

Who Am I? That is the billion-dollar question. What better way to know who you are than to go to the source? In "I Am: 10 Things God Says About Me" you will learn who you are according to your Creator. Knowing your identity will allow you to walk freely and fully into your purpose in life, and no one will ever be able to take that away from you.

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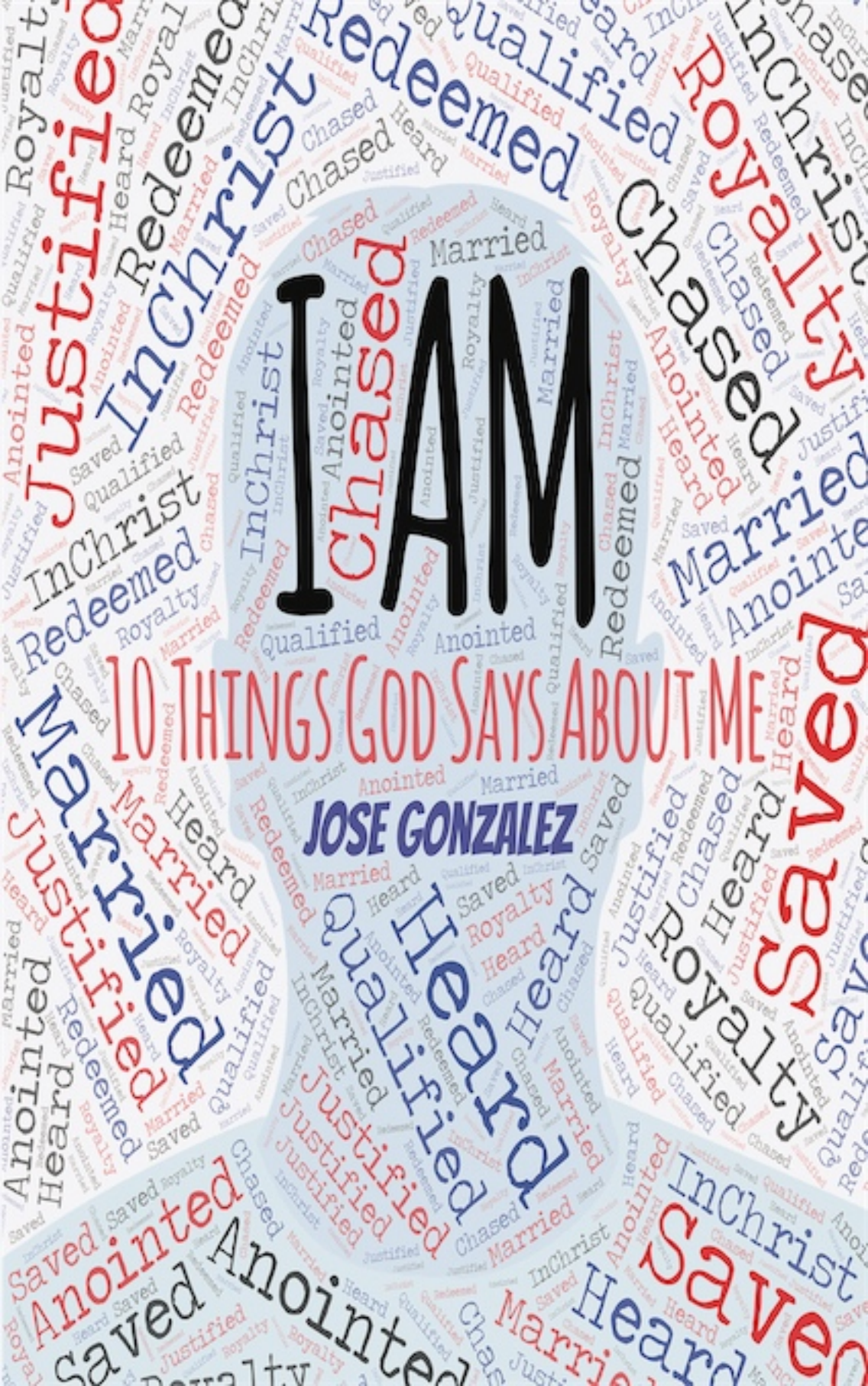
10 Things God Says About Me

by Jose Gonzalez

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I AM

10 THINGS GOD SAYS ABOUT ME

JOSE GONZALEZ

Heard

Saved

Saved

Justified

Anointed

Justified

In Christ

Royalty

Redeemed

Chased

Married

Heard

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Prologue

I'd like to welcome you to take this journey with the countless others who will be reading this book. I set out to write this book because I am a people watcher, not to judge but because I genuinely love the human creation with all its triumphs, inventions, faults, feelings, and even failures. All these years of watching people, I noticed that there are too many people who don't know who they are.

