

But I'm not who I used to be... – Dan Hitz

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What's more, I am changing your name. It will no longer be Abram. Instead, you will be called Abraham, for you will be the father of many nations.

Genesis 17:5 NLT

There are times in Scripture when the Lord changes people's names to reflect the work He is doing in their hearts. Their new name reflects their new identity. Sarai became Sarah. Jacob became Israel. Saul became Paul. There are others. These new names are a practical application of 2 Corinthians 5:17 NKJV, "Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." If you are in Christ, this includes you. You are a new creation. You have a new identity.



Walking this out is a process. There is tension as we live in the reality of *justification*, having the full righteousness of Christ applied to us through the grace and mercy of God, while living in the process of *sanctification*, experiencing the transformation process step by step in our lives. God no longer sees us as who we were. He sees us as He created us to be in Christ. I frequently tell my clients that our "old man", our old sinful nature, has been crucified with Christ [Romans 6:6]; but he happens to be lying around the living room stinking the place up from time to time. Sometimes our old nature slips out and we end up acting or responding like we did in the past. This doesn't negate the fact that we have the full righteousness of Christ. It doesn't negate the fact that we are truly a new creation and that the old nature is gone by divine decree. However, it does illustrate the fact that sanctification is a process, and that we are learning to express our new nature more each day as we follow Christ.

One of the many challenges that many of us face in our recovery are the times when those close to us, those we hurt in the past, may continue to identify us by our old identity. It's hard for them to see us as a new creation if they're still recovering from the wounds we've inflicted on them. They may be afraid to drop their guard and trust that we are different out of fear that we will hurt them again. Sometimes we remind them of who we used to be just by being around them. It's complicated.

During those times when people around us seem to identify us by our old name and nature, we need to remember to exercise patience and offer grace. Grace to those who were negatively affected by our behavior in the past. Grace to those who hold our old nature against us. And grace to ourselves as we continue our recovery and grow into our true identity in Christ. During those times it's easy to get frustrated. We may even ponder giving up. Don't. Take some time to step back and remind yourself of the new identity you have in Christ. Continue growing into the fullness of who God declares you to be. It is a process. May the Holy Spirit give you much grace in that process.