

What does it mean to be "human?"

May 12, 2019

We are made in the **Image of God/Imago Dei**

Episode One – I referred to Dr. Seuss – Horton Hears a Who

**"A person's a person, no matter how small." Dr. Seuss**

*A person's a person no matter how small.*

**God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. ..." So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female He created them. (Genesis 1:26-27 NLT)**

When it came to mankind, **God got dirty and bloody**

**"Then the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man's nostrils, and the man became a living person." (Genesis 2:7 NLT)**

**"The LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. While the man slept, the LORD God took out one of the man's ribs and closed up the opening. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib, and he brought her to the man." (Genesis 2:21-22 NLT)**

**God made human beings exactly like he wanted them made**

In His image

Male and Female

**Men and women and the human race didn't just happen by chance**

The creation of humans was planned

Blueprinted

Artist renditions

Humanity wasn't an afterthought

**"God does not play dice." Albert Einstein**

People have value beyond imagination

Priceless

Invaluable

**Imagine that you are driving down the road and you realize your brakes have failed**

On one side of you is Tesla

On the other side of you is a truck filled with cargo

Beyond you is the front of a beautiful building

Walking across the street is a mobility challenged adult, struggling to make it across the road in front of you

What do you do?

For most people, one of the obvious answers is: "I wouldn't hit the person!"

Why? Why would we make that choice?

The car is a car, the truck is a truck, but a person is a person no matter how small.

There is intrinsic value in the person

How a person views themselves is one of the most powerful thoughts they can have

If you view yourself and others as merely an accident of nature ... there are results

If you view yourself and others *as animals that can walk and talk* ... that view has other results

If you view yourself and others as a no better than other parts of creation ... that view has still different results

**"The most powerful of all spiritual forces is man's view of himself, the way in which he understands his nature and his destiny; indeed it is the one force which determines all the others which influence human life." Emil Brunner**

Every human atrocity – large or small is rooted in a misunderstanding of the human person

The man who takes advantage of a child – sees that child's presence/existence/reason for living is for his gratification.

The woman who sells steaming videos of herself does so because who she is and what she does is a source of income.

## The Good Society Video

The Killing Field, Tiananmen Square, the Holocaust, the gulags, the diamond mines, the kidnapping of girls by Boko Haram, testing chemical weapons on POW

The perpetrators are justified because of a warped and erroneous view of human

"I might be made in the "image of God," but certainly they are not ..."

I bet there are things you've done or not done that you would do differently if had in the front of your mind/before your eyes the thought ... "That person is made in the image of God."

Let me talk for a little while about Identity - Charles Taylor and Tim Keller

In every culture... a person's IDENTITY is based on how a person answers three questions  
Your identity is rooted in how you answer three questions:

What do I aspire? What am I going to living for?

What am I worth?

Who gets to say?

What do I aspire? – What am I going to live for?

Everyone has aspirations

Everyone is living for something

Children, spouse, God, \$, sex, fame, fun, pleasure, environment, politics, power

Yesterday I had an interaction with a local man

As a young man, he spent time in a mental struggle – HSP

Prayed – "God, you help me, and I'll live for the greater good."

I've spent the last 45 years trying to do that – live for the good of the community.

### What am I worth?

Assessment - How am I doing living for what I'm living for?

Am I achieving

How am doing "achieving my aspiration."

\$, sex, fame, fun, pleasure, environment, politics, power

### Who gets to say?

Who gets to decide what I should live for?

Who gets to decide whether how I'm doing on the other two questions?

### Traditional Identity – ***Traditional Identity is Outside In***

People looked outside and beyond themselves for their identity

Their identity was shaped and formed by things outside

Identity from God, creation, family, society, moral truth

The person's value was found in what they were living up to; what they aspire to?

The person would then adjust/rearrange their life to line up with the identity

People chose to make the changes and sacrifices needed for the higher good – for what they aspired to.

Their identity is rooted in their duties to God, family, society, culture

People sacrificed for the highest good – for "Why they are here."

