

## Trusting God for Who You Are, or Just As I Am

Psalm 139:13–16 (NKJV)

*13 For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. 14 I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well. 15 My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. 16 Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them.*

The Bible affirms that God made us the way that we are. God “skillfully wrought” us; he formed us in our mothers’ belly. He fashioned us together; we are “fearfully and wonderfully made.”

Thus far in our Summer Sermon Series, we’ve been talking about trusting God. Today I want to talk about trusting God for who and what we are.

There is an identity crisis in our culture today. People are often unhappy/dissatisfied with who they are. And with modern science and medicine, if people want to change who they are, they can change themselves in various ways. Culture tells us that we can be anything we want to be – men, women, children, animals – you are whatever or whoever you claim to be.

The Bible tells us that we are who God made us to be. We can change ourselves and our conditions a little bit, but we can’t really get away from the person God made us to be. In fact, we should strive to accept and appreciate the way God made us. We should trust God for making us who we are. We can try to be better, but we can’t really change who God made us to be. And we should seek to be satisfied with who and what God made us.

Notice several things the Bible says about trusting God for who we are.

- I. God made you who you are.
  - A. God made you intentionally.

1. We don't believe in neo-Darwinian evolution. You are not the product of random, chance, mindless, impersonal forces. You are not merely molecules in motion.

You are the product of both natural processes and of God's intentional design. God knit you together in your mother's womb. God superintends the biological process involved in fashioning each one of us to be what God intends.

2. Many passages imply the same truth.

Job 10:8–11 *'Your hands have made me and fashioned me, An intricate unity; ... You have made me like clay. ... [You clothed] me with skin and flesh, And knit me together with bones and sinews?*

Psalms 119:73 *Your hands have made me and fashioned me;*  
...

Jeremiah 1:5 *Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; ...*

**Quote:** You are the result of the attentive, careful, thoughtful, intimate, detailed, creative work of God. Your personality, your sex, your height, your features, are what they are because God made them *precisely* that way. ... Your genes and chromosomes and creaturely distinctives—even the shape of your nose and ears—are what they are by God's design.<sup>1</sup>

God claims each person as an object of his intentional care and design. You are who God made you to be. That's not the end of the story, but the basic idea is true: you are who God made you to be.

If you have difficulty accepting who you are, then you have a problem with God and his design for you. We should accept how God made us.

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<sup>1</sup> James Hufstetler, "On Knowing Oneself," *The Banner of Truth*, Issue 280 (January 1987), page 13, quoted in Jerry Bridges, *Trusting God* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1988), 161.

B. God formed your outward appearance.

David, who wrote Psalm 139, was a remarkable person. He had a fine appearance and handsome features (1 Sam 16:12).

**App:** Outward appearance does not matter much. Most of us are not especially attractive, but that's OK. You don't need to be attractive to be happy or successful. Beauty fades away. What's most important is inner beauty.

Our value is not based on external appearance, personal achievements, or extraordinary talent. Our value is based on the fact that God made us in his image. God, in his infinite love and mercy, designed and built us; we are what God intended us to be. We have inherent value, and we bring value into the world as we fulfill God's purposes for us.

Jesus himself was apparently not a particularly handsome person. The Bible describes him in this way:

Isaiah 53:2 ... *He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him.*

Jesus was apparently quite average in his appearance; there was nothing unusually attractive about him. Any pictures of Jesus as a handsome man are not accurate.

If you can improve your appearance, go ahead. People improve their appearance through makeup, clothing, and good health practices. Do your best with what God gave you.

If you are trying to attract a mate, it might be important to improve your appearance. Most people can do things to make themselves more attractive. If you are unhappy about your appearance, do something about it. That is something you can change.

C. God formed your abilities or disabilities.

Ex 4:11 *And the LORD said unto [Moses], Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD?*

1. Part of trusting God is accepting yourself for who God made you with your strengths and weaknesses, talents and lack of talent, disabilities, flaws and all.
2. That's not an excuse for failure or for lack of effort, but it is a realization that I am who God made me to be. I should be satisfied with that; I should accept that I am who God made me to be. I should work within my abilities and interests.
3. If you have a disability or handicap, it can no doubt be difficult to accept yourself as you are. You may wish that God had made you differently. You may pray that God would heal your infirmities or allow you to overcome them. But at the end of the day, as Christians, we have to accept the fact that God had a purpose in making us as we are. Even if we are blind or deaf or handicapped in some way, God had a purpose in that as well.
4. John 9 tells the story of a man born blind. The disciples asked Jesus whether he or his parents sinned in that he was born blind. Jesus said that it was neither his sin or his parents' sin that caused his blindness, but that the work of God might be displayed in his life (Jn 9:3). The man's blindness was ultimately for the glory of God.
5. This is all part of trusting in God. God made us as we are, and God has a purpose for us no matter what our abilities or disabilities are. We may be physically disabled or limited, but if God made us that way, then he has a purpose in it. We can still bring glory to God in spite of our weaknesses.
6. Most Christians are able to serve and glorify God in spite of their inabilities and weaknesses. There is some place of service for nearly anyone. Even if you are confined to a hospital bed, you can still pray.

