



*Beautiful  
or  
Ordinary?*

*Discovering Significance and Love*

# BEAUTIFUL OR ORDINARY?

If you have to enter a hall through one of two doors marked “Beautiful” and “Ordinary”, which would you choose? Your choice would reveal how you see yourself—whether you have a low or high self-esteem. Self-esteem is your overall opinion of yourself. It is about how you feel regarding your attributes and abilities, your worth and value.

Many lifestyle gurus and image consultants tell us that we need to raise our self-esteem if we want to succeed in life. But is simply developing a high self-esteem really the answer to a low self-esteem? Will a makeover change our self-worth and value?

The true answer lies elsewhere.

This selection of articles from *Our Daily Bread* reaffirms how valuable and precious you are to the One who truly loves and esteems you. If you find these articles helpful and would like to receive the *Our Daily Bread* devotional, just complete the request form in this leaflet and return it to us. Our materials are offered at no charge. We are supported by the freewill donations of our members and friends.

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## WHODUNIT?

*Today's Bible Reading***GENESIS 1:1, 20–27**

**T**he word *whodunit* is actually in the dictionary. It means “detective story.” The most important whodunit of all time is the question of creation.

**God said, “Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us.”**

GENESIS 1:26

Some people wish the Bible said, “In the beginning, God wasn’t needed.” To them, it’s unacceptable to say, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1), or “Let us make human beings in our image” (v.26).

Instead, they believe that after an explosion of energy and matter, somehow an atmosphere conducive to life was formed. Then, single-celled organisms morphed into the exceedingly complex life forms we have today.

No need for God, they say, for it all happened naturally. On an Earth and in an atmosphere not of anyone’s making, forces with a blueprint designed by no one joined together to position the Earth *perfectly* for life to thrive.

What we understand with the phrase “In the beginning God” is at the center of it all. We must either believe the Bible—and everything the Bible claims—or we must believe that our meaningless lives resulted from an accidental, mindless chain reaction. What a stark contrast with “Let us make human beings in our image”!

In the beginning. Was it God? Or was it chance? Our answer to this whodunit reveals whether or not we truly worship the awesome God of creation. —*Dave Branon*

**All of creation bears God’s autograph.**

## CROWNED WITH GLORY

*Today's Bible Reading*

## PSALM 8

**T**he *Voyager 1* spacecraft, which was launched in 1977, is at the outer edge of our solar system, more than 10 billion miles away. In February 1990, when *Voyager 1* was almost 4 billion miles from us, scientists turned its camera toward Earth and took some pictures that revealed our planet as an almost imperceptible blue dot in a vast sea of empty space.

In the immense reaches of our universe, Earth is just a minuscule speck. On this seemingly insignificant pebble in the ocean of galactic objects live more than seven billion people.

If this makes you feel insignificant, God has some good news. Tucked into one of the Bible's songs is a rhetorical question that can allow you to step out into the night air, look up at the sky, and rejoice. The song, Psalm 8:3–5, tells us that we are superstars in God's eyes: "When I look at the night sky and see the work of your fingers—the moon and the stars you set in place—what are mere mortals that you should think about them, human beings that you should care for them? Yet . . . you crowned them with glory and honor."

Let that sink in! God—who spoke into existence a universe so vast that the Hubble telescope hasn't found the end of it—created you, and He cares deeply for you. He cared enough to ask Jesus to leave heaven to die for you.

Look up in wonder at God's creation and praise Him for crowning you with glory through His Son Jesus.

—Dave Branon

**What are . . .  
human beings that  
you should care for  
them?**

PSALM 8:4

**We see the power of God's creation;  
we feel the power of His love.**

## SIGNIFICANT

*Today's Bible Reading***PSALM 139:1–16**

**A**n old TV sitcom featured an establishment that the patrons seemed to frequent on a daily basis. The concept was that it was a welcoming place where “everybody knows your name.”

