

Pleasant Springs Church

WDGW? — *What Does God Want?* • Lesson 1 of 6

Lesson 1 — God Wanted a Family

Tuesday, June 2 -- 6:00 PM

After Michael S. Heiser, *What Does God Want?* · Septuagint (LXX) & ESV side-by-side

KEY TEXTS

Genesis 1:26-28 - Genesis 2:7 - Job 38:4-7 - Isaiah 63:16; 64:8 - Luke 3:38 - Acts 17:28-29 - Romans 8:14-17

THE BIG IDEA

God did not make us because He needed us. He didn't make us because He was lonely — before He made the earth He already had a supernatural family of intelligent beings (Job 38:7). God created us because He wanted a **second** family — a human family made in His own image, to live in His presence, share His attributes, and rule with Him over the world He had just made. That is the answer to the oldest question of the human soul: **Why am I here?**

INTRODUCTION

Heiser opens his book with the picture of God most of us start with — not necessarily a hostile God, but a *distant* one. A creator, a power, an observer somewhere out there. Real, yes; involved, maybe; interested in *me*? Probably not. The Bible quietly demolishes this picture from its first page. The God of Scripture is not a detached observer. He is a **Father** who acts with purpose, makes things in order to enjoy them, and seeks us long before we ever think to seek Him.

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PART ONE

What Our Own Nature Tells Us

We are made by Someone like ourselves — only infinitely more so

Notice how *you* behave. You don't do things at random. You brush your teeth on purpose. You go to work because something good is waiting on the other side. You get angry when someone mocks or destroys what you spent yourself making. You are, by nature, a **purposeful, self-aware, creative being** — not an accident with hands.

Heiser's point: the opposite of those things would be a psychological anomaly. We are wired this way because we were made in the image of a Maker who is exactly this way — only infinitely more so. If *you* care intensely about what you make, why on earth would you assume the One who made *you* doesn't care just as much — and infinitely more?

KEY INSIGHT

Argument in one sentence. God “does what he does to enjoy what he's done” (Heiser). He did not create humanity because He *lacked* something. He created us so that what He made could enjoy Him in return.

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PART TWO

The Image-Bearers

Genesis 1 hands every human a king's commission

Two Hebrew words are doing the heavy lifting in Genesis 1: *tselem* ("image," Greek *eikôn*) and *demuth* ("likeness," Greek *homoiôsis*). In the ancient Near East, a *tselem* was the king's representative statue, placed in a province he did not personally inhabit to declare: *this place is mine, and I rule it through this image*. Genesis takes that political vocabulary and gives it to **every human being**.

KEY INSIGHT

Image as a verb. Heiser says it best: think of "image of God" as *a verb, not a noun*. We don't merely *have* an image of God somewhere inside us — we are made to **image** Him. To be His representative on the earth He owns. To do, in our small way, the things He does: think, choose, create, bless, govern with care.

Genesis 1:26-28 - The Image-Bearers

Septuagint (LXX)

²⁶καὶ εἶπεν ὁ Θεός· ποιήσωμεν ἄνθρωπον κατ' εἰκόνα ἡμετέραν καὶ καθ' ὁμοίωσιν...

²⁷καὶ ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον, κατ' εἰκόνα Θεοῦ ἐποίησεν αὐτόν, ἄρσεν καὶ θήλυ ἐποίησεν αὐτούς.

²⁸καὶ ἠλόγησεν αὐτούς ὁ Θεὸς λέγων· αὐξάνεσθε καὶ πληθύνεσθε καὶ πληρώσατε τὴν γῆν.

English Standard Version

²⁶Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion..."

²⁷So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

²⁸And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it..."

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PART THREE

God Was Never Alone

Before Adam was a thought, God had a supernatural family

Here is one of the great surprises of Heiser's book: the reason God created us was *not* to fill a hole in His own heart. The Bible tells us God was never alone. Before the earth was made, He had already created a vast company of intelligent beings — the angels, what the Old Testament calls “sons of God.”

The Hebrew phrase *bēnê ha'elohim* (“sons of God”) appears repeatedly in the Old Testament for angelic beings (Job 1:6; 2:1; Ps. 29:1; 89:6; Deut. 32:8 DSS). The word for “sons” can equally be translated “children.” And the phrase “children of God” means one thing in the Bible: **family**.

KEY INSIGHT

God already had a family. Before Adam was a thought, God had a *supernatural* family in the unseen realm. He was a Father long before there was a man to call Him one. This means the human family was not a backup plan for divine loneliness. It was a deliberate *second* household, designed to live with the first one, in God's presence, on God's earth. Eden was the meeting place of the two families.

Job 38:4-7 - The Sons of God Shouted for Joy

Septuagint (LXX)

⁴ ποῦ ἦς ἐν τῷ θεμελιῶν με τὴν γῆν? ἀπάγγελον δέ μοι, εἰ ἐπίστασαι σύνεσιν...

