

# Rooted: Core Truths

## Week 2: What It Means to Be Human -- Genesis 1:26–27; Psalm 8

Picture a young shepherd lying on his back in a Judean field, the flock quiet around him, the fire down to embers. Above him the sky is not the washed-out gray we see over our cities but a riot of stars, thousands upon thousands, spilling from one horizon to the other. David has spent countless nights like this, and on this night the old question rises in him again, the one that comes to anyone who has ever felt small under a big sky. If God flung all of this into being with His fingers, the moon and the stars set in their places, then who am I? What is one short-lived shepherd in the middle of so much glory? And then, instead of crushing him, the thought lifts him, because he remembers what God said about people in the very beginning, and he reaches for his harp. “What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?”

David is circling back to the oldest and highest statement ever made about the human race, written on the first page of the Bible. When God made everything else, He spoke it into being. But when God made us, He paused, as if to mark the moment, and said something He said about nothing else in all creation: “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” We are not an accident of chemistry or a clever animal that learned to talk. We were made, on purpose, to bear the image of the living God, male and female, and we were crowned with glory and honor and given a world to care for. David looks at the stars and feels small, and then he remembers he is a son of the King, and the same God who hung those stars knows his name.

Our world has lost this. On one side we are told we are cosmic dust, the chance result of a universe that does not know we are here and would not care if we vanished. On the other side we are told we are gods of our own making, free to define ourselves however we please. Both leave us exhausted and uncertain, scrambling to prove we matter by how we look, what we accomplish, or how many people approve of us. Genesis and Psalm 8 offer something steadier and far more beautiful. Your worth is not something you generate or defend. It was stamped on you by your Maker before you did a single thing, and nothing you do or fail to do can erase it.

That is where this week begins, with the question David asked under the stars and the answer God gave at the dawn of creation. Read these verses slowly. Let them tell you who you are, and who the person next to you is, and let that truth begin to reorder the way you see yourself, your neighbor, and the God who made you both.

**Group Discussion:** Our culture sends a constant stream of messages about what makes a human being valuable: beauty, intelligence, productivity, wealth, influence, independence. Where do most people you know actually look to find their sense of worth, and what happens to that worth when the thing they have leaned on slips away? How is the dignity God gives in Genesis different?

**Personal Reflection:** Be honest about where your own sense of worth tends to come from on an ordinary day. Is it anchored in the fact that you are made in the image of God, or does it rise and fall with your performance, your appearance, or the approval of others? Where do you most need to let God's view of you replace the one you have been carrying?

*Read Genesis 1:26–27; Psalm 8*

## Study Questions

1. When God makes humanity, He says, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (Genesis 1:26). What does it mean to be made in the image of God, and how does this set human beings apart from the rest of creation?
2. Most of us, in practice, measure our worth by something we can lose: looks, achievement, usefulness, the opinions of others. In what specific area are you trying to earn a sense of value that God has already given you simply because you bear His image? What would change if you truly believed your worth was settled before you did anything?
3. Genesis says, “male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27), and both are made in God's image. What does this teach about the equal dignity and worth of men and women, and how should that shape the way we regard and treat one another?
4. James writes that with the same tongue “we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God” (James 3:9). Think of a person or group you have quietly held in contempt, dismissed, or spoken about with disdain. How does remembering they bear God's image change the way you are called to treat them?
5. God tells humanity to “have dominion” over the earth and to “subdue it” (Genesis 1:26, 28). What kind of rule does God intend us to exercise over the world He made, and how is godly stewardship different from selfish exploitation?
6. Every one of us has been given a sphere to steward: work, money, a body, a home, relationships, a corner of God's creation. Where have you been treating what God entrusted to you carelessly, or as if it were simply yours to use as you please? What would faithful stewardship look like in that area this week?
7. David marvels, “when I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him?” (Psalm 8:3–4), and yet he says God has “crowned him with glory and honor” (v. 5). How does this passage hold together both our smallness before God and the astonishing dignity He has given us?
8. It is possible to err in two directions: to think too highly of ourselves, forgetting we are creatures who depend on God for our next breath, or to think too little of ourselves, despising the dignity He has given. Which direction do you tend to drift, and how would a true view of yourself, humble and dignified at the same time, change the way you carry yourself this week?
9. Hebrews takes the words of Psalm 8 and applies them to Jesus, saying that though we do not yet see everything in subjection to humanity, “we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor” (Hebrews 2:9).

How is Jesus the true human who fulfills what God intended for us, and what does it mean that God is now remaking us into His image (Colossians 3:9–10; Romans 8:29)?

10. Look back across both passages. God made you in His image, crowned you with glory and honor, gave you a world to steward, and is now reshaping you into the likeness of His Son. Name one specific way you sense Jesus forming you through these verses. What is the single truth about what it means to be human that you most need to carry into this coming week?

### **Now or Later**

Reflect on these passages: Psalm 139:13–16, the God who knit you together and knew you before you were born; Hebrews 2:6–9, the words of Psalm 8 fulfilled in Jesus, the true and crowned human; Colossians 3:9–10, the new self being renewed in knowledge after the image of its Creator; Genesis 9:6, the sanctity of human life grounded in the image of God; 2 Corinthians 3:18, being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another