**E.g.,** Joni Erickson Tada – severe handicap, yet very productive

- D. God formed your inner desires and personality.

1. Notice Ps 139:13 -- KJV “thou hast possessed my reins.” Another translation has “You formed my inward parts.” The Hebrew word here is literally “kidneys.” The ancient Jews thought of the kidneys as the seat of the emotions and desires. We would think of the heart rather than the kidneys.

2. Even our interests and desires, our personality, comes from God. Your innermost person is who God designed it to be.

Some of us are rather bookish and shy; others are not the least bookish and are outgoing/talkative. God has wired us in a certain way to have the personality that we have.

That does not imply that we cannot change for the better. It just means that God made us with the personality that we have.

E. We should focus on the positive traits and abilities that God has given us.

Perhaps we have various weaknesses and handicaps, but we still have great value. We can still achieve great things. We should not allow our weaknesses and failures to prevent us from achievement. We can overcome our problems and enjoy life in spite of our handicaps.

**Quote:** All of us received whatever ability, learning, riches, station in life, rank, or influence we have from God to be used by us for His glory. Whether it is an ability or disability, let us learn to receive it from God, to give Him thanks, and to seek to use it for His glory.<sup>2</sup>

I. God made us to fulfill the plan he has for us.

Psalm 139:16 ... *in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them.*

A. This suggests that God has set a certain number of days for our lifetime. We will live out the number of days God has pre-ordained for us.

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<sup>2</sup> Jerry Bridges, *Trusting God* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1988), 164.

*Job 14:5 Since his days are determined, The number of his months is with You; You have appointed his limits, so that he cannot pass.*

- B. However, it seems likely that David is describing God's control over the details our lives. God put you into the family you were born into, in the place you were born, and in the circumstances you experienced.

Do you ever wish you'd been born at a different time in history or in a different place in the world?

God puts us where he intends us to be—the family, the place, the time, the circumstances.

- C. God created us to fulfill his plan for us. He has a plan for us, and he created us to fulfill that plan. God equipped you to do what God intended for you to do. In other words, God intended you to fulfill a certain role in life.

- D. When we talk about our roles in life, we are talking about vocation. The Bible mentions four particular vocations: they pertain to family, church, career/job, and society. We have roles to fill in each area. We have a station in life, a position in various settings. And our goal is to glorify God and do good in these roles.

1. Family—God created you to fulfill a certain role in your family. As a child at home, you have a role to play. When you get married, leave home, and establish your own family, you have a role to play; you have a new set of responsibilities.
2. Church—God created you to fulfill a certain role in the church. Once you get saved, you can be a member of the church, and as you get older, you may have various responsibilities. Everyone has a spiritual gift; we believe in gift-based ministry.
3. Career—God designed and suited you for your job (if you work outside the home). You have certain affinities, skills, and abilities that allow you to make a living in various ways.

4. Society—God intends that Christians fulfill a certain role in society. We are to be like salt and light in a dark and dying world.

In all of these roles, we seek to find satisfaction and purpose in the places God has put us. We seek to bring glory to God in our various vocations. We should strive to accept the roles and positions God has given us. We should strive to be happy and satisfied within these roles.

- E. We might strive for something different than what we currently have. I.e., we might want a better job; if single we might want to be married; you might want a different role in church; you might want a different place in society. And we can seek to change our station or position in life. We can improve in many ways. But our attitude should always be of glorifying God and thanking him for the vocations that we have. We should be satisfied with what God gives us or allows us to have regarding our station/position in life.
- F. Every vocation is important. No station/position in life is without value. If God has given you a position in life, then it has value, purpose and meaning. In God's economy, being the president is of the same value as being the garbage man. If that's where God has put you, then make the most of it. Every legitimate occupation has value and honor. Be the best person you can be in the position God has given you. Appreciate your position and make the most of it. Thank God for it.
- G. Every day has meaning and purpose because God ordained it for us and has put us where we are. Our job is to fulfill our roles and callings every day and in every circumstance. Whatever we do, we must do it for the glory of God. Even dull and tedious jobs and conditions are still part of God's will for us.

