



Finding your value and purpose begins with a simple but profound truth: you have been wonderfully made. Don't believe the lie that you are defined by your struggles or that your worth comes from your achievements or looks. No matter what others say, God declares that you are His creation and His eternal plan for you is good.

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Made by God

**She chose to believe
and it set her free.**

*T*o discover who we've been made to be, we must start at the beginning. I believe the answers to our biggest questions about life and our purpose begin with one simple yet mysterious and profound truth: we have been made.

We must ask ourselves what we believe about the foundational questions of life. Why do we exist? What is the meaning of it all? The Greek philosopher Socrates said, "an unexamined life is not worth living."¹ It can be easy to take our existence for granted, to go about the motions and never look for the answers to some of life's greatest questions. One of the biggest questions we can ask is, "How did I get here?" Have you ever wondered how this expansive, sophisticated, beautiful world began?

Our belief about how and why we are here will determine the course of our entire lives and change the way we see ourselves. It will shape our sense of worth. It will determine our sense of purpose. What we believe as young girls—and eventually as women—about how we came to exist determines the way we understand ourselves, our lives, and our value. It is the substance upon which we build our identity.

Just as Socrates said the unexamined life isn't worth living, I wonder if the unexamined faith is worth believing? Maybe you've been raised in a Christian home. You fell asleep to stories of Noah's ark. You are familiar with the creation story and you believe in God, but have you used the mind He's given you to examine your beliefs? Or maybe all you've heard is that there was a "big bang" in the cosmos and billions of years later we are here due to evolution.

There are two primary viewpoints on how the universe and life as we know it began. The atheistic view is that life resulted outside of intelligent design or divine intervention. The theistic view is that life is the result of intelligent design, that life had a creator or a supernatural beginning.

If you believe you evolved over billions or millions of years and originated without any divine intervention, what does this say about the meaning of your life? Are you an accident? Should you really be here? What is the purpose for your life, and what happens when it's over?

If you believe the universe was divinely created, what does this mean? Could it be that, before the beginning of time, you were chosen to be here? Is there a unique purpose for your life? Is there something after it's over?

In our culture, there is a battle between science and religion,

and many claim you can only side with one. Some physicists believe the universe burst into existence out of nothing. However, even atheists agree with theists—that the universe had a beginning.

In his book *The Case for a Creator*, Lee Strobel, an author and former legal editor who was once an atheist, interviewed Stephen C. Meyer, an author and former geophysicist. He quoted Meyer as saying, “If it’s true there’s a beginning to the universe, as modern cosmologists now agree, then this implies a cause that transcends the universe. If the laws of physics are fine-tuned to permit life, as contemporary physicists are discovering, then perhaps there’s a designer who fine-tuned them. If there’s information in the cell, as molecular biology shows, then this suggests intelligent design.”²

Scientists of all worldviews agree that our universe is finely tuned, meaning there is a precision of physical laws and constants that must be exact for life to exist. If any of these constants, such as the gravitational force that holds the moon in its orbit or the strong force that holds the atoms together, changes by a tiny fraction of a percent, life becomes unsustainable. This convinces me that our world was intelligently designed with precision, order, and intention.

On his journey toward faith, Strobel realized,

To continue in atheism, I would need to believe that nothing produces everything, non-life produces life, randomness produces fine-tuning, chaos produces information, unconsciousness produces consciousness, and non-reason produces reason. I simply didn’t have that much faith.³

It takes faith to believe in God. Like Strobel, I believe it takes even more faith to believe this all just happened.

There are many scientific theories about how the first living cell appeared and how life has evolved since. However, these theories don't speak to the origin of human consciousness, our emotions, or our innate search for meaning. Philanthropist John Templeton, despite not adhering to an orthodox theology, still posed a great question: "Would it not be strange if a universe without purpose accidentally created humans who are so obsessed with purpose?"⁴ We are physical and spiritual beings. We are looking for spiritual answers our material world cannot provide.

The Bible tells the story of a wealthy man named Job. He was an upright man who did the right thing. Job went on to have every good thing taken from him and to experience immense sorrow and suffering. Job questions God and then God speaks to him and says,

"Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation?
Tell me, if you understand.
Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know!
Who stretched a measuring line across it?
On what were its footings set,
or who laid its cornerstone—
while the morning stars sang together
and all the angels shouted for joy?" (Job 38:4–7)

Radiant sunsets, gnarled oak trees, a harvest moon, fireflies in summer, a child's giggle—the beauty around us speaks of a beautiful creator. No, it didn't all just happen:

For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. (Romans 1:20)

God has revealed Himself through creation because of what has been made. Creation praises the Creator. God is the great artist, the master designer, the chief architect of all things wild, lovely, and beautiful. His evidence surrounds us, and because of this, we have no excuse not to believe in a higher purpose.

As a little girl, I never doubted the existence of a creator—I saw God's fingerprints all around me—in the giant trees hovering above our home upon the hill; in the glorious sunsets of pinks, purples, and oranges painted on the canvas of the evening sky; in the miracles of roly-poly bugs and shooting stars. Even as a little girl, my spirit knew the beauty around me was evidence for the God who made it all.

The universe is not looking out for you, but the One who breathed it into existence is. As you embark on this journey to discover the life you've been made for, will you choose to believe that you've been made? This belief is the foundation on which you will build your understanding of who you are and who you've been created to be.

The universe is not looking out for you, but the One who breathed it into existence is.

