

GENESIS: Being Created

That every single person has inherent value is the doctrine expressed at the very beginning of the book of Genesis. Being created in the image of God also includes the capacity for relationships (with God and others) and most importantly, that the one who is created is the visible representation of an invisible God.



GENESIS 1: 26-31

²⁶ Then God said: Let us make humankind in our image, after our likeness. Let them be stewards of the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the tame animals, all the wild animals, and everything that crawls on the ground.

²⁷ Humankind was created in God's own image;
in the divine image, God created them;
female and male God made them.

²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, "Bear fruit, increase your numbers and fill the earth - and be responsible for it! Watch over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things on the earth.

²⁹ God also said: See, I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the earth and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit on it to be your food; ³⁰ and to all the animals, all the birds of the air, and all the living things that crawl on the earth, I give all the green plants for food. And so it came to be.

³¹ God looked at all of this creation, and found it very good. Evening came, and morning followed—the sixth day.

GENESIS 2: 8, 15, 18-25

⁸ Yahweh planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and placed there the earth creature that had been made.

¹⁵ Then Yahweh took the earth creature and settled it in the garden of Eden, to cultivate and care for the land.

¹⁸ Then Yahweh said, "It is not good for the earth creature to be alone. I will make a fitting companion for it."

¹⁹ So from the soil, Yahweh formed all the wild animals and all the birds of the air, and brought them to the earth creature to be named. Whatever the earth creature called each one, that became its name. ²⁰ The earth creature gave names to all the cattle, all the birds of the air, and all the wild animals; but none of them proved to be a fitting companion.

²¹ So Yahweh made the earth creature fall into a deep sleep, and while it slept, God divided the earth creature in two, then closed up the flesh from its side. ²² Yahweh then fashioned the two halves into male and female, and presented them to one another." When the male realized what had happened, ²³ the male exclaimed,

"This time, this is the one!

Bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh!
Now, she will be Woman, and I will be Man,
because we are of one flesh!"

²⁴ This is why people leave their parents and become bonded to one another, and the two become one flesh.

²⁵ Now the woman and the man were both naked, but felt no shame.

FOR REFLECTION

1. What does it mean for you to be created in the image and likeness of God? How does your LGBT identity or ally role fit into that description?
2. What aspects of your life most strongly reflect the image and likeness of God? Or, in other words, what do you see as the vocation that God has offered you?
3. The Genesis story tells that God created human beings with the need for companionship with other people. "Bone of my bone" and "flesh of my flesh" are phrases that describe companionship as intensely intimate. How do you develop intimacy in your relationships? Is God a part of that intimacy with others? What do you see as the role of physical and/or sexual contact in your intimate relationships?

4. The Genesis accounts seem to promote a heteronormative model for intimate relationships. How does your understanding of sexuality and gender identity relate to this model? Are there other scriptural or religious models or images for relationships that you find more relevant or powerful for you?
5. What prevents you from seeing other people created in the image and likeness of God?
6. Does the inclusion of gender terms “male and female” in the description of being made in the image and likeness of God help or hurt your relationship with the Divine?



PRAYER

Loving God, I/we thank you for our sameness and our diversity. I/we thank you that we are brothers and sisters by your design. May that truth shape how we view others, but first, may it shape how we view ourselves.

In Jesus' name, Amen.