**Trans:** God made us who we are, and he designed us to carry out certain responsibilities. We should embrace our God-given identity and use our station in life to glorify God and serve others.

II. Other considerations associated with the fact that God made us to be who we are:

A. The fact that God made us as we are does *not* imply that we must accept everything about ourselves. We should not accept anything in our lives that is ungodly or sinful, even if those things reflect deeply held personal desires. We should strive to be less sinful and more holy every day. Put off—put on.

And we also can change things about our physical appearance. There's nothing wrong with improving our appearance if possible. But we should accept the fact that God made us a certain way; he designed us to be the way we are. That's true even of our physical problems and handicaps.

B. It is not wise to compare your position/station in life with others.

*2 Cor 10:12 For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.*

*John 21:22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what [is that] to thee? follow thou me.*

1. God's plan for us is individual and specific. His plans for others is not the same as his plan for us. So it's not wise to compare yourself to others.
2. Don't be jealous of those who have greater talents than you. Strive to develop and perfect the talents and gifts that you have, and rejoice when others succeed; be happy that others have talents/skills that you don't have. Don't become bitter or resentful that you lack talents/skills/opportunities that others have.



3. Try to be happy and satisfied with what God has given you. Strive to improve your conditions if you can. But don't compare your lot in life with anyone else. Be happy for what you have and try to accomplish as much as you can where you are and with what you have.

C. The world is under the curse of sin.

1. Nobody is perfect; we all fall short of the glory of God; we all stumble in many ways.

Nothing will ever be perfect in this life. We have to deal with faults and failures, both our own and from others. God did not make us perfect; we are subject to sin and weaknesses.

That means that we may fall short of our goals and aspirations. We may have to settle for a job or a position we don't really like or that is undesirable in some way.

You may have to be realistic in your search for a mate. If you are an average person, you should be happy with an average mate. Some people never find a mate because they never find anyone good enough for them. They are average people, yet they expect to get married to a high quality, above average person. Some people are fortunate enough to "marry up," but most don't. Don't maintain an overly-inflated view of yourself.

2. If we have sinful desires, we must strive to change our desires or at least not indulge them. We don't make excuses for them by saying "It's just the way God made me. These desires are natural for me; this is how God made me. If God made me this way, then it must be OK for me to fulfill my appetites."
  - a) In our sinful world, people have sinful desires. The Bible calls the worst of these desires "vile affections" and "against nature" (Rom 1:26). God does not give anyone these sinful desires. They are the product of a corrupt, sinful, depraved heart.

Jeremiah 17:9 *The heart is deceitful above all things,  
And desperately wicked; Who can know it?*

Mt 15:19 *For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts,  
murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness,  
blasphemies:*

- b) Remember that God never tempts anyone to sin; God does not give anyone depraved desires. God's intent is never that anyone should lead a depraved, corrupt, perverted lifestyle.
- c) Some people claim that they have these evil desires from very early on, and perhaps they do. But as soon as parents find out about these inclinations in their children, they should do everything possible to convince the child that God is not the source of such depraved desires.
- d) Some people claim that they can't help how they feel; they can't control their emotions. They have these desires, and so they have to act on them; they have to fulfill their passions.

All of that is false for Christians. You can learn to control your emotions. You can learn to love what God loves and hate what God hates. You can submit your will to God; you can control your actions and not indulge your wicked passions. God expects us to control ourselves and not indulge our sinful appetites.

BTW, wicked passions/appetites often fanned into flame by evil materials and media. If you are indulging in depraved entertainment, don't be surprised if you can't control your passions.

- e) God made us to be who we are, but he did not make us to be corrupt and perverted. Any inclination toward sinful, depraved desires is the opposite of God's plan. Those who follow that path cannot also follow God. They cannot blame God for making them with those evil desires. People with such desires must renounce them and strive to change them. By the grace of God, we can change our desires to be more in line with Christian morality.

E.g., Rosaria Butterfield

3. Our condition in life is easy to accept when it's all positive—loving parents, happy family, nice environment, good education, physical gifts and talents, etc. But what about those people who experience the opposite?

What about those who have abusive parents, a very unhappy family life, a terrible environment, a poor education, disabilities and deformities; few gifts and talents—some people are born into those conditions.

The curse of sin is evident in some people's lives. God allows some people to endure great suffering because of other people's evil choices.

