



***So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:27)***

**Just about every morning I take my dog for a walk. About thirty minutes later we return to the fenced-in backyard and I unclip the leash and slip off the harness. And then, it never fails. Rocket looks me in the eye for the briefest of moments, and then he's gone, zooming full speed across the yard. Before we rescued him Rocket ran because he was forced to. Now he runs because he wants to, because it's in his DNA. He bounds across the yard with joy, sometimes leaping into the air, or chasing down a toy, ears pinned back, (almost) always graceful, beautiful to watch not only because his athletic ability is on full display, but mostly because it's what God intended for him to do. He runs until he is completely out of breath, gas tank empty, and then he lopes over to me and sticks his nose in my face as if to say, "OK, I'm done now, you can scratch my back." And so I do, a reward just for doing what God created him to do. This routine repeats every morning. And it never gets old.**

**I've been reflecting lately on the satisfaction I experience from witnessing one of God's creatures do precisely what he was made to do. And it made me think of this passage from Genesis where the poet asserts that God created human beings in God's image. This text has been misinterpreted so many times to mean that we somehow bear the actual image of God, that we in some way mirror the physical or spiritual characteristics of the Creator. But that's not what it means. I remember an Old Testament professor in seminary explaining it this way: God had a blueprint for each person; there was an "image" in God's mind, a vision of what every single human being is supposed to become.**

**If that is indeed the correct interpretation, and I believe it is (my professor was a very smart guy!), then it would follow that we would find ultimate joy in fulfilling that vision of God's purpose for our lives.**

**The prophet Jeremiah said, “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord. “Plans to prosper you and not to harm you. Plans to give you hope and a future.”**

**(Jeremiah 29:11)**

**I don't know how often we allow ourselves to think about God's purpose for our lives. I feel fortunate that I get to do that almost every day while watching Rocket speed across my backyard. Today I want to encourage you to carve out some time to simply reflect on what you are doing with your life, and ask yourself if what you are doing matches up with your understanding of how God imagines your life to be. Are you fulfilling the purpose God laid out for you when God first called you into being? What can you do to move yourself closer to God's plan? Perhaps you can end your time of reflection with the prayer below.**

**Pastor Chuck**

**Creator God, you have a blueprint for everything and everyone, an image of what you want us to become. Help me to live into that image every single day. Help me to commit my life to doing the things you have created me to do. Fill me with the joy that only comes from fulfilling your purpose for my life. Amen**