

*DR. DUSTY FACTFINDER*

~ AND ~

*THE CASE OF THE  
MISSING IDENTITY*



ALIVE MINISTRIES  
STUDENT CONFERENCE  
DECEMBER 29 – 31, 2011

SCENE 1 – IDENTIFYING HOME

*Rap. Rap. Rap.*

Dr. Factfinder: Mr. Watson, there appears to be someone rapping at the door.

Watson: How dreadful, Sir. Surely everyone knows that we only listen to classical music.

Factfinder: Not *that* kind of rapping. I meant someone is *knocking* at the door.

Watson: Oh, my apologies, Sir. I wonder who it could be?

Factfinder: Mr. Watson, since you are the butler, why don't you find out by answering the door?

Watson: Ah, splendid idea, Dr. Factfinder. Splendid, indeed.

*Watson makes his way to the door and opens it to find a young lady who looks a bit scared and very disoriented.*

Watson: Good day, Miss. May I help you?

Girl: Oh, I hope so. You see, I hit my head in a terrible car accident, and now I don't know who I am or where I live. I am told that the great detective, Dr. Dusty Factfinder, lives here and I am hoping that he can help me find out my identity – who I really am.

Watson: Good heavens! Please do come in and get out of this dreadfully cold weather.

*The young lady enters. Watson directs her to the nearby library where Dr. Factfinder is sitting.*

Watson: Dr. Factfinder, may I introduce Miss..., Miss... (*turning to the girl...*) Sorry, Miss, but what did you say your name is again?

Factfinder: Mr. Watson, I believe the young lady has just told you that she doesn't know who she is.

Watson: Ah, right you are, Sir.

Factfinder: Miss, please do come in. You may take a seat by the fireplace to warm yourself. Would you care for some tea?

Girl: Oh, yes. A large glass of sweet tea, maybe with a twist of pennyroyal mint, if you have some fresh from the garden. That would be quite refreshing after being out in this weather.

Factfinder: Watson, would you have the kitchen staff see to the young lady's request.

Watson: Certainly, Sir.

Factfinder: So, Miss, can you tell me anything about yourself – anything at all?

Girl: There is nothing to tell – I don't remember a thing. I'm so scared we'll never know who I am or where I'm from.

Factfinder: Quite to the contrary, you've already told us where you are from.

Watson: How so, Sir? I've been with her since she arrived, and have heard her mention nothing about where she is from.

Factfinder: Elementary, my dear Watson. When offered tea this young lady assumed *iced* tea, not the hot tea commonly served in our region on cold days such as today. This indicates that she is likely not from this area. Sweet tea suggests that she is from a more southern locale, and the mention of garden-grown pennyroyal mint in her tea suggests somewhere along the Gulf Coast where soil and climate are more conducive for this herb. From this, along with the particular lilt in her accent, one may deduce that this young lady is from the state of Mississippi, and most probably from one of the southern districts of that state.

Watson: Amazing, Sir. Simply amazing.

Girl: Wow! That *is* amazing. Finding out where I belong is the first step in discovering who I am. You are wonderful, Dr. Factfinder!

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Like the young lady, many of us are trying to find our identity. Part of our identity is built upon the place we belong. For at least a few years in our lives we identify ourselves as a panther, a trojan, a bobcat or some other character because we belong to a school with that character as our mascot.

And like the girl in our story, even if we haven't discovered it yet there is a place that we belong. What are some of the cool things that are a part of feeling like you belong?

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So, where is a place you feel that you belong? Some people have strong ties and a sense of belonging to their families. For some it's their school, a club, or a certain activity they enjoy.

Other people feel like they really don't belong anywhere. This can be especially true during some of the teen years. It is a part of God's design for most of us that as we mature we leave our family and begin a new family of our own. Many teens go through a transition period as they slowly get closer to this point – a period when they aren't yet able to make a living on their own, but still have a growing sense of wanting to be independent of their parents and family. And while this is normal, it often leaves them feeling that they don't really belong anywhere.

But the Bible tells us that there is a place where *all* those who have accepted Jesus Christ as Savior belong – we belong to His kingdom. What is that kingdom? Think of it this way: What will it be like to live on earth when Jesus comes back and becomes the king? Well, all the wonderful things that will be a part of that earthly kingdom, He wants to have in a kingdom inside your heart right now – and that includes a place where you belong. If you are His child, a part of your identity is belonging to Him and to His kingdom.

Do you feel like you don't belong? If you are saved, then you can find your sense of belonging in Jesus. You are a part of His kingdom.

If you are not saved, you can belong to Jesus and His kingdom by asking Him. You can find help to do that in the last lesson of this devotional booklet.

Look again at your list of things that are cool about belonging..., then think about those things being a part of your belonging to Jesus. Now is that cool, or what?

