

“Gattaca” starring Ethan Hawke, Uma Thurman, Jude Law, 1997, PG-13, 106 minutes

Major themes:

- Ethics
- Eugenics
- Destiny
- Expectations
- Discrimination
- Value of life

Major characters:

- “Vincent” Anton Freeman
- Jerome “Eugene” Morrow
- Irene Cassini
- Anton Freeman
- Director Josef
- Dr. Lamar

Movie Nights for Thinkers and Seekers

Scriptures:

Ecclesiastes 7:13 (KJB) – *“Consider the work of God: for who can make that straight, which he hath made crooked?”*

Romans 5:3 – 6, 8 (The Message) – *“We continue to shout our praise even when we're hemmed in with troubles, because we know how troubles can develop passionate patience in us, and how that patience in turn forges the tempered steel of virtue, keeping us alert for whatever God will do next. In alert expectancy such as this, we're never left feeling shortchanged. Quite the contrary—we can't round up enough containers to hold everything God generously pours into our lives through the Holy Spirit! Christ arrives right on time to make this happen. He didn't, and doesn't, wait for us to get ready . . . God put his love on the line for us by offering his Son in sacrificial death while we were of no use whatever to him.”*

Psalms 139:13 – 17 (NLT) – *“You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed. How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered!”*

Acts 15:8 – 9 (The Message) – *“God, who can't be fooled by any pretense on our part but always knows a person's thoughts, gave them the Holy Spirit exactly as he gave him to us. He treated the outsiders exactly as he treated us, beginning at the very center of who they were and working from that center outward, cleaning up their lives as they trusted and believed him.”*

1 Corinthians 2:4 – 5, 7 (NLT) – *“My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power . . . we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began.”*

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Luke 12:22 – 24 (NIV) – *“Then Jesus said to his disciples: “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds!”*

1 Corinthians 9:19, 21 – 23 (NLT) – *“Even though I am a free man with no master, I have become a slave to all people to bring many to Christ. When I was with the Jews, I lived like a Jew to bring the Jews to Christ . . . When I am with the Gentiles who do not follow the Jewish law, I too live apart from that law so I can bring them to Christ. But I do not ignore the law of God; I obey the law of Christ. When I am with those who are weak, I share their weakness, for I want to bring the weak to Christ. Yes, I try to find common ground with everyone, doing everything I can to save some. I do everything to spread the Good News and share in its blessings.”*

Deuteronomy 30:15 – 16 (NLT) – *“Now listen! Today I am giving you a choice between life and death, between prosperity and disaster. For I command you this day to love the LORD your God and to keep his commands, decrees, and regulations by walking in his ways. If you do this, you will live and multiply, and the LORD your God will bless you and the land . . .”*

Background info:

Jude Law's character asks to be called by his middle name, Eugene. "*Eugene*" comes from the Greek for "*well born*," which he is. "*Eugenics*" is the "*applied science or the bio-social movement which advocates the use of practices aimed at improving the genetic composition of a population*", usually referring to the manipulation of human populations. It has become associated with Nazi abuses, such as enforced "*racial hygiene*", human experimentation, and the extermination of "*undesired*" population groups.

Genism, or genoism, is the theory that distinctive human characteristics and capacities are determined by genes. Genism may also refer to any and all discrimination based on the genotype of a person rather than their individual merits.

The word "*Gattaca*" is composed entirely of the letters used to label the nucleotide bases of DNA (guanine, adenine, thymine, and cytosine). During the opening and closing credits, the letters G, A, T, and C are all highlighted.

The film was shot under the title "*The Eighth Day*." This was a reference to the Biblical creation story, which states that the earth was created in six days and on the seventh day, God rested. The original title implies the tampering of man with what God has already made.

The icons used to denote a Valid versus an In-Valid have significant meaning. On the scanners, an infinity symbol appears next a Valid's name, denoting their "*infinite potential*." Next to an In-Valid's name, a dagger appears. In biology, a dagger next to a taxon (organism or species) indicates extinction. In addition, the dagger symbol resembles a cross, a reference to In-Valid's being referred to as "*God Children*."

Public address announcements in the Gattaca Corporation headquarters building are in Esperanto, an artificial language invented in the 19th century.

The winding stairs in Jerome's apartment have a helical structure, like DNA.

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Giovanni Domenico Cassini, a 17th century Italian astronomer, discovered Saturn's "*Great Red Spot*," the prominent gap in Saturn's main rings, and 4 of its moons. The main female character's name is Cassini. The space mission in *Gattaca* is destined for Saturn. In 1997, NASA launched the Cassini space probe bound for Saturn, with an expected impact in 2017. Cassini's son, grandson, and great-grandson went on to also become notable astronomers! His great-great-grandson broke this tradition, but nevertheless became a notable botanist.

The FBI agents are called "*Hoovers*," a reference to the longest-serving director of the FBI, J. Edgar Hoover, but also a clever reference to a vacuum cleaner brand. There are numerous shots of vacuums being used to gather DNA evidence.

New Zealand writer-director Andrew Niccol also wrote the script for "*The Truman Show*."

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Discussion points:

1. Where does our society stand on various forms of discrimination? Discuss this quote from the movie: *"We now have discrimination down to a science."*
2. One movie tagline says, *"There is no gene for the human spirit."* Talents, gifts, abilities, and genes are God's gift to us. What we do with them is our gift to God. Discuss.
3. What does the naming of the brothers say about the value in the father's eyes of each of his sons?
4. The human condition could be described as de-gene-eration. No matter how much our physical bodies are improved, we need more than genetic engineering to cure our human condition – we need a Savior. Discuss what Jesus Christ did for us in re-gene-eration.
5. Faith has been defined as r-i-s-k . . . can we see places in our lives where we have *"saved for the swim back"* instead of being willing to go all out for the glory of God?
6. What can we learn from the predictions made about Vincent's life when he was born? What kinds of predictions have you experienced? How do predictions such as these relate to the sovereignty of God? the free will of man?
7. In what ways does our society discriminate against people who are *"less than?"* How can we *"act justly"* and *"love mercy"* and *"walk humbly with our God"* (Micah 6:8)?