

An Identity Test

Do You Know Who You Are?

Peter Lord

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|--------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> True | 1. A good description | <input type="checkbox"/> True | 8. Sainthood is attained |
| <input type="checkbox"/> False | of a Christian is a sinner saved | <input type="checkbox"/> False | by only a few Christians. |
| | by grace. | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> True | 2. You can sin and not | <input type="checkbox"/> True | 9. To be tempted is a |
| <input type="checkbox"/> False | know it. | <input type="checkbox"/> False | sign of our sinfulness. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> True | 3. It is normal for | 10. | How many sins have you committed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> False | Christians to sin every day. | | today? (You may have to approxi- |
| <input type="checkbox"/> True | 4. A bad thought is a sin. | | mate.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> False | | 11. | How many acts of righteousness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> True | 5. It is easier for a | | have you committed today? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> False | Christian to sin than to do | 12. | How righteous is Jesus Christ on a |
| | right. | | scale of one to a hundred? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> True | 6. The closer we get to Christ, | 13. | How righteous are you on a scale of |
| <input type="checkbox"/> False | the less we will be tempted. | | one to a hundred? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> True | 7. We get closer to Christ | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> False | through actions of righteous- | | |
| | ness. | | |

[Turn to the next page to see how
you scored!]

The “Identity Test” on the previous page, and the “Test Key” that follows are taken from the pages of *Turkeys and Eagles*, written by Peter Lord. The heart of this book is a masterfully told allegory. Teaching the believer’s identification in the Lord Jesus Christ, it centers around an eagle (designed and destined to soar the heavens) who was raised among the the turkeys (who were scratching around in the dirt). The heaven-bound eagle, just as many believers, didn’t know his true identity and calling. He thought he was an earthbound turkey.

TEST KEY

Take a look at the thirteen answers you gave. The answer to the first nine of those questions is false. If you answered true to any of those questions, you have been “turkey-ized.” If you got all nine of them right, do not be proud. It is not proof positive that you have not been “turkey-ized.” Remember, it is turkeys who strut, not eagles.

How did you answer number 10, “How many sins have you committed today?” and number 11, “How many acts of righteousness have you committed today?”

The average Christian who answers these questions writes down that his sinful acts were three times greater than his acts of righteousness.

Such an answer reveals what kind of concept he has, within himself, of how he has behaved during the last twenty-four hours.

With such thinking going on inside of him, no Christian could experience freedom in Christ. Here is a Christian who admits, at least to himself, that his sin has exceeded his righteousness by a three-to-one ratio!

Then there are questions 12 and 13. Every Christian knows that Jesus Christ is one hundred percent righteous. Yet when they come to question 13, “How righteous are you on a scale of one to a hundred?” very few Christians have the right answer.

By the way, the right answer is 100!

When we became Christians, we were given the righteousness of God in Christ. That righteousness is the righteousness of Christ. So we have one hundred percent righteousness!

Most Christians do not understand this very basic truth. Therefore, they see themselves as 30, 40, 50, or 60 percent righteous. Their life, with this concept embedded in them, is ever given to attaining righteousness. Such Christians are striving to become one hundred percent righteous.

The Christian life is a life in which God gives us righteousness. We move from that righteousness which He has given us, out into life. That is far different from seeking to achieve a righteousness which we think that we do not yet have, but must work hard to get. Of course, Scripture plainly tells us that we can never achieve righteousness by works.

Now, let me just share with you some generalities before we take a careful look at each of these questions.

First, the result of being “turkey-ized” is that we become highly sin-conscious. In our sin-consciousness, there is a tremendous amount of fear (and there is an aching feeling, “I’ve got to try harder”).

Do you remember the first thing Adam and Eve said after they had sinned? The first thing they said was, “I was afraid.” Sin-consciousness, where we are constantly aware of sin – real or unreal – is a bad thing, because it results in a life of fear.

In our everyday living, it matters not what the truth is. We act according to what we think is true, whether it actually is true or not. If we think of ourselves always in sinful terms, the result is going to be much fear.

