

## **Introduction**

I'd like to begin by making an observation. God broke the mold when He made you. Most of you have been told that before but probably weren't sure if it was a complement or a cut. It's a complement today and Psalm 139:13-16 explains why it is.

## **Just Another One of Those**

There is in astronomy what is called *The Principle of Mediocrity*. That principle says that there's nothing special about the earth. There's nothing unique about it, including its features and location in the universe. Astronomers estimate that there are approximately one hundred billion billion planets in the universe, which is a 1 followed by 20 zero's. According to *The Principle of Mediocrity*, the earth is an ordinary run of the mill planet just like all the rest are. It's just "another one of those" in other words, the one hundred billion billion.

That helps us understand, by way of analogy, what many believe about human beings. There's nothing special or unique about any of us. It's estimated that eighty billion people have lived in human history, which is a huge number. According to many, each of us is an ordinary run of the mill person just like all the rest are. Each of us is just "another one of those" in other words, the eighty billion.

## **The Drive to Significance**

But is that true? It's devastating to us if it is because human beings have what is called "the drive to significance." Each of us desperately needs assured that we aren't a nobody but a somebody special instead. Each of us needs to know that we are in some way extraordinary and unique, that we are one of a kind.

This drive to significance first appears as a vital need in the small child, and later in its clamorous desire for attention. It then continues

on in the adult until the day that he or she dies. It's in all of us.

And there's nothing wrong with that. The drive to significance isn't a bad thing. We need to be clear about that. It isn't egotism. Egotism is self-obsession. The egotist sees everyone and everything in terms of him self or her self. That egotism isn't the same thing as the drive to significance. It's a result of it. Each of us has the need to be one of a kind. Egotism is a response to the frustration of that need.

The drive to significance then is a good thing. God Himself gave it to Adam and Eve and to you and me when He made us. He made us to be held irreplaceable, without price. Which is why the idea that we're just "another one of those" is so devastating to us.

A man bought a new car. On the way home from the dealer, he heard a rattling in the door and took it back and complained. The dealer then removed the door panel and guess what he found – four large bolts and a note that read "left by Ralph." It turned out that Ralph was an assembly worker who had put the door on. He did what he did because he had grown frustrated about being just another assembly worker, about not counting, about not being able to leave his mark on the world.

It was a stupid and even immoral thing to do but it illustrates what I'm trying to say. We scream against being just "another one of those" from every pore of our being. If the secularists are right and that's what we are, we might as well "curse God and die," to quote Job's wife.

### **God Broke the Mold**

But that isn't what we are. On the contrary, according to Psalm 139:13-16, God broke the mold when He made you and me.

Look at the word "womb" in verse 13 and its metaphor in "the depths of the earth" in verse 15. David's writing about you and me in our mothers' wombs. He teaches that two things happened there.

The first is found in verses 13 and 15. Verse 13 says that God wove us. The Hebrew word translated "wove" refers to knitting a piece of fabric or cloth. The words "skillfully wrought" in verse 15, meaning

"intricately wrought," take that thought a step further. They suggest a weaver or embroiderer creating something with complex patterns and colors. Those metaphors reveal one thing that happened in our mothers' wombs. God Himself fashioned every part of us. Think of the unimaginable wealth of detail that makes us up. Well, God conceived and created every point of that detail in the womb. We are His handiwork.

In verse 16, David reveals the second thing that happened in the womb. This is a cryptic verse. He's probably saying that God mapped out the days of our lives in advance. That doesn't mean He preordained everything we do. It does mean He placed us in a specific context to count in ways that no one else does. That is our destiny. It's to do things for God and His kingdom in our context that no one else can do.

So those are the two things that happened in our mothers' wombs. God fashioned every detail of us and mapped out the days of our lives in advance. He broke the mold, in other words, when He made you and me. That really is what this passage teaches. Each of us is "one of a kind." Verse 14 declares the staggering implication of that. The Hebrew there can be translated, "**I praise Thee, for I am awesomely wonderful.**" That means that I can say to each of you "**You're awesome,**" and it's precisely true. You are. Why? It's because you're "one of a kind."

Let's go back to our analogy again. *The Principle of Mediocrity* is wrong. Earth isn't just "another one of those." The peculiar conditions on it that make life possible are astounding – so astounding in fact that there's probably not another one like it in the universe. Eugene Shoemaker, who was called "the godfather of astrogeology," once ran calculations to estimate the likelihood of the right conditions for life existing elsewhere. Based on mathematical probabilities, he concluded, "**Only one planet in the universe is likely to bear intelligent life.**" Since earth bears intelligent life, it is that "one." God broke the mold when He made it. It is literally "one of a kind."

