

HARD QUESTIONS

A BIBLICAL VIEW OF LIFE

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INTRODUCTION

Each week I continue to use the phrase “a biblical worldview.” Everyone has a “worldview.” While there are differences of opinion as to the number of worldviews, there are at least six primary views from which people live their lives: Christian, Islam, Secular Humanism, Marxism, New Age, and Postmodernism.

A Christian worldview is built upon the framework of ideas and beliefs through which a Christian individual or group interprets the world and interacts with the world. Our worldview shapes the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual dimensions of our lives. The most important worldview element is how it answers questions about God.

The Biblical worldview says there is a God—One who is personal, powerful and caring—who created the world and everything in it. It states unequivocally that man is created in God’s image, living in essence as God’s co-regent over creation. Mankind—born and unborn, rich and poor, able and disabled—has intrinsic worth. Almighty God is a sovereign God, ruler over nations, states, empires, and governments. He is to be worshipped and obeyed through the precepts and principles revealed in His infallible Word. He not only exists, but He is sovereign over all of history according to His wisdom and purposes, and He is intimately involved in every aspect of life (Franklin Graham, “A Biblical Worldview in Today’s Culture”).

The five major questions all worldviews answer:

1. Origin – where did I come from?
2. Destiny – where am I going?
3. Purpose – why am I here?
4. Values – how should I live?
5. Truth – what is the truth?

LIFE FROM A BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW

“Then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.” Genesis 2:7

- **The author of life – God is sovereign over life (and death).**

(Genesis 1:26; Job 33:4; Acts 3:15; Colossians; Proverbs 16:9, 20:24; Psalm 31:14–15; Ecclesiastes 3:1–2; Psalm 139:15–16; Job 14:5; Hebrews 9:27; Luke 12:25)

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“Life is a gift from God. Adam became a living being by the breath of God (Gen. 2:7), and if God were to withdraw his breath from humans, they would perish (Job 34:14–15). Since life belongs to God, humans do not have absolute autonomy over their own lives but are stewards of the life given to them by God. The lives of all humans, both their own and others’, are to be cherished and guarded.”

- **The purpose/meaning of life – God is the one who gives meaning/purpose to life.** (Isaiah 43:7; Ecclesiastes 12:13)

Why are you here? I’m not asking why you live in a certain area, I’m asking why has God placed you on the earth? The Bible makes it abundantly clear that God created man and that He created him for His glory. Therefore, the ultimate purpose of man, according to the Bible, is simply to glorify God.

“The meaning of life is to know God, and to enjoy God, and to reflect some of the beauty of God as we know him in Christ.” John Piper

We fulfill our purpose of glorifying God also by living our lives in relationship and faithful service to Him (1 Samuel 12:24; John 17:4). Since God created man in His image (Genesis 1:26–27), man’s purpose cannot be fulfilled apart from Him. King Solomon tried living for his own pleasure, yet at the end of his life he concluded that the only worthwhile life is one of honor and obedience to God (Ecclesiastes 12:13–14).

The Westminster Shorter Catechism is a catechism written in 1646 and 1647 by the Westminster Assembly, a synod of English and Scottish theologians and laymen. The most famous question and answer in the catechism is:

Q. What is the chief end of man?

A. Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.

- **The “*imago dei*” – (Latin for “the image of God”) – God created mankind in His image.** (Genesis 1:26-28)

The study of the doctrine of *imago Dei* must address key questions.

1. What does it mean that man and woman have been created in the image of God?
2. How was the image of God in man marred or affected by the Fall?
3. How is the image of God in man restored in salvation?
4. How is this truth significant to us today? (This question will be answered in the section entitled “Implications.”)

(The following is from an article: *Man - Made in the Image of God* by Don Dunavant, October 1, 2009 in Baptist Faith & Message)

The Meaning of the Image of God

Several characteristics in the uniqueness of humanity help us understand the meaning of the image of God in man. While this is not an exhaustive list, the following seven characteristics reflect *imago Dei*.

- **We are *spiritual beings*.** We are created to represent and worship our God who is Spirit. Human beings are not merely material beings. When God created the first man, He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life (Genesis 2:7), making man a living soul and giving to him spiritual life. Only humans are able to relate to God in worship and communication. A vital component of this spiritual nature is immortality — human beings that will never cease to exist but will live forever.
- **We are *personal beings*.** We are created by a personal God, and our personhood reflects that aspect of God. He created humans with personality, as unique individuals with self-consciousness and purpose. While every man

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and woman share common characteristics, no two people are alike. Since each individual is stamped with the image of God, each human life has significance before God.