Why not say a prayer, thanking Jesus for allowing you to belong to Him and His kingdom? Then go out and face the world, knowing that whatever happens you belong to Someone and something very important!

## SCENE 2 – IDENTIFYING FAMILY

Factfinder: Now, Miss, since we have discovered where you are from, let us now return to the task of determining who you are. I see you are carrying a backpack; might I suggest that you and Mr. Watson look through it for clues while I quickly check for a missing persons report?

Girl: Certainly, Dr. Factfinder.

*Factfinder leaves the study to check with the police. The young lady and Watson begin to look through the contents of the backpack. Moments later Factfinder returns.*

Factfinder: Mr. Watson, were you able to locate anything that is a clue to our guest's identity.

Watson: We found a couple of clues, Sir. It appears that she is a Girl Scout, where she worked on a project with the Red Cross protecting people against lions.

Factfinder: And what brings you to such a bizarre conclusion?

Watson: This merit badge attached to her Scout uniform, Sir. See, a bright red cross on a gold shield with a lion in one corner. But I don't understand the meaning of this poem at the bottom of the merit badge: *Ung roy ung foy ung loy.*

Girl: That's strange, I don't remember being a Girl Scout, or anything about fighting lions.

Factfinder: And well you shouldn't, Miss. Watson, what we have there is *not* a merit badge on a uniform, but a coat-of-arms – sometimes called a family crest – on a blazer. The words you read are the family motto, and they mean “One king, one faith, one law.” And unless I am mistaken, this is the family crest and motto for the Burke surname.

Watson: This young lady is a sir, Sir? Surely you jest.

Factfinder: “Surname” is not the name of a sir, Mr. Watson. It simply means a person's last name. And this family crest indicates that our guest's last name is Burke.

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Have you ever looked up your family coat-of-arms? These crests were once used to identify the family or clan a person belonged to. They often highlighted things that were important to that family.

As we search for our own identity, part of that identity is discovered in the families that you belong to. And one of the families that a Christian belongs to is a church.

On a sheet of paper draw a coat-of-arms to represent your church family or your youth group. Think of three or four things that are especially important to this family, and design a crest that includes these items. You might even include a motto to go with it. When you are finished, share the design with someone else and explain each of the elements and why it is important to this family.

### SCENE 3 – IDENTIFYING DAD

Factfinder: Mr. Watson, you mentioned that there is a second clue?

Watson: Oh yes; yes we did, Sir. There is a note here. It seems this young lady is in the military – in boot camp, I believe.

Girl: I don't remember being in the military, either.

Factfinder: First the Girl Scouts, and now the military, Mr. Watson? Does this young lady look like she is going through boot camp?

Watson: I know, Sir. But look at the note – signed by her sergeant:

*Sweetheart, I will miss you while you are gone. I hope you enjoy your time in Rochester. I love you. “Sarge”*

Factfinder: Watson, does it not strike you as the least bit odd for a drill sergeant to address one of his soldiers as “Sweetheart,” and to add “I love you”? I rather think that this note was written to her by a close family member – probably her father – who is nicknamed “Sarge.” (*Turning to the young lady...*) Does that make you think of anyone, Miss?

Girl: Sarge? Sarge..., yeah..., that is beginning to sound familiar. Yeah, Daddy was in the army a few years ago. He was like this gun sergeant or something.

Factfinder: Maybe “gunnery sergeant”?

Girl: Yeah, that's it! When we found out all the soldiers had called him “Sarge,” we started calling him that, too.

Factfinder: Gunnery Sergeant Burke. Now we are making some progress.

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“She looks just like her mother.” “His smile is just like his father's.” Comments like these are very common as we look at babies and small children.

Why are similarities like this so common? Because the characteristics of our parents very often show up in our lives as well. This means sometimes we can better see who we are as we find out more about our parents and even our grandparents.

That is especially true in our spiritual life. Jesus said that those who don't have God as their Father take after the spiritual father, Satan (John 8:44). And people that do have God as their Father begin to take on His characteristics.

Write down what you normally do and think when things don't go like you want them to or when you get upset:

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Is the way that Jesus (who was God in the flesh) would have reacted? Do you show characteristics that are handed down from God, your Father? Or do you maybe need to ask God's forgiveness for these, and ask Him to grow His likeness within you?

#### SCENE 4 – IDENTIFYING ME

*Dr. Factfinder leaves to place another phone call. As he returns to the study Mr. Watson pulls him to one side, out of the hearing of their guest, and privately shares some concerns with him.*

Watson: Sir, while you were out this young lady started a nervous condition of some kind, and she doesn't even seem to notice it. When she talks her hands make all kinds of motions.