Another sign of sin-consciousness is the feeling of unworthiness. We are never worthy. We never quite measure up.

Yet a third sign of being “turkey-ized” is the feeling of inadequacy. We do not have what it takes. This is followed by frustration and guilt. Often our feelings of guilt are nothing more than our own self-condemnation. The average Christian does not seem to know the difference between the conviction of the Holy Spirit and the condemnation of the devil. As a result, many Christians live their lives as turkeys.

Self-condemnation is a turkey trait.

Because of the “turkey-ization” of our minds, much of the Christian life today is unnatural. We find ourselves doing things that do not come naturally. These things, by their very nature, are unfulfilling. We are dissatisfied; we are overcome by many things. Oddly enough, we are judgmental of other people because of this ever present sin-consciousness.

These are signs of being “turkey-ized.”

Now, let us take a look at each one of the questions you answered.

Question #1: *A good description of a Christian is a sinner saved by grace.*

The answer is ... absolutely no! Nowhere in Scripture is a Christian called “a sinner saved by grace.” That is not a good description of a Christian. In fact, it is an absolutely terrible description of a Christian. Do not call a Christian a sinner saved by grace!

Such a statement may indeed be accurate, but is it a good description? No! It is the lowest word you use to describe a believer! Yes, you *were* a sinner. Yes, you were saved by grace – but *now* you *ARE* a saint. How many of us think of ourselves as saints? The word “saint” means Holy One. Do you think of yourself as a holy one? If we think of ourselves as sinners

saved by grace, the emphasis is still on being a sinner, not a holy one. Such a mind-set results in a believer being enveloped in feelings of unworthiness.

Question #2: *You can sin and not know it.*

Certainly this is what the turkeys teach, but is it a teaching of the Scriptures? I have been taught that a bad thought is a sin, that it is normal for a Christian to sin every day. So, by the end of the day, it is our assumption we have done all kinds of sinning that we know nothing about. In fact, we have also been taught that we cannot live without sin, and so we assume that we are sinning all the time! ...

Do you realize what such a view of the Christian life does to you?

It creates a deep sense of unworthiness and guilt and frustration. The teaching that offers us the idea that Christians sin every day, and do not even know it, came from the turkeys who do sin every day! Perhaps they needed an excuse for their lifestyle! Maybe they need an excuse to shield them from embarrassment when they compare themselves to someone else's lifestyle.

Question #3: *It is normal for Christians to sin every day.*

If I believe that it is normal for a Christian to sin every day, then I will expect to sin. I will not be surprised when I do sin, because I will see sinning every day as a normal procedure for every Christian.

This is the teaching of turkeys. This is certainly not supported by Scripture ...

There is no teaching in Scripture that says it is normal for a Christian to sin every day. In fact, the emphasis in the Bible is exactly the opposite.

Have you ever asked yourself the question, "How long can I live without sin?" We usually ask it as though we were asking, "How long can I hold my breath?"

Dear Christian, living your life out on this planet is not a sinful act. A Christian can live without sin as long as he chooses not to sin. Committing a sin requires a willful choice to do so. It will never happen by accident or without your consent. It will certainly not happen without your knowing about it!

Question #4: *A bad thought is a sin.*

It would be impossible for me to describe to you how I was held in bondage by this particular teaching – a teaching that was said to be scriptural. If a bad thought is a sin, then when you are tempted, you sin. After all, no one can be tempted without a bad thought. This is another teaching of "turkey-ology."

Sin is an act – not a thought. As long as you hold to the notion that a bad thought is sin, you will live without knowing freedom in Christ. The enemy is able to fire bad thoughts into your

head. Thoughts are the fiery darts of the wicked one! It is one thing for a thought to knock at the front door of our minds, but it is quite another thing for us to invite that thought in, and then to carry out that thought in some sort of action.

“But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Matthew 5:28).

