

We are Awesomely and Wonderfully Made

“I thank you because I am awesomely made, wonderfully; your works are wonders - I know this very well. My bones were not hidden from you when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes could see me as an embryo, but in your book all my days were already written; my days had been shaped before any of them existed.” (CJB, Ps 139:14-16)

Introduction:

The following questions reveal something to us about *Adonai's* design for us. Take a moment and honestly answer them being as honest as you can with yourself:

Answer Yes or No

- _____ 1. If you had the power, would you change anything about the way you look?
- _____ 2. When you were younger, did others point out 'defects' in your outward appearance or call you names?
- _____ 3. Have you ever wished you could look like somebody else?
- _____ 4. Do you know what the meaning of your name is?
- _____ 5. Do you know what your motivational spiritual gift is?
- _____ 6. Have you ever thanked *Adonai* for the way He made you?

Mark Each of the Following that Apply To You

- | | |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| _____ Attempt to hide “defects” | _____ Name-dropping |
| _____ Need for status symbols | _____ Hypersensitivity to criticism |
| _____ Conformity to fads | _____ Criticism of others |
| _____ Excessive shyness | _____ Inability to give or receive praise |
| _____ Self-criticism | _____ Overdone makeup and jewelry |
| _____ Mocking others physical features | _____ Need for constant approval |
| _____ Wishful comparison with others | _____ Rejection of family background |

The Biblical Concept of Design/*Adonai's* Perspective in Prescribing Us {Review}

1. *Adonai* created each of us with a body, a soul, and a spirit.

Adonai created man in His image so we could have fellowship with Him. *Elohim* is a Tri-Unity in One, and so are humans. He formed man out of the dust of the ground (body), and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life (spirit), and man became a living soul (soul).

Sometimes Scripture refers to man as a “living soul” (see 1 Peter 3:20); other times, man is described as “body and soul.” (See Isaiah 10:18.) However, in 1 Thessalonians 5:23, *Adonai* describes man as having three distinct parts: “...may your entire spirit, soul and body be kept blameless...” For the purpose of being blameless, we need to understand how these three aspects of our being function with each other.

THE SPIRIT

The spirit is the part of us that communicates with *Adonai*. *"The Spirit himself bears witness with our own spirits that we are children of G-d"* (Romans 8:16). This verse reveals that, by nature, each of us has a human spirit which *Adonai's* Spirit unites with at salvation. *"For who knows the inner workings of a person except the person's own spirit inside him? So too no one knows the inner workings of G-d except G-d's Spirit."* (1 Cor. 2:11).

- ◇ The spirit of man is the home of man's faith. *Adonai* gives extra faith before the mind is fully developed; thus, He instructs us to have the faith of a little child in order to enter His Kingdom. (See Mark 10:15.)
- ◇ The spirit is also the home of genuine love. There is a love that surpasses human comprehension. (See Ephesians 3:16-19.)
- ◇ The spirit is the home of the conscience. *Adonai* has written His Law on our hearts so that each person's conscience debates with his mind.
- ◇ Other functions of the spirit include creativity, fervency (enthusiasm)-*"but serve the Lord with spiritual fervor"* (Romans 12:11)-our drives, and wisdom from *Adonai*.

THE SOUL

The soul is composed of the mind, will, and emotions. We must bring these three areas under the control of *Adonai's* Spirit and allow Him to work through our spirit. Otherwise, our souls will be controlled by our fleshly natures and we will be carnal. *"For the old nature wants what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit wants what is contrary to the old nature. These oppose each other, so that you find yourselves unable to carry out your good intentions."* (Galatians 5:17).

At the time of salvation, the spirit is born again. *"what is born from the Spirit is spirit."* (John 3:6). The soul is not born again, but is to be transformed by the Word of *Adonai*. *"receive meekly the Word implanted in you that can save your lives"* (James 1:21). This instruction of Scripture was written to those who were already believers.

The soul in us is similar to what the Promised Land was to our people Israel. The land was given to our people, but it needed to be conquered. The battleground between *Adonai* and Satan is the human soul.

