

Who Do You Think You Are?

1. Warm up: Jeff began Sunday's sermon by singing the JD Wentworth TV jingle that often gets stuck in his head. What a jingle (or other song you hate) gets stuck in your head?
2. Annoying jingles remind us how our brains work; our brains are creatures of habit. Each thought we think burns a path through our brain. Each time we repeat that thought, the path gets burned deeper, so that with each repetition it becomes easier to think that thought again and again, until we end up thinking that way effortlessly, as if on auto pilot. That's why it's imperative that we pay attention to our thoughts. Our adversary the devil is constantly trying to feed us lies. Our challenge is to recognize those lies and to replace them with the opposite countervailing truth. That's where we picked up our conversation this past Sunday. One of Satan's biggest lies is: The physical world around us is all there is; I'm a mere accident of biology; therefore my life is not special. When we buy into that lie, the result is aimless living – what Jennie Allen calls complacency.
 - a. Why is the lie that my life is not special so deadly?
 - b. Complacency, Jennie suggests commonly takes one of two forms: (1) sitting on the couch and doing nothing (Underachieving); or (2) aggressively pursuing what I think will make me happy, as if it's all about me (Overachieving). Both are forms of surrender to the status quo notion that our lives have no higher purpose. As you look back over your life, has there been a time with you surrendered to the status quo and became complacent? If so, what form did your complacency take – overachieving or underachieving? During that time, did your life feel full and meaningful? If not, how did it feel?
 - c. What form of mindless pastimes are you most drawn to? What form of aggressive overachieving are you most drawn to? Of course, some amount of playful pastime and aggressive pursuit of success is a normal healthy part of life. How can we tell when we're going too far and getting out of balance?
 - d. Given the way you're put together, if you were to fall into a period of complacency in the future, would you tend to be more likely to become a couch potato or an aggressive seeker of personal success?
3. The lie that I'm an accident of biology, therefore my life is not special, is blown out of the water by the truth of God's Word. On Sunday we walked through a litany of verses that tell us who we are and why we're here. Read those verses again, as printed on p. 3.
 - a. When you read those verses, what kind of feelings do they stir inside you?
 - b. In Jeremiah 1:5, God says, "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you." Psalm 139:13 says, "It was you, O God, who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb." Do you believe you were individually custom designed by God? Why or why not? If yes, what are the implications?

- c. Psalm 139:16 says, “In [God’s] book were written all the days that were formed for me, when no one of them as yet existed.” Do you believe God has a plan for your life? If so, what do you think the plan is?
 - d. In John 15:16, Jesus says, “I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide. . . .” The idea of choosing someone takes us back to the playground when captains were picking teams. The captains, of course, only chose the most “desirable” teammates. Do you believe Jesus chose you, i.e., that he genuinely wants you on his team? Why or why not?
 - e. I Corinthians 3:16 tells us that God’s Spirit dwells in us. In Hebrews 13:21, God says, “I will equip you for every good work I’ve planned.” Do you believe you’re fully equipped to be extremely effective for God? Why or why not?
 - f. In John 4:3, Jesus says, “I am coming and I will take you to the place where I am.” Do you think of yourself primarily as a citizen of earth or a citizen of heaven? Does it matter? Explain your answer.
4. Jeff summarized the truth of the foregoing verses like this: “You were designed by God for a special purpose. Therefore, you are here on a mission, kind of like Superman was sent to earth on a special mission, and when we embrace that truth, the result is purposeful living – living for a higher purpose – no more complacency!” But that leaves the question: What is my mission and what special powers has God given me to accomplish that mission? The answer is found through Jesus’ example on the cross. His only “weapon” on the cross was sacrificial love, yet that was enough to change the world forever.
- a. When Jesus says, “Take up your cross and follow me,” he’s calling us to repeat his pattern of sacrificial love in our lives over and over again. Sacrificial love is our secret supernatural power. Tell us about a time in your life when you saw sacrificial love do something amazing.
 - b. Jeff said, “If you want to live into your destiny, when you wake up in the morning, simply ask, “How can I love today? How can I give myself away today like Jesus did?” Looking back over the past couple weeks, tell us about a time (large or small) when you did something that exhibited sacrificial love. Alternatively, because we’re all still a work in progress, tell us about a time recently when you could have offered sacrificial love, but held back.
5. Read Philippians 3:18-21, as printed on p. 3, then answer the following questions:
- a. What does it mean to say that most people hate the cross of Christ? What do they hate about it?
 - b. What does it mean to be “citizens of high heaven” and how does that add “far more to life for us”?

Litany of Verses Related to Discussion Question #3

Jeremiah 1:5. “Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you.”

Psalms 139:13. “It was you, O God, who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother’s womb.”

Psalms 139:16. “In your book were written all the days that were formed for me, when no one of them as yet existed.”

John 15:16. “I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide. . . .”

I Corinthians 3:16. “Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?”

Hebrews 13:21. “I will equip you for every good work I’ve planned.”

Revelation 3:11. “I am on my way.”

Hebrews 10:37, John 4:3. “In just a little while . . . I am coming and I will take you to the place where I am.”

Revelation 21:3-5. “You will be with me. I will wipe every tear from your eyes, and death will be no more. Behold, I am making all things new.”

Passage Related to Discussion Question #5

Philippians 3:18-21. “There are many out there taking other paths, choosing other goals, and trying to get you to go along with them. . . . They hate Christ’s Cross. . . . [They] make their bellies their gods. . . . All they can think of is their appetites. But there is far more to life for us! We are citizens of high heaven! We are waiting the arrival of the Savior, the Master, Jesus Christ, who will transform our earthly bodies into glorious bodies like his own. He will make us beautiful and whole with the same powerful skill by which he is putting everything as it should be, under and around him.”