

50 Days
to
=EMBRACING=
(and enjoying)
Who God Says
YOU ARE

Eric Geiger & Eden Geiger

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50 Days to Embracing (and Enjoying) Who God Says You Are

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ISBN 979-8-4005-0959-9

Printed in the United States of America

32 31 30 29 28 27 26
7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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A Note from Eric and Eden

We are so honored to go on this journey with you—a journey of embracing and enjoying who God says we are.

If you are already a Christ follower, the Bible is loaded with descriptions of your new identity. Studying what Scripture says about you will encourage you, change you, and challenge you. That is our story!

If you are not yet a Christ follower, you will get to see what Christians believe, and you can consider what God is offering you. We love that you are reading this!

Each day you will see the daily devotional in two parts. The first part is written by Eric, and the second part is by Eden. Eric is Eden's dad and a pastor who has spent years of his life leading groups of high school students. Eden is a teenager, and she is currently doing her best to apply all of this to her own life—just like you.

When I (Eric) started following Christ my senior year in high school, I struggled with really understanding that I was brand new and forgiven, that I had a new identity. I was embarrassed about things I had done and struggled with guilt. Studying my

new identity, as described in Scripture, helped me so much, and I know the Scripture will help you too.

I (Eden) have struggled with where to place my identity. I have been tempted to find identity in my struggles, like having dyslexia or wrestling with anxiety. I have been tempted to find my identity in things I want to accomplish or good things I do, but that only puts more pressure on me and does not give me joy. When I remember who Christ has declared me to be, I have more joy, and I want that for you too!

We encourage you to read one devotional a day for the next fifty days. Don't read more than one per day because we hope you will reflect on what you read throughout the day. If you miss a day, just pick back up. If it takes longer than fifty days for you to complete it, that's okay!

We also included a memory verse for each week and a few questions at the end of each day. These will help you reflect on what God is teaching you, and you could also use the discussion questions if you are reading with friends or a Bible study group.

Let's go!

Memory Verse

*You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body
and knit me together in my mother's womb.*

*Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex!
Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it.*

PSALM 139:13 - 14

WEEK ONE

God Designed Me
with Great Care

*You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body
and knit me together in my mother's womb.
Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex!
Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it.*

PSALM 139:13 - 14

DAY 1



I Am Wonderfully Knit Together

Eric

If you long for the day when you will be able to drive yourself to school or to Starbucks or to a friend's house, you are not alone. Getting into a car—without your parents or a driving instructor—and driving down the road is a major milestone. If the car you want to drive (or are driving) is like most cars, it has around 30,000 parts and takes manufacturers 18 to 35 hours to make. You look at the car of your dreams and think, *This thing is awesome*. You never think, *This car just happened*. The fact that the car has been designed means it had a designer.

In a similar way, your incredibly intricate body points to a much greater Designer. It didn't come into existence by chance. Just think about the complexity of a car versus the complexity of the human body:

The car: 30,000 parts

Your body: 30,000,000,000,000 (30 trillion) cells

The car: 35 hours in the factory (on the high end)

You: 6,570 hours in the womb (or nine months)

God spoke the world into existence and created everything in six days. He said, “Let there be light,” and there was light (see Genesis 1:3). But with you, He took extra time. He did not just speak. He knit you together.

Just as your dream car points to a designer, you point to a Designer. God designed and created you, which means you are worth much more than a car. Not only because you have more cells and took longer to make, but because your Maker is God Himself. Your dream car will be worth less five years from now. That’s called “depreciation,” a word you’ll probably hear in some economics class. You don’t depreciate, though. Your worth remains because the One who created you set His image on you. (We will talk more about this tomorrow!)

Eden

For a teenager growing up in the social media era, the comparison game is real. Body image is a major concern for many of us. It’s challenging not to fixate on how we appear to others or how we stack up against people with tons of likes on Instagram or those stunning models. I have felt judged based on my style, my fitness, and even my height. It’s easy for our self-esteem to take a hit, and I’ve found myself wondering, *Why do I look like this?!*

“Ten years from now, no one will remember that pimple,” a friend might say. True, but today is today, not ten years from now! I need something to help me right now.

Psalm 139 helps me remember this. God is the One who made

me, and He never makes mistakes. What He thinks of me is far more important than anyone else's opinion. Next time you feel insecure about your appearance or abilities, remind yourself that you've been wonderfully made by the Creator of the universe!

Reflection & Discussion Time

- What causes people (maybe even you) to have a low view of yourself? Of your body?
- How does Psalm 139 challenge you and help you think differently about who God made you to be?

Then God said, “Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground.”

GENESIS 1:26

DAY 2



I Am Made in His Image

Eric

The word *genesis* means “beginning,” so the book of Genesis is the book of beginnings, including the beginning of people. The first words of Genesis are “In the beginning God created . . .” God was there in the beginning, meaning He has no beginning because He has always been. He is not like us, because all of us have a beginning—a date we were born into this world. We are the created; He is the Creator.

Throughout Genesis 1, God says that what He created was good:

- The light: good (verse 4)
- The land and seas: good (verse 10)
- The sun, moon, and stars: good (verses 16-18)
- The animals: good (verse 25)

A musician often plays his best song at the end of the concert. An artist often displays her best piece at the end of the exhibit. And

God saved His best work, His most creative act for the end. The crowning work of God's creation was making people. "Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was *very good!*" (Genesis 1:31, emphasis added).

People marvel over sunrises, sunsets, and ocean views. People pay lots of money to go on safaris to stare at animals through binoculars. Those are all good, but God waited to call His creative work "very good" until after He made us!

What makes you "very good"? What makes you different from all the other amazing sights, sounds, and creatures God created? You were created in God's image, to be like Him. He did not make any other creature in His image. Only humanity.

