

# God's Good People

**SESSION IN A SENTENCE:** People were created by God to bear His image in every facet of our lives.

**MAIN PASSAGES:** Genesis 1:26–2:3,15–18,21–25



When have you underestimated something or someone? What happened as a result?

We have each experienced the sting of undervaluing an object, but we have all made a greater mistake—a more costly one—as well. And many of us continue to repeat this mistake day in and day out: We fail to value humanity, both in us and in others, as we should.

# Group Time

## Point 1: We bear God's image in how we rule over the world (Gen. 1:26-31).

<sup>26</sup> Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, the whole earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth."

<sup>27</sup> So God created man in his own image;  
he created him in the image of God;  
he created them male and female.

<sup>28</sup> God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth." <sup>29</sup> God also said, "Look, I have given you every seed-bearing plant on the surface of the entire earth and every tree whose fruit contains seed. This will be food for you, <sup>30</sup> for all the wildlife of the earth, for every bird of the sky, and for every creature that crawls on the earth—everything having the breath of life in it—I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. <sup>31</sup> God saw all that he had made, and it was very good indeed. Evening came and then morning: the sixth day.

With our focus on what's wrong with ourselves plaguing us from within and our culture's shifting landscape of humanity bombarding us from outside, it is easy for us to forget that God has provided the definition of humanity.



In what ways do you see the world attempting to redefine what it means to be human?

**Image of God in Humanity:** The image of God in humanity is understood as \_\_\_\_\_ God's \_\_\_\_\_ in our nature, actions, and relational capacities.

God has placed us as stewards over all creation, and our rule should reflect its value and more importantly the value of its Creator. The greatest way we do this, the greatest way we bear the image of God, is by valuing the pinnacle of His creation—humanity.



How should all people bearing the image of God impact how we relate with one another?

## Point 2: We bear God's image in how we work and rest (Gen. 2:1-3,15).

<sup>1</sup> So the heavens and the earth and everything in them were completed. <sup>2</sup> On the seventh day God had completed his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. <sup>3</sup> God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, for on it he rested from all his work of creation.

.....  
<sup>15</sup> The LORD God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it.

We have staggering potential for work by our creation, but because of our sin, that potential drives us away from the One who placed it within us. But there is good news. Our capacity and power to glorify God through work is not destroyed, only distorted. God's image can be seen in our work when we work for the Lord in His power, for His glory, and according to His will (Col. 3:23). The gospel redeems our work today and gives us the hope that a day is coming when Christ will return and we will finally be able to glorify God perfectly in our work.

Where would you put your work in the image of God on this scale?



Done for People

Done for the Lord

When we rest, we reflect the image of the One who created and rested and the One who will provide our final rest one day. Hebrews 4 speaks of a Sabbath rest that remains for God's people—a rest found in Jesus Christ that will be fully realized upon His return. On that day, we will finally rest from the struggles and labors of our work brought on by sin.

Where would you put your rest in the image of God on this scale?



No Rest

Work and Rest in Balance

No Work



How should the image of God in our lives affect our work and rest?

### Point 3: We bear God's image in how we relate to Him and others (Gen. 2:16-18,21-25).

<sup>16</sup> And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree of the garden, <sup>17</sup> but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die." <sup>18</sup> Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper corresponding to him."

.....  
<sup>21</sup> So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to come over the man, and he slept. God took one of his ribs and closed the flesh at that place. <sup>22</sup> Then the LORD God made the rib he had taken from the man into a woman and brought her to the man. <sup>23</sup> And the man said:

This one, at last, is bone of my bone  
and flesh of my flesh;  
this one will be called "woman,"  
for she was taken from man.

<sup>24</sup> This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh. <sup>25</sup> Both the man and his wife were naked, yet felt no shame.

We bear God's image and honor our relationship with Him in our \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ to His commands.

God expects His image bearers to honor Him as they relate to other image bearers. When we see human dignity as God defined and designed it, we won't treat people differently based on who they are. Instead, we will love all—casting aside racism, classism, nationalism, sexism, and any other "–ism" rooted in sin—as we share and model the hope of the gospel with the world.



In what ways can you bear the image of God in your relationships with others more clearly?



#### Voices from Church History

"The Soul of the poorest Beggar that cries at the door for a crust, is in its own nature of equal dignity and value, with the Soul of the most glorious Monarch that sits upon the Throne."<sup>1</sup>

—John Flavell (1630–1691)

# My Mission

Because we are image bearers of God, we reflect His glory in how we steward the earth, work and rest, and cultivate relationships with Him and others.

- **Identify the places in your life where you struggle to bear the image of God well; then pray for forgiveness and help to obey God with joy.**
- **In what ways can your group engage in your community to affirm the inherent dignity of others (e.g., the poor, widows, orphans)?**
- **What relationships will you begin or cultivate with others who need to have their dignity affirmed as image bearers of God? Who need to have their purpose restored through the gospel of Jesus Christ?**

## Notes

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# Daily Study


## Day 1: Read Genesis 1:26-31

When we read the creation account in Genesis 1–2, we tend to focus on what it teaches us about God and humanity. And we should. Those are critical doctrines to the grand narrative of Scripture that follows this account as well as to our daily living. However, we cannot miss what this passage teaches us about creation itself. How should Christians view and treat the earth?

