



## Knowing Christ

### (Part 3: The Key to Knowing Yourself)

“Be yourself. Everybody else is already taken” – Oscar Wilde.

As sound as that advice appears, it’s rather difficult to *be* yourself if you are caught up in the cultural trendiness of perpetually *finding* yourself.

We have inherited a preoccupation with self-absorption. Eve was distracted from God’s directives by the self-serving appeal of the tempter, and all of her progeny since have evidenced the same fleshly mutation. If that weren’t enough, at the very center of our western worldview is an endemic condition called “I”-itis. In the on-going demise of our society, we seek ever-new ways to assure that our “me” is happy, to fill ourselves with pleasure and ease, all search of a “me”-centered nirvana.

Yet the number of people who muddle in the murkiness of finding themselves mysteriously mushrooms.

The Bible is not silent, however, about understanding ourselves more clearly. Romans 12:3 admonishes, “Don’t think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves...” (NLT). After all, as the prophet Jeremiah pointed out, the human heart is quite deceitful (Jeremiah 17:9). But the goal is not hopeless. In the Romans passage, the apostle notes that the way to avoid a distorted perspective of ourselves is to overlay our understanding of who we are with the metric of grace.

If we listen to what Paul is saying in Romans 12, we will see that by God’s grace we are more than the sum of our own personal traits, quirks, skills, and talents. Our identity is intrinsically linked to the Body of Christ. A life of faith is not a solo act. We are not designed to live only for ourselves.

To know Him is to participate in the life of the Suffering Servant who gave Himself as the Sacrificial Lamb. We share in the eternal design to bring hope and redemption. Together with The Body we reflect and live out His redemptive purpose.

In the previous few issues of *The Flame* the focus was on the way prayer allows us to know God more deeply as He shares with us His passion and purposes. As He reveals Himself, we experience and discover His grace in an ever-expanding measure. And it is only through the aurora of grace we can truly know ourselves.

Prayer draws us into His presence, allows us to set aside the clamor of the world’s insistence that we are defined by our friends, our wealth, our education or perhaps by our failures, our weaknesses, or even our lack.

In God’s presence we find ourselves. The focus is not on our human birthright, our social status, or the dynamics of our earthly environment – whether those are great or otherwise – but on our heritage as part of the family of God, His children (John 1:12-13, Galatians 4:4-7).

Through the practice of prayer, His Spirit affirms to us that our new Self finds fulfilment and lasting meaning as we live out our call to be agents of grace.

### Taking Our Next Step Together

Father, heal us of our spiritual tunnel vision that sees only through the lens of flesh.

Give us vision to see the bold reality of who You are as Grace and Truth and unfold to us who we are as you see us in the matrix of Your grace.