Brothers, how often has that verse pierced your being? You have been taught that for the thought to enter your mind is sin, haven't you? Well, let us talk about the meaning of this verse for a moment. First of all, a look [to lust after] is a deliberate action. It is a man turning his head and deliberately gazing on a woman and playing out an act of adultery in his mind. That is a far cry from the thought that enters into a man as some woman passes him in the hallway at work, scantily dressed or dressed in a seductive way.

Let us use another illustration. I walk into a bank, and the thought occurs to me, “Wouldn't it be nice to have all that money? I could steal it if the teller wasn't looking.” Have I committed a sin? Of course not! That thought entered my mind, and there is no question where it came from. Still, I have not committed the action of sinning. Bad thoughts are not sins. This is the teaching of the enemy. Turkey-talk. Bad thoughts which are received and acted on are sins.

Question #5: *It is easier for a Christian to sin than to do righteousness.*

Your state of mind determines the way you act. If a friend of yours told you that your dearest loved one just died a horrible death – and you believed him – you would be overcome by grief and sadness. Yet what if your friend had lied to you? Would you feel grief? As long as you did not know that you had been lied to, you would still act on the belief you held, that your loved one was killed.

In the same way a cloud of sin-consciousness hanging over a Christian, a belief that he is sinning all the time, can so alter a Christian's behavior that he can (and does) slowly become “turkey-ized.”

It is hard (no, impossible!) for a Christian to live what most people call “the Christian life” today, because the real Christian life is simply not what is being portrayed to believers today.

In Jesus' day, it was impossible for people to live the life projected to them by those people called Pharisees. Yet that “Pharisee-life,” presented as the way to live, was not the life of God! Jesus had a harder word for the Pharisees than He did for any other group of people.

It is not hard for a horse to be a horse. It is not hard for a cow to be a cow. It is not hard for a bird to be a bird. That is what they are, and what they were meant to be.

It is not hard for us to be Christians in the true sense of the word. However, It is very difficult to live out our lives as turkeys. I want you to know, you who are having such a struggle with your Christian life: You are not struggling with the Christian life, you are struggling with a

distortion of the Christian life ...

Question #6: *The closer we get to Christ, the less we are tempted.*

Turkeys tell us that “we need to get closer to Jesus.” Such words give an impression that there is a great deal of distance between a believer and Jesus. The reality is that He lives and dwells within you. How can you get any closer to Him than that?

I used to think (and I am not sure where all of this thinking came from) that the more like Jesus I got, the less I would be tempted. I was constantly frustrated because every time I thought I had made progress in the Christian life, it seemed like the attacks were more intense than they had ever been before!

I have come to find out since then that the more you seek to know Jesus Christ, the more the enemy tries to alter your vision and take your heart from Him. The enemy tempted Jesus, and he is going to tempt us ...

You are as close to Jesus as you can be. As the years progress you may feel you understand His heart better, but you are in Him and He is in You, and that is as close as anyone can ever get.

Question #7: *We get closer to Christ through acts of righteousness.*

Somehow all of us have it in our thinking that on the days that we do real well (we led someone to Christ or did some good deed for someone) that God likes us better, and we are closer to Him than on the days when we lost our temper with our children or when we were irritable.

As a result of this outlook, we believe that by doing good, we get closer to Christ. This is a lie. This is a teaching of the turkeys which locks us into an up and down life, as well as keeping us from knowing the freedom which Christ gives.

To believe that you could ever earn God’s favor is to show what a small and humanistic view of God you hold. How could Almighty God be impressed by your act of “kindness?” He knows the intent and depth of your heart toward Him whether you are having a good day or a bad one; whether you disciplined your children today in love or in anger, whether you led a lost person to Christ today or did not witness at all; whether your prayers touched heaven today or sank in your throat and you felt far, far away from Him.

Your righteousness in Christ is simply not dependent on your performance. You are complete in Jesus Christ, and it is only in Him that you are complete.

Are you bound up in sin-consciousness? Do you attempt acts of righteousness to compensate for your innate feelings of wickedness? Well, why is it you feel so wicked?

