

# PEOPLE ARE ETERNAL, A REFLECTION ON IDENTITY

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Last post I stated that lingering on the eternal changes our relationships. I don't think it's rocket science to say that people matter. You don't have to believe in eternal things to value people. But something does change when we perceive people as forever beings. And if we take it a step further, we acknowledge them as kings and priests — heirs with Christ. **I think where our perceptions fail us is when we fail to see who they are. Who we are. And where we belong.** It's an identity crisis of sorts.

*"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am." -- John 14:3*

Moana is the delight of my daughter's heart right now. Brandon looked at me the other day and said, "Oh my goodness. THIS is why people go to Disney!" And we both gasped in shock and agreement because we have NEVER WANTED TO GO THERE. But I stray... The whole inspiring movie revolves around *identity*. And (spoiler alert), even the terrifying Te Ka (lava monster) turns out to be the beautiful goddess (Te Fiti) who has to be reminded of *who she really is*. And of course, her stolen heart delivered back from Maui. Once her identity was uncovered, she became something different.

She interacted with others differently. She was beautiful and life-giving.

Her heart needed reminding... huh.

Perhaps we need reminding more often that we allow.

*"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us **kings and priests** unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."* — Revelation 1:6 (emphasis added)

**The people we interact with are *eternal beings*.** They are *kings and priests* — children and heirs with Jesus — flawed though we all are with sin stuck deep in our hearts. And practically speaking, *this life isn't it*. **My enjoyment of living and knowing all of life's pleasures should not be forever ruined by any individual — because no one has that power when we realize that this is a *blip* on the timeline of forever.**

This doesn't mean we don't set healthy boundaries, or that people can't be God's fleshed out blessings, but we see them differently. Our joy and satisfaction doesn't hinge on their impact on our momentary "wants."

**I propose this: When we make it an intentional habit to perceive people as eternal, royal beings, deeply loved by a holy God — *dignity* and compassion are offered in our exchanges.** And this isn't a perspective we claim timidly. It isn't just "nice." We work hard and intentionally toward this act of grace.

- When we date, we require dignity from our pursuers.
- When we discipline our children, we engage in such a way that dignity is preserved.
- When we raise our sons and daughters, we prepare them to claim eternal promises.
- When we see someone we love making destructive choices, we fight to preserve their dignity, to reveal their true identity.
- When we are married, we approach our spouses with dignity — even when we are at odds.
- When we observe people as eternal, we become less selfish — because only a few things really matter.

When we fix our eyes on the eternal, it changes our relationships. We perceive people with the glory they were intended for, and the identity that deserves dignity.

We are free to serve them better, because this blink of an eye life is not all there is, and this story is not all about me.