

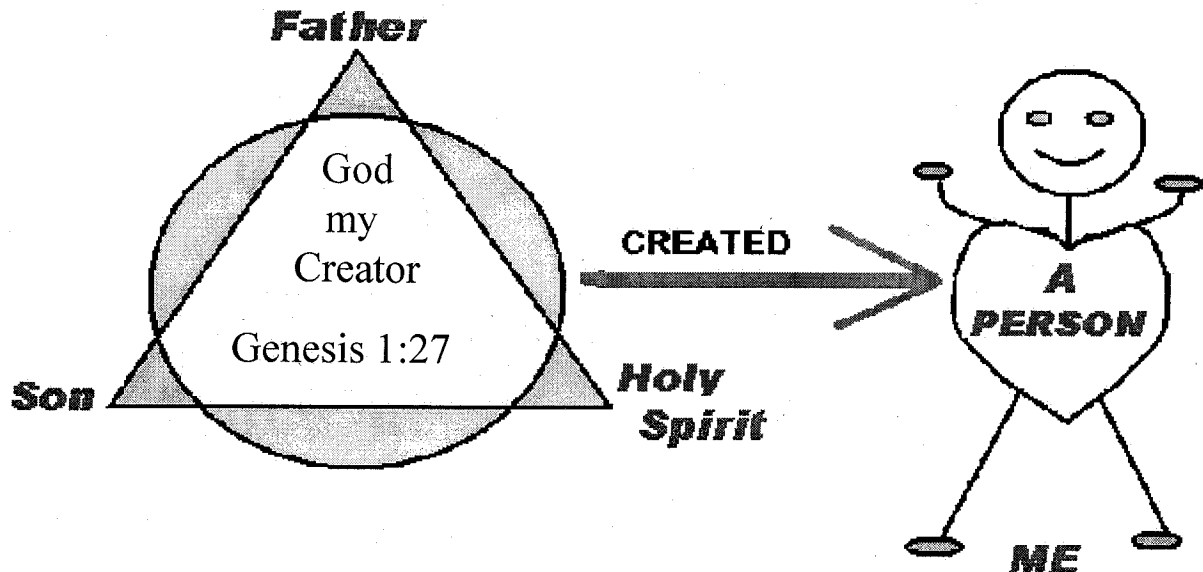
CHAPTER 5

THE PROBLEM OF BEING LOVED AND ACCEPTED

Knowing Who I Am

Who am I and why am I here? These are questions that every person needs to think about and answer.

The first thing that I need to understand is that I am a person who has been created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27):



Why are you here? You are here because God made you and created you! You are not some accident of nature. You are not some ape-like creature who has evolved into a human. You are here for a reason. You are a **creature** who has been made by a **Creator**: "Remember now thy _____ in the days of thy youth" (Ecclesiastes 12:1).

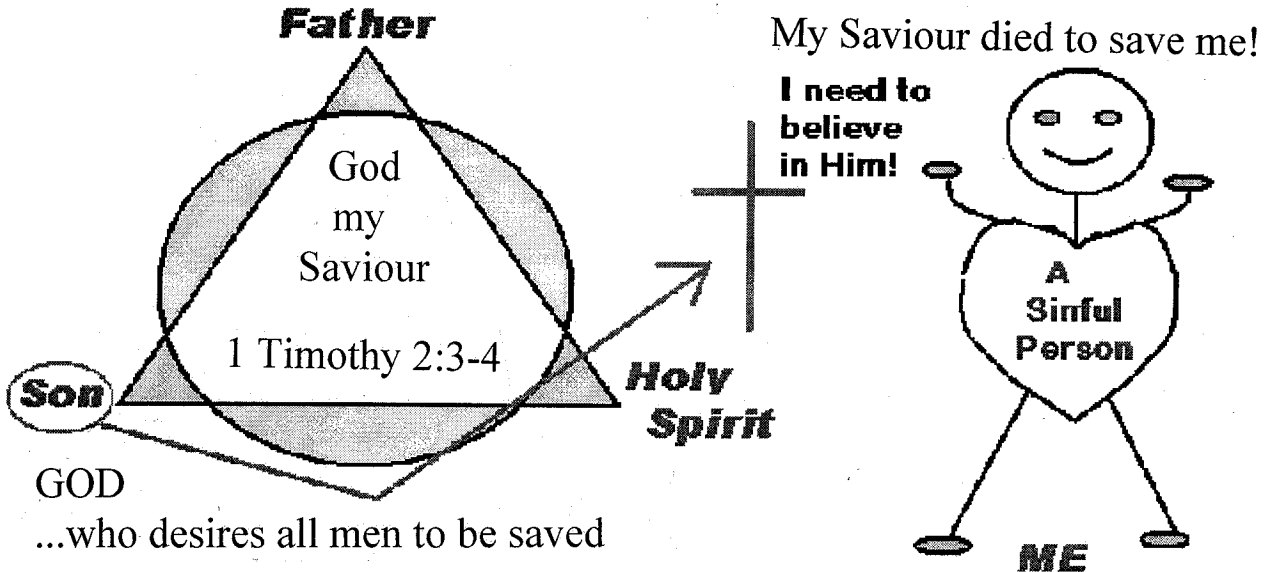
You are the result of God's creative work. God used parents to bring you into the world, but this does not change the fact that God created you and God has a purpose for you. There are some young people who do not know who their biological parents are. Perhaps they were adopted as babies. They may not know their parents, but should they know who their Creator is? _____

