

God Is: Trinity  
God Speaks: Revelation  
God Creates: Creation  
God Loves: Anthropology

**This Week's Big Question: What is the purpose of humans?**

**Genesis 1:27-28 says:**

**“So God created man in his own image; he created him in the image of God; he created them male and female. God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth.””**

*“Anthropology”*: Noun – “the study of human societies and cultures and their development.”

One of the biggest questions we all ask ourselves is: “*Who am I, and what is this life all about?*” (OK, so that’s two questions... cut me some slack). This questioning is the fuel of teenaged speculation as young people ask which electives they should study at school, followed by what trade or degree they might explore afterward. Many a stereotypical man has gazed at the motorcycle shop in his 40’s and wondered whether a Ducati is the answer to all their questions? Finally, those entering the twilight years find long hours to ask if they have “done enough”? For some people who aren’t Christian, this kind of questioning can lead to despair. If there is no real purpose to our existence, then there is no real meaning, and if there is no real meaning, then that just leaves us floating through the world without a real anchor.

For others, responding to that sense of purposelessness has led to a desire to *create* our own meaning and purpose. Last term Ed referred to this as the “Lego builder approach” where people construct a sense of meaning and a set of values for themselves. I can determine every aspect of my life. What brings it meaning, and even how I define simple terms like male and female. This way of understanding our world is also problematic, because it inevitably leads to a clash of values as one person holds up foundations for meaning against differing ones, with no one being able to claim a definitive value.

For the Christian, however, one can’t get past the first chapter of Genesis before we have an answer to these great questions. *Who am I?* I am a human being made by God with purpose and intention. *What is life all about?* Life is about honouring the God who made us and acting as good stewards of God’s creation.

There is a sense in which this might all sound a little airy fairy, but in reality, this *anthropology* is the most grounded of questions, because our knowledge of ourselves acts as the bedrock for all other knowledge that we collect. John Calvin in his famous book set “*Institutes of the Christian Religion*” starts this famous work with the statement: “*Nearly all the wisdom we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists in two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves*”.

As we grow in a deeper understanding of who God is (as he reveals himself in the Scriptures, and most importantly through his Son) we grow a deeper understanding of who *we are* and what it means to be made in God’s image. This also means that as we find our Christian understanding of the world rub up against other ways of understanding, we have a firm foundation for our beliefs about who we are and what life is all about.

Of course, Christians also know that a fundamental part of how we answer “*who am I*” is the acknowledgement that we are sinners (this time we only make it to Genesis 3 when we are confronted by this). A large part of our understanding of who we are as people is wrapped up in the reality of our imperfection *as people*.

But thinking about sin is a question for next week!

### **THREE QUESTIONS**

How do you think you would answer if someone asked you “What is the meaning of life?”

What do you think it means to be “made in God’s image”?

How does a firm sense of our identity in God’s eyes help us in an age of “identity politics”?

### **RESOURCES FOR THE WEEK**

Bake and decorate a cake. Chat about the similarities and differences between your creation and God's creation.

Everything A Child Should Know About God: Part 2

The-Ology: Chapters 6-11

PTC Course: Old Testament 1

## **LIVING AND ACTIVE PRAYER**

Gracious Father,

You have saved us with a wonderful and powerful salvation.

Your Word is living and active. Today, we have heard you speak,

So help us to not harden our hearts but to live it out.

Forgive our failures, renew our wills, awaken our joy, and transform our lives.

Make our faith living and active.

In the name of your Son and by your Spirit, Amen

### **Tuesday: Psalm 8**

Use this space to reflect on this verse, answer the question, and write a prayer.

How does this Psalm grow our wonder and awe for God?

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### **Wednesday: 2 Corinthians 3:18**

Use this space to reflect on this verse, answer the question, and write a prayer.

How does this verse enlarge your understanding of redemption and what it means for you to be saved?

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### **Thursday: Romans 8:28-29**

Use this space to reflect on this verse, answer the question, and write a prayer.

How do these verses deepen of understanding of suffering and grow our dependency on God?

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### **Friday: Hebrews 2:5-9**

Use this space to reflect on this verse, answer the question, and write a prayer.

Hebrews 2 quotes Psalm 8. How do these verses help us understand the rightful place of humanity in God's created order, and when it will be restored?