

DAY 1

The Doctrine of Humanity

Scripture

Genesis 1:26-27

26 Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals,[a] and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

27 So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

Humanity is the Peak of God's Creative Work

In Genesis 1 the structure of the first six days of creation reaches its apex in the creation of humans.

Only God creates. The first evidence of humanity's uniqueness centres around the word create: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The Hebrew word is never used to refer to human creative ability, because God can do something humans can never do—create out of nothing. The Hebrews believed that no material world existed until God called it into being.

The word create is also used at a crucial juncture in the creation process—when conscious life comes into being: "So God created the great creatures of the sea...and every winged bird" (v.21). And it is used three times of the creation of humans: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (v. 27).

The benediction pattern. On the third day God begins pronouncing a benediction at the end of each day of his completed work. Notice that verses 10, 12, 18, 21, and 25 conclude with the asm "And God saw that it was good." What does this mean? It means first of all that God is having a great time with his creative work. He is also saying, "I did a great job. This is coming out just the way I intended."

But the jewel of God's creation has not yet been set in the crown. Note that after the humans are created the benediction changes slightly, but very importantly. After God had completed all his work he "saw all that he had made, and it was very good" (v.31).

The creation formula. Through the first six days of creation leading up to the creation of humans, God uses an impersonal formula. Starting at verse 3 we read, "And God said, 'Let there be light.'" This same formula, with slight variation, is consistent throughout the passage: "Let the land produce vegetation." God speaks and it is so.

But with the creation of the humans the formula abruptly changes. At verse 26 we read, “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness.’” Human beings are the expression of the personal nature of the Creator and are therefore qualitatively different from the animal world and the rest of the creation. Human beings bear the stamp of God.

In what sense are humans created in God's image? The words image and likeness in verse 26 and 27 indicate that there is something about God that we replicate, copy or resemble something that corresponds to the original. God leaves the distinct imprint of his nature on us. What is it?

The first priority of these love relationships is that we were made to be loved by God. In Genesis 2:2 we read, “By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work.” God paused to enjoy his creativity.

In the New Testament salvation is spoken of in terms of entering God's rest. The rest of God is to be included in the pleasure of God and in joining the circle of his love. The often-quoted statement of Augustine is true: “Our hearts are restless until we find our rest in thee.” the first order of priority then is vertical—our relationship with the one who made us for himself.

Second, to be made in God's image means that success in this life is measured by our investment in horizontal relationships. If our primary relationships are in disarray, what does the rest matter? To be made in the image of God is to be made of love relationship. To be made in God's image is to be made from the motive of love and for love. To be like God is to put our priority time and energy into loving God and others.

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Application

- What did you hear? What did the Holy Spirit say to you?
- What do you think and how do you feel about what the Holy Spirit said? How do you feel comforted, convicted & challenged?
- What does the Holy Spirit want you to do now?
- Now talk to Jesus...

DAY 2

Made In God's Image

Scripture

Colossians 3:8-17

8 But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. 9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. 11 Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16 Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. 17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Once we invite Jesus to enter our lives as Saviour, He goes to work to restore the original image.

As a young boy, theologian Alister McGrath enjoyed experimenting with chemicals in his school's laboratory. He liked to drop a tarnished coin into a beaker of diluted nitric acid. He often used an old British penny bearing the image of Queen Victoria. Because of the accumulated grime, Her Majesty's image couldn't be seen clearly. But the acid cleansed away the grime and the Queen's image reappeared in shining glory.

We know, to be sure, that we were created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26), but that image has been defaced by our sin. We are still His image-bearers, however.

Once we invite Jesus to enter our lives as Savior, He goes to work to restore the original image. He transforms us to make us like Himself (2 Corinthians 3:18). This process is described as putting off some behaviors and putting on others. For example, we are to "put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language" (Colossians 3:8) and to "put on love" (v.14).

Unless and until our sin-tarnished souls are cleansed by Jesus' forgiveness, God's image is obscured in our lives. But when we trust Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, we are forgiven and the restoration begins.

Unless and until our sin-tarnished souls are cleansed by Jesus' forgiveness, God's image is obscured in our lives.

Application

- What did you hear? What did the Holy Spirit say to you?
- What do you think and how do you feel about what the Holy Spirit said? How do you feel comforted, convicted & challenged?
- What does the Holy Spirit want you to do now?
- Now talk to Jesus...

DAY 3

Made in God's Image

Scripture

Genesis 1:26-31

26Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

27So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

28God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

29Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. 30And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food." And it was so.

31God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

Sometime today take a few moments to look at yourself in a mirror.

When you do, don't look for wrinkles or gray hairs or for things you don't like about yourself. Try to ignore whatever blemishes you see, and, while looking at yourself, say out loud, "I am made in God's image."

We were made to look like God—not physically, but with the ability to love, to choose, and to communicate. Psalm 8:5 tells us we were made "a little lower than the angels and crowned ... with glory and honor." Psalm 139:14 adds that we are "fearfully and wonderfully made" by God himself.

Perhaps it's difficult for some of us to believe we are special. Maybe other people have made you feel that you are insignificant and worth very little. Maybe you are in a stage of life in which you feel useless. Perhaps you are confined to your bed, unable to do the things you want to do. If so, you need to know that you are special no matter what—because you bear God's image.

Because we are made in God's image, he cares about each one of us. Isaiah 49:16 says that we are engraved on the palms of God's hands. He wants to use each one of us in his goal of renewing his creation.