When God made Adam and Eve (Genesis 1:27; 2:7; 2:22), He had *you* in mind. You were not even born yet, but God knew that you would come from Adam and Eve. God knew just who your parents would be! God knew everything about you long before you were ever born.

Things are usually made for a purpose. If you were to make a sandwich, would you have a purpose for that sandwich? Or would you say to the sandwich, "I don't know why I made you. I have no use for you at all"? Does God have a purpose for everything that He has created and made (Revelation 4:11)? _____ Does God have a purpose for you? _____

My Creator Died to be My Saviour

God created man but man disobeyed and sinned against God (Genesis 3:6 and Romans 5:12). Just like a beautiful, shiny coin can be scratched and marred, so man has been marred by sin. Is your life marred by sin (Romans 3:23)? _____ The same God who created me is the same God who is willing to save me:



God has provided salvation for every person whom He created. The Lord Jesus Christ died for every person (Hebrews 2:9). In fact, the good news of salvation (the gospel) should be preached to whom (Mark 16:15)? _____ Who does God command to repent (Acts 17:30)? _____ God wants all men everywhere to believe on Christ and be saved (1 Timothy 2:4)! Have you done this? Are you a new creature in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17)?

Accepting What God Says About Me

When you look into a mirror you have to accept whatever you see. If you see a funny shaped nose, you must accept this because this is your nose! If you see large ears or blue eyes, you must accept this because this is the way you are. You must accept whatever you see in the mirror. God made you the way you are, and He did not make any mistakes.

God's Word, the Bible, is another kind of mirror (see James 1:22-25). The Bible helps us to see ourselves as we really are, and we must accept whatever it says about us. I must accept whatever God says about me.

What does God say about me? What does the mirror of God's Word reveal? These verses show us what God says:

1. Jeremiah 17:9. How is my heart described? _____
2. Mark 7:21-23. What kinds of things come from within me—good things or evil things?

3. Romans 7:18. How much good dwells in me? _____ What does dwell in me (Romans 7:17)? _____
4. How much can I do without Christ (John 15:5)? _____
Remember, you must accept whatever you see in the mirror!

What about when a person is saved? A saved person must accept whatever God says about him (or her). As the saved person looks into the mirror of God's Word, what does he (or she) see?

1. 2 Corinthians 5:17. He is a N _____ C _____.
2. John 1:12. He is a SON or CHILD of _____.
3. Ephesians 1:7. He is a **forgiven sinner!** There is forgiveness and it is found only in Christ.
4. Ephesians 1:6. He is "accepted in the B _____." Who is the beloved One (Matthew 3:17)? _____ Ephesians 1:6 is saying that we are accepted in Christ. God has favored us and has been gracious to us because of His Son. God is well pleased with His Son and God is also well pleased with those who are in His Son (those who are saved).

If you are saved, do you really see yourself as a child of God? as a forgiven sinner? as a new creature?

Life Has True Significance

Is there any reason as to why you are here in this world? Is there any purpose for you? Is there any place for you? Where do you fit in? Is there a path for you to follow?

Why have you been put on this earth? Are you important? Does your life have any meaning?

What makes a person important? What makes a life meaningful? What gives a person true significance? Here are some **wrong** answers that people sometimes give:

My life has meaning...

...if I get money

...if I have lots of friends

...if I do well in school and get good grades

...if I make the team

...if people recognize me and notice me and think I'm important

...if my parents are happy with me

These things do not give a person true meaning and significance. Only God can give a person true significance. A person's meaning and significance is found in Christ!

God had a reason and a purpose for creating you. God has a plan for you. God has a job for you and a place for you. And God has made you and designed you so that you can fulfill that job and that purpose. Here are three important things to remember:

1. *God is about His business.* God is doing His job! As we learned in the last chapter, God is managing this universe and the people in it, and God does His job very well!