Factfinder: This is no surprise after what I discovered in this last phone call. Watch, and in a moment we should know for sure who our new friend really is.

*Getting the young lady's attention Dr. Factfinder places his thumb and forefinger about three inches apart and moves them down his neck as if tracing the outline of his throat. The young lady lifts up her hand in a ball-shape, and rocks it back and forth as if knocking on an imaginary door.*

Watson: See Sir, that is exactly what I was talking about. And I fear that it is contagious and you have now caught the disease as well!

Factfinder: There is no need to fear, Mr. Watson. This "nervous condition" as you call it is sign language, and by it our guest just told us that she is hungry.

Factfinder (speaking for all to hear): Miss, I believe we have just discovered your identity. It seems you are Miss Madeline Burke, the new sign language teacher at the Rochester School for the Hearing Impaired. You were due to arrive there yesterday, and when you still had not shown up this morning they called your father, and he notified the police. The police just told me of the missing persons report that Sergeant Burke filed, and you fit his description to a "T".

Miss Burke: Yes, that is it! It is all coming back to me now. My name is Madeline. I arrived in town yesterday morning, and my purse with all my personal identification was stolen at the airport. I took a cab from the terminal, but as we were going to the school there was the big accident I told you about. Now I remember..., and now I know who I am! Thank you so very much, Dr. Factfinder!

Factfinder: You are very welcome, Miss Burke.

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Finding our identity involves understanding where we belong, identifying with our family, and understanding that some of our characteristics are handed down from our parents and grandparents. But a big part of our identity is simply found from the process of discovering who we are as an individual.

Make a list of some of the characteristics that make you the individual that you are:

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God made you a unique individual – different from anyone else in this world. And part of that uniqueness is the combination of special talents and abilities that He is growing in you to do the unique job that He has for you now, and that He plans for you in the future. Some people He will call to be pastors or missionaries. Some may be teachers, in a church or in a school. He chooses people to do

sign language to help the deaf, as doctors and nurses to help the sick, and others just to listen to people who need someone to talk to. He will give some the job of being a great parent to a special-needs child, and others he will want to be a big help in the routine needs around the church. And whatever job He has for you, He will teach the skills and give the ability to do them. And these responsibilities, skills and abilities will help you to know just exactly who you are – that you are a special person that is uniquely crafted by the God that deeply loves you and gives you a special place of service in His work. Now that’s an identity that we can be proud of!

### *MISTAKEN IDENTITY*

Hello, my name is Don Burke. I am a pastor and I wrote the devotionals in this booklet. I hope you have enjoyed reading the stories here as much as I enjoyed writing them. Sorry, there is no real Madeline Burke – I made her up. But the stuff about our family crest is true.

It would be tough to be in the place that our fictitious Madeline found herself in when she didn’t know who she was. But something that would also be horrible would be for a person to think that he knew who he was, but he was wrong about that. Can you imagine what would happen if a person thought he was a surgeon but really wasn’t? (That makes me want to take a close look at the diplomas on the wall the next time I go to see my doctor!)

This kind of mistaken identity is going to really be bad for some people that Jesus told about. Jesus said, “Not everyone that says to me, ‘Lord, Lord’ will enter into heaven” (Matthew 7:21). That means that just because a person said that Jesus is the Lord, or even does good stuff and follows His “rules” in the Bible – that doesn’t make them a Christian, and doesn’t mean that they will go to heaven. It will certainly be a big surprise to them on Judgement Day when they find out that “being good” wasn’t good enough.

So, someone may be asking what exactly does it take to be a real Christian and to really go to heaven. The answer to that question is as simple as A, B, C.

A – Admit (to yourself and to God) that you have sinned – that is, that you’ve done things that the Bible says are wrong – and because of that sin we deserve to die (Romans 3:23, 6:23).

B – Believe what the Bible tells us about Jesus. That means that we genuinely believe that Jesus was the Son of God and that He died on the cross so that we can be freed from our sin and be able to go to heaven.

C – Commit. Simply pray to God, and (if you really mean it) ask Him to forgive your sins, ask Jesus to save you, and commit your heart and life to Him.

If God has stirred your heart to be saved, and you have genuinely believed these things and prayed to God committing your life to Him, then here is God’s promise to you: “For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Romans 10:13).

If you made this commitment, then as a new Christian you need to talk regularly with God in prayer; you need to read your Bible to hear what God has to say to you. You need to go regularly to a good, Bible-believing church. You also need to talk to your pastor about being baptized. This is the beginning of an exciting life for you – a chance to find your real identity!

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If you have made the decision to accept Jesus as your Savior while reading these devotionals or during the ALIVE conference this year, I would really love to hear from you. You can share your good news by sending me an email to PotosiPastor@gmail.com.