

There Is a Difference

Male and female . . .
fascinating!

Have you ever wondered why God created people in His image?

Have you thought about His purpose for you as a female?

Have you considered the fact that God intentionally planned everything about your life?

Consider these jaw-dropping words from Acts 17:26: "And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place."

Think about it: God determined the "allotted period"—the exact time in history when you would live.

He determined the boundaries—the exact place on the planet where you would live.

He determined the family, friends, and circumstances of your life.

And He determined that you would be a female.

How extraordinary!

After God created the man and woman He said that this creation was very good.

It really is.

*Will you join us on a journey to explore
our very good calling to true womanhood?*

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

GENESIS 1:27



After each devotion you will find suggestions to help you learn to think, pray, and live for God’s glory. I encourage you to spend time journaling your journey. You may want to read the devotion one day and journal the next day, or read all the devotions, and then re-read them and do the “Time for You” sections. To help you get started, I asked our teen granddaughters to write their thoughts. Read what they said, and then it will be your turn.

Time to THINK

Write your thoughts and feelings about Acts 17:26.

“This scripture makes me feel like I shouldn’t complain or be unhappy with things in my life because God put these in place on purpose. It also gives me confidence that He is in control. God put all the people who are in my life there for a reason. Sometimes life is hard, but I know God has a plan for me. He made me in His own image, and He sacrificed His Son for me. I am grateful that He has a good plan for my life. I want to keep worshiping and praising Him.”—Suzie, age 15

Time to PRAY

Write a prayer using Genesis 1:27 and Acts 17:26.

“Dear Jesus, thank you for creating me in Your image. Thank You for giving me a loving family and Christian friends. Thank You for having a plan for my life. Please help me glorify You in all that I do. In Jesus’ name, amen.”—Cassie, age 14

“Dear God, thank You for all Your blessings, specifically for what You did in creation, designing us humans as male and female, both equally good in Your image. It is so comforting to know, like You say in Acts, that You already know my every situation and surrounding, that nothing surprises You, that You have everything under control, and that You specifically made me a woman—a woman who strives to be true. I pray that You will help me every day to become more and more like a true woman and to honor You in all my endeavors and in my role as a woman. In Your name I pray, amen.”—Mary Kate, age 19

*Suzie, Cassie, and Mary Kate had their time—
now it’s time for you to write your thoughts.*

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Time to THINK

Think about Acts 17:26. God planned when and where you would live, and the people and circumstances of your life. Write your thoughts and feelings about this incredible reality.

Time to PRAY

Using God's Word as the basis for our praise and petitions helps us to know God and His Word more intimately. It deepens our prayer life. Write a prayer using Genesis 1:27 and Acts 17:26.



Time to LIVE FOR GOD'S GLORY

Tell someone what you learned from Genesis 1:27 and Acts 17:26.

The Big Story

The Bible is not simply a collection of disconnected stories and events. It is one big story of God keeping His promise to redeem His people. "To redeem" means to pay a ransom. The Bible is the story of Jesus, the Redeemer, who came and lived among us and gave His life as the ransom to free us from sin.

I will make my dwelling among you . . . And I will walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people.

LEVITICUS 26:11-12



Womanhood is part of this story of redemption. We will never understand our womanhood unless we see it as part of this amazing story that begins before the beginning.

Ephesians 1 gives a glimpse into what happened before creation:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world . . . In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace . . ." (vv. 3-6).

"In him [Jesus] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses . . . so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory" (7, 12).

"In him you also . . . were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory (vv. 13-14).

Here we see an agreement, a covenant, between the members of the Trinity. In this agreement each Person of the Trinity assumed a different function.

- Look at verses 3–6 again. What did God the Father agree to do for us?
- Look at verses 7–12. What did Jesus agree to do for us?
- Look at verses 13–14. What did the Holy Spirit agree to do for us?

God the Father chose us to be His children before He created the world. He did not choose us because of anything we would be or do. He chose us because of His love.

