

5 Keywords

From the beginning of creation, God speaks about our identity.

In Gen 1:26-28 and Gen 2:14,15 we come across five key words that tell how God looks at man and his identity.

Keyword 1. Identity

Man is made in the image of God, both male and female.

Keyword 2. DNA

God blesses man and commands them to multiply and populate the earth. The DNA in man multiplies the same kind.

These two keywords give us insight into who we really are in His eyes.

Keyword 3. Authority

God gives man authority to rule over creation.

Keyword 4. Responsibility

God gives man a garden, a part of the earth over which they are responsible and are allowed to exercise their authority.

These last two keywords tell us what we do.

Keyword 5. Free choice

God gives Adam and Eve the choice to eat from the tree of life or the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

In the next 5 chapters, each keyword is discussed per chapter. Let's start with keyword 1: Identity

Identity

In this chapter, I will go deeper into the principle that we are made in the image of God. The original language of this text actually says that we are the shadow of God. So we are a lot like Him.

With the image of God you could think of skin color, male or female, size of the nose, large or small stature. But no, there is no mention of what God physically looks like throughout the Bible. He has no body. God is Spirit.

When speaking of being "made" in the image of God, we resemble His being.

You will find many characteristics of God in the Bible.

If you want to know what you look like, you can look in the mirror. The mirror reflects exactly what you look like. If you want to know what the original purpose of your "I am" is, you will find it in the encounter with God. God is your mirror.

Love

When you look at God you see that He is a God of love. He is a God who encourages you to love yourself and others. God made you to be with Him, He loves you. God sent Jesus to the people to make His love visible on the earth. Jesus did not condemn the prostitute who was condemned by the spiritual leaders. He touched the leper although this was forbidden by the law. He called a tax collector who was shunned by everyone and said, "I want to be in your house today." Jesus spoke to the children as he spoke to adults. He called His disciples His friends, to whom He told all that He knew. His love was and is unconditional, even for you.

Dignity

When you look at God you see that He is also a God who asks us as humans to worship Him. He considers Himself worthy to be worshiped. I think this is a special thing. God sees the goodness in Himself and He longs for your worship. You are made in His image and so you can look at yourself with dignity. Be grateful for who you are and what you can do. Stand in the place you are given with



confidence that God the Father has appointed you to do this. He can show you that dignity.

Unique Destination

God is also a Creator. He invents, makes and does new things all the time. For example, God has given you creativity to use your talents and gifts to invent, develop, care for or pass on things. You are unique in this. God the Father has a unique plan for each one. The talents and gifts are part of your DNA created in your being by God. With this DNA, your gifts and talents you may serve others and multiply yourself with what you have received.

Good

God is good and just. He has made you good too, man is even very good. Unfortunately due to wrong decisions and events you can come to believe that you are not good. Jesus would like to restore your "inner I am" so that you can be a restored person who can think well of yourself.

Free Choice

Oddly enough, God gives you, His creation, the choice to be the way He is. Like Adam and Eve in the garden had a choice. The trees, especially the tree of life, were made for Adam and Eve to eat. However, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was not for them to eat. God just tells them not to eat from it. God does not put a barrier around it, there is no army, angel or electric fence. God gives them the freedom to choose for themselves. In this way He also gives you the freedom to choose. This is how He shows His love.

Identity in OT and NT

You have been shaped by the upbringing you received in your family at home and by the environment in which you were raised. You have been shaped by teachers at school, by family and friends. Those who, due to circumstances, have not been brought up in their own family, have been educated by foster parents or educators. Culture also has a major effect on how you are formed. All these factors determine what we think about ourselves.

In the OT we see that God wants you to become like God. There is love for yourself, love for each other and for God. God gives rules to the people of Israel that clearly state that they must respect and love each other. To give value to people and their property. That gifts and talents may be used. However, we already see in the beginning of the Bible that free choice is directly used to choose one's own thoughts and values. Adam and Eve are very quick to do what they shouldn't do. They eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In fact, many of us do too. It means that you want to decide for yourself what is right and what is wrong. We like to do that in the church too. We determine what a Christian life is, what Christians should actually do, what a church service should look like. The same often happens in companies. It is determined what is best for the company. We feel what is right without involving God's values.

When we go back to the beginning, God especially longed for us to have a relationship with Him. When you are connected to Him you will become like Him.

Daniel

Daniel was a man God had chosen to show who God was in a wicked kingdom. Daniel is visited twice by an angel as he tries to discover what God's plans are for the nation of Israel that is currently living in exile. Both times the angel begins to tell what God thinks of Daniel. Not only what he does is important, but who he is: loved by God! The people are blessed through Daniel. Because of his wisdom, because of his talent to get and explain dreams and visions. Both of these qualities: being loved by God and his wisdom, open the doors to walk in his destiny and receive authority over the responsibilities presented to him.

Jesus

Jesus in the New Testament shows us what He thinks about Himself. He knows He is the Son of God. There are two clear moments when we can read that the Father loves Jesus. He says clearly: You are my beloved son, I enjoy You and I support Your decisions. We see that Jesus receives the Spirit from the Father and can thus begin to do the works of the Father. If you try to describe the life of Jesus in a few words, you will see that He loves those who are deformed by life. He reaches out to those who have fallen into sin and gives them a new chance. He has great respect for the dignity of people and gives them an opportunity to grow and do what He has shown. Jesus heals, He delivers, Jesus raises the dead, He forgives, Jesus gives direction to many people by explaining the principles of the Kingdom. Jesus thus restores the identity of the people He meets.

EXERCISE

When you stand in front of the mirror do you see the same person as whom God intended? You see a person who is loved, a person who is valuable and who has a destiny to do good. Can you see in that mirror that you are made good, to do good?

PRINCIPLE 4

God has given us an identity. We are loved, valuable and destined. We may choose to embrace this or not!