When you become a Christian, you do not have to strive to act righteously. Righteousness becomes a part of your experience.

If I were to ask you if you had done any acts of righteousness today, you should be able to immediately reply, “Yes.” Such behavior is the natural way for a Christian. There is no grey area. Your life is either righteousness or sin.

Everything you do is an act of righteousness unless you choose sin.

Sin is a deliberate choice. If you allow God to set you free of sin-consciousness, it may well be the greatest thing that ever happened to you! Sin condemnation is a heavy weight on your shoulders, and you need not live under it.

What we Christians need to do is discover who we are. We live like a bunch of turkeys because we feel like a bunch of turkeys. You are not a turkey, dear reader! You do not belong with the turkeys, my friend! You are an eagle!

Question #8: *Sainthood is attained by only a few Christians.*

Modern-day teaching could almost lead you to think that there are three levels of Christianity: (1) You can be a Christian, or (2) you can be a disciple, or (3) you can be a saint if you really want to go that far.

The impression is that sainthood is something that is achieved by only a few Christians.

Dear Christian ... Scripture refers to all of us as saints. We are made saints by an act of the grace of Almighty God.

Are you beginning to see that wrong thinking can bring wrong action? Then think on this: You are a saint, a holy one.

Question #9: *To be tempted is a sign of our sinfulness.*

This is another teaching of “turkey-ology.” This concept certainly cannot be. Remember, Jesus was tempted, yet without sin.

Question #10: *How many sins have you committed today?*

Question #11: *How many acts of righteousness have you committed today?*

Now let us take questions 10 and 11 together. It is important that you understand this: Everything that a Christian does, except when he sins, is an act of righteousness.

Have you committed more acts of sin today than righteousness?

I found that among the seminary students, of all people who answered these questions, the ratio was 2 to 1 in favor of sins. If I have found this is true among Christian leaders and seminary students, just how much worse is the “average” Christian feeling? What are they

being taught by their leaders, who just happen to feel this way also?

If I were to ask you to list the sins you have committed today, you could not do it. That is because you are not really aware of sinful acts that you have done. Right now, you are just assuming that you are sin-filled.

One Sunday, I asked a congregation, “Everyone who hasn’t sinned today, please stand up.” Not one person stood, and that was on Sunday!

If you were going to have a day with a minimum of sins in it, it should be Sunday! Right? On this particular Sunday, it was not even noon! After the meeting was over, I turned to my wife and asked her just what sin she had committed. I was interested. After all, I am her husband.

My wife’s answer was that she did not really know, but she just figured she must have sinned somewhere along the way that morning. This type of thinking does not come from God, nor from Scripture. Such a mind-set has come to us, in my opinion, from preachers and evangelists who want to get a lot of “decisions” when they give an invitation. It is time such a mind-set ended and our true relationship to Christ was exalted!

Those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness will reign in life through Jesus Christ our Lord. How does one receive the gift of righteousness that God has given to us?

We as Christians are not designed to skulk in the dark and live under our circumstances. Christians were made to reign in life. Furthermore, we will never be fulfilled until we live as God has designed us to live.

Paul wrote, in his second letter to the Corinthians, that the ministry of the New Testament is a ministry of righteousness. Are you a minister? Do you minister righteousness or do you minister condemnation? Even more importantly, what has been ministered to you? John wrote in his gospel that the Holy Spirit has come to convict us of three things: sin, righteousness and judgment ... How often do you stand and proclaim, “Praise God! I’ve been convicted of righteousness!!” ...

Without the Holy Spirit, we cannot comprehend righteousness. There is a time when you may need to fall on your face before God in repentance; *but*, dear friend, you should live in the excitement and freedom of righteousness. You can do that when you understand that you are as righteous as Jesus Christ is righteous.

A brother once reminded me of Romans 3:23,

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”

Yes, it does say that, but that passage is speaking of sinners who were claiming righteousness apart from having received the righteousness of God through Jesus Christ. That brother should

have kept reading. By the time he had read through chapters 6, 7 and 8, he would have been flying with the eagles!

