

Who Am I? (Part Two)

Assertion of the Question of Identity

I. THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION OF IDENTITY

The query "Who am I?" is identified as one of the most fundamental questions human beings ask. The term "identity" itself, originating from the Latin *idem* ("the same"), implies a state of sameness and oneness. When an individual poses this question, the inquiry can be understood in one of three ways:

- **Substance:** Pertaining to the essential nature of being (e.g., an animal, a biological machine, an illusion).
- **Functionality:** Relating to roles and responsibilities (e.g., a mother, a father, an employer).
- **Affiliation:** Concerning identification with a particular person or group.

II. COMPETING WORLDVIEWS ON THE PURPOSE OF RELATIONSHIPS

The document establishes its foundational premise on the existence of the God of the biblical worldview. The answer to the identity question is first sought in the creation account of Genesis, chapter one.

The Non-Biblical Worldview

This perspective, characterized as operating "inside the box" by closing itself off from God as the ultimate source, arrives at several functional conclusions for the existence of relationships.

Rationale for Relationships (Non-Biblical)
The propagation of the "species."
The purpose of procreation.
To preserve society and the social order.
To pass on our genes for preservation.
A relation to our "animal ancestors."
For the "good or benefit of society."
To lower the crime rate in society.

The Biblical Worldview: An Analysis of Genesis

The document presents a detailed analysis of Genesis chapters 1 and 2 to establish a theological framework for human uniqueness and the divine institution of relationships. This framework is built by examining specific divine statements and actions and contrasting them with the creation of animals.

Directives in Genesis 1:28

The command, *"God blessed them; and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.'"*, is deconstructed to highlight unique human attributes.

In contrast to this view, an alternative pantheistic worldview is presented, which sees the Universe as the creative, preserving, and destructive force, with humanity being an interdependent part of that whole.

Scriptural Phrase	Implied Human Attribute	Contrast with Animals
"Be fruitful and multiply"	Humanity is created with all the biological parts to fulfill this command.	-

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"God said to them"	Humanity is created with the faculties to understand language.	God did not speak to animals or give them similar directives.
"Rule over..."	Humanity was created with the reason, ability, and capability to complete tasks.	God did not give animals a similar directive to rule.

The Creation of Male and Female in Genesis 2

The narrative of the creation of man and woman is presented as further evidence of humanity's special status and the intended nature of male-female relationships.

Scriptural Event/Statement (Genesis 2)	Implied Significance	Contrast with Animals
v. 18: "It is not good for the man to be alone..."	Underscores the specific intent of God to make woman and establish the relationship between the sexes.	God did not speak such an intention concerning the animals.
v. 7, 21-22: Male "formed"/ Female "fashioned"	Highlights the unique and distinct manner in which God created humans.	God did not create the animals in this specific manner.
v. 23: "bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh"	Demonstrates Adam's recognition of a corresponding substance in the woman.	Adam did not express this recognition about any other creature.
v. 24: "a man shall leave... and be joined to his wife"	Provides the divine reasoning for why the joining (marriage) is done.	Moses did not write anything similar about any other creature.

III. THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS AND SCRIPTURAL CONSISTENCY

The document outlines the broader theological consequences of these foundational principles as they appear throughout Scripture.

Consequences of Rejecting the Created Order

Drawing from Romans 1:18ff, the text argues that when humanity exchanges "the truth of God for [the] lie" by worshiping the creature rather than the Creator, it leads to "degrading passions." These acts are described as those which **"eclipse" the glory of God in relationships!**

A Consistent Pattern of Intergenerational Teaching

A recurring theme in Scripture is the command for one generation to teach the next about God and His ways.

- **Deuteronomy 4:10 & 6:4-6:** Commands for the first and second generations of Israelites to hear God's words and diligently teach them to their children.
- **Ephesians 6:4:** An instruction for fathers to bring their children up "in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."
- **2 Timothy 1:5:** An example of sincere faith being passed down through generations, from grandmother Lois to mother Eunice to Timothy.

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The Divine Parallel: God as Father, Believers as Children

The document posits that the father-child relationship is used consistently in Scripture as a parallel for God's relationship with believers, reinforcing the importance of this relational structure. Numerous scriptural references are provided to support this point, including:

- **God as Father:** Psa. 89:26; Jn. 1:18; Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:3
- **Believers as Children:** Rom. 8:16-17; Eph. 5:1; Phil. 2:15; 1 Jn. 3:1-2

Jesus' Affirmation of the Created Order

In Matthew 19:3-8, when tested by the Pharisees about divorce, Jesus answers by quoting the Genesis creation account: "Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE, and said, 'FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH'?" He clarifies that divorce was a concession by Moses due to "hardness of heart" but that "from the beginning it has not been this way." This underscores that relationships are intended to reflect the natural order of creation established by God.

IV. THE CORE DISTINCTION: IDENTITY VS. VOCATION

The central thesis of the analysis is the crucial distinction between a person's identity and their vocation.

- **Identity:** A qualitative status that is given by God and maintained irrespective of one's works, responsibilities, or performance.
- **Vocation:** A quantitative set of functional roles and the responsibilities within them (e.g., father, mother, friend).

DESCRIPTORS OF A BELIEVER'S IDENTITY:

- HOLY (EPH. 1:1,4)
- FAITHFUL (EPH 1:1)
- SONS (EPH 1:4)
- REDEEMED (CF. EPH. 1:6)
- FORGIVEN (CF. EPH 1:7)
- HEIRS (ROM. 8:17)
- BELIEVER (CF. EPH. 1:13)
- SPIRITUAL (GAL. 6:1)
- BELOVED (CF. 1 JN. 3:2)
- RIGHTEOUS (ROM. 1:17)

The following table illustrates the conceptual separation between these two concepts:

Identity (Given)	Vocation (Function/Role)
The motivation to complete responsibilities within the vocation.	The responsibility within the vocation.
<i>Examples:</i> Righteous, Beloved, Holy, "Good" Christian.	<i>Examples:</i> Father, Mother, Friend.

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Solomon's proverb is interpreted to mean that humans possess a spirit originating from God, and this spirit contains the qualities of conscience and volition.

Principles of Identity and Vocation

- For believers, failure in the responsibilities of a vocation **does not** impact their core identity in the sight of God.
- Successfully completing vocational responsibilities **does not** guarantee a successful outcome or that others will accept one's counsel.
- The quality of a person's actions (e.g., being a "good" or "bad" parent) is not solely determined by completing responsibilities, as children or friends may reject consistent, intentional efforts.
- A believer's **qualitative identity**, aligned with grace, ought to positively impact their **quantitative responsibilities** in their vocation.
- As a believer matures in understanding their identity in Christ, they become more **assured** in their actions within their vocation.

V. CONCLUSION: PURPOSE AND MOTIVATION

The analysis concludes by synthesizing the primary motivations and purposes of human relationships from the Biblical perspective.

- **Primary Motivation:** Our identity in the sight of God.
- **"Connective Tissue" to Motivation:**
 - Being created in the *Imago Dei* (Image of God).
 - Biological or lawful connection and association.
 - Being alike beings of like substance.
 - The call to do "good works" for our children.

Ultimately, relationships are presented as being more than their utilitarian functions. They are not just for procreation, societal stability, or passing on genes. They are vocations that contain responsibilities, but these functions are separate from the core identity of the individuals within them.