Whatever *"ground"* we do not regain in the early years of our lives as Believers will develop strongholds against us in later years. Thus, it is vital to *"So remember your creator while you are young, before the evil days come, and the years approach when you will say, 'They no longer give me pleasure.'"* (Ecclesiastes 12:1).

THE BODY

Man's body is the intricately formed container of his spirit and soul. Its delicately balanced systems are directly affected by what takes place in his spirit and soul. The body also contains the physical senses of taste, touch, sight, sound, and smell.

What takes place in the soul and spirit directly affects the body. Therefore, when we are sick, we are to call for the elders of the congregation and clear any hidden sins that could be the cause of the sickness. *Adonai* also established other times for us to carefully examine ourselves. If we fail to do this, many will be weak, sickly, or may die. (See 1 Corinthians 11:28-30.)

2. We are created with ten unchangeable features.

There are some things about ourselves that we can change, such as attitudes, behavior, and personal neatness. But there are other things we cannot change. What we cannot change, we must accept as *Adonai's* perfect preparation for accomplishing His purpose for our lives, for giving us more grace, and for conforming us to the

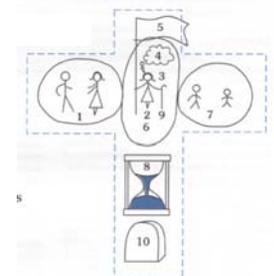


image of *Yeshua*. These unchangeable features help us to relate to *Yeshua*, because He experienced all ten:

1. **Parents** *He was born with the false stigma of illegitimacy.*
2. **Physical Features** *“He was not well-formed or especially handsome; we saw him, but his appearance did not attract us” (Isaiah 53:2).*
3. **Gender** *He laid aside His glory to become a man.*
4. **Brothers and Sisters** *He was not accepted by His own brothers. (See Mark 3:32).*
5. **Birth Order** *As firstborn, He had greater responsibilities. (See John 19:26).*
6. **Race** *He was born into a despised race which had many enemies.*
7. **National Origin** *His nation was under the rule and control of Rome.*
8. **Time in History** *He came during the reign of jealous and ruthless rulers.*
9. **Mental Capacity** *He did nothing of His own will, but obeyed Elohim. (See John 5:30).*
10. **Agging and Death** *He experienced the cruel torture of death by crucifixion.*

3. Comparing unchangeables produces inferiority.

We will always see people who we think are more intelligent, more attractive, or more capable than we are. If we compare ourselves in these ways, we will tend to feel inferior and inadequate. Thus, we are warned by *Adonai* that it is unwise to compare ourselves with others, or to measure ourselves by others. “...*In measuring themselves against each other and comparing themselves with each other, they are simply stupid.*” (See 2 Cor. 10:12)

It is wise, however, to compare changeable things, such as attitudes and skills. However, our measure for these must not be other people, but the Adonai Himself. Even though we are a long way from becoming like Him, His holiness and purity motivate us to worship Him, and He gives us the grace to become the people He wants us to be.

The problem with comparison is that people often put values on unchangeables that are contrary to *Adonai's* values. For example, we think of the scars in *Yeshua's* hands and feet as beautiful because of their meaning to us in salvation. However, the world says that scars are ugly and have no significance.

Yeshua's scars are for eternity, whereas the scars we bear will last only during this lifetime. When we are resurrected with *Yeshua*, we will be given a new body without the scars and “defects” we now have. These concepts, when presented properly, can help individuals change their outlook on the scars they have and be free to view them as *Yeshua* does.

4. Adonai does not have an outward ideal, but an inward one.

The practice of selecting a “Miss or Mr. Universe” is based on the false assumption (presupposition) that there is a universal outward ideal in physical appearance, strength, and ability. *Adonai* has no such ideal, though if anyone would qualify for such titles, it would have been Adam and Eve as the perfect man and woman.