God the Son agreed to give His life to redeem God’s people from sin. He agreed to pay the redemption price by dying on the cross as punishment for our sin.

God the Holy Spirit agreed to give God’s people the power to believe that the Father chose us and the Son died for us. He is the guarantee that we will receive the fullness of the benefits of redemption when Jesus comes back.

This agreement between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is called the covenant of redemption. Each Person of the Trinity has a different function in this covenant, but the goal is the same. What is God’s overriding goal of His redemption plan? Look again at verses 6, 12, and 14. Underline the recurring phrase.

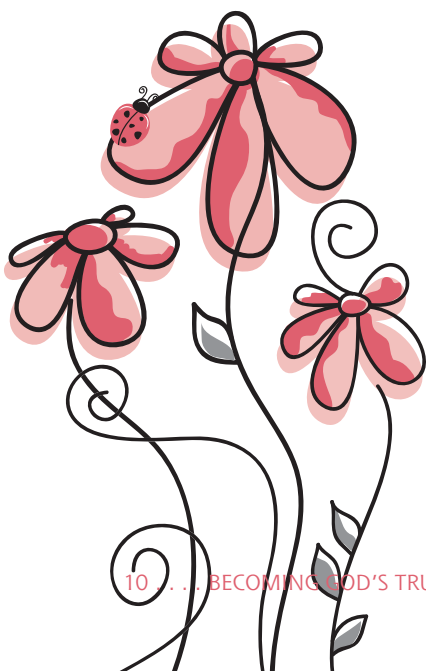
The Father chose us, the Son redeems us, and the Holy Spirit gives us the power to believe the gospel message so that we can praise His glorious grace.

Grace is God’s gift—Jesus—to us. We can do nothing to deserve or earn this gift. Grace is also His power—the Holy Spirit—in us. The redemption story is the story of God’s grace.

This is the big story, and you are part of it.

Q. Which Person of the Trinity is most important for our salvation?

A. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are equal, and the function of each Person in the Trinity is equal, but these functions are different. Equal but different—what an intriguing concept.





Time to READ

These verses are just a few places where we read God's promise to be our God. Read several of them.

- Genesis 17:7 ■ Exodus 6:7 ■ Jeremiah 24:7
- 2 Corinthians 6:16 ■ Revelation 21:1-4



Time to THINK

Personalize the verses above by putting your own name in them. For example:

"I will give Susan a heart to know that I am the Lord, and she shall be my child and I will be her God, for she shall return to me with her whole heart" (Jeremiah 24:7).

Next, write your thoughts about this extraordinary promise.

A large rectangular area with horizontal red lines for writing. On the right side, there is a decorative illustration of a pink flower with a grey stem and leaves.

Time to PRAY

Use the verses you read and write a prayer of gratitude to God.



Time to LIVE FOR GOD'S GLORY

Think about the Triune God's promise that He will be your God and you will be His child. Think of one difference that being God's child should make in your life and write it down. Then ask the Holy Spirit to change your heart so that you want to live as God's daughter.





Dianne's Story

Patty approached me one Sunday at church. She was pretty and outgoing, and I was flattered that she would talk with me.

"Your mom said you may be interested in coming to our youth Bible study on Wednesdays," she said.

"That sounds great," I lied. I had no intention of going to church twice in one week.

By Wednesday I had forgotten the conversation, but Patty remembered. She called me, and when I answered the telephone, her bright voice on the other end of the line said, "We're all here. Where are you?"

I reluctantly drove to the house where they were meeting, and Patty warmly welcomed me.

There I encountered something I had never experienced: Teenage girls were worshipping the Lord. These girls were my age, yet they talked to God as if He was in that very room. I was captivated. I was overwhelmed with an intense desire to have that kind of relationship with God.

Patty sat beside me as I discovered Christ as my personal Savior. After I prayed and asked Jesus to be part of my life, Patty explained to me how a person grows closer to God through daily Bible reading and prayer. I was moved by her concern for me. But I was even more moved by her love for Jesus.

