

## **Humanity**

**Key Verse:** Genesis 1:26-27

**Key Idea:** I believe that God created male and female in His image.

**Key Question:** Why did God create male and female in His image and what does that mean?

After God created the plants and animals on the earth, he had one more thing to create, the pinnacle of his creation:

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."  
(Genesis 1:27-28)

God did not create us because he was lacking or needing anything. He wasn't lonely, nor did he need someone or something to bring him praise or give him glory. But he still chose to create us, and we do bring him glory. In Isaiah 43:7, God says "Everyone who is called by my name...I created for my glory." Although this fact is supposed to give our lives significance, unless we understand what it means, it can seem empty and meaningless. To give God glory means to give him great honor and praise, and we can do that in various ways.

### **Created for God's Glory**

Because we were created for God's glory, our ultimate goal in life should be to live for his glory. Giving God glory will give our lives purpose and meaning; it will give us the joy in our life that we all long for. Giving God glory is part of the life Jesus spoke of when he said, "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly" (John 10:10).

### **Created in God's Image**

If all the Bible told us about ourselves is that we were created for God's glory, this would be a wonderful thing, but it wouldn't really distinguish us much from the rest of creation. For, "the heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork" (Ps. 19:1). Part of our uniqueness, however, comes from the fact that we are the only part of God's creation made "in the image of God" (Gen. 1:17).

Because of sin, God's image in us is partly distorted. His image is not seen as clearly as it once was. Although the Bible is clear that man is still "made in the likeness of God" (James 3:9), that likeness, defiled by sin, doesn't look like everything it is supposed to. For example, sin distorts our moral judgment, clouds our thinking, and hinders our fellowship with others.

The good news is that God's image is being restored. God redeems his children through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus so that they can be "conformed to the image of his Son" (Rom. 8:29), who is the "image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15). Paul says that fellow Christians have a new nature, "which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its

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creator" (Col. 3:10). And while here on earth, we "are being transformed" into Christ's image "from one degree of glory to another" (2 Cor. 3:18).

### Responsibilities as Creatures in God's Image

As creatures made in God's image, we were also made to be his representatives on earth. Much like a king who places images (through statues and pictures, for example) of himself around his kingdom to show where he rules, God has, through us, placed images of himself across his world. This is why he commanded Adam and Eve to "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth" (Gen. 1:28). When they replicated God's image across the earth, they demonstrated all the places where God rules and reigns. And since "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof" (Ps. 24:1), God desires that his image "fill the earth" (Gen. 1:28). When we fill the earth with God's image, we demonstrate all the places where he reigns and rule and bring him the glory he desires and deserves.

As God's representatives on earth, we are also called to take care of his land. When God commanded Adam and Eve to "subdue" the earth and "have dominion over...every living thing that moves on the earth" (Gen. 1:28), he did so as a king telling his representatives to care for his kingdom in a way that honored him. Therefore, although we are free to take from the abundance of God's earth, we are to do so in a way that demonstrates care for it and respect for its Creator. And when we take the opportunity to make improvements to the world we live in, we are bringing God the glory he deserves by making his world look more like he designed it to look.

Therefore, we have great hope and respect for all people – regardless of their state. They, like us, are the culmination of God's infinitely wise and skillful creation. They have the potential to return to the beauty of Jesus Christ, the "image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15), by turning away from their sin and turning to their Creator.

### Personal Questions

1. Why were we created? What are some specific examples of ways we can fulfill the purpose we were created for?
2. What does it mean to be created in God's image? How does that affect your view of yourself?
3. What are our responsibilities as God's image bearers? What are some ways you and your church can fulfill those responsibilities?

Group Study

OPEN

How do we help someone who has a poor self-concept and feels worthless?

VIDEO TEACHING NOTES

**Key Question:** How does God \_\_\_\_\_ people?

**Key Idea:** I believe \_\_\_\_\_ people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

**Isaiah 53:6:** "We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own \_\_\_\_\_."

**Key Verse:** "For God so loved the world that he \_\_\_\_\_ his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not \_\_\_\_\_ but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

**Romans 5:8:** "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still \_\_\_\_\_, Christ died for us."

**(Key Application)** I value \_\_\_\_\_ human life.

**(Key Application)** I see and treat all people the way \_\_\_\_\_ sees and treats them.

**(Key Application)** I am compelled to tell all people about \_\_\_\_\_.

**(Key Application)** I believe all people are \_\_\_\_\_ by God and \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus Christ as their Savior.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Describe the thoughts and feelings that come to mind when you hear about God's radical love for you.
2. Do you find it difficult to receive God's love and forgiveness? Why or why not?
3. What personal disciplines can we adopt that invite the Holy Spirit to change our hearts toward difficult people?
4. Describe a time when God changed your heart toward a person or people group. What specifically caused the change?
5. Describe in your own words God's original intent for the human race.
6. What are some of the results of human sin reflected in these chapters?
7. What is our best defense against false teachers?
8. How does the book of Hosea show both God's discipline and punishment and his compassion and redemption?

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9. How do the stories in this chapter highlight God's persistence and compassion in bringing people into a right relationship with him? Which phrases speak to you personally?

Read Romans 1:18-32

1. What does Romans 1 reveal about humanity and the human condition?
2. How does loving our enemies show the world that we are children of God?
3. The Bible calls us to love difficult people the way God does. Is this possible? If so, how?

**Key Application:** We ought to value all people.

CLOSING PRAYER

### Next Week

**Key Verse:** 1 John 1:8-10

**Key Idea:** I believe in sin

**Key Question:** What is sin and what are its consequences?

### Study Passages:

1 John 1:8-10

Psalm 51:1-4

Isaiah 53:6

### Questions

1. Define sin in a way a child could understand.
2. Sin is within the context of evil. Why is the whole idea of good and bad and right and wrong so confusing these days?
3. What are grey issues?
4. How do we explain the fact that people who trust in Jesus continue to sin?
5. How is sin defeated? How is temptation ignored?

Take a moment right now and talk to God about sin in your life. Ask for His help in resisting temptation.

6. List a few ways that the Holy Spirit helps us live godly lives. (Read 1 Corinthians 10:9-13 and James 4:7-10.)