Lord our God, thank you for the honor of bearing your image. Please use each one of us to honor you.

Application

- What did you hear? What did the Holy Spirit say to you?
- What do you think and how do you feel about what the Holy Spirit said? How do you feel comforted, convicted & challenged?
- What does the Holy Spirit want you to do now?
- Now talk to Jesus...

Adapted from <https://today.reframemedia.com/devotions/made-in-gods-image-2014-06-02>

DAY 4

Created In the Image of God

Scripture

Genesis 1:27

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

**The image of God in which we are created is certainly not bodily form.
Image gathers up aspects of spirit, soul and heart.**

At the risk of being charged with inexcusable boldness, we venture the assertion that while the Incarnation is mysterious, it is not illogical or contrary to reason. We would not presume to settle with a pen stroke those profound and awful mysteries which have stilled the voices of the ages and brought men and angels to their knees in worship; but we would dare to say that in our opinion the act of becoming man was altogether reasonable from God's standpoint. It placed no strain upon the divine nature and admitted into the scheme of God nothing unnatural or inconsistent.

The reasons for so believing are these: Man was originally made in the image of God. "God created man; in the likeness of God made he him." This is a cardinal doctrine of the Christian faith. It is not necessary to understand all that is included in this doctrine, for even here we run into some real theological problems. But faith can soar where reason can never climb, and it is only necessary that we believe the truth. Its power over us depends upon our believing it, not upon our understanding it.

The fact is all that matters: man was made in the image of God. Now, if man was made in the image of God, then God must certainly carry something of the image of man. (That sin has marred the image and introduced a foreign and destructive element into human nature does not detract from the force of the argument.) If a boy looks like his father it must surely follow that the father must look like the boy. Somewhere within man's nature, twisted and deformed as it may be, there is godlikeness. This will not be seriously questioned by anyone who knows his Bible. No student of Christian theology would deny this as a fact, though he might reject the conclusions we draw from the fact.

Sin has marred and distorted that image but not destroyed it.

Application

- What did you hear? What did the Holy Spirit say to you?
- What do you think and how do you feel about what the Holy Spirit said? How do you feel comforted, convicted & challenged?
- What does the Holy Spirit want you to do now?
- Now talk to Jesus...

Adapted from <https://www.cmalliance.org/devotions/tozer?id=45>

DAY 5

God's Masterpiece

Scripture

Ephesians 2:10

For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

God says we are His workmanship

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Have you ever sat and really looked at God's handiwork? Isn't it amazing? You can see the starlit sky at night. The stars seem to shine like diamonds. Or have you ever watched the heavens at dawn when it looks like a blazing orange canvas? Even when stormy days come, filled with gray skies and torrents of rainfall, and winds sway the trees like they are dancing, it is a sight to see the wonders of God's artistic hand.

I couldn't help from daydreaming the other day as I gazed out my window. I watched the lightning and heard the thunder. The rain was so heavy you could hardly see the shapes of the trees. The Creator of the universe created all that artwork. Our minds are captivated at the wonders of God's creation. Flowers bounce back after torrents of rain. Birds and squirrels even sit in the trees as if to watch what is happening around them. Yet in all this beautiful scenery there is something greater.

His greatest masterpiece is you and me. Wow! When the Lord created the heavens and the earth, He rested and said all that He made was good. Yet, something was missing - us. So, He made man in the image and likeness of Himself. Man and woman were created to have fellowship with God. We weren't the afterthought in creation. We were the special finishing touches. He longs for the day when He shall gather His children and we shall be with Him for all eternity.

The Lord dropped a thought in my heart. He loves us so much he chose not to live without us at the beginning of creation nor when He went to the cross! We are His greatest work of art, so valuable that He says we are the apples of His eye.

You are His masterpiece. What matters most to Him is you. He loves you.

Application

- What did you hear? What did the Holy Spirit say to you?
- What do you think and how do you feel about what the Holy Spirit said? How do you feel comforted, convicted & challenged?
- What does the Holy Spirit want you to do now?
- Now talk to Jesus...

Adapted from <https://www1.cbn.com/gods-masterpiece>

houseChurch Discussion

1. Have different readers read the Bible passage from 2 or more different translations.
2. Reflect & meditate between each reading.
3. Scripture

Genesis 1

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

3 And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. 4 God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

6 And God said, "Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water." 7 So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. 8 God called the vault "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.

9 And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so. 10 God called the dry ground "land," and the gathered waters he called "seas." And God saw that it was good.

11 Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so. 12 The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. 13 And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.

14 And God said, "Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years, 15 and let them be lights in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth." And it was so. 16 God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. 17 God set them in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth, 18 to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. 19 And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.

20 And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky." 21 So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. 22 God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth." 23 And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day.

24 And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so. 25 God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

26 Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals,[a] and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

27 So God created mankind in his own image,
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31 God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

Application

1. What did you hear during the reading? What did the Holy Spirit say to you?
2. What do you think and how do you feel about what the Holy Spirit said?
How do you feel comforted, convicted & challenged from the reading?
3. What does the Holy Spirit want you to do now?
4. Share any of the above discoveries with your houseChurch. Ask each other, “What is your nugget?”

Discussion Questions

1. The Bible begins, “In the beginning God...” What does this teach us about God?
2. What is the benediction that God pronounces over the created order prior to humankind’s coming into being in the following verses: 1:10, 12, 18, 21, 25?
3. How does the benediction change with the creation of humanity (1:31)?
4. What does this tell us about how God views humanity?
5. Now talk to Jesus...