on planet earth is subordinate to my primary position in Christ Jesus. Far from being directionless, all of my life's challenges are designed to reorient me towards a focus on my eternal destiny (James 1:2-4). Again, check.

Am I still being responsible to my wife and kids? I hope so. Some things here are out of my control, but I'm doing everything I can to provide for them. I am being careful with my decisions in this space since I know my responsibility is to provide for my family financially (1 Tim. 5:8).

My kids are old enough to know life's journey has its potholes, and much as I've always tried to do the right thing, my family has already hit a few of those with me in times past. Launching a major vision as I

did was not easy. I know my reactions in these present moments will provide real-time lessons for them even as my decisions in the past did the same thing. I need to consciously be the right example.

All that confessed, I wish most of all that my wife and kids look forward to the prospect of being with Jesus Christ in His kingdom as a result of my influence in their lives. I know they see it that way. Check.

Will others perceive me unjustly? You bet! I've chosen the high road plenty of times where I could have taken a different route. I've often sacrificed where others have gained, and I've kept silent while others exercised their own agenda. Choosing virtue has not always earned me rewards in this life.

None of that is really my problem. I serve Jesus Christ above all others, and His example of servanthood is always in front of me to guide me in my own responses (Phil. 2:6-7). It doesn't matter if I am perceived unjustly - and honestly, I probably will be (John 15:18-19). It's part of being a Christian. So – check.

In the process of bringing my head *and* my heart into compliance with the divine truth of God's Word, I am released into full peace. I face the future less sure of temporary things than I had been, but more sure of eternal things as I ought to be.

Above all, I realize the beautiful truth that God alone is my portion (Lamentations 3:23-24). May His great name be constantly lifted up in my life.