I observed that there is a severe case of identity crisis in the world and, more importantly, in the Church, and because they don't know who they are, they are prone to a life that comes short of the abundant life of which Jesus spoke. I'm sure various studies can prove my observation, but if you want those facts and figures, this is not the book for you. One of the few questions I noticed

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that people have been asking over the past few years has been "Who am I?", "What is my purpose?" "What do I want?" "Why am I rarely satisfied?" or "Why can't people see the real me beyond my skin color, job or financial status?" I believe that we as humans tend to ask these questions because we were created for a purpose, and that purpose, in my opinion, is that we were created to be free to be the people that our God, Creator, and Father designed us to be.

Walking according to who God says I am is important to me because I come from a culture that often dictated what you were and dictated what you should be doing in life. No longer am I bound by that. Now, for me, it's just about being. Seeing myself as God sees me is my ultimate goal, and I hope you also make that your goal.

In my early times with the Word of the Lord, I believed that it was all about the God who

stated: "I Will" like in passages found in Jeremiah 31:33-34. I believed with my entire heart that it was about The Father who did it for us because we could not do it for ourselves. Then, unfortunately, my beliefs came under fire. The Church I began to attend had weak teaching in this area; they were teaching that our faith is all about doing rather than being and relying on what God says He did. What did I know? I was a kid off the streets. Me, compete with these seasoned church folks? Now, let me get this straight. I didn't think it was a competition, I thought we were family, but they thought I should just shut up and obey what they were teaching. The problem I had with that that line of thinking was that it conflicted with what I was reading in my Bible.

Due to my experiences and lack of active teaching from the leaders I was following, I fell into a mixture of beliefs. This is where my identity crisis began. I started believing that my faith was

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based on what I did and not solely based on what God said. I must tell you as I look back, it caused a lot of pain and confusion in my life. It saddens me to acknowledge that due to my thinking I was even guilty of ostracizing unbelievers. To them, if you are reading, please, forgive me.

We will be getting into the meat of the book shortly, but first, allow me to share a little insight into the beginning of my testimony. I want to share this because maybe you will see the God who initially revealed Himself to me and how grateful I am that He did. Some people can tell you the exact date they were saved. I am not one of those people. All I can say is that I was 19, and that my friends, was many years ago.

It was a scorching summer day in Buffalo, New York. We don't get many of those, so that sticks out in my mind. I remember riding my bike home from a female friend's house, who I used to

smoke marijuana and have sex with. I remember finally getting home drenched from my ride, high and thinking I was going to die from heat stroke. No one was home and I distinctly remember wanting to shower and go straight to my room because I had an air conditioner in there. After being in that grueling heat, there was no place I wanted to be more than in my room. We lived in a two-floor split level townhouse, and at the top of the stairs, there was a light brown bookshelf that was about 3ft high and contained various books. One thing about this bookshelf that sticks out in my memory is that it was never orderly. That day as I reached the top of the staircase one book caught my attention in the midst of the many others. It was a Bible. Sitting on top of the bookshelf was a green leather King James Bible, and for some reason, I picked it up. Allow me to remind you I'm still high at this point. I remember saying to myself, "I'm going to read this for myself, and I know how this works, I'm going to open it

and bam! It's going to speak directly to me" What was I thinking? My life has never been the same since.

Before I continue, let me explain a little about my family's history and experience with the faith. I spent my early childhood years with my grandmother, who was a Catholic. I remember going to Midnight mass on the holidays, her praying the rosary, the iconic artwork, the "Stations of the cross" in the Church, the Easter parade where we got to see a reenactment of Jesus carrying the cross, and her Bible. You see, my grandmother didn't know how to read, yet I remember her Bible because it was sort of enshrined in her living room. My grandmother's Bible was covered in plastic, and it could not be touched because it was the holiest thing in the house.

