



IDENTITY- Crafted to connect

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BIG IDEA – God created us to connect.

scripture focus - [Ephesians 2:19-22](#) So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family. **Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets.** And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. **We are carefully joined together in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord.** Through him you Gentiles are also being made part of this dwelling where God lives by his Spirit.

[Galatians 3:26-29](#) **For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes. There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.** And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are his heirs, and God's promise to Abraham belongs to you.

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- **We are created on purpose for purpose.**
 - Our **free choice shattered what** we see as the image of God in us and in others.
 - **Life is a miracle.**
 - **We're crafted to connect.**

Have you noticed a change in the way we connect in our relationships? We're living in a strange time in history as both all-time highs and lows are happening simultaneously. Social media and digital technology have accelerated the way we connect but it also creates surface-level relationships. In other words...quantity vs. quality within our relationships. However, God created us to be relational! He created us **on purpose and for a purpose.** Let's find out why relationships play such a critical role in our lives.

Relating to Each Other

Youth & adults have less close friendships. Loneliness has skyrocketed over the past few years and the U.S. [Surgeon General](#) declares it an “epidemic.”

What have we done? **It's even creeping out sociologists because as of the latest statistics – SEX IS AT AN ALL TIME LOW. We seriously broke something!** It's an “age” thing on both ends of the spectrum! The super-seniors and the iGen generation have this sexcession thing in common!

Jean Twenge, professor of psychology at San Diego State University and author of [iGen: Why Today's Super-Connected Kids Are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy — and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood](#), said in an interview that **growing sexlessness among America's 20-somethings is primarily attributable to waiting to partner up later in life.**

Are we seriously going to make the case that aloneness, isolation and living like a hermit is healthy and good?

The text turns from GOOD to NOT GOOD. The work is good, the free food is good. Then something is NOT GOOD. What is NOT GOOD?

IT IS NOT GOOD FOR אִישׁ TO BE ALONE!
Genesis 2:28

Seven times God declares GOOD. Good, good, good, good, good.

ALONE – intentional solitude, lack of community or relationship.

A story and an object lesson

A SURVIVAL STORY



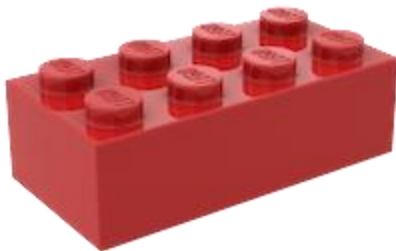
The rescue story in 2010 of the 33 [Chilean Miners](#) trapped for 70 days in a mine in Chile is amazing.

In many interviews with Luis Urúza, the foreman on the job, one of the interviewers asked him, “How did you and your men survive for so long.” Luis responded, A lot of [Prayer and fellowship](#)! They had a lot of conversation. [Luis Urúza](#) structured a time for worship and prayer together as part of their community life. He set the tone: all of us are in this together. We will all be rescued together.

The Christian God is ONE God eternally existing in three persons. Each unique existence is FULLY God, yet they exist in relationship as one God. There is singularity and plurality. There is individual uniqueness, yet there is absolute union and fellowship.

"The Father, Son and Holy Ghost were happy in themselves and enjoyed one another before the world was." – Richard Sibbes

An object lesson – the amazing LEGO.



God made us to be like Legos. A Lego piece was never designed to be a stand-alone piece. A one-piece Lego would not be fulfilling at all! Legos were designed to CONNECT with other pieces. And, only when a Lego connects with another Lego will you be able to see what it was designed to be.

We bear the image of God individually. We are completely human alone. We also bear the image of God as we connect with others.

Loneliness – is a soul reaction to a lack of human connection.

God crafted us for Him... and for others.

A disciple, a follower of Jesus is not just someone who is on a solo adventure for Jesus. It is someone who is following Jesus in community. This has been a struggle for us to understand in our rugged, American individualistic rights and achievements.

God crafted intentional connection opportunities. A design, a template and manual on how to connect and relate to others.

FOR THE NOTES: Legos had their ups and downs until they released them in kits! The Lego insiders call them “hyped sets.” [History of Lego](#) and [Wikipedia's History of Lego](#). Godtfred Kirk Christiansen makes a critical observation in 1954, the LEGO brick – simple pieces of plastic – are not particularly eye-catching individually, but in a child’s imagination they can become anything and everything – again and again. At first they released the plastic block as “automatic binding bricks,” so much for an engineer’s attempt at marketing. They later decided to just call them LEGOS. Then it became the LEGO System in Play. **The Town Plan** was released in 1955. Then in 1978 they came out with **LEGO play themes**.

We find that God had designed this idea of connection **Five different relationship structures in the Bible**. Each structure serves as a gift and a template to us for revealing God’s image in relationships.