While God's creation is certainly majestic and reveals much about the Creator (Ps. 19:1-6; Rom. 1:20), we know that we are not to worship creation itself (Rom. 1:21-25). But neither should we go to the other extreme and treat creation callously. Notice the emphasis God places on our role as His stewards over His creation in these verses:

- God created humanity to rule over the creatures (Gen. 1:26,28).
- God created humanity to fill and subdue the earth (v. 28).
- God created the plants and trees to be a source of food for humanity and all the creatures (vv. 29-30).

What God says matters, and so does how often He says it. It is clear from these verses in Genesis that God expects us to take ruling over His creation seriously. We are to be faithful stewards who value His creation and take care of it. And in doing so, we bear well the image of the One who created it all, who is sovereign over it all, and who one day will send Jesus to renew and restore it all.

 What are some ways you can better care for God's creation?

### Voices from the Church

"The more we understand how the gospel redeems our work, the more we understand that our talents and gifts are not ours to keep, but to give away. They are not meant to be used for our own selfish gain, but for the glory of God and the good of others."<sup>2</sup>

—Bethany L. Jenkins

## Day 2: Read Genesis 2:1-15

There is an interesting detail about creation in Genesis 2:5: “No shrub of the field had yet grown on the land, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the LORD God had not made it rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground.” Notice the cause and effect. Shrubs and plants had not grown and sprouted because God had not made it rain and there was no man to work the ground. Both were necessary as part of God’s plan for creation.

Embedded in this cause and effect we find God’s intended purpose for humans to rule over creation. The roles God gave us were not an afterthought. He did not create the world followed by people only then to figure out how we would fit within His design. From the very beginning, God’s intention was for people to work in concert with Him to rule over creation.



How is your sense of purpose and dignity strengthened by knowing that God’s intention is for you to work in concert with Him?

## Day 3: Read Genesis 2:16-25

The end of Genesis 2 records the first marriage ceremony with God the Father giving the bride to the waiting groom. After Adam awakens from his slumber and the Lord presents the woman to him, he responds with joyous acceptance of God’s good provision. Every animal had paraded past him with none being a suitable counterpart (2:19-20). But now this woman, who had been taken from his flesh and bone, was at last the one.

Then in verses 24-25, a parenthetical comment further explains God’s design of marriage. In marriage a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife to become one flesh. God’s intention is for the marriage relationship to be one of deep intimacy and unity, as expressed by the closing refrain of the man and woman being naked with no shame. Marriage like this is for our good and for God’s glory as it pictures the relationship between Christ and the church (see Eph. 5:22-33).



How has marriage—yours or someone else’s—helped you better understand God’s love for you?

## Day 4: Read Psalm 8:1-9

The majesty of creation is all around us—in what we can see and what we cannot see. From the thundering power of a waterfall or the terrifying brilliance of a lightning strike to the intricate design of the smallest of flowers or the gentleness of a butterfly's flight through the air, God has given us ample reason to stand in awe of His creation and more importantly of Him.

This is what David felt as he penned this psalm. Gazing at the moon and stars in the heavens and considering how God created and ordered it all, the scope of creation stunned him. In the midst of an enormously large and majestic creation, David felt rather small, leading him to wonder how is it that God appointed such seemingly insignificant people to rule over it all. What a gift to be crowned with glory and honor by God in this way!

As we consider our role in bearing God's image as rulers over creation, may we echo David's conclusion to this psalm: "LORD, our Lord, how magnificent is your name throughout the earth!"



What aspects of creation amaze you? What aspects humble you?

## Day 5: Read Hebrews 1:1-4

We cannot read the overarching story of Scripture without seeing God's ongoing desire for us to know Him. Every step we take away from Him is followed by Him taking multiple steps toward us as He relentlessly chases us down to restore us back to Him. Prophet after prophet was sent to warn the people of this world because of their sin and to call on them to repent. No matter how rebellious the people were, how blatantly they sinned against God through idolatry, God continued to reach out to them.

Until on that day in Bethlehem when God's voice was heard in a different way—through the cries of a newborn baby named Jesus. Jesus would not be merely another way God spoke; He would be the perfect way God spoke to us as He is the exact expression of God's nature. And it is only through Jesus that we can finally be restored with God and discover what it truly means to bear God's image.



In what ways does Jesus help you better understand your humanity?



# Encourage One Another

*Join together with 2-4 people from your group, or with your family, sometime during the week to reflect on the session and to share how God is working and you are responding.*

Share your thoughts and reflections on the truths from Scripture in this session:

- We bear God's image in how we rule over the world (Gen. 1:26-31).
- We bear God's image in how we work and rest (Gen. 2:1-3,15).
- We bear God's image in how we relate to Him and others (Gen. 2:16-18,21-25).



How have you responded to these truths from Scripture?



How have you seen the image of God under assault in the world this week?



What are some ways the gospel of Jesus Christ can fight back these assaults? Can affirm victims? Can challenge offenders?

## Notes

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---