

LESSON 1

YOU WERE CREATED TO BRING GLORY TO GOD!

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Have you ever wondered why you exist? Or why anything or anyone exists? Are we just a cosmic accident? Or perhaps we're just the result of organisms eventually evolving into humans, like the atheist evolutionists believe. Or, perhaps we're all really just a *part* of God and all of our unique individuality is just an illusion. Some people believe that you and me aren't even "real." And the belief that we are—the illusion that we are all actual separate people—is the reason for all the suffering and wars and conflicts in the world. But is that true? Are you *not* a unique individual? Do you *not* have unique feelings, unique desires, and unique preferences different from others? Do you *not* have unique memories and your own unique story and your own personal experiences and dreams and plans and goals for the future? Well, I know that I do, so I know that you do too!

What if everything seems to look and feel like we're all unique people because we actually are. Perhaps even a unique, special person, that was created by a personal God, for His own unique and special purpose. And this God I speak of is personal and loving and good and always does what is good and true and just and right. I'm here to tell you this isn't a fairy tale; it's actually true! God knew you before you were even born and He created you in a unique special way, and for a very special purpose. In addition to this, He's also known you your entire life, and He's been near you the entire time. He loves you and He has an amazing plan for your life. God wants you to know the truth and the truth will set you free and change your life forever. "*For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."* These were the words God spoke to the prophet Jeremiah in Jeremiah 29:11 but it's true for me and you too.

Many people worship false things as gods or put their trust in other things other than the one true God. Many religions have idols they call gods that may look like people or animals or some combination of the two. Others look to the sun, moon, stars, or other things in nature for meaning and answers. But these things aren't gods, or even a part of God - they are only things that God has made. It does not bring glory to God for us to worship these other things. Some look for guidance or protection or blessing from

angels, jinn, spirit guides, charms and amulets, spells, or seek help from their deceased ancestors. These things are bad for many reasons, are not trustworthy, will actually cause harm to you, and doing them does not bring glory to God. God wants us to seek Him and Him alone.

Remember those that think everything is a *part* of God, including us humans? This is wrong and very bad because they're worshipping *themselves* as though they are God. But we aren't God! We didn't create the heavens and the earth. We can't bring life or stop death. We can't control blessings or curses. God is not glorified by our worship and devotion to *any* of these false things! There is only one true God and He is the Creator of everything that exists. He alone brings life and causes death. He alone controls the blessings and the curses. He *alone* deserves all of the glory and honor and praise and worship. He is a personal being and He takes it personally when we give the glory due to Him to other things. It's a very serious sin called idolatry. When we worship other things we get further away from actually knowing who He is and what He's like. Further away from knowing Him personally and having a personal relationship with Him. And we get further away from discovering the reasons He made us the way that He did and His unique plan and purpose for our life. But these are the *reason* He created us!

Many people believe in the teachings of Muhammad but he was a false prophet who taught wrong things about Jesus (Isa) and ignored or contradicted most of his actual teachings. You can read them for yourself in the New Testament portion of the Bible. Allah (God) as revealed through Muhammad is *not* an *accurate* representation of the true God. Jesus came to share God's (who He called His Father's) heart with us. Jesus came to teach us who God really is and to show us what's really important to Him. To teach us why we were created. To teach us what is *really* the reason there is death, pain, suffering, illness, evil, poverty, war, abuse, demons, and all the other problems in the world. Jesus taught that these bad things are the result of us created beings worshipping ourselves, and other false gods, instead of the true God. Jesus also taught that it's our own selfish, sinful desires and actions that have caused the brokenness in the world. Some of us are very guilty and some of us are less guilty, but we're all guilty. Every one of us is selfish and sinful and we've all done things that we shouldn't have. We've all done things that brought dishonor to God. He made a creation that was supposed to be good, but we've gone bad. God created us so that we could know Him and to live with Him forever, but we have all sinned and rebelled against Him. He created us to bring Him glory. To be a creation that pleases Him—but none of us truly do. Even when we try we still fall short. We can't be perfect like God so no matter how good we try, how much we help those in need, how many laws and rules we follow. We can never be perfect even though God desires us to be perfect like Him. Jesus said so in Matthew 5:48. The problem can't be fixed by just *forcing* ourselves to follow rules. Jesus taught us that we need more than just *rules to submit* to. God doesn't *only* look at our outward actions, He also looks at our heart. He sees the selfish motivations and wicked and sinful desires on the inside.

Jesus came and died on a cross for *your* sins to *show you how much God loves you!* And He then gives us a new spirit on the inside that changes those wicked desires on the inside. Jesus died on your behalf so you could be forgiven for all of your sins against God. If you believe in this, and put your trust in Him as your Savior and Lord, then you will be *totally* forgiven, made *completely* right with God, *and* receive eternal life! You were created to bring glory to God, that's why He made you. That's why anyone who makes anything does. They make it because it pleases them to make it. God made you, so that who you are, and what you do with your life, would please Him. But this wasn't just so you submit and follow rules. No! God could have made us like robots without the ability to sin or to choose to do anything that wasn't pleasing to Him if He wanted to. God *does* want you to obey Him but submission and obedience is not the *main* thing He desires. God wanted us to be able to know Him and His heart and to actually genuinely love Him for who He is. Not just *what* He is (God)—but *who* He is. I mean loving Him because you can see that He's lovely and you have actual affection for Him because there is an actual real personal relationship with Him. THROUGH JESUS we can KNOW God!

The cross teaches us three very important things. One, we are all guilty sinners that need a savior. Two, God is righteous and just and He demands that all sin gets punished. Three, God is merciful and loving because He sent Jesus to die for our sins to give us a way to be forgiven and have a relationship with Him. It's in believing *this Gospel* that we MOST glorify God, through faith in Jesus. We don't glorify God the most by just following rules or by being the best person we can. Jesus said in Matthew 19:17 that there is none good but God alone. We glorify God the most by seeing our need for a savior and by believing in the Savior that He sent. Jesus said in John 6:39-40, "*And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.*" And in 1 John 5:20 it says, "*We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true by being in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.*"

By believing in this good news and following Jesus we understand who God is and begin to have a real relationship with Him. By choosing to repent of our sins, believing in Jesus, and letting Him be our Lord and Savior, we glorify God with our lives. When we allow the Gospel to impact our lives and become the highlight of our story, we begin to realize how important it is to share this good news with others. As we share this news with others, God, you, me, and all of us get to play a role in it touching their lives too. And then their story is part of our story. And then we all glorify God, together, forever!

Let's pray. God, our Heavenly Father, please help me understand who you truly are that I may know you in spirit, and in truth, and to glorify you with my life. Lord Jesus, speak to my heart and confirm the truth about who you are and what you did on the cross for me. Help me make the decision to fully put my trust in you and surrender every part of my life to you. Amen.