

Adult Bible Studies

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Devote All to Christ Philippians 2:1-11

Andrew Self, a man with Down syndrome, recently appeared in a show called *The Greatest Dancer* in the United Kingdom in an audition that brought the judges and audience to tears. For this competition, dancers perform in a closed studio, the audience watching by video. If 75 percent of the audience votes for the dancer, “a mirrored wall [opens] to reveal the live audience” and judges. Before the music began, Andrew seemed self-conscious and nervous. His demeanor immediately lightened with the music, and he moved with rhythm and grace, a real showman who thrives on the energy of an audience. Judge Matthew Morrison said to Andrew, “I think you’re going to inspire a lot of people with the performance that you just gave today, so thank you so much for that gift.” Andrew said, “Having Down syndrome, it doesn’t stop me from doing anything.”¹

In today’s lesson, the student book author says, “Reset your mind-defaults to the way Jesus views things.”² To see others and creation the way Christ does sometimes requires us to set aside preconceived notions and prejudices. For many people, it takes time and effort to see others as Jesus sees them, as beloved children of God.

When we hear the words *Down syndrome*, certain images come to mind. We may assume physical and mental disabilities. We may conclude that someone with Down syndrome could not dance with such grace and rhythm. Andrew Self proves us wrong and challenges our mind-defaults. Through Andrew, we see as Jesus does, a young man full of love and passion who inspires others to take a chance.

1. In what ways does Jesus see creation and human beings different from the ways we see?
2. When have you taken the time and effort to view someone or some piece of creation in a new light? How has that time and effort changed your mind-default?
3. When have you known someone with Down syndrome, and how did they defy your expectations? How might your faith community be in ministry with people with Down syndrome?

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¹From “Young Man With Down Syndrome Thrills Studio Audience on ‘The Greatest Dancer,’” by Dorothy Cummings, LifeSiteNews.com (lifesitenews.com/news/young-man-with-down-syndrome-thrills-studio-audience-on-the-greatest-dancer).

²From *Adult Bible Studies*, Winter 2018–2019, by Stan Purdum (Cokesbury, 2018); page 64.

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