

GOD'S IMAGE BEARERS

"You have crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands."

Psalms 8:5-6

When we think about humanity, two truths must be held together. First, we are creatures, not God. We are dependent, finite, and made from the dust. Second, human beings occupy a unique place within creation because God made us in his image and entrusted us with responsibility over the world he made.

Psalms 8 holds both truths together beautifully. David looks at the heavens and asks, "What is man that you are mindful of him?" (Psalm 8:4). Compared with the vastness of creation, we seem small. Yet David immediately adds that God has "crowned him with glory and honor" and given humanity dominion over the works of his hands (Psalm 8:5–6). Human dignity does not come from independence from God, but from the place God has graciously given us within his creation.

Genesis 1 makes the same point. Humanity was created alongside the other creatures of the earth, yet only men and women are described as being made "in the image of God" (Genesis 1:26–27). To bear God's image means, in part, that we are meant to "image forth" God within his creation: to reflect something of his character and represent his rule in the world he made. This gives every human life extraordinary worth. Our value does not depend on intelligence, strength, productivity, age, wealth, or usefulness. Human dignity begins with the Creator who made us to reflect and represent him.

Imaging God also brings responsibility. God commanded humanity to exercise dominion over the earth (Genesis 1:28) and later placed Adam in the garden "to work it and keep it" (Genesis 2:15). Dominion is therefore not permission for careless destruction. It is stewardship. We are to cultivate, protect, develop, and use creation wisely for human flourishing and the glory of God.

This means human beings are neither gods nor intruders in God's world. We are creatures entrusted with a remarkable task. We can build, cultivate, discover, create beauty, produce food, heal disease, and develop communities because we bear the image of the Creator. The right response is neither pride nor self-contempt, but humble gratitude: we are small before God, yet deeply valued and entrusted with meaningful work.

What does being made in God's image mean for how we value human life?