

# Humanity

By John Taylor

## Pre-Session Assignments

One week before the session, students 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 use evidence here: what people talk about, what they spend time on, 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, and just 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 experience of life seems to contradict the high destiny the Scripture gives us?

### Scripture to Memorize

*“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.

**John Taylor** is associate professor of New Testament at Southwestern Seminary. Born in Australia, he studied at the University of Melbourne, Fuller Theological Seminary, and at the University of Cambridge in England. He teaches the letters and theology of Paul and New Testament Greek. His passion is to teach people to read the Bible well because it is the Word of God and to multiply the ministry of the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit into the world. John and his wife, Heidi, were missionaries in England for many years, working in the inner city. They have four grown children.

## 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, vv. 26–28.

**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 rule.** Representing God means acting to establish 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 student 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, vv. 1–6

**Verse 1. How majestic is Your name in all the earth** (also see v. 9). In this psalm David was 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. You crown Him with glory and majesty!** David was aware of the majesty of God above creation and the majesty of creation under God. He felt that humans come in a distant third. But when he read Genesis 1, he discovered that God made humans to be significant indeed. God gave them a majesty which in all of creation is second only to God. And even more, He gave man the responsibility to establish God's rule, His kingdom, in creation.

### Assignment Two Feedback

The student 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, vv. 6–9

**Verse 6. one has testified somewhere.** The writer to the Hebrews read Psalm 8, where David reflected on Genesis 1.

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

**Verse 8. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him.** God made humans in His image and to represent Him in the world and put them over His creation. But 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 do see . . . Jesus.** The world is not yet what it was created to be; and, because of sin and death, humans are not yet fulfilling all that God made us for. But 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 student 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 (the real you) for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something in your life 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 says 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 King 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 being so that we can reach the purpose He created us for.

Sin and death have warped and twisted the image of God humans were created to be, but it has not been lost altogether. God's plans for humanity have not been abandoned. When we forget our God-given nature and purpose, when we forget that we were created to be like God and establish His ways 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.

But 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 a cosmic significance and an eternal purpose. We have a wonderful Savior who has suffered for us all so that we might return to the path God designed for us when He made us in His image.

### Parent Question

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

The Making Disciples curriculum is a gift from Southwestern Seminary to teenagers 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.

For more information about the entire Making Disciples series, see [www.disciple6.com](http://www.disciple6.com).  
For more information about Southwestern Seminary, see [www.swbts.edu](http://www.swbts.edu).