And so are we. In the same way that earth as a planet isn't just "another one of those," neither are we as human beings. God fashioned

every detail of us. He placed us in a specific context to count in ways that no one else does. We are, therefore, extraordinary and unique. God broke the mold when He made us. Each of us is “one of a kind.”

So act like it. That’s our call today, to act like we’re one of a kind. Doing that requires two things of us, both of which I want to explain.

### **Follow Jesus**

First, follow Jesus. Dallas Willard shares what is just a profound insight in that regard. Listen carefully to it. People’s hunger for significance is the basis of humanity’s enduring response to Jesus. Why do you think so many different people in so many different centuries and places have chosen to follow Him. I’ll tell you. It’s for two reasons.

First, it’s because Jesus takes you and me and every one else as seriously as our dignity demands.

Recall what 139:13-16 teaches. Question. How many people regard and treat you as if that is true of you, that you’re one of a kind? Question. How many people do you regard and treat as if that’s true of them, that they’re one of a kind. The fact is that very few people in this world take others as seriously as Psalm 139 dictates they should.

But Jesus does. **“God broke the mold when He made you”** isn’t a joke with Him. He actually regards and treats each of us that way. He takes us as seriously as our dignity demands.

There’s a second reason that so many different people in so many different centuries and places have chosen to follow Jesus. He and He alone has the resources to carry through how He takes us. He does something no one else can do - inhabits and empowers the very core of us if we follow Him. That in turn enables us to become the one of a kind God made us to be.

I once talked with a nurse who excelled at what she did. She was an angel to her patients and they loved her. That’s what made what she told me one day so remarkable – that she had been a professional prostitute before being a nurse. Hearing that, I asked her how a

prostitute became a nurse. To which she simply replied, **“I met Jesus.”**

That answer is so instructive. If we hunger for significance, the very first thing we should do is become disciples of Jesus. Make and carry out the decision to be with Him to learn and do all that He says. We cannot be the one of a kind that God made us to be unless we do.

### **Develop a Mission Statement**

Acting like we're one of a kind requires a second thing. Develop and live out a mission statement. Notice that we do two things here.

First, we develop a mission statement. Someone once asked Helen Keller if there is anything worse than being blind. She quickly replied: **“Yes! Being able to see and having no vision.”** So let's have vision. We do that by developing a mission statement for our life.

A mission statement is a pronouncement that expresses the purposes and goals of our lives – that expresses what will make them successful. We should write it out and make it specific and clear.

Now, the mission statement that we develop should be divine. I mean by that, it should reflect purposes and goals that God Himself has give us. A year or so after deciding to follow Jesus, William Wilberforce wrote in his diary: **“Almighty God has set before me two great objectives, the abolition of the slave trade and the reformation of manners.”** Devoting his life to those objectives, Wilberforce went on to become one of the greatest social reformers in history. But what I want you to notice are his opening words, **“Almighty God has set before me.”** Wilberforce's mission statement was a divine one and so should ours be. It should express purposes and goals that God has given us.

We develop a divine mission statement by doing four things.

First, make our mission statement a matter of prayer. We ask God specifically and persistently to help us write it. Finding His purposes and goals for our lives should be a prayer priority.

Second, identify and write down what our talents and gifts are. God always equips people for what He calls them to do. So, we reflect

and figure out what we might do well if we tried.

Third, identify and write down what we'd like to do for God. Oswald Chambers claims that this is the clearest indicator of God's calling and I agree. So, we examine what we have a deep desire to do for God. If we're truly disciples of Jesus, that deep desire is probably what He Himself wants us to do for Him.

Fourth, get into a state of what is called *receptive consciousness*. We do that by practicing solitude. We regularly get away from the sights, sounds, and activities of everyday life and do nothing but be alone with God. In that state of solitude, we become receptively conscious, meaning attuned to the Holy Spirit's still small voice. We're then able to hear from Him what He wants us to do in our context.

Once we've developed our mission statement, we do a second thing - live it out. We make and carry out a decision - to do whatever is necessary to achieve the purposes and goals that God has given us.

I've done both of those things. According to actuarial tables, I have approximately 27 more years to live. That isn't much time and I want to make it count for God. So he and I together developed the following mission statement: **"Until I take my last earthly breath, I want to glorify God by assisting as many people as I can to become like Jesus and to find the fullness of joy that doing so brings. I will do that by loving them and teaching them 'Now what?'"** That's my mission and I'm living it out as best as I can.

## **Conclusion**

I close this morning with the words of an old child's song that my wife used to sing to our sons when they were little boys. Part of it goes like this: **"You're something special. You're the only one of your kind. God has a special purpose that He's wanting you to find."** That isn't cheap sentiment. It's literally true of each and every one of us. Each and every one of us is one of a kind. God broke the mold when He made you and me. So, let's act like it!