**You watched me as  
I was being formed  
... as I was woven  
together in the  
dark of the womb.**

PSALM 139:15

We all want to be accepted, to fit in somewhere. But some people live out on the margins of life where it can be difficult for them to feel like they have any value or significance, or that they matter to anyone. Children sometimes experience this: too tall—when other kids haven’t had a growth spurt yet; too fat—when the other kids are thinner; too smart—when their classmates are struggling; or “not smart enough” in comparison with others. Being different as a child often results in mockery or bullying from others, but an adult who doesn’t fit into the mould may just be ignored—considered so insignificant that he or she feels invisible.

But what a great significance we have in God’s eyes! We were so valued that He sent His Son to pay the price for our sins and to allow us to have a relationship with Him. We were created in the image of God, and He has designed us and been involved in every detail of our lives since before we were born. Whether or not we always feel significant, we are deeply loved by our Father. —*Cindy Hess Kasper*

**The God who created the universe is  
the God who loves you.**

## HE CALLS THE STARS BY NAME

*Today's Bible Reading***PSALM 147:1-9**

**O**n a plateau high above the Atacama Desert in Chile, one of the world's largest radio telescopes is giving astron-

**He counts the stars and calls them all by name.**

PSALM 147:4

omers an unprecedented view of the universe. In an *Associated Press* article, Luis Andres Henao spoke of how scientists from many countries were “looking for clues about the dawn of the cosmos—from the coldest gases and dust where galaxies are formed and stars are born to the energy produced by the Big Bang.”

The Bible celebrates the mighty power and infinite understanding of God, who “counts the stars” and “calls them all by name” (Psalm 147:4). Yet the Creator of the universe is not a remote, uncaring force, but a loving heavenly Father who “heals the broken-hearted and bandages their wounds” (v.3). “The Lord supports the humble” (v.6) and “delights in those who fear him, those who put their hope in his unfailing love” (v.11).

He loves us so much that “he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

British author J. B. Phillips called Earth “the visited planet,” where the Prince of Glory is still working out His plan.

Our hope for today and forever lies in the loving mercy of God who calls each star by name.

—David McCasland

**God, who knows the name of every star,  
knows all our names as well.**

# THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE

*Today's Bible Reading*

**1 JOHN 3:16–23**

**W**hen Deng Jinjie saw people struggling in the water of the Sunshui River, Hunan province, China, he didn't just walk on. In an act of heroism, he jumped into the water and helped save four members of a family. Unfortunately, Jinjie, exhausted from his rescue efforts, was swept away by the river current and drowned.

**We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us.**

1 JOHN 3:16

When we were drowning in our sin, Jesus Christ gave His life to come to our aid. He came down from heaven above and pulled us to safety. He did this by taking the punishment for all of our wrongdoing as He died on the cross and 3 days later was resurrected. The Bible says, "We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us" (1 John 3:16). Jesus' sacrificial love for us now inspires us to show genuine love towards others.

If we don't appreciate Jesus' ultimate sacrifice on our behalf, we'll fail to see and experience His love. Today, consider the connection between His sacrifice and His love for you. He came down to rescue you.

—Jennifer Benson Schuldt

**Jesus laid down His life to show His love for us.**

# LOOKING FOR LOVE

*Today's Bible Reading*

**JOHN 3:16–21**

A computer virus known as “The Love Bug” spanned the globe by email, infecting millions of computers in less than 24 hours. It seems that even wary people like top software engineers couldn’t resist opening a message titled simply, “I Love You.”

**For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son so that anyone who believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.**

JOHN 3:16 TLB

Some analysts have said that the success of the destructive computer virus reveals as much about the longings of the human heart as it does about the vulnerability of our cyber-society. Deep down, every person on the planet is looking for love.

It’s no accident that one of the best-known verses in the Bible is John 3:16. It says, “For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son so that anyone who believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

Could it be that the love we long for the most is God’s love? Is Jesus Christ the special person we eagerly hope will sweep us off our feet? If so, then accepting God’s love in Christ could change our lives in remarkable ways. Hope, peace, and a zest for living—they all spring from being in love with Jesus.

When God says, “I love you,” it’s the message we’ve all been looking for. It can change our lives.

How will you respond to Him today?

—David McCasland

**The death of Christ is the measure of God’s love for you.**