⁷ ὅτε ἐγενήθησαν ἄστερες, εἰκέσάν με φωνῇ μεγάλης πάντες ἄγγελοί μου.

English Standard Version

⁴Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding...

⁷when the morning stars sang together and all the **sons of God** shouted for joy?

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PART FOUR

The God Who Is Called Father

From Adam onward, the Bible's load-bearing structure is family language

Once you see this, the family-language of the Bible stops being a sentimental decoration and starts being the load-bearing structure. From Adam onward, Scripture calls God our Father and humanity His children. It is not poetry. It is biology — the spiritual kind.

Even Paul, preaching to Greek pagans who knew nothing of Genesis, anchors the gospel to this same conviction: every human being on earth is, in the broadest creational sense, the *offspring* (*genos*) of God. We were not made by accident, by an indifferent universe, or as cosmic afterthought. We were **fathered**.

Acts 17:28-29 - Paul on the Areopagus

Greek New Testament

²⁸ἐν αὐτῷ γὰρ ζῶμεν καὶ κινούμεθα καὶ ἐσμέν,
ὡς καὶ τινες τῶν καθ' ὑμᾶς ποιητῶν εἰρήκασιν·
τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμέν.

English Standard Version

²⁸For "In him we live and move and have our being"; as even some of your own poets have said, "For we are indeed his offspring."

²⁹Being then God's offspring...

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PART FIVE

The New Testament Echo -- Adopted Into the Family

Romans 8: not merely creatures of God, but children with an inheritance

The Old Testament called God "Father" in a creational sense — we are all His children because we are all His handiwork. The New Testament takes that further. In Christ, those who once turned away are **adopted** into the family in a deeper way: not merely creatures of God, but *children*, with the inheritance and intimacy that word implies.

This is the answer to the modern soul's loneliest fear. You are not an orphan in a meaningless universe. You were made by a Father, you are wanted by a Father, and through Jesus you are invited back into the Father's house.

Romans 8:14-17 - The Spirit of Adoption

Greek New Testament

¹⁴ ὅσοι γὰρ πνεύματι Θεοῦ ἄγονται, οὗτοί εἰσιν υἱοὶ Θεοῦ.

¹⁵ οὐ γὰρ ἐλάβετε πνεῦμα δουλείας πάλιν εἰς φόβον, ἀλλ' ἐλάβετε πνεῦμα υἰοθεσίας, ἐν ᾧ κρᾶζομεν· ἀββᾶ, ὁ πατήρ.

¹⁶ αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα συμμαρτυρεῖ τῷ πνεύματι ἡμῶν ὅτι ἐσμὲν τέκνα Θεοῦ.

English Standard Version

¹⁴For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. ¹⁵For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" ¹⁶The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God... ¹⁷and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ.

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DISCUSSION & REFLECTION

1. Heiser opens by describing the “detached observer” picture of God. Which version of God did *you* grow up assuming was true? Where did that picture come from?
2. Because *we* are intentional, creative beings who care about what we make, we can reason something about the One who made us. Is that an argument you find persuasive?
3. Genesis says we are made “in the image of God.” Heiser turns the noun into a verb: *to image God*. What is one specific thing you do in an ordinary week that, done well, *images* what God is like?
4. Job 38 says God already had a supernatural family of “sons of God” before He made the earth. Does that change anything about *why* you think He made us?
5. Acts 17 says every human being is, in the creational sense, God's offspring. Romans 8 says those in Christ are adopted as “sons by adoption.” What is the difference, and why does it matter?
6. If every person you meet is an image-bearer of God — including the cashier, the neighbor you find difficult, and the person on the other side of a political argument — how does that change the way you treat them this week?
7. Heiser closes the chapter: “What does God want? He wants you.” What in your heart resists believing that — and what would it look like to let that resistance go?

A PRAYER IN RESPONSE

*Father, you were never a stranger. We were the strangers. Thank you that you made us — not to fill a hole in your heart, but to enjoy us and to be enjoyed by us. Thank you that we are not accidents. Thank you that our lives are the work of your hands. Help us this week to live as imagers of you, treating every other soul we meet as the family member you intended them to be. And through your Son Jesus, draw us deeper into the household where we were always meant to belong. **Amen.***

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SOURCES & FURTHER READING

- Michael S. Heiser, *What Does God Want?* Blind Spot Press, 2018. (Chapter 1.)
- Michael S. Heiser, *The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible*. Lexham Press, 2015.
- J. Richard Middleton, *The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1*. Brazos Press, 2005.
- Septuagint Greek text: Rahlfs-Hanhart, *Septuaginta* (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft).
- English text: *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version*. ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Crossway Bibles.