

Genesis 1-2 describes all that God intended for Creation before man sinned and brought about God's judgment. God's design as we see it in these chapters is critical for us to understand what community, vocation, relationships, etc. were meant to be like in a world of moral perfection, of utmost goodness and righteousness, when man and God lived in peace and yet untainted fellowship. This evening we will focus on two aspects of man that Genesis 1-2 highlights, that he was created 1) in God's image, and 2) to be responsible stewards.

Read Genesis 1:24-2:25

I. Created in God's Image

1. What are some 'beliefs' about creation of man that you've heard before (from friends, school, TV, etc.)? What are some implications about human life of each of these beliefs?

Francis Schaeffer, the apologist, said, "If I had an hour to spend with a person on an airplane, a person who didn't know the Lord, I would spend the first 55 minutes talking about man being created in the image of God. And the last five minutes on the presentation of the gospel of salvation that could restore man to that original intended image."

2. What does it mean to be created 'in God's image' and what are some of the implications (1: 27-28 & Psalm 8:3-8; 1:28 & Col 3:10; Gen 5:1,3, Luke 3:38; Eph 4:24)? Ultimately, who is the goal of our likeness to be (1 Jn 3:2, Col 1:15)?
 - 1:27-28, Col 3:10 → Being created in God image means we can hear and respond to God's Word! (1:27-28) are given the ability to know God, at least in what He's chosen to reveal (Col 3); no other creature was able to hear and respond to His Word. **Implication:** we are responsible moral beings, we have the privilege of knowing God's mind, 1 Cor 2:16 says we have the mind of Christ
 - 1:27-28, Psalm 8:3-8 → To share in His rule over creation; we are His vice-regents, given royalty to rule; Psalmist in Psa 8 expresses his joy and praise, in light of all that God created that He would choose to 'crown man with glory and honor' and make him ruler!
 - 5:1,3; Luke 3:38 → Image denotes sonship, as in Gen 5:3; Luke 3:38 says "Adam, the son of God"; a foreshadowing of the sonship of all those who would be in Christ... a paternal pattern is established here already, that we have the likeness of God
 - Eph 4:24 → The image of God includes characteristics like 'righteousness and holiness' (Eph 4)
 - 1 Jn 3:2, Col 1:15 → Christ is the perfect image of the invisible God (Col 1); 1 John 3:2 says that one day we will even be 'like Christ' when we see Him as He is
3. What implications does being made in God's image have on our worth and dignity (1:31, Ps 139:13-16, Acts 17:28)? How is the value of human life reflected in the command God gives in Gen 9:6? How should this impact how we are to treat other people (e.g. James 3:9-10)?
 - 1:31 → Man's creation in the image of God was one of the things declared 'very good' by God Himself; every human being is worthy of honor and respect; Ps 139: we were fearfully and wonderfully made... God had a plan and design for us even before we were born; Acts 17: in God we live, move and have our being. Implication: our intrinsic worth and value is rooted in God Himself! Since God Himself formed us, and gave us the very breath of life, human life is tremendously valuable – much more so than animals who don't have souls
 - Gen 9:6 → human life is so sacred that murder must be punished by life-taking
 - Ja 3:9 → must not slander others, rather
4. Read 1 Cor 6:18-20. What unique designed purpose for our bodies does the writer (Paul) mention here, especially for Christians (v.13b, 19)? How then should we treat and use our bodies (v.20)?
 - Our bodies are meant for the Lord, and are the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in us; we must honor God with our body
 - Specifically here, sexual sin is particularly heinous because it's sin against part of the very thing that God created in His image, and in which He dwells... the body

5. What does being made in God's image mean in terms of the moral standard we're given and that we need to live by (Eph 4:24)? Who's moral standard is it and what happens as man chooses to go against this standard and mar the image of God? (Rom 1:28-32; 2:14-15)
- God's moral standard is 'written in our hearts' – those who don't know God are still accountable to the law written on their hearts because we were all created in His image
 - As man chooses to disobey and 'suppress the truth', God gives them over to their sin and allowed man to spiral downwards morally

II. Created to be Stewards

1. What were the primary responsibilities given to man in the Creation account (1:28; 2:5b, 15; 2:19)? Out of what motivation did God give these responsibilities to man (1:28a)? What does this tell us about the nature of work that God intended?
- 1:28, Psalm 8 → Two things: fill the earth and subdue it... and rule over; Hebrew word 'rule' used 25 times in OT; suggests responsibility more so than authority → to be 'stewards' of the earth
 - 2:5b, 15 → to work the ground and take care of it
 - 2:19 → to classify and name each living creature – to bring about God's order to Creation
 - Motivation: 1:28 → "God blessed them and said to them..."; the duty to fill the earth and subdue it was an act of blessing to man, from God
2. The 'rule' that God gave to man over everything (e.g. 1:28), in the Hebrew, speaks more of 'responsibility' or 'stewardship', rather than 'authority'. Read Luke 19:12-27. What is the difference between 'ownership' and 'stewardship'? What other principles of stewardship are brought out from this parable?
- Ownership: the man of noble birth 'owned' the mina and gave it to servants as he saw fit for them to 'put this money to work'
 - Stewardship: the king's subjects were given responsibility to be steward over the mina; the subjects didn't own the mina... the king did
 - Principle: God rewards good stewardship with even greater and better responsibility → stewardship of Minas resulted in charge of cities!
 - Principle: God will hold us accountable and even judge us (v.22) for poor stewardship of what He's given us
3. Read Gen 3:19, 2 Thes 3:6-12. What does Scripture say about those who choose not to work?
- Gen 3:19 → Man must work for his food and the rest of his livelihood
 - 2 Thes 3 → Paul laboured hard to set an example to those around him, that those who didn't work, should not eat; each person should 'earn what they eat'
4. Reflect for a few minutes in your group what your attitude is towards work? In light of what Scripture says about work (God's intent of work as a blessing, the rewards given to faithful workers, and consequences of idleness) what should your attitude be?

Taking every thought captive...

As we've seen, being created in the image of God means that our self-value and worth ultimately comes from Him, not in how we look or what we do for a living, or how much money we make. While we have a certain responsibility to take care of ourselves, God was the One who '...created my inmost being', who '...knit me together in my mother's womb...' (Psalm 139:13), creating us in exactly the way He wanted. Every life is precious – young or old, diseased or healthy, born or unborn – because every life was made in God's image. One of the ways this is reflected is in the privilege God gives us to rule over His creation. We are therefore to heed what Scripture says, to make the best use of all that God has given us responsibility over, and to faithfully administer His design for order, creativity and beauty in Creation *through working* so that, ultimately, His glory would be magnified.