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Fast forward several years to living with my mother who at one point was married to a South African man whose family were Christian ministers. To say my religious experience was vastly different from what I had when I lived with my grandmother would be an understatement. One was very quiet and the other was extremely loud. I was dragged to Church services that lasted for what seemed like an eternity. At that point in my life I just wanted to go outside and play. Having to endure Church felt like torture to me. The music always seemed to be so loud. They were always praying, so much so that it was even done before people traveled. Our house seemed to be a midpoint for people who were continually passing through on their way to the various church events they would be attending. I didn't understand it all but what I did know is that I didn't want to be there doing all the things these people were doing.

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Because of my various experiences with Church, I never really questioned the reality of God. I just didn't believe that God was intimate and personal. At that point in my life, I would have to say that I was more agnostic, if anything.

So back to my story... I just finished riding a bike in what felt like a million degrees, I'm hot, sweaty, and I know that I was aggravated since I hate to be hot. I have the Bible in hand, and I open it believing that it would work like I would imagine magic does, and read a passage about "seeing the Lord in the land of the living" instantly I closed the Bible not even taking note where it was that I read the passage. I closed the Bible quickly because I was immediately under self-condemnation by what I read. I didn't think I was a bad person by any stretch or means; I just knew that my life was not right and that I didn't qualify to see the Lord in the land of the living. What did I do? I'm glad you asked. I said to myself, "lemme try this again I

know for sure the Bible is going to talk to me for real this time" So there I went, I just opened it to a random page knowing God is going to talk to me. If this were a text message, I'd be using the emoji with the dashes as eyes right now, or a face palm. What was I thinking of trying this again after seeing what I read the first time? So, I opened it up again, and there I was ninety-nine percent scared and one percent curious. What do I see? You sure you want to know? Well ... keep reading. "Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order, for thou shall die, and not live" 2 Kings 20:1.

Yea, I know what you are thinking, trust me; I was thinking the same exact thing. "Why did I pick up this book?" At that point, my high was blown, but this time I didn't stop reading. I remember going to my room without showering and reading about a king who, like me, didn't think he was an overly bad guy yet to God that didn't matter. All that mattered was His word to the king.

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You can find the story of King Hezekiah starting in 2 Kings 20, and I encourage that you read it for yourself. I won't tell you how the story ends, but I'll let you know what I found and didn't find that day. I didn't find a God who was far away and distant, but rather One who cared about His creation. I didn't encounter a God who wanted to judge me but instead longed to be merciful. I was embraced by a loving, close God who wanted to be my Father and wanted me to know Him for myself by understanding what He says both about Himself and me.

From that moment on, I loved to read His Word. I wanted to know more about this God. I would lock myself in my room and read for hours. Hours turned into days, days into weeks, weeks into months, and months into years. It's been many years since that time, and while some of my convictions may have changed, my Heavenly Father has not.

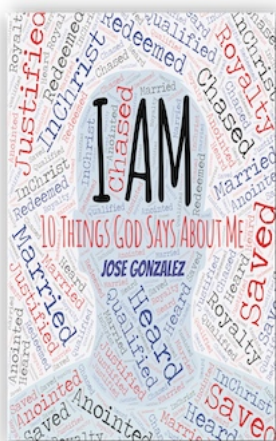
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I have been to, and part of several churches since I began my journey as a Christian. I can honestly say I have even gotten kicked out of a church before, but that is not what defines me. What defines me is not what I do or don't do but rather who and what God says I am. I am grateful to say that I know who I am, and I continue to learn more every day. Having a better understanding of who you are in Christ is vital because when you know who you are and where you stand in God's eyes, then and only then can the real you rise from the noise of the world and shine to be who He created you to be.

Now, I know that this book might ruffle a few feathers, but that is not my intent. I intend to provide scripture-based evidence about who we are in hopes that your faith would grow because of what God says, rather than what I say. This resource I created for the body of Christ is by no way shape or form exhaustive. I am presenting

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only ten designations of who we are in Christ as a basis, a bedrock if you will, on which you can build your faith.



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