

Humanity

By John Taylor

Pre-Session Assignments

One week before the session, participants will take the following assignments.

Assignment One

Think about your friends or acquaintances. Prepare to share your answers to the following question: Where do they find meaning and significance in life? You can find evidence in what people talk about, what they spend time on and what they find comfort in.

Assignment Two

Read the comments related to Genesis 1:26-28 and Psalm 8:1-9 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share your answers to the following question: What is the unique role God gave to humans in His creation? How important are we to God compared to the rest of creation?

Assignment Three

Read the comments related to Hebrews 2:6-9 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share your answers to the following question: What does Hebrews 2:6-9 remind us of concerning Jesus, even when our experiences seems to contradict the value that Scripture places on us?

Scripture to Memorize

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” Genesis 1:27

Session Goal

Consistent with God's Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit—by the end of this session, disciples will understand the unique significance of being created in God's image.

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It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

A friend feels lost and despairing, as if there is no point to life. She thinks we just come and go in this world, and life or death has no meaning. What can you say is the meaning of life, and what Scripture can you point her toward, to reassure her?

Read Genesis 1:26-28 out loud.

Studying the Passage

Verse 26. Let Us make man in Our image. As the final act of creation, God made humans and set them in the world. Unlike the animals He had created (see vv. 24-25), they were uniquely made in God's image—to be like Him and to represent Him or be His image in the world. **let them have dominion.** Representing God means acting as stewards of God's reign and rule in the created world.

Verse 27. male and female He created them. Both men and women are equally made in God's image.

Verse 28. God blessed them. The first act of God toward His human creation was to bless them with fruitfulness. That there are so many people on the earth is a sign of God's blessing!

Assignment One Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment One** during the week can now report on how his or her friends and acquaintances find purpose and meaning in life.

Discussion Question

What does it mean to be made in God's image and likeness? In what ways are we made like God, and in what ways are we not like God at all?

Read Psalm 8:1-9 out loud.

Studying the Passage

Verse 1. How majestic is Your name in all the earth (also see v.9). In this psalm, David was probably thinking about Genesis 1 and the significance of human beings. He was aware of the greatness of God, even above the heavens.

Verses 3-4. What is man . . . ? David looked at the sun, moon and stars and felt small and insignificant compared to the vastness and majesty of the creation. He asked why God would even notice or care for him or any person.

Verses 5-6. crowned Him with glory and honor. David was aware of the majesty of God above creation and the majesty of creation under God. It felt like humans came in a distant third, but when he read Genesis 1 he discovered that God made humans to be significant! God gave them a majesty which, in all of creation, is second only to God. Even more, He gave man the responsibility to steward God's rule in His creation.

Assignment Two Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Two** during the week can now report on what the Scripture says is the unique role and importance God gave humans in His creation.

Read Hebrews 2:6-9 out loud.

Studying the Passage

Verse 6. It has been testified somewhere. The writer to the Hebrews had probably read Psalm 8, where David reflected on Genesis 1.

Verse 7. lower than the angels. Hebrews was originally written in Greek, so the author was probably quoting from the Greek translation of the Old Testament instead of using the Hebrew, which reads “lower than the heavenly beings.”

Verse 8. now we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. God made humans in His image; to represent Him in the world and over His creation. It sure doesn't look like it right now! Is creation submitting to you yet? Hebrews notes the apparent contradiction between God's created purpose for people and our present reality.

Verse 9. But we see . . . Jesus. The world is not yet what it was created to be. Because of sin and death, humans are not yet fulfilling all that God made us for. However, the majestic purpose of God for humans will be fulfilled, and Jesus has made it possible. By becoming a man, dying for everyone, and in His resurrection receiving honor and glory, He now can bring us back to what we were created for (see v.10, “bringing many sons to glory”).

This is the most incredible fact about being human: God became a man so we would fulfill His purpose for us. This makes us significant!

Assignment Three Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now report on what Hebrews 2:6-9 reminds us of, even when our experience of life seems to contradict the high destiny the Scripture gives us.

On Your Own

In the space below, write three things in your life that seem like the opposite of what God created you for. Then write down three things Jesus did or experienced to bring you into God's purpose for your life. Thank Him for making you in His image.

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven. Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit reveals to you below, and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Give the group this update: "In our last session I made a commitment to . . . I want to let you know how that turned out. On that same issue I think the Holy Spirit now is leading me to . . ."

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Disciples can agree on a way to hold one another accountable. Confessing faults with other disciples allows them to offer grace, insights, and encouragement. Even more important is confession to Christ, the source of true forgiveness and cleansing.

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Groups of disciples always are making preparations for evangelism, missions, and service. Use these minutes to work on the next plan.

Prayer

7 minutes

Every disciple will pray aloud, offering praise to Jesus, thanking Him specifically for His gracious acts, making heartfelt confession, committing to actions flowing from the Bible study, praying toward evangelism locally and globally, and interceding for others as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

At Home: Nail It Down

In three passages of Scripture (Genesis 1:26-28, Psalm 8 and Hebrews 2:6-9), you can see the most important truths about being human:

1. God made us in His image.
2. He blessed us.
3. He made us to represent Him in this world.
4. We are even more important than the rest of God's majestic creation.
5. In Jesus, God became a human so that we can fulfill the purpose He created us for.

Sin and death have warped and twisted the image of God in humans, but it has not been lost altogether. God's plan for humanity has not been abandoned. When we forget our God-given nature and purpose, when we forget that we were created to reflect God and live under His rule in the world, then we seek meaning in all kinds of things that, in the end, are worthless or we despair because we find no meaning at all. We feel like David did when he looked at the stars, as if we are nothing at all and not worth caring for.

We have to see the big picture. Creation (God making man in His image), the incarnation (God becoming a man in Jesus Christ) and redemption (Jesus dying and rising for everyone) remind us that we have cosmic significance and an eternal purpose. We have a wonderful Savior who suffered for us so that we might return to God's design for us when He made us in His image.

Follow up Question

What makes us different from or the same as the animals?

The Making Disciples curriculum is a gift from Southwestern Seminary to those who, for the glory of the Father and in the power of the Spirit, will spend a lifetime embracing the full supremacy of the Son, responding to His kingly reign in all of life, inviting Christ to live His life through them, and joining Him in making disciples among all peoples.