

Week Six: *The Path of Originality*
Ephesians 2:10

Spend FIFTEEN – Day One

1. We all kind of want to feel special, don't we? It feels good to be recognized for our unique contributions to the world. Have you ever won an award or trophy or been recognized for something special you did? What was it for? How did it feel?
2. In the Pixar movie *The Incredibles*, the young boy with special powers is frustrated by having to hide his unique gifts. Check out this brief interaction with his mother: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8gXCCBmTvBI>. Do you agree or disagree with Dash's final line? Why?
3. Now read Jeremiah 1:4-10. What special calling does God give to Jeremiah?
4. It's fairly clear that Jeremiah had a "special" calling from the Lord. But, here's the harder question (and faithful people will disagree): Does God only have special intentions for *some people*, like a biblical prophet or great leader? Or does God know everybody in the womb and have a special plan for *everyone*? (In other words, is the promise in this passage just for Jeremiah, or is it for you too?)
5. Depending on which answer you believe, how would that change your own search for meaning in your life?
6. What things about yourself would you feel confident saying *are* gifts from God—something special that he designed you with?
7. Close your FIFTEEN by thanking God for the ways he made you uniquely.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two

8. The direction of evolutionary science and advances in artificial intelligence seem to support the theory that human beings are nothing special—just one particular step in a long chain of natural development. How can people reconcile this theory with the idea that humanity is something unique?
9. Now read Psalm 8:1-9. What is the major problem that the psalmist struggles with?
10. What is it that helps the psalmist find hope?
11. Now read Psalm 103:15-16. How does the Psalmist sum up our existence?

12. Whether you believe in evolution or not, we all have to find a way to reconcile the majesties of creation with our own comparative smallness and the brevity of our lives. How do you make peace with your place in the universe?
13. There are two ways to interpret the magnificence of the heavens: we are but specks in comparison to the universe, or we are the crowning jewel of the God who made the universe. What is something that would help remind you of your unique value in the Creator's eyes?
14. Close your FIFTEEN in prayer, asking God to help you see your own wonder through his delight in you over all the rest of creation.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three

15. Leo Tolstoy coined an expression that has since become known as the Anna Karenina principle: “All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.” Do you agree or disagree? Why?
16. Who do you think lives a more “unique” existence—someone who follows God, or someone who lives their own life the way they want to? Would the culture agree or disagree with your answer?
17. Read Philippians 3:17-21. What becomes the source of people's “boasting”?
18. What do you think motivates people to boast about their broken desires? How do you feel if someone ever calls you out on something for which you are ashamed?
19. It's tempting to double-down on our failures sometimes, because at least we can claim they make us unique. What other solution does Philippians 3 offer us?
20. A common fear is that letting God redeem our lives will also take away the things that make us uniquely ourselves. What is a trait or foible of yours that you would like to see God enhance in a wonderful and holy way?
21. End your FIFTEEN by praying for God to show you how he can transform even your worst weaknesses into something that gives him glory in a unique way.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four

22. What do you usually do when a bowl or glass gets chipped or broken?
23. Skim this article about the Japanese practice of “kintsugi.” <https://www.lifegate.com/people/lifestyle/kintsugi> What is their approach to broken things?

24. In your opinion, can something still truly be beautiful once it's been broken?
25. Read Ecclesiastes 3:11. What promise about God is this making?
26. Now watch this short clip from the movie *Joshua*. In this movie, Jesus has come back to a small, modern-day town and goes by the name Joshua. Mary Magdalene (who goes by "Maggie") is despairing of her heartbroken life.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JXCOogmKI0c> How does Joshua show Maggie that her understanding is wrong?
27. End your FIFTEEN by contemplating the brokenness in your life that you could submit to God, and trust in him to make something beautiful out of the mess. Then pray to God to make you whole, in spite of your own flaws or a life that doesn't live up to your own perfect vision for it.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five

28. We human beings are a mess of contradictions! On the one hand, we are each a lovely, admirable child of God. We are also each a "poor, miserable sinner." To which one of those do you more often tend to connect?
29. Read Genesis 1:26. What do you think it means that we are made in God's "image"?
30. After the Fall from Eden, we became tainted by sin (Romans 5:12). What effect did that have on our "image" from God? Does God think there's anything worthwhile in us anymore?
31. Now read Ephesians 2:10. What do you think the word "workmanship" means?
32. Take a few moments to read this article about Ephesians 2:10. <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/you-are-gods-workmanship> What does the original word for "workmanship" mean in modern English?
33. Think deeply about this next question: what unique work has God created for you to do?
34. Spend the rest of your FIFTEEN marveling at how wonderfully he made you. Thank him for putting his stamp on you with his image. Ask him to show you your God-given uniqueness and to make clear to you the specific work that you—and only you—can accomplish in his name!