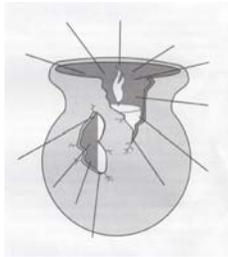
Since the Fall of Man, we all have defects, limitations, inadequacies, and blemishes on the outside. Every person ages, and every person dies. *Adonai's* ideal, on the other hand, is the inward person of the heart with the character qualities of a meek and quiet spirit. These are the attributes which *Yeshua* used to describe Himself. “*Come to me, all of you who are struggling and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (Matthew 11:28-29).*”

It is amazing to discover that those who win beauty contests have the same feelings of inferiority that others have, because of the personal defects of which they are aware, and because they are comparing themselves with others. In reality, those who are more attractive are subjected to more temptations.

5. Adonai sacrifices outward beauty for inward character.

Because our happiness and fulfillment come by the development of inward character qualities, it is understandable that *Adonai* will sacrifice outward beauty in order to motivate us to develop inward character.

Rabbi *Sha'ul* stated that "...*Though our outer self is heading for decay, our inner self is being renewed daily.*" (2 Cor. 4:16). David testified, "*It is for my good that I have been humbled; it was so that I would learn your laws*" (Ps 119:71).



The key passage to demonstrate this point, however, is Rabbi *Sha'ul's* own testimony about his thorn in the flesh. *Adonai* specifically states that He sent this to him in order to humble him, so he would not become proud, but would instead experience inward strength through a new measure of *Adonai's* grace. (See 2 Corinthians 12) This is a key point in helping people understand why *Adonai* allows outward scars, defects and aging.

A beautiful vase would consider it a tragedy to have pieces broken out of its side. Yet if there is a light within, that is the only way for it to shine out. Before *Adonai* can use us, He must break us.

6. Physical features frame Adonai's message in us.

My goal in counseling a person who has rejected himself is to help him concentrate on his inward qualities rather than his outward appearance. Several concepts are usually needed to help a person understand how *Adonai* uses deficiencies on the outside to develop a more beautiful message on the inside.

The concept of an artist selecting a frame is helpful in illustrating that, because there are many different messages that an artist may wish to portray, there are many varieties of frames from which he chooses. As the inward picture progresses, people do not notice the frame. Instead, they see how it amplifies the message.

The frame is not noticed once the picture is complete. Its size, color, and shape amplify the artist's message.

7. Adonai continues to perfect us on His artist's easel.

A further concept from the field of art can be given by describing the interaction between the artist and a canvas on an easel. As the artist begins the picture, it will not look at all like the finished product. A bystander may mock the picture by saying it looks messy. If the canvas saw itself in a mirror, it might agree with the bystander and decide to jump off the easel in order to try to improve itself. As the canvas would make marks, the artist would wince because He had not planned for those marks to be there. The artist would then appeal to the canvas to get back up on the easel so He could finish the picture He began.

In similar fashion, a child is often mocked by neighbors or classmates who point out differences in his physical features. He may "jump off" *Adonai's* easel and begin making his own decisions in life. The decisions he makes are like marks on the canvas, but *Adonai* is merciful and promises that if His child gets back up on His easel, He will erase the marks made, and the ones that cannot be erased, He will make part of the message. In this way, He will give "beauty for ashes." (See Isaiah 61:3.)

In this concept, we are able to understand the importance of having patience while *Adonai* works on the picture of our soul. Those who have jumped off must get back on the easel and cooperate with *Adonai*.

8. Grace is the desire and power Adonai gives to do His will.

A key factor in understanding why *Adonai* allows humbling physical features is understanding the vital importance of *grace* and how to receive it. *Grace* is dynamic power which *Adonai* gives us to carry out His will.

Grace is given only to those who are humble. (See James 4:6.) Therefore, *Adonai* must take us through humbling circumstances in order to conquer our pride and give us more of His grace. This was Rabbi *Sha'ul's* experience with his thorn in the flesh.

Answer the question: How the changes you would like to make would actually remove an important means of your receiving *Adonai's* grace?

