



This week's **FOCUS**

When discussing what makes human beings distinct from other animals, we might talk about our understanding of morality, reason, or the structures of human culture. However, none of these differences make us better, they just make us distinct. On the other hand, the Bible reveals that all human beings, unlike anything else God made, are made in His image. Images, by nature, are reflections. The fact that we bear God's image tells us that every human being, by nature of simply being human, reflects God's glory. If we reflect the glory of the God of the universe, that means we matter to Him. The most important thing about us is that God made us for a personal relationship with Himself.

Central **TRUTH**

All human beings reflect God's glory, and therefore have inherent value and dignity.



EXPLORATION

Genesis 1:26-27, 9:1-7;
Matthew 5:21-22

*Begin by reading
through the
passage.*

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, the whole 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.

9:1 God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. 2 The fear and terror of you will be in every living creature on the earth, every bird of the sky, every creature that crawls on the ground, and all the fish of the sea. They are placed under your authority. 3 Every creature that lives and moves will be food for you; as I gave the green plants, I have given you everything. 4 However, you must not eat meat with its lifeblood in it. 5 And I will require a penalty for your lifeblood; I will require it from any animal and from any human; if someone murders a fellow human, I will require that person's life. 6 Whoever sheds human blood, by humans his blood will be shed, for God made humans in his image. 7 But you, be fruitful and multiply; spread out over the earth and multiply on it."

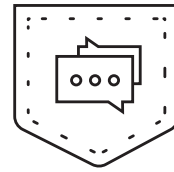
5:21 "You have heard that it was said to our ancestors, Do not murder, and whoever murders will be subject to judgment. 22 But I tell you, everyone who is angry with his brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Whoever insults his brother or sister, will be subject to the court. Whoever says, 'You fool!' will be subject to hellfire.

.01 WHAT ARE SOME TRAITS UNIQUE TO HUMAN BEINGS THAT OTHER ANIMALS DO NOT HAVE? EXPLAIN.

Talk it out

.02 WHAT ABOUT YOU? WHAT ARE SOME UNIQUE TRAITS OR THINGS THAT DISTINGUISH YOU FROM OTHER PEOPLE?

CONVERSATION



Genesis 1:26-27

.03 GLANCE BACK AT GENESIS 1:1-25. WHAT STANDS OUT TO YOU ABOUT GOD'S CREATION OF HUMAN BEINGS COMPARED WITH EVERYTHING ELSE HE MADE?

.04 WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD (SEE ALSO V. 28)?

.05 WHAT DOES THE FACT THAT GOD CREATED ALL PEOPLE IN HIS IMAGE TELL US ABOUT GOD? WHAT DOES IT TELL US ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE AND HOW THEY SHOULD BE TREATED?



CULTURAL CONTEXT

The concept of the image of God was not a foreign one to people in the Ancient Near East. Several Mesopotamian and other Near Eastern cultures like the Babylonians believed that their kings were image bearers of their gods and deities. Some ancient cultures like the Egyptians actually viewed their pharaohs—as gods. These ancient conceptions of the “image of God” allowed ancient kings to demand the obedience, financial support, and, sometimes, even the worship of their people. In contrast to such concepts, the God of the Bible created all human beings in His image.

Genesis 9:1-7

.06 WHY DO YOU THINK GOD REMINDED NOAH OF HIS COMMANDS TO ADAM AND EVE IN VERSES 1-3? WHY MIGHT WE NEED A SIMILAR REMINDER TODAY?

Reflect and respond.

08

.07 WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VIOLENCE AND THE FLOOD (SEE GEN. 6:11-13)? IN LIGHT OF THIS, WHY DO YOU THINK GOD GAVE THE COMMANDS HE DID IN VERSES 5-6?

.08 WHAT CAN WE INFER ABOUT THE VALUE OF HUMAN LIFE IN VERSES 5-6? WHAT MIGHT IT LOOK LIKE FOR US TO MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO TREASURE HUMAN LIFE TODAY?



THEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

While God's commands to Noah in these verses closely mirror His commands to Adam in the garden (Gen. 1:28-30), there are some notable differences. God's command to rule over the other creatures of the world is replaced by a more negative comment that indicates that the animals of the world would greatly fear humans. Secondly, God indicates that Noah now has permission to take the lives of animals for food. However, God forbids Noah and his family from consuming animal blood—this was likely an acknowledgment that all life is from God (see Lev. 17:12-14).

Matthew 5:21-22

Journal your response here.

.09 READ EXODUS 20:13. WHAT WAS JESUS' TAKE ON THE COMMANDMENT AGAINST MURDER? WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HATRED AND MURDER?

.10 WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR US TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT JESUS DEEPLY VALUED HUMAN LIFE? WHAT ARE SOME OF THE IMPLICATIONS FOR US?

CENTRAL TRUTH

All human beings reflect God's glory, and therefore have inherent value and dignity.

NOW WHAT?



.11 WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MOST COMMON WAYS WE FAIL TO SEE THE IMAGE OF GOD IN OTHER PEOPLE? HOW CAN WE FIGHT THIS TENDENCY?

.12 WHAT THINGS MOST OFTEN HINDER OR DISTRACT US FROM ACTIVELY TREASURING HUMAN LIFE?

.13 WHAT ARE SOME PRACTICAL WAYS YOU MIGHT VALUE AND SUPPORT LIFE IN YOUR SCHOOL, NEIGHBORHOOD, OR FAMILY?

.14 HOW MIGHT WE, AS A GROUP, SUPPORT AND TREASURE HUMAN LIFE IN OUR COMMUNITY?

