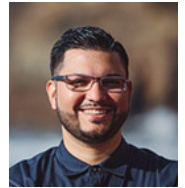


## You Are Not Just Some "Thing"



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You know, as I travel around the country, I have a lot of conversations with a lot of young people, and one constant theme in the conversations that regularly comes up is there are a lot of young people that feel like, *Man, why do I even exist? Why was I even born into the circumstances and the situations that I was born into?* So often we think that because things have been done to us in a very, very hurtful and damaging way and things that we've done out of reaction or response to those hurtful things makes us feel like we're damaged goods and we're no good and we're nothing.

So often I've talked with young people who just broke their heart in front of me and said, "Man, this is who I am. I'm an accident. I'm a mistake. My mama told me she didn't want me. My daddy didn't want me. My grandmother beat me." They would just pour out the reality of the pain in their heart, and I would sit there and I would weep with them. I would hear this pain coming out of them, and I wished that all I could do is stop it, make everything erased from their past, and give them a fresh start. But I can't. The reality of what God has done on their behalf is something that many young people have no idea about. When I would have those conversations, I would explain to them that God took great joy in creating them and forming them in their mother's womb, whether they were the product of a one-night stand or they were a planned pregnancy; sometimes it was an abortion that went wrong, and they survived and they lived. And in those situations, I want them to understand this truth, the same truth that I want you to understand—you're not a mistake. You're not an accident. In fact, you're God's masterpiece.

When we look at the reality of Scripture, it comforts us to know that God didn't just trip over a rock and cause us to be born. Everything God does is well thought out, and remember, like we said in the previous video, He's perfect in every decision that He decides and every decree that He declares; everything that He does is always

right. So just the fact that you were born—that you’re here, that you’re watching this—is evidence of the fact that God loves you and He sees you, not as a mistake, but as a masterpiece. In fact, the Bible tells us that while we were still being developed in our mother’s womb, God was already there working and forming and shaping us. See, that’s the thing about a masterpiece, man. A masterpiece is not something that you just go into a room and come out five minutes later and say, “Bam, here it is and this is a classic, timeless piece of work.” No, no, no. Artists have spent years; and authors who have their magnum opus, their one work that basically defines their career, they spend years, decades, working on that one piece. You are that piece that God is daily working on. You’re valuable. You’re so valuable that the God who created all of creation is working on you every moment of every day. The fact that He is keeping you alive is evidence that He is supplying you with air in your lungs so that you can turn to Him to know Him, to love Him with everything you have so that you can meet this glorious God who sees you as His masterpiece.

You see, it’s natural to kind of look at ourself in the mirror and think, *Man, I wish I could change this. I wish I could change that. I wish I could go to the gym a little bit more; maybe I need to lose weight, maybe I need to gain weight, man.* Trust me, I understand that, because those are insecurities that even I have, man. I look at myself and I don’t like how I look, and I feel like nobody else likes me. And then it starts getting into these thoughts that *Man, I’m really nothing that nobody cares about, and even if I were gone nobody would miss me.* Those are thoughts that human beings wrestle with, and I love you enough to be honest with you to say, *Yeah, those thoughts even get thrown at me at times.* But here’s what I go back to, I don’t go back to putting all of my weight of decision making on how I feel or my emotions. I go back to God’s Word, and God’s Word tells me in Psalm 139 that I, like you, “we were fearfully and wonderfully made” and that God doesn’t make accidents. He’s taking time to work on us every moment of every day.

Physically that’s one aspect, but spiritually is the reality that I want you to focus on. God has created us and given us a soul that will live after we die and our body goes into the grave; where your soul goes all depends on your belief in Jesus Christ. If you embrace Him as God’s true Messiah sent to save those sinners who couldn’t save themselves from the slavery of sin, then your soul will go to be with God when your body goes into the grave. But if it doesn’t, it will go to a place of torment. That’s what’s heartbreaking to

God, that even those who reject Him—even when they die, still rejecting His plan of salvation—that doesn't make God happy. In fact, the Bible tells us in Ezekiel that God weeps when those who are wicked die. Why? Because He shared with every human being snapshots of His character; He made us in His image. We're valuable. We're above every other form of creation. That's how special you are.

So as you go into your group, as you talk to your leaders, we've equipped your leaders with some great Scriptures for you to read through and memorize and work through when you feel those thoughts of *Man, I wish I were this or nobody cares about me or I'm a mistake*. Or even if people tell you that, you can say, "It doesn't matter what your opinion is about me, it matters what my God says. And my God says I'm fearfully and wonderfully made. I'm God's masterpiece." Take that, apply it in your life, and as you discuss that, man, open your heart. Listen to your peers. Allow them to speak into your life affirming words to let you know that you're valuable and you're God's masterpiece. Then in turn, do the same thing to them. Affirm them and love them. Allow them to see that they, too, are God's masterpiece, just like you. He doesn't make mistakes.