

Introduction Who am I? What is life about? Where is the world going? These are all questions that flow out of both an internal need and an external crisis regarding human understanding. Our creator God communicates clearly through the scriptures as well as through the observable design and engineering of man that there is something special about man distinct from all other creation. The early chapters of the Bible reveal that our creator owner God is . . .

1. Self existent. God is independent of all that everything else depends on. God does not need anything. He is self sufficient, self determined, and self revealing.
2. Powerful. God has no limits, all he wants to do he does. He wills nonbeing into being. What he announces and commands, happens.
3. Purposeful. God does everything according to his desire, purpose and will. He exercises supreme dominion over all things. There is intentionality to all that he does.
4. Good. God is the final standard for what is good. All that God does is worthy of approval. God gives all necessary gifts and functions to support life.

Embedded in these opening chapters of God's word we also find answers to the most profound questions of mankind. This morning let's learn about you. You are quite special, but we may think so for different reasons. You are distinctive, significant, valuable, important, loved and responsible. All of these truths about you come from an even a casual study of the early pages of scripture. These are not the result of complex psychological observation, extended behavioral research or the trustworthy sociology of afternoon television. If you want to know you, start with the words of God that describe how and why your creator made you.

Read Genesis 1:26 – 2:17

Contemporary and popular culture defines you in many different ways. You probably find it quite frustrating to shape your existence around these expectations, but most of us spend a significant amount of energy trying to conform even when we know it does not make any sense. One theologian proposes the following list of popular cultural views that stand in contrast to you being a creature made by God and in his image . . .

- You are a machine. Valued for what you do; value if useful; means to an end.
- You are an animal. No qualitative difference between your pets; behaviorist
- You are a sexual being. Sexuality is key to human nature; drives, desires, gratification
- You are material. Adequate food, clothing, housing motivates/gives significance
- You are a pawn. At the mercy of forces/destiny. Helpless/resignation
- You are free. Will is essence of personality; self determination; no restraints

With the assistance of God's helping Spirit, let's listen well to God's perspective of who you are, what you were made to be satisfied by and how you are to think about yourself. All of this self awareness is crucial for your understanding of being rightly related to your creator owner God.

We draw five answers from the Genesis text to the question of your identity. These stand in sharp contrast to what most of us have come to think habitually from our overexposure to popular culture. These five truths about you form the foundation or grid for you to be rightly related to God. These truths ultimately describe the

framework for your life to be and to do the most exciting, satisfying, liberating, fulfilling, meaningful, valuable and important kind of life known to man. Let's listen to God's words about you.

1. You are created by God. 1:26-27; 2:7 You have no independent existence apart from him.

- Let us make . . . 1:26; so God created man . . . 1:27 the LORD God formed/breathed – 2:7
- Created similar but distinct from other living creatures breath of God; everlasting life; sustaining
- Created with knowledge/design/care Psa. 139:13-18
- Created for God's glory. Isa. 43:7; 45:18-22

2. You bear God's image and likeness. 1:26,27 You are distinct from all other creation.

- Creatures made per their kind, 21, 24, 25 – man made in image and likeness of God 26,27
- Let us make man to be like us and represent us . . . reflect Isa. 43:7; relate and rule/dominion 2:5
- Completion of image in Christ . . . Col. 3:10; 2Cor. 3:18; Rom. 8:29
- Exist to reflect and relate in worship . . . Psa. 8:1, 9

3. You are intentionally male or female. 1:27 You have a God given role and perspective.

- Connected to image of God; common to both male/female and godhead . . . complimentary  
Harmonious personal relationships  
Equality in personhood and importance  
Difference in role and authority
- Male/female roles and function necessary for creation mandate of dominion/multiply/fill/subdue
- Male female role/function basis for church, family, society structure 1Cor. 11:2-16; 1Tim. 2:13
- Divisions, superiority, inferiority are abolished in Christ Gal.3:28

4. You are loved by your creator God. 1:28; 2:8 You are wired to enjoy God and give him joy.
- The blessing of purpose, provision and function 1:28ff
  - The provision of beauty and food. 2:8-9 no need to pursue the forbidden fruit
  - The thoughtfulness of a generous environment. 2:10-14
  - The satisfaction of responsibility and work. 2:15-17
  - Psalm 8:4 . . . mindful care of the creator for the creature man.

5. You have a sense of moral responsibility. 2:9; 16,17 You are a complete person only as you obey God.
- Trees in the center of paradise . . . symbolic for everlasting life and moral understanding.  
 Tree of knowledge of good and evil . . . 2:9  
 Only God has all knowledge and perspective to say what is right and wrong 3:5  
 Man is created to depend on God's words for right and wrong  
 Sin is the choice to live independently of God's words, presence and standards.
  - Creator God issues a command to be obeyed . . . 2:16, 17
  - Creator God explains the consequence of disobedience. 2:17 you shall surely die  
 Cmp. 3:4-5 separation from God and others

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 5. You have a sense of moral responsibility. 2:9; 16, 17 You are a complete person only as you obey God.

Conclusion The most exciting, satisfying, liberating, fulfilling, meaningful, valuable and important life you can live is not focused on pursuing work, money, food, sex, play, fun, service to others or discovery . . . it is to do what you have been made to do . . . declare the wonders of your creator God! Psalm 8:1, 9. Your work, family, sexuality, desires, appreciation for beauty, personality, passions and creativity then become your God given platform to obey God and shout out the majesty of his great name!

Small Group Questions

1. Review the introduction, what ways is your self awareness most shaped by popular culture rather than God?
2. Review the 5 truth statements describing man. Look up supporting scriptures, clarify understanding and contrast with your current understanding or perspective of culture. What are you thinking about yourself that limits your worship . . . per Psalm 8? Read and discuss Psalm 8 flow and message.