Be Still and Be Loved

A TIME TO REFLECT

How does what you believe about how you came to exist influence your sense of identity and purpose?

*God,
I see Your fingerprints all around me in what
You have created. I believe because of what
has been made. Show me the path to life as I
put my faith in You.*

Made to Know God

**She's discovering eternal truths
that tell her who she is and of the
One who holds all things together.**

*I*t is one thing to believe in God, but it takes more faith to really know Him. The Bible is the bridge that takes us from believing in God to really understanding and knowing Him. The Bible is the best-selling book of all time, with an estimated five billion copies in print throughout the world.

Even as a little girl growing up in a somewhat religious home, I knew it was sacred. Dressed in my Sunday best, my little ears soaked in stories about Jesus as I attended church. The Bible held a prominent position on our bookshelf, though we never read it

at home. Its fine print and old-fashioned words were intimidating. To me, the Bible was mysterious, overwhelming, and way over my head. It seemed so holy that it should be untouchable, so I kept my distance.

However, when my life fell apart due to severe depression at the age of eighteen, I was desperate for hope and began to read it for the first time. As I began to pore over the Psalms and Gospels, I went from believing in God to having a deeper knowledge and understanding of Him.

While it is considered one complete book, the Bible is a collection of many books written by many authors over a span of about 1,500 years. The books of the Bible were written by everyday people inspired by God to record wisdom and events. The

**I was desperate
for hope.**

Old Testament, which wrapped up its writings around 450 BC, records events before the birth of Christ and documents God's relationships with the Jewish people.

The New Testament captures the life and ministry of Jesus and His followers during the first century and records the many miracles Jesus performed and the struggles faced by early Christians.

The Bible is unmatched by other published works for many reasons. For one, the Bible foretells detailed events years and even centuries before they happened. There are about 2,500 prophecies or passages in the Bible that reflect communication from God and tell of interpretations, warnings, or predictions. These prophecies are about everything from natural disasters to global politics, the future of the nation of Israel, the coming of a Messiah or Savior of the world, and the fate of humanity.

Through the prophet Isaiah, God says, “Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come” (Isaiah 46:9–10). This speaks to God’s eternal nature and His sovereignty. He is timeless—for He declares the end from the beginning.

I am most compelled by the numerous biblical prophecies Jesus has fulfilled. The Old Testament prophets recorded detailed signs about the coming of the Messiah, the Savior of the world. There are over three hundred Old Testament prophecies that Jesus fulfilled. As I consider this astounding fact, my faith is strengthened, as it is simply not plausible to attribute this to mere coincidence.

Out of all ancient documents, the Bible has the most surviving copies that can be examined for variants or errors. Many of Jesus’ followers were severely persecuted, yet they didn’t stop spreading His message. The records of the New Testament are consistent and accurate. Even though the Bible has many authors and was written over a long period of time, it has a consistent and coherent message of God’s love and redemption.

Some of the doubts people have about the Bible arise because of the stories recorded in the Old Testament. The Red Sea parted, Jonah was swallowed by a large fish, a flood covered the earth, and the sun stood still. We might wrestle with these stories and question if they really happened. We may wonder if they are literal or if they are mere fables intended to emphasize God’s almighty power. If God exists and is so powerful, and He created something beautiful out of nothing, then with Him the supernatural is possible. Because life itself is a miracle, the miraculous is possible.

The apostle Paul wrote, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16–17). I love the word picture that “God-breathed” paints in my mind. I envision God breathing words of truth and revelation through His Spirit to the many authors of the Bible who recorded them. Centuries later our eyes glide across the pages of this ancient text that has been like a lighthouse guiding billions of people throughout human history. As it has for centuries, its words are read every day in churches and homes, in hospital rooms, at weddings, and at funerals throughout the world.

I think of the strong women of our past who endured civil wars, world wars, famine, plagues, or other difficult times, and who turned to these God-breathed words for hope, comfort, and understanding. I consider how countless women today do the same. There are good works God has prepared in advance for you too. The Bible will equip you to live out these unique and good purposes guiding your steps every day.

Today, we are blessed to still have the Bible’s ancient but eternal wisdom at our fingertips (and on our phones) to guide and strengthen us for the good things we have been called to do. As we read them, the Bible’s words penetrate our hearts, giving us courage in our current circumstances. While we won’t generally hear an audible voice from God, He has given you the gift of His Word because He wants to speak to you.

What are the questions you have for God? What circumstance in your life needs His eternal wisdom? Be willing to turn off the notifications and shut out the noise and make space in your life to hear from the One who made you and loves you.

Jesus says, “Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). Scripture is our soul food. It sustains and nourishes us for this life. It guides us through our darkest days and equips us for our best days. James 1:21 says the Word of God has the power to save our souls. What else in the world has the power to do that?

The Bible is God’s way of revealing Himself to you. Through Scripture, God has bridged the gap that has separated us from a mere knowledge of Him to a heartfelt understanding of who He really is. You were not only made by God; you were made to know God. Augustine of Hippo said, “The Holy Scriptures are our letters from home.”¹ These letters are designed to guide us through this sometimes brutal but beautiful life. Will you read this love letter and let it change your life?

Be Still and Be Loved

A TIME TO REFLECT

How can you allow the Bible’s wisdom to transform your life?

God,

Thank You for Your love letter to me. Open my heart to receive Your truth. Let it nourish my soul and guide me all the days of my life.

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