

Week 5 Discussion Guide

26 Then God said, "Let Us make mankind in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the livestock and over all the earth, and over every crawling thing that crawls on the earth." **27** So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. **28** God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth." **29** Then God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you; **30** and to every animal of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to everything that moves on the earth which has life, *I have given* every green plant for food"; and it was so. **31** And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. Genesis 1:26-31

Q: Why do you think God creates humanity *after His likeness* (similar characteristics) to *bear His image* (*His representatives*)?

Q: Discuss how the visual illustration of God, creation, and man helps us to understand ourselves and the world around us better.

God

Man

Creation

Q: Why do you believe that so many men who seemed to be so accurate in their theological convictions were so wrong in their conclusions about the image of God in mankind (ie Thornwell, Gillespie, Bell, etc.)? How can we avoid similar blindspots?

Carl Trueman, in his book *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self* said, "The intuitive moral structure of our modern social imaginary prioritizes victimhood, sees selfhood in psychological terms, regards traditional sexual codes as oppressive and life denying, and places a premium on the individual's right to define his or her own existence." The spirit of this age is the spirit of an authoritative self conception as the defining model for "our own truth" which is categorically opposed to the definitive truth's we see in creation.

Q: How do you believe this spirit will continue to manifest itself in our world and what should Christians do about it?

For the Christian, as we grow we see more of our sin. The natural result is a healthy suspicion of our own feelings, conclusions, proclivities, biases, and preferences and a repetitive return to the word of God, letting the word lead us and shape our understanding of the world around us. In Kevin Deyoung's article *We Must Find a Better Way to Talk about Race* he discusses this idea of realizing in humility our own failings, recognizing that even as we speak our thoughts are impacted by our sin, and continuing in the process of holding these healthy reservations about our own thoughts in tension with revealed truth.

Interact with some of his thoughts below:

Might we be able to acknowledge that systemic injustice can exist while also asking for evidence that, in whatever particular situation we are studying, it does exist? That seems like a reasonable starting place for further conversation. "I acknowledge that structural racism could play a part, but let's take a closer look at the evidence for that claim."

Might we be able to acknowledge personal choices and cultural factors almost always play a role in shaping who we are, the mistakes we make, and the opportunities we find? I'm sure we will still disagree about the relative importance of each factor but recognizing that we are all complex people—not merely the product of environment and circumstance, nor simply the accumulation of our individual decisions—is surely a better way to talk about racial matters than assuming that every disparity is the result of discrimination or that personal responsibility alone can right every social wrong.

Likewise, isn't it possible that American history is both worse than most white people think, when it comes to race, and still a story with much to celebrate and be thankful for? Isn't it reasonable to think that minorities have different experiences than members of the majority and that members of the majority may be blind to those experiences, while nevertheless rejecting the kind of standpoint epistemology that circumscribes the right to speak, and even defines the measure of truth itself, by the standard of one's lived experience?