A CASE OF MISSED IDENTITY

Story One. “Name Shouldn’t Be Sold.” Mark Cuban, owner of the NBA’s Dallas Mavericks, recently offered WGN Chicago radio sports-talk host David Kaplan $50,000 to change his name legally to “Dallas Maverick.” When Kaplan politely declined, Cuban sweetened the offer. Cuban would pay Kaplan $100,000 and donate $100,000 to Kaplan’s favorite charity if he took the name for one year. After some soul searching, talk host David Kaplan explained: “I’d be saying I’d do anything for money, and that bothers me. My true incident. I’d like to preserve my integrity and credibility.”

Story Two. FBI agents conducted a raid of a psychiatric hospital in San Diego that was under investigation for medical insurance fraud. After hours of reviewing thousands of medical records, the dozens of agents had worked up quite an appetite. The agent in charge of the investigation called a nearby pizza parlor with delivery service to order a quick dinner for his colleagues.

The following telephone conversation took place and was recorded by the FBI because they were tapping all conversations at the hospital.

Agent: Hello. I would like to order 19 large pizzas and 67 cans of soda. Pizza man: And where would you like them delivered? Agent: We’re over at the psychiatric hospital. Pizza man: The psychiatric hospital? Agent: That’s right. I’m an FBI agent. Pizza man: You’re an FBI agent? Agent: That’s correct. Just about everybody here is. Pizza man: And you’re at the psychiatric hospital? Agent: That’s correct. And make sure you don’t go through the front doors. We have them locked. You will have to go around to the back to the service entrance to deliver the pizzas.

Pizza man: And you say you’re all FBI agents? Agent: That’s right. How soon can you have them here? Pizza man: And everyone at the psychiatric hospital is an FBI agent? Agent: That’s right. We’ve been here all day and we’re starving. Pizza man: How are you going to pay for all of this? Agent: I have my checkbook right here. Pizza man: And you’re all FBI agents? Agent: That’s right. Everyone here is an FBI agent. Can you remember to bring the pizzas and sodas to the service entrance in the rear? We have the front doors locked.

Pizza man: I don’t think so.

Go to http://www.snopes.com/medical/asylum/fbipizza.asp to get more details of this incident.
You also have a responsibility to expand the family name beyond yourself. Not so with God. Who you are is defined by what Jesus did. You have a legal and undisputed relationship to the King of the universe through His Son. You have rights as His child to live joyfully without fear, worry, or anxiety about anything, even death. You have the right to call upon God anytime for anything in Jesus' name.

For professional ball players to become famous, they have to become the best at playing ball. For musicians to get noticed, they practice and hope for someone to notice them. Sometimes they get it; most of the time they don't; but ultimately "who they are" is defined by what they can do.

For you, and so on. And what God thinks about you has everything to do with "who you are."

Back to the real world. Maybe our real world is in desperate need of a change in the way we think about ourselves. It seems as if we have an identity crisis on our hands. And our making it through the crisis is based on the choice of to whom we listen. Don't you think it is time we gave God a chance to tell us who we are to Him?

Try to stump God! Ask Him a question about you that He doesn't know. Give it a try. He knows things you don't even know: how many hairs are on your head, what you are most afraid of, what you wish your friends liked about you, what you want your parents to be able to say about you, and so on. And what God thinks about you has everything to do with "who you are."

Net so with God. Who you are is defined by what Jesus did. You have a legal and undisputed relationship to the King of the universe through His Son. You have rights as His child to live joyfully without fear, worry, or anxiety about anything, even death. You have the right to call upon God anytime for anything in Jesus' name.

You also have a responsibility to expand the family name beyond yourself. You have the responsibility to wear your family name proudly in the open. Think of it as a citizenship oath. Raise your hand and pledge allegiance to God.

What about our relationship, rights, and responsibilities? Read Paul's letter to the Ephesians 1:4-14, NIV, and answer the following questions.

1. According to this passage, what is our relationship to God?

2. Because of our relationship to God, what rights do we have?

3. What are our responsibilities?

If you think about the stories of your life, can you come up with a few incidents that have made the most impact on you for better or for worse (spiritually or emotionally)? Think of five to 10. Fill in a very short description of that event in one of the body parts in the person on the right. In the boxes that surround the figure place Bible passages from this lesson that you feel define you. Write a paraphrase of the verses, starting with the words "God says I am . . ."