



Chapter 3 "Who Am I?"

Section 1

Who are you? What is your purpose? Do you even have a purpose? Why do you even wonder whether or not there is an actual purpose for your existence in the first place? Where does concern for such a thing come from?

Evolutionary theorists answer these kinds of questions with the response, "You have no purpose." You are merely the product of random chance and natural processes that somehow came to exist of their own accord. If that were true, you would have a bleak and uninspiring existence indeed. But, as the Bible explains, your existence and identity are far greater and more beautiful than the empty speculations of humanism and evolutionary theory.

God's Special Creation

The Bible declares that human beings are created beings, carefully designed by God Himself. The emotional, spiritual, and physical faculties men and women possess are all given by God. Genesis chapter 1 describes how God created the universe emphasizing that everything He created was initially good. But when He created humans as the crowning piece of all His creative works, the Bible says what God accomplished was "very good."

With your Bible, answer the following questions:

1. Read Genesis 1:3-25 and Genesis 2:7. What is different about how God created humans as opposed to how He created the rest of the universe?
2. Do you think the process God used to create humans implies anything about how He values them in contrast to everything else He created? If so, what?

God's Image Bearers

If you aren't convinced that humans (including you) occupy a special place in God's heart above the rest of His creation, the Bible gives even more evidence of this in Genesis 1:26: "And God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image.'" (NKJV)

Men and women are uniquely made in the "image" of God. But what does that mean? Being made in God's image includes:

- A. The ability to communicate with God in relationship. When Genesis 1:28a says, "God said to them," it portrays God doing something with humans He doesn't do with animals—having a relational conversation. Humans uniquely have the ability to hear from, understand, and respond to God in a personal relationship.

B. The capacity to rule over God's creation, under His ultimate authority. Genesis 1:28 also says mankind was to have "dominion" over all over all created things from the very beginning. Humans were intended to take care of, invest in, and benefit from creation under the leadership of their Creator. And this has been the story of the world; no matter how smart, strong, or majestic, mankind has brought all animals under his authority. Man has investigated the depths of the ocean and distant parts of space.

C. The capacity for creativity. Like their Creator, human beings are creative. The art, music, architecture, and societies humans create mirror the creative works God has accomplished in the universe. The universe is full of color, order, beauty, and systems. And those things exist in every culture under the sun where man exists, because mankind expresses himself creatively, being made in the image of a creative God.

Application

1. God considers you the crowning achievement of His creative works. How is His view of you different than your view of yourself?
2. How does mankind's calling to have dominion over creation challenge or affirm the beliefs you've held regarding how people should relate to creation? What examples can you think of that demonstrate how mankind exercises dominion over creation?
3. What do you consider the most beautiful created thing you have personally seen in the world? What do you enjoy most about it?
4. According to Exodus 31:2-10, where does the human capacity for art and creativity come from?
5. What is the most beautiful or impressive thing created by a human that you have seen or experienced? What do you enjoy about it?

Section 2

Men and women, boys and girls are different. The Bible reveals that the differences between the genders are God's design. The inherent differences between men and women enable them to fulfill unique purposes respectively in their relationships with God and each other.

Equal in Value – Unique in Function

The Bible is clear that though God created men and women to fulfill different functions, they are equal in value and dignity in His sight. Both genders are made equally in the image of God and therefore occupy the same place of honor over the rest of creation.

“So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’” (Genesis 1:27-28 NKJV)

With your Bible, answer the following questions:

1. According to verse 27, who was made in God's image—men, women, or both genders?
2. In verse 28, who did God bless directly after creating men and women in His image?
3. Also in verse 28, to whom did God give the privilege of exercising dominion and authority over the universe?

Created to Work

To many people, all work feels like a curse. But the Bible reveals something different about work; that it is a gift from God. Prayerfully answer the following questions pertaining to the place work occupies in our human experience:

1. In Genesis 2:5, what did God need a man to do with the flourishing ground in the garden?
2. In Genesis 3:17-19, what changed about work when the first humans sinned and invited death into the world? How have you seen the curse play out in work you have done?
3. What does 1 Timothy 5:8 indicate regarding the responsibility of Christian men to provide for their immediate family and needy extended family members?

Section 3

Created for Marriage (Genesis 2:24-25)

One of the most unique gifts human beings have been given by God is the institution of marriage. Marriage, as humans are intended to experience it, is not a gift enjoyed by the animal kingdom. Marriage is not an invention of human beings; it is the plan of God for filling the earth with the human race, creating families, maturing men and women spiritually and relationally, and more.

In your Bible, turn to Genesis 2:18-25 and answer the following questions:

1. In Genesis 2:18, what does God say is generally true about men? What did God decide to do about man's problem?

2. The word translated "helper" in verse 18 has the idea of completer. What does this communicate about the value women have from God's perspective in marriage, family, and society?

3. Verse 24 is the template for a biblical marriage ceremony. It was actually personally officiated by God. According to verse 24:
 - o How many partners should be involved in a biblical marriage ceremony?
 - o What genders are involved in a biblical marriage?
 - o What do the husband and wife "become" when they are joined in biblical marriage?
 - o Should a husband and wife be comfortable living with their in-laws or being supported by them long-term? (Also see 1 Timothy 5:8.)

What about Single People?