1. **Marriage and the diversity of God**. – God institutes a covenant relationship between a **biological man and a biological woman**. “they become one flesh” Genesis 2:24. God designed the two biological sexes to reveal his own image.

Genesis 1:26-27

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness.... So God created man in his own image; he created him in the image of God; he created them male and female.

One flesh, singularity.

Male and female, plurality.

Diversity in unity.

Genesis 2:18 A helper (ezer) suitable (neged) in front of, in sight of, opposite to (like opposite). Like that the woman is a human being, but opposite because she is NOT the man.

2. **Family and the love of God – Family structure is important because it reflects the image of God**. It’s not just a marriage between complete opposites, now God introduces kids! Family is a relational structure and

model of how to both bear God's image and behold God's image in your own little creation. [Genesis 4:1-2](#)

3. **Society and the authority of God** – Society can be described as where you work, live and play. Neighbor, community, Government, and civic life. All the places outside the home, for us to still be caring and for the keeping the common good. This also covers government authority, Jesus often yielded to government. [Romans 13:1-2](#) **Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God. So anyone who rebels against authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and they will be punished.**

4. **Friendship and the selflessness of God** – Friendship is a powerful theme throughout the Bible. David and Jonathon's friendship is highlighted. Jonathon was in his forties, David in his twenties, when they became friends. Proverbs is filled with friendship wisdom about how to get, keep and foster solid friendships. ([Proverbs 13:30, 17:9, 17:17, 18:24, 27:5-6, 27:9,27:10](#)) And in the New Testament, Jesus calls his disciples, more than just followers – he called them friends (John 15:15). James writes, that we have a friendship with God Himself when we are loyal and obedient to His will (John 15:14).

5. **The Church and the Unity of God** – Belonging to God. No matter where you are from, what you have done, how much money you make or don't make, your political affiliation. Whether you're a sports nut or a techy nerd, a butcher, baker, or candlestick maker. In the person of Jesus, we are ONE big Spiritual family. [Websites for more info.](#)

The Apostle Paul defined both who we are individually as well as in the community of Christ.

[Galatians 3:26-29](#) **For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes. There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.** And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are his heirs, and God's promise to Abraham belongs to you.

[Ephesians 2:19-22](#) So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family. **Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and**

the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. **We are carefully joined together in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord.** Through him you Gentiles are also being made part of this dwelling where God lives by his Spirit.

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Prayer focus today:

- **Take stock of your relationships and heart.** (use those five structures and ask yourself if there are fractures or sharp edges in some of those relationships)
- **Take an intentional next step towards joining a Life Group.** It is the perfect place for connecting with others.
- **Take a step toward conversation with your neighbor – where you work, live or play.**

NOTES

Scriptures

[Genesis 2:18](#)

Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him."

[Genesis 2:24](#)

That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

[Genesis 1:27](#)

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

[John 15:14](#)

You are my friends if you do what I command.

[John 15:15](#)

I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn't confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me.

[Galatians 3:26-29](#) **For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes. There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.** And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are his heirs, and God's promise to Abraham belongs to you.

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Discussion Guide

YOUR STORY

Q: Have you ever felt like you didn't belong? What was that experience like for you?

Q: What things or people make you feel like you belong in your family or community? What makes you feel belonging?

DIGGING DEEPER

We were created to be known and loved by God. We were created to walk in closeness with God. God alone satisfies the deepest part of our hearts. And at the same time, God created us for human relationships. This means it's entirely possible to be in relationship with God but out of sync with his ways as we walk in isolation. We can love God, which is good, but we can be lonely which is "not good."

Q: In your opinion, what are some common barriers that hinder people from cultivating meaningful relationships with others while still maintaining a close relationship with God?

Read aloud John 13:35 & Mathew 7:12

Q: If the mark for discipleship is how you love others, what's an honest assessment of how you're doing at loving those around you? Do you see room for improvement?

Q: It can be hard to love others if you don't feel loved by others. As a group how can we love you better? What makes you feel loved?

Q: Based on what makes you feel loved & on Mathew 7:12 what are some tangible things we can do to actively cultivate a sense of love, belonging, and interconnectedness with others in our daily lives?

Read aloud Ephesians 2:19-22

Q: What does it mean to be part of God's family? How does it make you feel knowing you belong to God's family?

Q: How should being part of God's family change the way we see and treat each other, especially when we face disagreements or conflicts?

Q: How does being part of God's family give us a sense of security and belonging, even when we feel lonely or misunderstood?

Q: What can you do this week to strengthen your connection with fellow believers?

MAKE ONE

Be in prayer asking God to help you experience life in connection and community with Him and other "image-bearers" as He intended.