### Amey – Did you make the right decision?

### Modern Identity – ***Modern Identity is Inside Out***

A person looks inward and to figure out who they are, what their value is, who gets to say

People look into the deepest desires, deepest dreams, deepest ambitions to determine who they are

A person determines who they are by looking inside themselves

Then they go out and tell their family, their community, the world that they need to adjust to them

The person is the validator of you

You determine what "higher," is you determine what is of value

You get to say ... not God, not society, not your family/parents, history, culture

*Listen to how the pop star Madonna describes Inside Out*

**"I have an iron will, and all of my will has always been to conquer some horrible feeling of inadequacy. . . . I push past one spell of it and discover myself as a special human being and then I get to another stage and think I'm mediocre and uninteresting. . . . Again and again. My drive in life is from this horrible fear of being mediocre. And that's always pushing me, pushing me. Because even though I've become Somebody, I still have to prove that I'm Somebody. My struggle has never ended, and it probably never will."** Madonna

Whereas in the "outside in" people adjusted their lives to the expectations of the "higher" good

In the INSIDE/OUT view of life

I declare what I'm living for and why I'm valuable.

I'm the one who determines all of this from inside me.

**I declare it to my family, peers, and society**

**Everyone else is required to change their lives** or view of life to conform to ME

Parents, family, and society is expected to change/adjust to accommodate you

Look at this Psalm with me – You'll see the three questions answered.

Why am I here? What will I aspire to?

What is my value?

Who gets to decide?

**“LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in the whole earth! You have made your glory higher than the heavens. You have made sure that children and infants praise you.”**

**“I think about the heavens. I think about what your fingers have created. I think about the moon and stars that you have set in place. What is a human being that you think about him? What is a son of man that you take care of him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings. You placed on him a crown of glory and honor.”**

**“You made human beings the rulers over all that your hands have created. You put everything under their control. They rule over all flocks and herds and over the wild animals. They rule over the birds of the air and over the fish in the ocean. They rule over everything that swims in the oceans. LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in the whole earth!” (Psalms 8:1-9 NIV)**

David looked outside himself

He saw his value and the value of people in how the one created everything related to His creation

He saw man's purposes as purposes given by God

He worshipped God for His greatness

### **One more idea about identity and value and who decides**

Historically, no matter the culture, when a person accepted any sort of religious belief they adapted their lives to that religious belief system

The religious belief system was the “truth.”

The person adjusted their life – inner world and outer world – the “truth.”

Today, people, accept a religious belief system ONLY if it matches what is inside them

They become the determiner of truth

They adjust the “truth” to their inner world

If the “truth” can't be adjusted to their inner world, then the truth is rejected

What's “real” on the inside is more “real” than what is outside.

### **The source of identity means everything**

Jesus and the disciples had just finished eating their last meal together.

They left the city and headed towards the Garden of Gethsemane

Then Jesus told them, “This very night you will all fall away on account of me, ...”

Peter replied, “Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will.”

“I tell you the truth,” Jesus answered, “this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.”

But Peter declared, “Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.” Matthew 26:31-35 (NIV 1984)

Peter was basing his identity on his himself

- They might all be cowards but not me!
- I'm not a coward
- Regardless of what everyone else does

"I love you more than anyone else."

**Peter was basing his identity on his love, devotion, and commitment to Jesus instead of basing his identity on Jesus love for him.**

Are you basing your identity on what's in you?

Are you basing your identity on how you compare to others?

Base your identity as someone made in the image of God.

Base your identity on who you are as a Jesus follower

**I am alive with Christ (Ephesians 2:5).**

**I am born of God, and the evil one does not touch me (1 John 5:18)**

**I have the peace of God that surpasses all understanding (Philippians 4:7).**

**The Spirit of God, who is greater than the enemy in the world, lives in me (1 John 4:4).**

**I have received abundant grace and the gift of life through Jesus Christ (Romans 5:17).**

**I am chosen by God who called me out of the darkness of sin and into the light and life of Christ so I can proclaim the excellence and greatness of who He is (1 Peter 2:9).**

**I am born again—spiritually transformed, renewed, and set apart for God's purpose—through the living and everlasting word of God (1 Peter 1:23).**

**I am God's workmanship, created in Christ to do good works that He has prepared for me to do (Ephesians 2:10).**

**I am a new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17).**

**I am more than a conqueror through Him who loves me (Romans 8:37).**

**I have everything I need to live a godly life and am equipped to live in His divine nature (2 Peter 1:3-4).**

**My body is a temple of the Holy Spirit; I belong to Him (1 Corinthians 6:19).**

**Christ lives in me, and I live by faith in Him and His love for me (Galatians 2:20).**

**"You have never met a mere mortal." C. S. Lewis**