

“Chris Morphew is like Tim Keller for teens. In the *Big Questions* series, he tackles some of today’s tough questions with Scripture, wisdom and clarity—and just the right amount of fun to keep young readers turning the page. I cannot wait to put these books into the hands of my three children.”

CHAMP THORNTON, Pastor; Author, *The Radical Book for Kids* and *Why Do We Say Good Night?*

“Growing up toward young adulthood can be jarring as we try to figure out who we are and what our place in this world is. In *Who Am I and Why Do I Matter?* Chris Morphew answers those questions in a refreshing, age-appropriate way that is sure to speak to the heart of every young reader. With short, punchy chapters, this book is easy to read and soaked with the gospel. I will be sharing it with each of my own kids and highly recommend it to yours!”

ADAM RAMSEY, Lead Pastor, Liberti Church, Gold Coast, Australia; Network Director for Acts 29 Asia Pacific; Author, *Truth on Fire: Gazing at God until Your Heart Sings*; dad to Alaiya, Benaiah, Ezra, Tayo and Elyana

“Our biggest questions prepare our hearts to hear God’s greatest answers. Pick up Chris Morphew’s *Big Questions* books and find key gospel responses to your kid’s honest questions about God and his plan for sending Jesus.”

BARBARA REAOCH, Former Director, Children’s Division, Bible Study Fellowship; Author, *A Jesus Christmas* and *A Jesus Easter*

“Passing the faith down to the next generation can seem like a daunting task. Add to that the fact that Christians must also train the next generation to engage skeptics in our faith, and it can seem like an impossibility. This is why I’m thankful for Chris’s book, *Who Am I and Why Do I Matter?* He takes one of the core truths of Scripture and explains it in a way that middle-schoolers (and their parents) can understand. I can’t wait to put this into my children’s hands, and also encourage them to put it into the hands of their unbelieving friends.”

JOHN PERRITT, Director of Resources, Reformed Youth Ministries; Author, *Insecure: Fighting Our Lesser Fears with a Greater One*; Host, Local Youth Worker Podcast; father of five

“In *Who am I and Why Do I Matter?* Chris Morphew answers two of the most important questions teenagers are asking today. While he writes in a manner that is accessible to those as young as pre-teens, the content is theologically rich and applicable for students of all ages. The chapters are quick, clear and easy to read. I’m grateful for this book!”

DREW HILL, Author, *Alongside: Loving Teenagers with the Gospel*

“Chris spends his days around young people, and you can tell—his writing is readable, biblical and full of stories. Our young people are being told they can be whoever they want to be. This book tells them who they were created to be. It’s a better answer!”

ED DREW, Director, Faith in Kids

**WHO AM I
AND
WHY DO I
MATTER?**

CHRIS MORPHEW

Illustrated by Emma Randall

The logo for The Good Book Company features a stylized bird or wing icon above the text "thegoodbook" in a lowercase sans-serif font, with "COMPANY" in a smaller, all-caps sans-serif font below it.

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*To Liam and Alec,
may you never forget who Jesus says you are*

Who Am I and Why Do I Matter?

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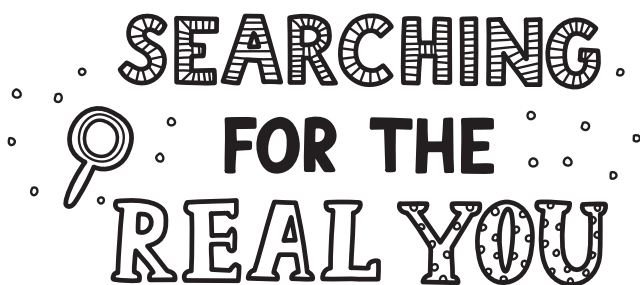
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Chapter 1

SEARCHING FOR THE REAL YOU

The title is presented in a playful, hand-drawn style. The word 'SEARCHING' is in a blocky, outlined font with horizontal lines inside the letters. Below it, 'FOR THE' is in a solid, bold, sans-serif font. 'REAL YOU' is in a large, outlined font with small dots scattered inside the letters. To the left of the text is a magnifying glass icon, and several small dots are scattered around the words.