Some people have been born as slaves into terrible conditions. The Bible addresses slaves; it tells them that they also have a purpose in God's plan. Paul tells slaves to serve to their masters well, but he also tells them to gain their freedom if they are able. If they have to remain slaves, they should not be bitter but accept that position as from God. Even slaves can serve God by doing their jobs well. Whatever condition we are in, we should believe that God has a purpose in it. We have a role to play, a job to do.

God has a purpose for us even in terrible conditions in life. But again, we should seek to change our conditions for the better. Many people have risen up from terrible conditions to enjoy many good things in life. So you can overcome your problems; you can strive to make a better life for yourself. You can make good choices going forward.

D. Some conditions in life simply cannot be changed.

1. Maybe you've made certain decisions in your life, and now you have to deal with the results. There is no going back. Now you have a child; now you are married; now you have responsibilities, and there is no way to change things. Your window of opportunity has closed. You've made your bed; now you have to lie in it. You are reaping what you've sown.

You have to take that as from the Lord as well. You can dream and hope and pray about your situation in life, but you also have to be realistic and deal with the situation as it is.

2. In the unchangeable situations in life, we must accept what God gives us without bitterness or regret. We have to make the best of what we have. We can pray about it and strive to change things, but if things don't change, then we have to accept our situation as from God—at least as it is right now.
3. And not only that, we must strive to use our station/position in life for the glory of God. If your position in life is unalterable, then just go with it; accept it. God can use you even if you occupy a tragic and terrible position or conditions.

Remember that Paul had a "thorn in the flesh" that he asked the Lord to remove, but it never was removed. God said, "My grace is sufficient for thee" (2 Cor 12:9). Paul decided to accept his weaknesses and infirmities instead of being bitter and resentful about them.

For many people, life does not turn out as they hoped. They had to settle for something less than their goals. They made poor decisions and experienced tragic results. But even if you are not right now where you want to be, you can still be happy if you believe that you are where God has you. We cannot allow disappointment to make us bitter or angry.

- E. We are not obligated to remain in sinful, abusive, or unbearable circumstances.
  - 1. We don't take a passive attitude in all of this. We don't just accept what happens to us as if there is nothing we can do to change our circumstances for the better. "God put me here so I guess there is nothing I can do about it. This is my condition in life, and I can't improve it or change it."
  - 2. If you are in a terrible situation, you should make every effort to change things for the better. If there is something you don't like about yourself or your conditions, you can probably do something to make things better. Start making small improvements; start moving in the right direction.
  - 3. Paul told Christian slaves, "If you can gain your freedom, do so" (1 Cor 7.21). We have the right to improve our situation or station in life. We can accept what cannot be changed, but we can strive to change what we can.
- F. We must accept our unchangeable primary characteristics.
  - 1. Some things about ourselves we can change, but other things are unchangeable and primary; it's impossible to change such things.
  - 2. In our world today, we know that some people are dissatisfied and unhappy with who they are. Perhaps a boy feels like he wants to be a girl, or a girl feels like she wants to be a boy.

3. If that's the case, the parents should patiently but very strongly assure the child that he/she is exactly what God intends him/her to be. God created the child to be either a boy or a girl, and it's wrong to be something else. Parents should reinforce reality, not accept the child's fantasy or imagination.
4. We should recognize that some boys don't quite fit the traditional masculine stereotype. Some boys are just a little bit feminine. Likewise, some girls are more masculine and not so feminine. Within limits, varying from the norm is acceptable.  
And it's quite common that these characteristics are temporary; kids grow out of these feelings. Little girlish boys grow up to be masculine men. Tomboyish girls often grow up to be feminine women.
5. But it's sinful and unacceptable to attempt to change your immutable, inherent, primary personal characteristics. You have to be who God made you to be. If you are a boy, you cannot be a girl. You can't change your sex. You should not want to change your sex. You should embrace who God made you to be.

Because God made us, he has the right to tell us who we are and what we are supposed to do. He has authority over us. Our responsibility is to accept ourselves as God's creation and live within the parameters he has set for us. We must trust that God made us who we are intentionally.

We can improve ourselves in various ways, but we still acknowledge that God made us as we are. We should strive to find satisfaction and happiness in the vocations and station in life that God has given us.

If we can change things for the better, we should do that. If not, we should be thankful for what we have and strive to glorify God and serve him in spite of the obstacles we face. Whatever our condition in life, we must avoid bitterness and resentment over lacking what we don't have.

Our attitude should be: **Ps 139:14** *I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well.*