By contrast, another brother sought the Lord concerning the answer to one of these questions: “How many sins have you committed? How many acts of righteousness?”

He had actually sat down and counted 300 sins and 10 acts of righteousness! ...

If you never win another soul to Christ, if you never have another quiet time, if you never pray or read the Scripture again, if you never do one thing for Him as long as you live, He will love you through all eternity with His everlasting love. You are as righteous as His Son Jesus Christ, and He accepts you just the way you are.

This is the foundation of the Christian life! Anything else, especially anything built on sin-consciousness, will come tumbling down. That foundation simply cannot stand.

When the Holy Spirit convicts you of sin, what do you do? You admit it. [And you accept that you are already forgiven in Him!]

Can you allow the Holy Spirit to convict you of righteousness?

Just as a man can resist the conviction of the Holy Spirit about sin, so can he resist the Holy Spirit's conviction of righteousness. See that God loves you for who you are *IN* Jesus Christ. His love for you is not based on your performance in life. Let truth set you free!

Without the gift of righteousness, you cannot reign in life as you were designed to do. A man cannot convict you of sin, or righteousness, or anything else. That job is solely for the Holy Spirit to do. The conviction of sin drives you to your knees in repentance. The conviction of righteousness raises you to your feet rejoicing and praising God.

Here is the record:

“For He hath made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (II Corinthians 5:21).

God said this! It is blasphemous to deny that you are the righteousness of God in Christ. It is good for you to speak out this fact.

It is fundamental to our nature that we act as we think we are. If you believe you are a dirty, rotten sinner saved by grace, then you are going to act like a dirty, rotten sinner saved by grace. If you see yourself as the righteousness of God, you will begin to experience some of the freedom that belongs to the children of the King. This righteousness you have, this righteousness which you are, is not like a garment which simply covers sins and hides them from view. This righteousness is the very nature of God, and it resides in His children – of whom you are one ...

You may feel offended by my claim to be as righteous as Jesus Christ. Some have claimed that this is contrary to humility. (They are obviously striving to be humble.)

Well, you should not strive for a brand of humility that does not acknowledge who you are in Christ. True humility will say about yourself what God says about you, no more and no less.

We do not need more humility! We need to claim what God has given us – freedom.

We mope around in self-defeat. We have not discovered who we are, so we crawl around in the darkness with the turkeys and wish to God that there were more to the Christian life than this.

There is more, dear Christian!

The reason you are dissatisfied is because you have been “turkey-ized.” No eagle has ever been happy living as a turkey! No eagle ever will. It is against his nature! To be fulfilled as a Christian, you must, first of all, lay aside the “turkey-ology” you have been filled with and realize that you are an eagle. To do that, you are going to have to accept His righteousness as your own.

Do you know what the problem was in the life of that Old Testament figure named Job? Self-righteousness. When God stripped Job of his self-righteousness, he was then doubly blessed. Yet God could not bless Job in such an amazing way until Job’s [self-] righteousness was stripped away. A critical spirit is a sign of self-righteousness. The key to change is receiving what God has to give you.

What if you do not understand all this? If you wait to receive things until you understand, you will be a pauper.

Now let us see exactly what acts of righteousness are. Here are a few: Getting up in the morning! Eating your breakfast! Brushing your teeth! Pinning on a diaper!

When a man goes to work and provides for his family and works eight hours a day, five days a week, this is an act of righteousness. This is well-pleasing to God. Acts of righteousness go far beyond reading your Bible, praying or soul-winning.

Acts of righteousness are the righteousness of Christ ... lived out in a normal life. Everything you do – except when you deliberately choose to sin – everything, is an act of righteousness!

Mothers are often under such sin-condemnation. They often believe that dressed-up ladies involved in “church work” are the only women serving God. How they need to know that being home pinning on diapers and raising babies for the glory of God is among the greatest acts of righteousness. All of life is meant to be righteousness. If it is not, it is sin. There is no “grey” or “in-between” stuff.