Many people who are single longer than they would like to be wonder if they have been cursed with singleness for some reason. Others actually feel no desire to be married and wonder if that means something is wrong with them. The Bible has encouragement for people in both categories:

- If you like being single so you can freely serve Jesus without the domestic responsibilities that come with marriage and family, you probably have the gift of singleness (1 Corinthians 7:7). You are not weird. Paul and Jesus were single.
- If you are single and do not like being single, you have not been cursed by God. People with the gift of singleness like being single. Enjoy the season of freedom you are in and wait patiently for the Lord's provision. When the time is right God brings the right woman to the right man (see Genesis 2:22).

Section 4

What roles has God designed men and women to play in the home and church? Biblically, men serve as the loving and self-sacrificing leaders in the home and church. Women serve as the loving and self-sacrificing completers in the home and church. Children partner with their parents and church leaders to carry out God's plans for family and the local church. They do this in submission to the leadership of their parents and church leaders in honor to Jesus. Below are the basics on men's, women's, and children's roles in the home and church.

*Note Look up each Scripture reference in your own Bible and underline them:

Home Husband

- Leader in family-life direction (Ephesians 5:23)
- Provides for housing, food, and well-being (1 Timothy 5:8)
- Submits personal preferences to his wife (Ephesians 5:21)
- Bears responsibility before God for raising kids for Jesus (Ephesians 6:4)
- In the church: Men may serve in all leadership roles in the church. This includes the office of elder/pastor which is the doctrine-setting, church-disciplining, body of leaders in the local church (1 Timothy 3:1-7)

Answer the following questions:

1. How does the description of a biblical husband challenge the view of manhood you have held?
2. In what ways does it affirm the view of manhood you have held?
3. If you are a man, what areas do you need to work on with Jesus to become more of the man He wants to make you?
4. If you are a woman, how can you assist your husband or future husband, brothers, or male friends in becoming the men God wants them to be?

Wife

- Completer/helper of husband in family direction and plans (Genesis 2:18)
- Counselor to husband (Proverbs 31:10-11, 26-27)
- Homeward orientation of life (Titus 2:4-5)
- Hard worker and co-provider when necessary for family flourishing (Proverbs 31:13-22)
- In the church: Women may serve in all leadership roles in the church with exception of elder/pastor. They may serve as a deacon, which is a support/complementary role to the role of elder/pastor (1 Timothy 3:8-13)

Answer the following questions:

1. How does the description of a biblical wife challenge the view of womanhood you have held?
2. In what ways does it affirm the view of womanhood you have held?
3. If you are a woman, what areas do you need to work on with Jesus to become more of the woman He wants to make you?
4. If you are a man, how can you assist your wife or future wife, sisters, or female friends in becoming the women God wants them to be?

Children

- Loved and welcomed by Jesus (Matthew 19:14)
- Examples of faith (Matthew 18:3)
- Equal in dignity and worth with parents (Genesis 1:26-27)
- Honor Jesus by submitting to mom and dad's leadership (Ephesians 6:1-3)

Answer the following questions:

1. How does the description of a biblical childhood challenge the view of childhood you have held?
2. In what ways does it affirm the view of childhood you have held?
3. If you are a child, what areas do you need to work on with Jesus to become more of the person He wants to make you?
4. If you are a parent, how can you assist your child or future child, nieces and nephews, or friend's children in becoming the people God wants them to be?

Section 5

When our first human parents chose to rebel against God, they invited sin and death into our world. All humans inherited the sin nature of the first humans. By nature and choice, all people continue in the footsteps of Adam and Eve, sinning against God at the level of imagination and action. When sin came into our universe it brought death in many ways. Unfortunately, as all humans experience, not even the way men and women relate to one another went unscarred by the curse of sin. Unity and peace were lost in many ways when the human race fell into sin. Consider some of the consequences the Bible reveals sin has had on mankind and the universe:

The Global and Relational Consequences of Sin

1. Humans lost relational unity with God (Genesis 3:8)
2. Humans lost relational unity with each other (Genesis 3:12; James 4:1)
3. Humans lost emotional peace within ourselves (Genesis 3:10; Psalm 32:3-5)
4. Humans lost peace between the nations (Psalm 2:1-3)
5. Humans lost the safety of a perfect and peaceful cosmos (Romans 8:18-22)

APPLICATION

1. Conflict in your personal relationships: How have you wronged others? How have you most significantly been victimized by others?
2. Negative or unhealthy views of yourself: What place has depression, self-deprecation, or self-abuse played in your life?
3. Conflict in society: What battles do you see going on in your own city in the area of politics or social morality?
4. Conflict between nations: What nation-to-nation conflicts currently happening in the world are results of human evil?
5. Conflict in creation: What natural disasters have you seen, experienced, or learned about?

The Gospel Connection

According to Revelation 21:1-5, because of Jesus, what will God do with all the pain, suffering, and sin we currently experience in our lives?

IMPACT POINTS

Write down the insights from this chapter that most impacted you and discuss them with your small group.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

Write down any questions you have about the content of this chapter, or additional questions you thought of as you went through it. Discuss these questions in your small group.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

GOING DEEPER

These are some resources you can purchase on your own to learn more about the God's identity:

Doctrine: What Christians Should Believe by Mark Driscoll

A Book You'll Actually Read...on church leadership by Mark Driscoll