

Learning She's a Princess

Several years ago, *ABC News* carried a fascinating story about a young woman named Sarah Culberson. Adopted two days after her first birthday, Sarah grew up the youngest daughter in a close-knit family in Morgantown, West Virginia.

She was surrounded by love in her home, but always wondered about her roots. Like many adopted children, she wanted to learn about her birth parents. At age 22, she decided to begin the search.

She quickly learned that her mother had died a dozen years earlier from cancer. Sarah was crushed. A few years later, a private investigator helped her locate her birth father, along with an unbelievable surprise. Sarah wasn't an average suburban girl. Sarah was a princess. Her father, a ruling member of the Mende Tribe in Bumpe, Sierra Leone, was living in Africa. By birthright, Sarah was royalty. She could one day be known as paramount chief in a country she'd never seen.



Talking with *ABC's* Robin Roberts on *Good Morning America*, Sarah said it took a while to process the shock of discovering her biological dad. For one thing, "It took a couple of years to kind of deal with finding my father and having two dads," she said.

Her African father invited her to come to Africa to meet her family there. When she arrived in Sierra Leone, the entire Bumpe community came out to welcome its princess. "They were amazing," Sarah said, remembering her first impression of the Bumpe people. "There were about 200 to 300 people there to welcome me. They were singing and dancing, and I was like, 'What did I do to deserve this?'"

(more)

While she found Sierra Leone beautiful and exciting, it was also heartbreaking. Sarah saw people suffering from a horrible civil war. She wanted to help. She started a nonprofit foundation to assist the Bumpe people. Sarah's search resulted in a new life, and a new mission helping the Bumpe people. For her, being a princess means doing her part. "The title princess means responsibility," she said, "and that's what I'm taking on."

In a related scenario, if you saw the movie *The Lion King*, there is a scene where Simba, the young lion, is being challenged to go back home and be the king he was born to be. Simba had run from his destiny. The struggle in confronting his mean uncle was just too difficult.



But in that memorable scene that represents a turning point in Simba's life, he looks in the water and sees the subtle reflection of his father, King Mufasa. Mufasa says to Simba, "You have forgotten who you are ... Look inside yourself, Simba. You are more than what you have become ... Remember who you are."

And that's a message for us as we end one year and begin another: remember who you are. The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the Galatians, gives this reminder:

When the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons (and daughters). And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ (Galatians 4:4-7 NKJV).

So, as we enter 2019, do so with a new awareness. Look inside yourself. You are more than you think you are. Because of what Christ has done on your behalf, you are a son or a daughter of the King.

That carries with it responsibilities – He made you with a plan in mind – but what an amazing gift. All we have to do is remember who we are.

– Beecher Hunter