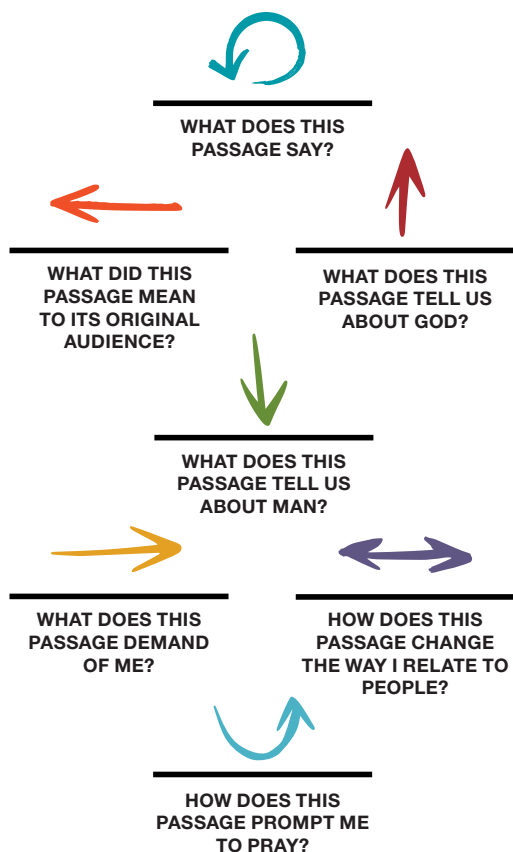
How does this apply to your life?



Daily DEVOTIONS

Choose five days this week to set aside time to dig deeper into God's Word with the following Daily Devotions. We hope you'll make this a priority and encourage others in your group to do so as well.

7 Arrows FOR BIBLE READING



Day One GENESIS 1:20-27

Dwell



.01 HOW ARE HUMAN BEINGS DIFFERENT THAN EVERYTHING ELSE GOD MADE?



.02 WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BEAR GOD'S IMAGE?

There has been a lot of debate over the years about what it means to bear God's image. At the most fundamental level, it seems that God made humans to have a personal relationship with Him like no other creature would have. Furthermore, bearing God's image demonstrates that all human beings have inherent dignity and value.

Memorize

Write Genesis 1:27 on a note card and tape it to your bathroom mirror.

Pray

Thank God for making you in His image and for desiring a relationship with you.



Day Two

GENESIS 1:28-31

Dwell



.01 WHAT DID GOD COMMAND PEOPLE TO DO IN THE GARDEN? WHAT DOES THIS TELL US ABOUT HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH PEOPLE?



.02 HOW MIGHT A GREATER AWARENESS OF THE FACT THAT ALL PEOPLE ARE MADE IN GOD'S IMAGE CHANGE THE WAY YOU INTERACT WITH AND RELATE TO PEOPLE?

The more you love another person, the more likely you are to trust them to accomplish important tasks. By entrusting humans with the task of working and keeping the garden, God demonstrates His love for them. God's love, care, and goodness are on full display in His creation and interaction with human beings in Genesis 1.

Memorize

Read Genesis 1:27 aloud several times today and write it out in your journal as you strive to commit it to memory.

Pray

Thank God for loving you well.

Day Three

GENESIS 9:1-7

Dwell

The fact that all human beings are made in God's image has far-reaching implications. One of the most important implications is the protection and honor that should be afforded to all human life.



.01 WHY DID GOD REPEAT THE COMMAND HE GAVE IN THE GARDEN TO NOAH AND HIS SONS?



.02 WHY DID GOD REMIND NOAH AND HIS FAMILY THAT PEOPLE ARE MADE IN GOD'S IMAGE? WHY DO YOU NEED THIS REMINDER TODAY?

Memorize

Recall Genesis 1:27 as you walk or exercise. Consider recording the verse or using an app to read it aloud to you.

Pray

Ask God to help you value and honor the lives of everyone around you.

Day Four

MATTHEW 5:21-22

Dwell



.01 WHAT WAS INSUFFICIENT ABOUT THE COMMON VIEW OF THE COMMAND “DO NOT MURDER”?



.02 WHO ARE YOU MOST TEMPTED TO HAVE BITTER OR HATEFUL THOUGHTS TOWARD? HOW MIGHT PRAYING FOR THOSE INDIVIDUALS CHANGE YOUR ATTITUDE?

Jesus, as He often did in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7), demonstrated how common understandings of Old Testament law in His day were insufficient. Through Jesus’ teaching on murder, we see that Jesus expects more of us than merely to not take human life—He expects us, with the help of the Spirit, to fight even the temptation to harbor hatred toward other image bearers.

Memorize

Ask a friend or family member to quiz you on Genesis 1:27. Continue to practice reciting it from memory.

Pray

Spend some time praying for the person or people you are most tempted to hate. Ask God to help you love and respect them.

Day Five

COLOSSIANS 3:1-12

Dwell

Though made in the image of God, we also know that the image of God in us has been marred by sin. Thankfully, Jesus offers to renew the image of God in us through His resurrection from the dead.



.01 WHAT DOES PAUL SAY JESUS IS DOING IN THE LIVES OF ALL WHO TRUST IN THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION (SEE V. 9-10)?



.02 HOW SHOULD A RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS SHAPE OUR RELATIONSHIPS (SEE V. 12)? WHICH OF THE CHARACTER TRAITS IN VERSE 12 DO YOU MOST NEED GOD TO HELP YOU WORK ON?

Memorize

Treasure God’s Word in your heart (Ps. 119:11), and continue to reflect on Genesis 1:27 in the days and months to come.

Pray

Thank God for refusing to leave us in our sin and promising to make us new.