

The Lowedown

March 2015



Stripped

Last month we learned that our insurance company had been victims of a massive data breach and that the personal information of everyone in our family has been compromised. Of course our worst fear is that someone might use that information to commit identity theft.

In this age of technology and social media our identity is more important than ever. We go to great lengths to ensure we're protected financially from those who would steal our vital information for their own personal gain. We also want to protect our reputation. I have a doctor friend who has a very low profile on Facebook simply because he doesn't want anyone else creating a false identity of him online that might negatively affect his reputation.

I've been thinking a lot about identity recently. I'm not talking about the ethnic and age demographic information that seemingly everyone wants to know these days. I'm talking about where we get our value - where we get our identity and sense of worth from.

For most men, value, worth, identity often come from our jobs or our achievements. It might be a diploma from a prestigious school that is proudly displayed so that everyone can see it. Or it might be a car that represents a certain financial and social status. Or maybe it's a house in a certain neighborhood that projects a certain status to others. Regardless of what it is, many people gain their sense of worth and value from external things such as our family or our job or some other material things.

I think this last year has been a refining period where the Lord has been slowly stripping me of the things that have tended to give me value and self-worth. I don't have a fancy car or house and that chiseled physique seems to continually elude me, but for the last 25 years I've had a ministry that has enabled me to feel productive and fruitful and therefore valued. There was never a shortage of stories of someone who had trusted in Christ or who had experienced some radical life transformation.

This last year, with the challenges we've faced in our family and struggling to get a new ministry off the ground, I've found those stories harder to come by. It's forced me to reflect more deeply than ever and ask myself where my identity lies.

I've been reading through the New Testament and in Mark chapter 1, Jesus goes out to the desert to be baptized by John. When He comes up out of the water, the Spirit descends on Him in the form of a dove and the Lord speaks, **"You are my Son, whom I love; with You I am well pleased."**

I find it comforting to realize that the Father spoke these words before Jesus had performed any miracles, or healed any sick people. Jesus hadn't cast out any demons yet, taught to any large crowds or paid for the sins of the world. Jesus had done **NOTHING**. And yet, the Father affirms His identity (*You are my Son*), affirms security through unconditional love

(*whom I love*) and also affirms value (*with You I am well pleased*).

As it turns out, the best story of transformation we have to offer these days are examples from our own lives.

Thank you for the part you have played and are playing in our own transformation. Please pray that as the Lord continues to strip and refine and prune our character, that it would result in lives that are more fruitful and glorifying to Him!

*Love,
Dave & Jen*

Jen's Health Update

Jen is tapering down on her dosage of Prednisone and so far it appears that this new immunosuppressant she has been taking is working. **Please pray that there would be no complications and that many of the negative side effects of Prednisone (blurred vision, bursitis, muscular atrophy, water retention) would begin to subside.**

We have appointments the next two weeks with doctors at UCLA. **Pray for wisdom and clarity and that the treatment plan would help stabilize Jen's condition and help her get back to feeling normal again.**

Other Family News

It's hard to believe that Jacob and Joshua are in the midst of registering for high school. They are filling out their schedules now and requesting their classes and electives. Wow! It's gone by too fast and is almost surreal.



Jacob and Joshua are doing quite well in school and are involved in various activities. They are involved in a running club at school where they tied for first in a 2 mile

race that took place yesterday. They are also enjoying their last season of flag football.

Please pray for wisdom as they choose their classes, apply for sports teams and prepare themselves for life as high schoolers!