



What it Means to be Human | Doug Wekenman | 05.1.22

Weekly Study

START

To get things started, go around the circle and answer the following questions: What was the high - and low - of your week?

SHARE

Hope everyone's week has gotten off to a great start! This week Doug reminded us of God's design of humanity and the identity he has given to each of us. When we know who God is and know whose we are we will then live freely out of this. When we live freely out of our God given identity, knowing who we are, we will go out and live our God designed purpose here on earth.

Before we dive in, take some time to check in with your group and ask the following questions:

What is the most impactful or challenging thing you heard during Sunday's message?

What did that thing teach you about God? About yourself?

How do you want to begin to apply it to your life this week?

GROW

Read Genesis 1:1-5, 26-28

This week Doug talked to us about how we are the *tzelem elohim*, or 'image of God'. In this passage, there is a clear distinction between the way that God uses his words to speak things into being and the way He makes us in his image. Everything God spoke into being led up to the creation of His people. He calls us his masterpiece, and we are co-heirs and kingdom partners – the Creator's representatives to the rest of creation. We have royalty running through our veins. The more we know God, the more our identity is reaffirmed and the more we can see the unique ways that God has created and gifted other people. Because of these truths, we should have a deeply rooted, profound respect for people – and that includes ourselves.

Do you believe that God 'nailed it' when He made you? Why or why not?

The more we 1) experience how much God loves us and 2) get to know and love the person that God created us to be, the more we will be able to respect and love other people the way that Jesus does. The truest part of our identity is rooted in the love of God. When we catch that reality, it becomes easier to believe that we are God's masterpiece and that we have dominion and authority (Genesis 1:28) to cultivate and create beautiful things within creation. When we know who God is, we will know who we are. We are loved for who we are, but at the very same time, we were created to do. Identity indicates calling.

Read 1 Samuel 18:14

We often think of David as a king or a warrior, but before he was ever renowned for these roles, he was a young shepherd who anonymously tended to his sheep. He was faithful with the work that he had been given and cultivated a deeper love for God than possibly anyone else. The prophet Samuel comes to anoint David as the future King of Israel, and human nature would indicate that when we are given a picture of our future, we want to rush to get there. Instead, David heads right back to the pastures because he knew that it was his current assignment.

This verse in 1 Samuel shows us that David was successful in everything that he did because the Lord was with him. God was always with David because David was always with God. It

was his intimate relationship with God that positioned him to be excellent and effective in whatever he put his hand to. In the same way, we should not be more concerned with knowing things about God than we are knowing the person of God. Following Jesus is not about accumulating knowledge, it's about developing a close friendship with Him. It's not about chasing the next revelation; it's about pursuing His presence above everything else.

What can you do this week to further cultivate your love for God?

We are the overtaught and underapplied generation. What is something that God has taught you that you still need to apply to your life, or be obedient to?

M O V E

Read 1 Samuel 16:14-17

When you know who you are, you will know what to do. David spent time cultivating his work and his relationship with God in the hidden, unglamorous places – and did both with excellence. Before he was a king or a warrior, he was a shepherd who acted like a king and a warrior. In the same way, we should do everything with passion and excellence because we serve an excellent God. It is not about being perfect, it is about honoring God, who is worthy of our best effort.

What do we do if it feels like our dreams for our future are not aligned with the reality we are currently living? There are notes to be taken from David's life: after he was anointed as the future king, he went back to the pasture. He did not see his time as a shepherd as something to be despised or minimized; instead, it was preparation. He saw his current assignment as an opportunity to be excellent at whatever he did, whether it was playing the lyre, tending his sheep, or practicing the slingshot. In time, he was elevated to the palace, but by not forsaking the pasture, he was positioned in strength for the battles that came with his position.

If we do not allow God to prepare us before we receive the next promotion, we will not be able to properly withstand the weight of the assignment that God has given us to fulfill. It's easy to look around and see God's blessings flowing through people's lives, but what can look like God's blessing is often far more nuanced than that – it's usually the product of working really hard to be excellent at what they do on a daily basis. Don't minimize the seasons of

preparation and process because the big time is now. God deserves our excellence today.

What are you doing with the gifts God has given you today?

How can you maximize the opportunities that God has put in your path this week?

TAKE HOME ASSIGNMENT: Create an “I exist” statement if you haven’t already done so. We encourage people that attend GROW to create an “I exist” statement as a way of helping them open their eyes to the truth of who God says they are and what they’ve been put on the earth to do. If you have people in your group that have already crafted one, encourage them to share theirs as a way of brainstorming ideas with the other members of your group.

Say this statement out loud each day and watch how God renews your mind and builds confidence in your heart that you are His masterpiece and that you have been created to partner with God to make earth more whole.

P R A Y

We need prayer now more than ever. Spend some time-sharing prayer requests. If you are in a co-ed group, consider breaking off into two separate groups (or calls if you are an online group) to share more freely.