He is relational, and He made you to relate to Him and others. He is creative, so you can be creative. He is wise, so you can grow in wisdom. He is loving, so you have the capacity to love. He is holy, and He invites His own to live holy.

Eden

Leaders, teachers, or parents sometimes use the phrase "made in the image of God" to encourage us when we're feeling down or struggling with self-doubt. It doesn't always help me in the moment because I often don't take the time to think about what it really means. Sometimes I assume it's like when people tell me, "Oh, you look just like your mom." But looking similar to my mom and being made in the image of the perfect God of the universe could not be more different. My mom didn't choose my features; she just got what she got when I was born! God created me in His perfect image, even though I am far from perfect.

I love my dog, Roscoe—the cutest goldendoodle you'll ever

meet. He never fails to make my friends laugh because he thinks everyone exists to give him belly rubs. I love him, but I did not create him. I couldn't have, even if I wanted to! But God's love for me is greater than my love for Roscoe. God had the power and desire to create me, and God had the power and desire to create you too. That's why you're here and reading this right now!

Not only did God create us, but He made us in His own image! The God of the universe chose us to be made in His likeness. Knowing He put His image on us helps me understand just how much He loves us and how special we are to Him. As great as Roscoe is, he wasn't made in God's image. But you and I and everyone we'll talk with today carries God's image in them.

The phrase "made in the image of God" challenges me in another way too. It's not just about how I see myself, but also how I see others. The phrase applies to every human being: the strict teacher, the girl who ignored me at school, the classmate who mocked my faith, and the guy I don't get along with. Because I am created in God's image, I can and should be kind and compassionate to others who are also made in His image. This truth can impact not just how I feel about myself but how I feel about others.

Reflection & Discussion Time

- What qualities do you have that are similar to qualities God has? For example, God is patient, and you might be patient too.
- When you remember that all people are created in the image of God, how does that change how you treat yourself and others?

*God created human beings in his own image. In the image of
God he created them; male and female he created them.*

GENESIS 1:27

DAY 3



I Am Created with Intention

Eric

A growing number of teenagers express not feeling at home in their own bodies. Maybe you or a friend have felt this way: never fit in with the gender stereotypes of guys playing with toy trucks and rough sports or girls dressing up and playing with dolls, aren't happy and so badly want to be happy, and long for a sense of identity. TikTok features lots of videos about teenagers who have changed their gender identity, and they tell stories of being celebrated for their courage. Some think changing their gender could help them be known for something. Others struggle with a painful conflict within themselves, feeling as if their minds and bodies don't match—commonly called gender dysphoria. A film titled *Transgender Kids* puts it this way: “The heart of the debate about transgender kids is the idea your brain can be at war with your body.”¹ This means the person’s physical sex (how their body is designed) feels at war with their mind.

Do you know who else believes our minds and our bodies

can be at war with one another? Christians. We don't necessarily wrestle with our gender identity (though we may), but we wrestle internally with our sin and with living in a world that feels like a mismatch to who we are (see Romans 7:22-23). While God offers a solution different from changing our physical bodies, Christians can be compassionate because all of us, at some level, have not felt right in our own skin. So if you have a friend or family member who wrestles with gender dysphoria, you can and should be compassionate. If you experience this struggle personally, God is compassionate toward you, but He has a different path forward for you than the one the world offers.

The Creation account in the book of Genesis has a lot to say about gender. We see beautiful, intentionally designed distinctions in the way God created the world: day and night, land and sea, and male and female. Day and night come together to form our twenty-four-hour cycle. Land and sea come together to form the landscape of our world. Male and female come together, and God brings children from their union. We also see God and people come together. We are His creation, and He wants to be with us.

When God gave you your body, He decided whether you would be male or female. You may not love your body, but God designed you with great intention. If you struggle with a disconnect between your mind and your body, our culture says, *Listen to your mind and transform your body*. But is that wise? Think about how often our minds change. The Scripture says the opposite: *Offer your body to God and allow Him to transform your mind* (see Romans 12:1-2). Your body is a gift from Him. The way to be fulfilled is to see your body as a gift and offer yourself, including your body, to Him—to treat your body as ultimately belonging to God and to allow Him to continually work on your mind. Right

now, He is doing just that! You are spending time with Him in Scripture, and He uses this time to form you.

Eden

Okay, I have to be honest: I was slow to learn all the terms used to describe gender and sexuality in our culture. When I was a freshman in high school, it was all very confusing with lots of new terms and acronyms being thrown around. Since then, I have learned that *gender* refers to how someone identifies and *sexuality* is about who someone is attracted to. I still get confused at times, but in conversations about gender, three things are more important to know than any new phrase or term you may see on social media.

First, God loves all people. He loves me, and He loves you. When discussions about gender and sexuality come up, it is important to remember we are talking about people He loves. All of us have our own struggles and challenges, but God's love does not stop because of these.

Second, God gave us our bodies. He made my body, and He made yours. When God created Adam, He created him as a man, and when He created Eve, God created Eve as a woman. Both were designed by God and are very valuable to Him. Just as day and night are different, so are guys and girls. There are amazing things about night and day—whether it's talking with friends at night under the stars or enjoying a sunny beach day. Both night and day are great in their own ways, but they are different from one another.

Third, we only find true fulfillment when we trust God's design. Going against His design, even if it feels right and good

for a moment, always leads to pain. He is the Creator, the only non-created One, and we can trust His perfect design for us.

Reflection & Discussion Time

- What does it mean for a Christian to offer his or her body to God? How can you do that in your daily life?
- What are some things about your body that you're grateful for? List a few good things you can do with your body—for example, using your hands to write an encouraging note to a friend.