



Image of God: OT Foundations Genesis 1:26-28

- I. Pray and read passage together (Genesis 1:26-28)
- II. *“Your unique identity is formed in how you integrate all these influences (see below list) into a consistent personality who is sustained and true of you in every setting.”* We are a composite of all these influences. . . which of the below markers tempts you to prioritise it over others?
 1. Your race, ethnicity, culture and nationality
 2. Your gender and sexuality
 3. Your physical and mental capacity
 4. Your memories
 5. Your family of origin
 6. Your age
 7. Your relationships
 8. Your occupation
 9. Your possessions
 10. Your religion, convictions, values
- III. Two historical approaches to "Identity" formation:
 - A. **Traditional cultures:** will order the internal self-identity according to the priorities of your external social roles. (family, tribe, history). Looking outward.
 - B. **Post-modern secularism:** The individual is more highly valued than the society at large. Looking inward.
 - C. Discuss the pros and cons of each approach?
- IV. How has “Identity politics” contributed to the fragmented state of our contemporary society? How has this affected church life (theological, cultural, worship differences, etc)?
 - A. **“Identity politics”:** *an ideology which reduces human beings to a certain set of distinguishable identity markers where some identity markers (gender, sexuality, race) are more prized and valued than other markers (religion, family, history). Essentially, establishing a basic understanding of human identity based on our differences rather than on what is held in common.*
- V. Read Genesis 1:27. Pastor Carsten pointed out several relevant implications flowing out this one verse:
 - A. **God is other/transcendent:** God is creator, which means He is “other” or transcendent. He is not to be found within us nor is he found outward within creation.
 1. How does the transcendent nature of God guide our attempts to find meaning and purpose and identity?
 - B. **The Image of God: What does that mean? Discuss the below aspects of this expression to form a wholistic understanding.**
 1. God made us to somehow resemble him. (rational, relational, ruling stewards)
 2. Inherent worth of **every** human being regardless of race, gender, nationality, sexuality, etc. (see Genesis 9:6; James 3:8-9)
 3. The paternal aspect of being created in the “Image of God”: We are children of God. (see Genesis 5:1-3)
 - C. There are three implications of the Biblical doctrine of the Image of God for our contemporary society. Discuss each one and find examples where the biblical teaching challenges our society:
 1. Self-worth found by looking upward not inward nor outward.
 2. An external standard against which we can order our various identity markers.
 3. Affirms both the importance of community and the unique worth of the individual
 4. Paternal aspect, means our primary identity marker is found in being a child of God.
 - D. How does the parable of the prodigal son and the chicken who thought he was an eagle, help us understand the Gospel?