

Chapter 10: Who Am I?

Who Are You?

I spent some time this week looking through old pictures of myself as I was growing up. I enjoy recalling the memories caught in those two-dimensional rectangles. As I flipped through scenes of myself playing baseball, attending dances, and dressing up like Stone Cold Steve Austin (Halloween shenanigans), these recollections turn into daydreams of the past. It's almost like time travel.

Our memories reveal transitions through life. Who did you want to be like? Do you recall phases you went through? I went through a "hair-slicked-back" phase. Ah, eighth grade. Then there was the time in high school when I tried to grow a beard, but it looked super patchy and tacky. Some phases were more embarrassing than others. I'd imagine your snapshots of the past reveal times when you were searching to find an identity. And there is a great question embedded in the adventure of growing up: Who am I?

I believe that we usually answer with familiar worldly roles. Maybe you see yourself in terms of your role in the family—a dad, a son, or a daughter, for example. Perhaps you want to be a dancer or an author. These roles are important, but they do not express you at the core. After all, the clearest idea of yourself would be that which lasts forever. As we view the question of "Who am I?" more deeply, I want you to contemplate how your relationship to God defines you. This chapter should help with that worthwhile objective.

Living Out Your Purpose

As I sat in a mentor's office, I noticed two large blocks of metal resting on his desk. They were shaped something like the greatest candy bar of all time, the king-sized 3 Musketeers.¹ The chunks of metal appeared heavy; I picked one up and tried to discern its purpose. Maybe it was a weapon. The rectangular, metallic object would create some blunt force trauma for sure. Finally, I asked my mentor what the items were. He said, "I had a friend construct these for me. They are just the right weight and size to function for what I need." Nice! I readied myself for an influential purpose. Then my mentor opened a book and laid one block horizontally across the pages. "These hold my book open as I read."

What defines the purpose of something? The purpose is made by a creator. The laptop I am currently pecking away at serves me in conveying thoughts and storing information. Why not use it to hammer a nail into a wall? There are better inventions made to do that. A creator designs his work to be used for a specific purpose. When we don't know the purpose simply by observing, we appeal to the creator.

¹ You can argue with me, but you will be wrong.

So here is the big reveal: You are a creation. God made you as He made the first people. You were created “*in the image of God.*”² You reflect the nature of God to think, love, discern action, recognize justice, and comprehend morality. Now I realize that you have probably been taught something very different. There are those who tell you humankind is just a collection of cells, produced through random chance over time, and with no clear purpose. For those people, morality, love, and justice are subjective terms that change culturally.³ The Bible argues otherwise. God is active even in the conscience of someone who does not love or accept Him. For atheists to proceed in sin, they must numb themselves to the impulse of moral guidance, which God gives to all people.⁴ Denying that God created you leads to an empty and spiritually purposeless existence.

But you were created; all people are fashioned by God. There is implicit purpose in your existence. Can a creation tell its creator its purpose? Nope. Purpose is defined externally and existentially. The influencing factors that express your purpose can’t originate from within you. The canvas doesn’t tell the painter what to paint. The quilt is made for warmth; the chair is made

to be sat upon. Purpose comes from outside the design. Your purpose stems from God.

The Scriptures teach that you are wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14). Did you know that the DNA God used to create you is more than 6 billion characters?⁵ That’s billion with a B! To illustrate how much information that is, think about how many letters are in a King James Bible.⁶ The King James Version of the Bible has about three million one hundred individual letters in it. How high would a stack of ten King James Bibles rise? How about fifty copies? That’s a huge amount of data, but you have way more information in the coding of your being. If you had an expansive library of 2,050 King James Bibles,

you would be getting closer to the amount of information that God purposefully generated into



² Genesis 1:26; Genesis 5:1.

³ This train of thought can go many sinful places. The genocide of Jews in Nazi Germany comes to mind. If a culture dictates that the death of a people group is in the best interests of the masses, a godless society has no reason to halt such action.

⁴ I write in general truths. On this point, I recognize that some are born with disorders that hinder or alter thought patterns from a normative manner. Research into personality disorders teaches us about such exceptions. However, only by recognizing that there is order can we call something else a “disorder.”

⁵ The National Institute of General Medical Sciences states that there are 3.2 billion base pairs in the human genome. Rachel Crowley, “Genetics by the Numbers,” National Institutes of Health Biomedical Blog, April 24, 2024, <https://biobeat.nigms.nih.gov/2024/04/genetics-by-the-numbers/>.

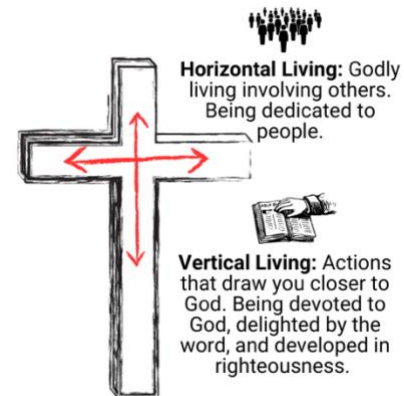
⁶ I chose the KJV Bible because the information on character length was readily available, and it’s one of the more well-known Bible translations.

little ole you. The Lord sequenced all that DNA correctly and intentionally to make the amazing creation that you are.

Creator God placed in you everything needed to fulfill your purpose. You were made with intentionality. Each cell is a miracle. I hope you realize how special you are, but this brings us to a larger question. Have you ever asked yourself, “Why do I exist?” Now, I want to be clear. You have many “purposes” that are seen throughout the Scriptures. My intention is to give you a general overarching description that encompasses them—a purpose that all other purposes fall into.

Your purpose is simple. You exist to know, explore, and enjoy the love of God and to share God’s love with others. This is best accomplished through two avenues. Sometimes, you might hear these two courses labeled as vertical and horizontal living. The imagery is of a crucifix’s beams. Picture that torture device that Christians use everywhere from nursery walls to jewelry. The imagery is well known. Two beams create a crucifix. Symbolically, one points up to God and the horizontal beam runs across humankind.⁷

Vertical living rests on your connection to God. Imagine yourself looking up toward the heavens and tuning out the world. Vertical living is composed of those actions that draw you closer to the Lord. In our 4D Discipleship Model, three Ds are vertical. When you become more devoted to God, you are centered on what pleases God. When you find yourself delighted by the word, you crave a closer relationship with the Lord. This leads to further exploration in the Scriptures as a treasure trove of information is gifted to you. When you are developed in righteousness, you begin to reflect on holiness, purity, and other areas that connect you to God. This is vertical living. Horizontal living recognizes those godly actions involving people. These actions are offshoots of your vertical living. Just as a horizontal beam is not possible without a vertical beam to rest on, when you care about God, you will feel concern for others. God made you to be compassionate. You were created and purposefully dedicated to others. As you come to know, explore, and enjoy the love of God more deeply, you will want to tell others. Service become second nature. You want to live out your purpose.



I hope you can sense the magnitude of finding your identity in your Creator, Lord, and Savior, Jesus. I once spoke with a man who told me he had been a Christian for fifty years. Usually, these are the types of saints⁸ I want to gather wisdom from because those believers have lived the life, run the race, and come away with spiritual battle scars. But this man was different. After fifty years of being a Christian, he could hardly explain more to me of Jesus than a very young child. He had no handicap of intellect, but his identity as a believer was deficient. He had not made Christianity the central and most important identity in his life. Receive this fact as it

⁷ This is not to say that the crucifix was made for the purpose of this particular symbolism, but that it stands as a good picture of vertical and horizontal living based on Jesus’s sacrifice.

⁸ Just a reminder that a saint is a Christian. That simple.