

# *deeper*

word faith life

## Season 3

The Doctrine of Man

The Doctrine of Sin

The Doctrine of Salvation

Eschatology

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## Episode 1 – The Doctrine of Man

The Doctrine of Man is also called Anthropology, derived from the Greek word [ANTHROPOS] which means [MAN], so we have the study of man or mankind. We do this from a Biblical perspective dealing with how God relates to man and vice versa.

Why was Man \_\_\_\_\_?

God didn't need to create anything. He was independent, sufficient and satisfied within Himself with no need to be improved upon, perfect and complete in every way. God did not need us or the rest of creation for anything. God created simply because it pleased Him. He created Mankind for His own glory. Isaiah 43:7 says, "...whom I created for my glory." We were created simply for His own glory. When we realise that that He didn't need us, we could conclude that human life has no real value or importance, but when we understand that the human race was created to glorify God, we see that we are important to God. We are truly valued and loved and given significance by our Creator for eternity.

What is our \_\_\_\_\_?

Our purpose must be to fulfill the reason that God created us: to glorify Him. When we look at this from our perspective we conclude that we are to enjoy God and take delight in Him and in our relationship with Him. The Westminster Shorter Catechism states the following, "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever." That is our purpose, that is why mankind was created, to bring glory to God. Whether or not we fulfill our purpose is another matter entirely. John Piper goes on to say this, "God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him."

Man Made in the Image of God

Genesis 1:26 says, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

Out of all creation, God only made one creature in His image, man. This can be defined as man being like God and representing God. The Hebrew words for [IMAGE] and [LIKENESS] refer to something that is similar but not identical to the thing it represents. So God was in essence saying, "Let us make man to be like us and to represent us on the earth." Our true identity and value is in the fact that we are created in the image and likeness of God. Nothing else in the universe can own this, not even the angels.

Genesis 1:27 goes on to say, "So God created mankind in His own image, in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them."

There is something sacred about being image bearers of Almighty God. In this verse, we can conclude that there are 3 imperatives that cannot be violated:

Our \_\_\_\_\_ is sacred - every human being on the planet has intrinsic value and is sacred.

Our \_\_\_\_\_ is sacred - every ethnic people group on earth is dreamt up in the heart of God and is sacred.

Our \_\_\_\_\_ is sacred - gender is a sacred thing and has dignity and significance.

We are not simply a higher form of animal as the prevailing world view would want us to believe. If we believe that then we are against God, we lose our sense of meaning and purpose in life and treat other people as mere animals. People of every race, male and female deserve equal dignity and rights. The elderly, the seriously ill, the mentally handicapped, the unborn babies, all deserve full protection and honour as human beings made in the image of God.



### The Fall of Man

We can read the account of the fall in Genesis chapter 3. God's image in mankind was distorted but not lost. Man is certainly not as fully like God as he was before sin entered his being. Human life is still sacred, but his moral purity is lost and his new sinful character does not reflect God's holiness. His intellect is corrupted by falsehood and deception, and his speech no longer glorifies God. His relationships are marred by selfishness and self-centredness rather than love and servanthood. Though man is still in the image and likeness of God, that image has become distorted in us.

The fall has resulted in mankind being totally depraved. This does not mean that we are as evil as we could possibly be, but it does mean that every aspect of our being is affected by sin. Sin has damaged every part of mankind including God's image, and we are totally incapable of ever saving ourselves from this condition.

The true nature of mankind in the image of God, the full measure of the magnificence of our humanity will not be seen on earth again until Christ returns and all the benefits of our salvation, which He obtained for us, are fully realised.

### How are we Made?

What are we made up of? How do we relate to the physical world, other created beings and to God? We know that we have a body which is highly complex and delicately balanced, an incredible marvel of creation. But we also know that there is something unseen about us, something on the inside, something more than physical. Theologians have been debating this subject for hundreds of years.

Three terms to take note of:

\_\_\_\_\_ - This is the view that we are made up of three parts; body, soul and spirit. The danger here is that we can find ourselves focussing only on our spirit as the only part of us that is important. We can then devalue our physical bodies and neglect them. Equally we can develop an anti-intellectual tendency which thinks that vigorous academic work is unspiritual.

Thessalonians 5:23 says, "May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

\_\_\_\_\_ - This is the view that we are made up of two parts; body and soul/spirit. This has been the historical belief contending that the spirit and soul are interchangeable terms for our immaterial essence and not two different parts of our being. Such a view helps us to embrace the fact that in this life, there is a continual interaction between our body and our spirit and that they affect each other.

Luke 1:46-47 illustrates this interchangeability as Mary says, "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour."

\_\_\_\_\_ - A less common opinion, it's the notion that we're an indivisible unity where body, soul and spirit all refer to our "self" or "life". This view is hard to base scripturally and is therefore broadly rejected.

Trichotomy and Dichotomy both claim biblical support but how do we reconcile them? One way would be to say that both are true. We are a Trichotomy of functions and a Dichotomy of substances. Our essence is made up of two components - the material and immaterial, functioning in three relationships; our body to the physical world, our soul to other creatures, and our spirit to God.



To throw another spanner in the works, we should be reminded of what Jesus said in Matthew 22:37, "Love the Lord with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind."

The Fall damaged the human mind, rendering us unable to recognise or accept God's truth.

After rebirth, the Spirit illumines our minds, enabling us to understand and respond to His Word. Under the guidance of the Spirit, faith and reason work together. Our minds are an important part of our humanity. Jesus commands us to love God with all our mind. Paul said that our transformation comes by the renewing of our minds. (Romans 12:2)

The 17th century Puritan leader Cotton Mather said, "Ignorance is not the mother of devotion, but of heresy." We are called to use our minds in our service of Jesus.

We need to surrender our ALL to Christ, allowing our new nature, or essence to be expressed in the way we live our lives under the direction of God's Word and His Spirit.

Ephesians 3:6 says this, "I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being."

### Where Do Our Souls Come From?

Two views have been common in the history of the church:

Creationism - The view that God creates a new soul for each person and sends it to that person's body sometime between conception and birth.

Traducianism - The view that the soul as well as the body of a child is inherited from the parents at the time of conception.

Both views have been held and defended during church history. The Roman Catholic Church embraced Creationism. Martin Luther was in the Traducianism fold while John Calvin favoured Creationism.

Both of these views can be supported by scripture but none of the noise around these perspectives has any real eternal ramifications so you decide for yourself. What does have eternal ramifications though, is that we know that God made us with an immortal nature and a capacity to know and relate to Him forever. Let's make it our priority to know Him, love Him and enjoy Him.

### Memory Verse

Psalm 139:13,14

"For You created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb.

I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well."

