

Becoming You

An Online Self-Study to Help You Find
Your True Self, Give Your Personhood
Integrity, and Become the Most Mature,
Healthy and Holy Possible



JOHN CHAFFEE

Becoming You Online Class

John Chaffee, MDiv/ThM

One of the main tasks of life is to figure out who we are. Unfortunately, our fast-paced culture does not slow down enough for us to figure out the answer to the question, "Who am I?" So here is an online class devoted to that very question.

Learning Outcomes:

To learn how Christian Spirituality emphasizes helping you discover who you are, to grow a little more, and get on your way "to becoming the most mature, healthy, and holy" version of yourself.

Content:

The content is shared through a series of videos and accompanying digital writings. Every section is connected to the topic of identity, how we understand it, ways that we get stuck from growing in self-understanding, self-awareness, and compassion, and how it all integrates with Christian spirituality.

Student Responsibilities:

Sit back, watch, read along, and personally send me any questions you might have via email at johnqchaffee@gmail.com.

Personal Note from John:

Hello Friend,

I sincerely hope this finds you well. Over the past couple of years, I have found myself having more and more conversations circling what it means to be a healthy and holy human being. While these two things can be understood separately, I believe they are most fully understood together. My hope for you is that this online class helps you wherever it finds you in life. After years of teaching on this subject in college and seminary settings, I decided to make an online class devoted to this singular topic.

My goal is not to tell you who you are, but to provide you with some of the best tools I have come across over the years and talk about this topic in light of some of the best, overlooked, and ancient wisdom of the Christian tradition.

Three cheers to you, my friend.

Sincerely,
John Chaffee

I. The Sermon of Trees and Being Yourself

A. *The Sermon of Trees*

1. "The glory of God is man fully alive." - St. Irenaeus of Lyons
2. "A tree can only give glory to God by being a tree. For in being what God means it to be it is obeying Him. It "consents," so to speak, to His creative love. It is expressing an idea which is in God and which is not distinct from the essence of God, and therefore a tree imitates God by being a tree. The more a tree is like itself, the more it is like Him. If it tried to be like something else which it was never intended to be, it would be less like God and therefore it would give Him less glory." -From *New Seeds of Contemplation* Ch. 5 by Thomas Merton
3. "For me to be a saint means to be myself. Therefore the problem of sanctity and salvation is in fact the problem of finding out who I am and discovering my true self.

Trees and animals have no problem. God makes them what they are without consulting them, and they are perfectly satisfied.

With us it is different. God leaves us free to be whatever we like. We can be ourselves or not, as we please. We are at liberty to be real, or to be unreal. We may be true or false, the choice is ours. We may wear now one mask and now another, and never, if we so desire, appear with our own true face." - From *New Seeds of Contemplation* Ch. 5 by Thomas Merton

4. "What a shame that, through our own unconsciousness, we do not know ourselves! Wouldn't a person look foolish, friends, if you asked him who he was and he didn't know, had no idea who his father or mother were or what country he came from? If this seems stupid to you, know that our own stupidity is incomparably greater when we do not strive to know who we are." - From *Interior Castle, First Mansion, First Chapter* by St. Teresa of Avila (trans. Miribai Starr)

B. *Being "Yourself"*

1. "For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God." - Colossians 3:3

Our lives are therefore not hidden in others, the things that we accomplish or fail, or the titles and money we accumulate... Despite this fact, that is where our modern culture encourages us to find ourselves.

C. *Questions*

1. Do you feel "fully alive"? What do you think it would take for you to feel "fully alive"? Are you willing to do whatever is necessary to achieve that?
2. What does it look like for you to be the healthiest and holiest saint, according to your personality?
3. How well would you say you know yourself?