9. Our defects are Adonai's marks of ownership.

One of the most powerful concepts in helping us thank *Adonai* for the way we were made is viewing our defects as *marks of ownership*. This concept is illustrated by a cattle rancher's placing a brand on each animal to identify ownership. A similar mark of ownership is placed on the ears of sheep (we are sheep). *Adonai* knows that we are prone to forget that we belong to Him. "*Or don't you know that your body is a temple for the Ruach HaKodesh who lives inside you, whom you received from G-d? The fact is, you don't belong to yourselves; for you were bought at a price. So use your bodies to glorify G-d.*" (I Corinthians 6:19-20)

A scar, birthmark, or 'deformity' will take on new meaning as it is viewed as Adonai's mark of ownership.

Any birthmark, scar, or defect can take on a whole new meaning by being viewed as a mark of ownership. Rabbi *Sha'ul* stated that he carried in his body the marks of *Yeshua*: "I have scars on my body to prove that I belong to *Yeshua*!" (*Galatians 6:17*). The word *marks* here is translated from the Greek word *stigma*. It means "*a mark incised or punched for recognition of ownership; a scar of service; a brand to identify ownership*"

If a defect can be turned into a daily reminder that we belong to *Adonai*, it will serve a very useful purpose by allowing us to "*glory in our infirmities.*"

10. Adonai has a special purpose for the fatherless.

A common cause of bitterness is the loss or absence of parents, especially the father. *Adonai* knows the importance of a father's role in the lives of children. Therefore, He is careful to explain in Scripture that He is "*a father of the fatherless...*" (*Psalms 68:5, KJV*), and that "*Even though my father and mother have left me, ADONAI will care for me.*" (*Psalms 27:10*).

It is also important to point out to a son or daughter who has lost one or both parents that *Adonai* has a special purpose for his or her life. This fact can be illustrated by pointing out the many great men and women in Scripture who were brought up without their birth parents.

For example, Moses was taken from his parents. Samuel was given up by his parents. Daniel was separated from his parents. Both of Esther's parents died. Timothy lost his father, and so did *Yeshua* sometime during His growing-up years.

In order for one who is fatherless to overcome bitterness and experience *Adonai's* special purpose for his life, he must do two things: first, thank *Adonai* for His purposes in taking away his birth father; and second, dedicate himself to serving *Adonai* and others. Each of the fatherless in Scripture who were mentioned above became great through serving. It is helpful to make an audible prayer, thanking *Adonai* for His greater purposes and dedicating ourselves to serving *Adonai* and others.

11. Birth order produces predictable tendencies.

Scripture identifies various individuals as firstborn, second born, or third born. These same individuals possess characteristics that tend to correspond with their birth order. In helping a person accept himself, it is important to understand how his position in the family affects his outlook on life, his relationship with others, and his basic needs. It would be important to study this material in the future and be able to explain the general concepts behind it.

Key Questions and Steps of Action

If you had the power, would you change anything about the way you look?

When you were younger, did others point out 'defects' in your outward appearance or call you names?

Have you ever wished you could look like somebody else?

Do you know what the meaning of your name is?

Do you know what your motivational spiritual gift is?

Have you ever thanked *Adonai* for the way He made you?

1. Emphasize how *Adonai* formed him in love.
2. Identify *Adonai's* ten unchangeables.
3. Explain how character brings happiness.
4. Point out that *Adonai* sacrifices outward appearance or call beauty in order to build inward character.
5. Explain "defects" as marks of ownership.
6. Emphasize that *Adonai* is still forming him.
7. Encourage him to get back on *Adonai's* easel.
8. Develop and use your spiritual gift.
9. Thank *Adonai* for all unchangeable features.
10. Take back ground from past bitterness.
11. List benefits for defects.

Please note that the following sequences apply:

- One who rejects self-doubts *Adonai's* control-rejects *Adonai* the Creator
- Rejects self-rejects others as well-does not accept life partner
- Resents "defect"-feels inadequate-surrenders to moral impurity
- Rejects self-envies others-hurts them with criticism and gossip
- Rejects self-feels worthless-fails to attempt assigned tasks
- Rejects self-seeks out important people-boasts of accomplishments
- Rejects self-anticipates rejection-does foolish things for attention
- Feels inferior-wants children to excel-puts undue pressure on them
- Rejects family-avoids being with them-becomes peer dependent
- Rejects "defects-tries to hide them-conforms to passing fads
- Rejects self-needs status symbols to impress-goes into debt