Patty persevered. The next day she called me to see if I had any questions about my decision to follow Jesus. I did have some questions, so she invited me to spend the night at her home. Patty loved God so much that I expected her to have a whole family of people who were strong Christians, so I was surprised to learn that Patty was the only one in her home who had a relationship with God. We spent hours in her room talking, praying, and praising God.

The years have passed. My husband and I have spent over twenty years on the mission field. I lost contact with Patty, but I have not forgotten her. Many times I think of Patty and wish I could tell her what an encouragement she was to me. The faithfulness to God she showed when she was eighteen still challenges me today.

Dianne Smalling, Missionary

(This story is adapted from TRUE, a discipleship curriculum for teen girls. Used by permission.)



Equal but Different

You have probably heard this joke: God created man and said, "I can do better than that," and He created woman.

Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created.

GENESIS 5:2



While you might laugh, I hope you see that this joke isn't true. God did exactly what He intended to do—He created male and female, and He declared the idea of two genders to be very good.

You have probably heard another untruth: Equality means females must do the same thing as males.

Two things do not have to be the same to be equal. Red and green are equally colors, but they are different.

God created male and female, and He created them equally in His image. However He gave them different functions in His kingdom. These functions are equally valuable.

Does this sound familiar?

- The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are equal.
- Each Person of the Trinity has a different function in accomplishing our redemption.
- These different functions have the same purpose—to praise the Triune God's glorious grace.
- There is *equality* in being, *difference* in function, and *unity* in purpose.


The same is true for us because we were created in the likeness of the Triune God.

- Men and women are equal because we are both created in God's image. Neither is more important nor more valuable than the other.
- We were designed for different functions.
- We were created for the same purpose: God's glory.
- There is *equality* in being, *difference* in function, and *unity* in purpose.

It's nonsense to say that God the Father must die on the cross in order to be as important as the Son, and it is nonsense to say that women must do the same things as men in order to be as important.

Men and women are different, but our differences are not meant to divide us—and they won't if we have the same purpose. The problem is when our purpose is to live for our own glory rather than God's glory.

God's plan is for men and women to live in harmony and to praise Him together. We are not to compete and criticize. We are to value our differences. We are to encourage and help each other glorify God.



The big story that began before the beginning, and that runs through history, is the story of God redeeming His people by sending His Son to be our Savior and by giving His Spirit to us so that we can believe this amazing salvation story and live for His glory.



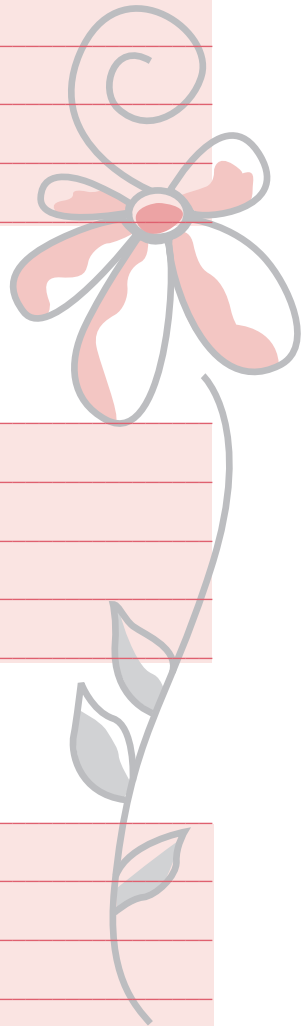


Time to THINK

What are your thoughts about the Triune God's plan and purpose that we see in Ephesians 1:1-14?

Have you trusted Jesus to be your Savior? If so, reflect on God's amazing grace in your life.

What are your thoughts about Dianne's Story?



Time to PRAY

Use Ephesians 1:1–14 to write your prayer.



Time to LIVE FOR GOD'S GLORY

If you are trusting Jesus to be your Savior, it is because God chose you to belong to Him before He created the world. What difference should this make in how you live?