A little while back, one of my students at school came to me with a problem.

This girl had moved here from a different school at the beginning of the year, but from what I could tell, she'd settled in really quickly.

She had a bunch of hobbies she really enjoyed and she was already making the most of our school's sport and music and drama programs.

She'd found a fantastic group of friends to hang out with. She had awesome, supportive parents who loved her.

She was fun and enthusiastic and outgoing. On the outside, it seemed like everything was going great for her.

On the inside, it was a different story.

When I asked her what was wrong, it took her a minute to find the words.

“I don’t know,” she said. “I just—sometimes I just feel like I don’t even know who I am. Like, when I’m with one group of friends, I act one way—but then, when I’m with another group of friends, I’m like a completely different person. So how do I know which version of me is the real one?”

“Well,” I said slowly, “who are the friends you feel most comfortable around? Where do you most feel like you don’t have to act a certain way—like you can just relax and be yourself?”

She listed off the names of a handful of friends and then said, “Yeah, I know I can be myself in front of them, but...”

She trailed off and stared out the window.

After a long moment, she said, “But what if it’s all acting? How do I know who the real me even is?”



Sooner or later, I think we all run into questions like this—because unfortunately, figuring out who you really are turns out to be way more complicated than it sounds.

Do you ever look at those people you know who seem to be so effortlessly confident and popular and easy-going—those people who seem like they’ve got it all figured out—and wonder how they do it? How do they just know the right thing to say and the right way to act in every situation?

Or maybe you *are* one of those people who seem to have it all figured out, and so you know the truth: that it's not as easy as it seems. You might look confident on the outside, but on the inside, you just feel anxious and exhausted—because it turns out that looking effortless takes a lot of effort. You have a feeling that if people knew the truth about your life, they might not be so jealous after all.



Or do you ever feel weighed down by other people's expectations for your life? Does it feel like you can never slow down—like you're constantly working and working to measure up to the standards that other people have set for you? Do you struggle with the nagging feeling that even if you *do* keep working, it still won't be enough—that no matter how hard you try, you might *never* measure up?

Or is it kind of the opposite? Does it feel like no one expects you to ever measure up to *anything*—like they all just think you're a bit annoying and useless? Do you wonder whether it even makes any difference whether you're here or not?

Or maybe it's not *other* people's expectations that are stressing you out. Maybe it's your *own* impossible standards. You have this ideal version of yourself in your head—a version of you who's smarter or more confident or more successful or better looking or all of the above—but no matter how hard you work to become that person, you can never quite seem to get there.

Maybe you wish you could find a way to stop worrying about what everyone else thinks and just be yourself.

Or maybe it's worse than that. Maybe you're worried that *being yourself* is exactly the problem—that if people got one clear look at the *real* you, they'd run the other way.



And look, I know all this might seem like a pretty depressing way to start a book—but the truth is, this stuff is *hard*, right?

We're dropped into this world as helpless little babies and, right from day one, the world is *full* of voices telling us who we are and who we should be.

First, there's our parents and grandparents and other close family. Then, as we get older, there are our teachers, our friends, our definitely-*not*-friends, our coaches, our extended family, and on and on and on. And that's without even mentioning the endless firehose of voices that can come blasting out of our social-media feeds.

Some of those voices are really helpful to pay attention to. Others, not so much. But whether we notice it or not, they all have some kind of impact on how we see ourselves.

So in the middle of all that noise, how do you figure out who the real you is? How do you sort through all those voices and opinions, and figure out the truth about who you are?

What are you supposed to tell yourself when you start to feel like you don't matter, or like you don't measure up, or like the negative voices speaking into your life are *right*? What do you do when you look out at the world around you and wonder where you fit, or if you even fit anywhere at all?

Well, the good news is that you *do* matter. You *do* fit. And the truth about your realest, truest self—the person who God says you are—is better than you can even imagine.