2. *I am God's business.* Right this second God is personally involved with me! God is just as much involved with me right now as He would be if I were the only person on the face of the earth. My clothes are not going to last forever, my house is not going to last forever, my school is not going to last forever, my money is not going to last forever (1 John 2:17), *but* I am going to last forever and God is very much concerned about me!

3. *I am in business with God.* Can I really say this? Am I doing business with God? He is involved with me. Am I involved with Him? He cares about me (1 Peter 5:7). Do I care about Him? (See Matthew 6:33.)

God is very successful with His business! And if I am in business with God then I must be successful too! I cannot fail! Suppose you were a baseball player and you were chosen to play on a winning team. If the team wins, then you would be a winner too! God is a winner! If I play on God's team and follow God's rulebook (the Bible) then I must be a winner too!

What if you become very sick. Is God still a winner? What if you lose a close friend? Is God still a winner? Sickness and sadness and friends and parents and problems—none of these things can change God's purpose for me: "All things work together for _____ to them that love God" (Romans 8:28).

Each piece in a puzzle is part of the whole picture and has a place and purpose. Every puzzle piece has a place where it fits in perfectly. The God who made you has a place for you. God knows just where you fit in. He has a plan for your life and a job for you to do.

God has a place for every believer in the body of Christ. Every member of the human body has a place and a purpose (see 1 Corinthians 12:12-27). So also every member of the church has a place and a purpose. Every member of the body is needed and every member is important. Would you be very happy without your left eye? without your left ear? without your left arm? Every believer has an important place in the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:16). Every believer has something important to contribute. Every believer has an important part to play and an important job to do.

True Security in God's Love

Security is a state of safety and protection. A secure house is a house that is safe and protected from thieves. People need to have security. People need to be free from fear and free from danger. Where do we find this kind of safety? Where do we find this kind of security?

Our **significance** (meaning) is found only in God. So also our **security** is found only in God. The person who is really secure is the person who really understands God's love:

1) God's love is *unconditional*.

"Unconditional" means that there are no "ifs" involved. A conditional kind of love would be like this:

"I'll love you *if* you are good."

"I'll love you *if* you love me."

"I'll love you *if* I feel like loving you."

"I'll love you *if* you are a lovable person."

Is this the kind of love that God has for people? _____ The Bible says, "God so _____ the world" (John 3:16) and yet this is the same world that hated Christ (John 15:18). Did God love you because you were a lovable person? The Bible says that God loved you **even though you were...**

(Please MATCH)

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. _____ Dead in sin | A. Romans 5:6 |
| 2. _____ His enemy | B. Romans 5:8 |
| 3. _____ A sinner | C. Romans 5:10 |
| 4. _____ An ungodly person | D. Ephesians 2:4-5 |

God loved me and Christ died for me! The more I understand God's love the more I will understand how secure I really am.

2) God's love is *eternal*.

"The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have _____ thee with an _____ love" (Jeremiah 31:3). Will anything *ever* separate you from the love of God (Romans 8:35,37,38)? _____ If your parents were never to die and if you were never to die, then you would be their son (or daughter) forever! You would have an eternal relationship with them. You would belong to them forever. This is the kind of relationship God has with the person who is a believer. Every believer is a child of God forever. It is a love relationship that never ends! It is a forever relationship which the Bible calls **eternal life**. This is true security.

3) God's love *keeps us safe forever*.

What does Christ give to His believers (John 10:28)?

_____ Will they ever perish (John 10:28)? _____ Are they safe in the hand of Christ (John 10:28)? There are also safe in the F _____'s hand (John 10:29). The Bible also tells us something else very wonderful. Not only are we *in* God's hand, but we are also *part of* God's hand (Ephesians 5:30)! Which would you be less likely to drop – a penny that was in your hand or your thumb that was part of your hand?

God loves me and God has accepted me. He has accepted me not because of what I am or what I have done, but He has accepted me because of Jesus Christ (who He is and what He has done). God loves me with an unchanging love! When Joseph was young he was completely separated from his family and from his father's love (Genesis 37:28; 39:1). Was Joseph separated from God's love? _____ Did God still have a plan and purpose for Joseph and a job for him to do? _____ **And God has the same for you**, no matter who you are and no matter where you are!

God has put you in the middle of a world with all kinds of problems. We will be studying some of these problems in the next chapters. In the middle of it all God has a real place and purpose for you. God wants to use you as His instrument in carrying out His plan. You are important to God. You have a very important job to do! The living God wants to shine through you (Philippians 2:15)!

