



SESSION 2

THE DOCTRINE OF HUMANITY

Human dignity has been distorted by depravity.



WORSHIP

READING PLAN

Read through the following Scripture passages this week. Use the space provided to record your thoughts and responses.

Day 1

Genesis 1:24-31

Day 2

Psalms 8:1-9

Day 3

Romans 7:13-25

Day 4

Isaiah 43:1-7

Day 5

Psalms 139:1-24

Day 6

Ephesians 4:17-24

Day 7

Psalms 119:73-80

EVERYONE IS VALUABLE

Many people think the sole purpose of Genesis 1–2 is to tell us how old the earth is. Simply put, Genesis isn't given to us for that. It isn't given to us to understand *how* or *when* the world was created. It's given to us to tell us *Who* created the universe and *why* He created it. Take a closer look at Genesis 1:26-28.

²⁶ 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, all the earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth." ²⁷ So God created man in His own image; He created him in the image of God; He created them male and female. ²⁸ 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."

GENESIS 1:26-28

What would you identify as the primary theme of these verses?

Notice that this was the first time in the creation account that God said "Let Us." The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are involved in the creation of mankind. There isn't just a physical creation happening here. There's spiritual creation happening as well. You are physical like the animals, but don't forget you are also spiritual—patterned after God to do something higher than the animals. But what does it mean to be patterned after God or created in the "image of God"? Consider the following statements.

People are created in God's image mentally. Just as God is rational, volitional, and communicative, mankind was created to reason, choose, and communicate. Every time a person thinks through a problem, chooses a course of action, or crafts a painting, he or she is reflecting the image of God.

People are created in God's image morally. Just as God is holy (see Isa. 6:3), righteous (see Ps. 145:17), just (see 2 Thess. 1:6), and good (see Ps. 136:1), God created mankind with a "moral compass" to choose right from wrong—a conscience (see Rom. 2:15) to make moral choices.

People are created in God's image socially. Just as God exists in community as the Trinity (Father, Son, and Spirit), God created people to live in community. The declaration that it was "not good for the man to be alone" (Gen. 2:18) represents our need for relationships with other people and with God. We can know God in a personal way and can choose to talk to Him in prayer, worship Him, serve Him, and obey Him.

People are created in God's image eternally. Just as God is eternal, mankind was created to live eternally. Although people have a finite beginning, each person is created with a living soul (Gen. 2:7), an immaterial part of his or her being that will live forever either with God or apart from God.

Which of the previous statements do you find the most difficult to believe? Why?

The dignity of mankind is that God has personally, uniquely, and purposefully created each person for His own pleasure and for His own glory (see Isa. 43:7). Every person matters to God (see Matt. 10:31). Every person possesses the image of God (see Gen. 1:26). Every person is a divinely-crafted masterpiece (see Eph. 2:10). Every person is loved by God (see John 3:16). Every person finds satisfaction and joy in knowing God and fulfilling the purpose for which God has given his or her life.

So there is good news and bad news. You've already heard the good news: every single person is valuable—without a caveat and regardless of what we believe about God or what we've done—because we all are created in God's image.

That's good news. The bad news is that every person you hate, disagree with, can't stand to be around, that's ever hurt you, lied to you, manipulated you, or disagreed with you—they are valuable as well. We don't get to believe that some people are image bearers of God and are valuable, while others are not.

And anytime we disagree with that in our actions or words, we are marring the image of God.

Do you have trouble believing the previous statement? Why or why not?

If every person was created by God and matters to God, then every person deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.

What are some ways you can demonstrate dignity and respect to those who have fallen through the cracks in your community?



EVERYTHING IS WORSHIP

We have already established that because humans are all image bearers of God, everyone has value and is significant. If this is true and we are all significant, then everything we do is significant. Everything we do carries meaning. Everything is worship.

This is another good news/bad news situation. The good news is that nothing you do is unimportant. And isn't that attractive? Don't we all want who we are and what we do to count? If this is true, everything you do is designed to picture something true about God.

The LORD God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it.

GENESIS 2:15

God put the man in this perfect garden and his purpose was to work and keep it. This is a loaded verse. The words *placed*, *work*, and *watch* have much deeper meanings than simply "God set them down in the garden and then had them tilling the soil and growing plants." The word *placed* means to set at rest. It's a peaceful term. It's like when you (against all your better judgment about how you'll be late, or how messy you'll get, or how risky it is) turn around on the interstate to go back and help that person change their flat tire in the pouring rain. You drive away soaked and late to your appointment with no perceivable benefit to you at all, and you still think, *That was what I was supposed to do*. When God placed the man in the garden, He was setting him at rest—at peace. And what He gave him to do didn't disrupt that rest—it's the very expression of it. See, God told the man to "work it and watch over it"—essentially to worship and obey. This is the expression of deepest rest. The way you are most human, both physical and spiritual, is to worship and obey in whatever state or environment you might find yourself in. This is what it means to reflect God's image. This is what it means to experience His "this is who I'm supposed to be" kind of rest. This is done by worshiping and obeying our Creator.

What observations stand out to you the most about this explanation of Genesis 2:15?

That's the good news. Everything is important because everything is worship. The bad news is this: we're all blowing it. The word *worship* comes from the old English word *worth-ship*. In other words, what you worship is whatever has ultimate worth in your life. Worshiping God simply means that you put ultimate weight on what He says about you, about life, and about the world. You then put your trust in Him and obey Him.

And though we all worship, most of us end up worshiping ourselves. Worshiping yourself just means the ultimate weight goes onto you—about who you say you are and who you say other people are. But if all of our lives are supposed to reflect God’s image, and our ultimate rest comes from believing that God is the only one worthy of obeying, then not a single thing we do should be separated from showing that worth. First Corinthians 10:31 says, “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for God’s glory.” Remember, everything you do is spiritual. It’s heavy. It’s important.

What questions come to mind when reading that everything you do has weight and significance?

Paul Tripp describes our worship in this way:

“Human beings were created by God to be worshipers. You can’t divide people into two groups, as if there are some who worship and others who don’t. Every person, regardless of religious profession, has worshiped their way through every day of their existence. I would even argue that everything you say and everything you do is an act of worship. ... Romans 1:25 is probably the best diagnosis on our worship condition. It says that human beings will exchange the worship of the Creator for worship of created things. ... How are you doing in awareness? Are you sensitive to each opportunity you have to worship in word and deed? And how are you doing in action? Are you frequently exchanging the worship of God for worship of created things? For the child of God, life in a fallen world will be one big worship war. Even though we’ve been given the Holy Spirit and the ability to worship the Creator at all times, our sinful nature will fight to worship the created world.”²

From the quotation by Paul Tripp, what application can you make to your life today?

1. Robert Robinsen, “Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing,” Baptist Hymnal (Nashville, TN: Lifeway Worship, 2008), 98.
2. Paul Tripp, “Worship Everyday,” *paultripp.com*. Posted July 14, 2014. Accessed April 24, 2105.