What a difference it is going to make to a man who goes to work every day, to realize that he is performing acts of righteousness, that he does not have to wait until seven o’clock tonight to go visiting or to witness to somebody in order to perform an act of righteousness. Doing a good

job, giving an honest day's work for an honest day's pay – *these* are acts of righteousness.

What a satisfaction it is to a mother as she stays at home, not to feel guilty about not going to visitation. She realizes that she is doing an act of righteousness in taking care of her child.

All of a sudden, all of life begins to become sanctified ...

If mama and papa eagles raised their eaglets properly, then little ones would not fall among the turkeys.

Mothers, you need to know that your baby was given to you in an act of righteousness. In fact, being away from your babies in order to do “church work” may be sin for you ... because it is not God's design.

Does all this that I am saying to you boil down to sinless perfection? No. It is simply saying that Christians do not have to live in sin. It is normal for Christians to live without sinning.

The enemy has imposed much guilt and condemnation upon the church of Jesus Christ. It is not necessary to live under that burden. ... You need to know that you are the righteousness of Christ. Yes, it is true. You do need to fall under the conviction of the Holy Spirit! You need to be convicted of righteousness!

Yet the sad fact remains that the condemned continue to find a purging of their souls by conjuring up a long lists of sins.

Well, the Holy Spirit is not about to sit idly by and let you rack up a long list.

Let me illustrate that.

Would you let your children stack up a dozen or more wrongs in the home without offering a single correction? Would you wait until you had catalogued a lengthy list of wrongs and then zap the child with all his sins at once?

Whenever you hear a voice inside accusing you, “You have sinned! You have sinned!” be careful.

Does that voice name the sin?

If not, you are hearing the voice of the enemy. The accuser. Try to imagine going home to an active, normal ten year old boy and saying, “You've done wrong! You've done wrong! And I'm going to get you for it!” You would be laying needless, unfair condemnation on your child. You would be giving him no hope for correction.

Learn this lesson. It can set you free and transform your life. The Holy Spirit deals with His children directly and specifically.

Conviction comes swiftly and clearly in the lives of Christians.

Be careful using the Old Testament to determine your propensity for sin ...

Too many Christians, it would seem, have been baptized with John's baptism rather than into Christ Himself!

Question #12: *How righteous is Jesus Christ on a scale of one to a hundred?*

Question #13: *How righteous are you on a scale of one to a hundred?*

Everybody knows that Jesus Christ is one hundred percent righteous; but few of us are willing to accept the fact that *we* are one hundred percent righteous. That I am one hundred percent righteous is a gift ... Righteousness is not earned. Righteousness is given. Righteousness is a gift of God.

To experience the gift of righteousness, you must first believe that you are in Jesus Christ and that you are clothed in His righteousness.

Let me put it in the form of a question. Who is going to be more careful not to get dirty: the man who believes his clothes are already filthy, or the man who is dressed in a white suit and feels like a million dollars? Why, of course, the man dressed in a white suit is going to be very careful not to stain it. If he does get a stain on his suit, he will seek to remove it immediately. On the other hand, what possible difference does it make if you get one more spot on your filthy old dungarees? ...

The Christian life is not one where you climb uphill against great odds to someday become holy. When you became His child, God placed you in His holiness. Your challenge is to know who you are in Christ. Know Him. Behold Him.

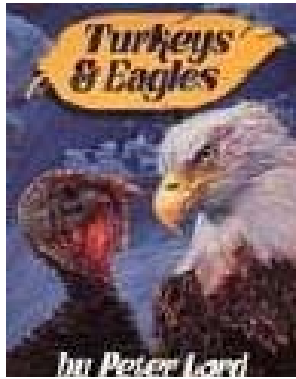
Such a waste it is to struggle to gain what has already been won; there is a great deal of futility in trying to become what you already are ...

Discover who you are in Christ Jesus. When you do, you are going to live a completely different life.

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SeedSowers

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Turkeys and Eagles (#4073)

by – Peter Lord

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