- **We are moral beings.** God is holy. He created humanity with a moral compass, a conscience that gives each of us an inner sense of the difference between right and wrong. The conscience may be deadened or seared by sin, but it remains hardwired in man. The hardest question for both atheists and evolutionists is how to explain the moral nature in the human race, in every culture, in every people group, and even in every religion. Moreover, man's moral capacity makes him accountable to God for his actions.
- **We are relational beings.** God reveals the relational nature of the Trinity in this phrase: Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness (Genesis 1:26). God created us with the capacity to relate both to God and to others. Humans were not made to live in isolated individualism. Thus, the image of God is involved in how we relate in marriage and in the fellowship of the church, and how we relate to others in the Great Commandment and the Great Commission (see Genesis 2:18-25; Matthew 19: 1-12; Galatians 3:26-29).
- **We are rational beings.** God is a God of knowledge. While our knowledge is limited, God created us with the capacity to think, to know, and to learn. Christianity is not a mindless faith. Just the opposite. The intellectual aspect of imago Dei means that our minds are a vital part of how we are to love God (Matthew 22:37), that we are to cultivate our minds (Ephesians 4:23), and that we are to renew our minds for transformation (Romans 12:2).
- **We are emotional beings.** We are made in the likeness of God who Himself is love. It is the emotive facet of our makeup that allows us to experience intimacy with those close to us, to feel compassion for others, and to know the deep awe of God that causes us to delight and find soul satisfaction in Him.
- **We are creative beings.** God is the Creator. His glory is displayed in His creation. We have an insatiable desire to create, whether producing a piece of art, starting a business, writing a book, or landscaping the yard. While our creativity is different from God's, who made everything from nothing, the linkage of the image of God in man in creation to the cultural mandate in Genesis 1:26-27 speaks to our creative responsibility. Nancy Pearcey observes that the first phrase, be fruitful and multiply, may mean: "to develop the social world: build families, churches, schools, cities, government, laws." She suggests the second phrase, subdue the earth, means: "to harness the natural world: plant crops, build bridges, design computers, compose music. This passage ... tells us that our original purpose was to create culture and build civilizations — nothing less."

IMPLICATIONS FROM A BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW

A biblical worldview is not merely an ideology, a theory, or a theology. A Biblical worldview should have real world implications. In other words, the Gospel, and God's Word should impact every day of our lives. Believing that every human being has been created in God's image, we are compelled to be concerned about the well-being of every person, including the unborn.

- **Abortion** (Psalm 139:13-16; Jeremiah 1:5)
 - » Biblical reasons to oppose abortion
 - » Scientific reasons to oppose abortion

"Abortion was a known practice in the ancient world. The Bible does not mention explicitly the practice of abortion. Yet when we listen carefully to the teaching of the Bible regarding what it means to be a human being and what it means to take the life of another, we find that the Bible speaks very clearly on the issue of abortion. Moreover, both Jews and Christians in ancient times explicitly condemned the practice of abortion.

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The main issue concerning abortion revolves around when life and personhood begin. Various views have been proposed: (1) at conception; (2) at implantation; and (3) at birth. There is now widespread consensus within the medical field that human life begins at conception, when the egg and the sperm fuse together to form a human embryo. On top of established medical conviction, however, the Bible teaches that a fetus within a womb is a living human being bearing the image of God. In Psalm 139:13, David speaks of how God formed his “inward parts” while he was in his mother’s womb. This text clearly teaches that God forms a new person before birth, not during or after birth. Furthermore, David speaks of himself being conceived as a sinner (Ps. 51:5). Since only human beings can have moral responsibility, full personhood must, according to the Bible, begin at conception. We are compelled to conclude that destroying a fetus amounts to taking the life of a person, which the sixth commandment directly prohibits. The outrage God feels at the murder of the unborn is underscored in his forbidding the taking of innocent life (Ex. 23:7). He “hates . . . hands that shed innocent blood” (Prov. 6:16–17).” [1]

- **Euthanasia**
- **Human flourishing**
 - » Poverty
 - » Adoption
 - » Foster Care
 - » Sex trafficking
 - » Slavery
 - » Drug abuse/alcoholism
- **Racism**
- **Medical ethics**

A biblical view of life compels us to **value the life of the unborn.**

A biblical view of life compels us to **value the life of those who have been born.**

A biblical view of life compels us to **value God’s sovereignty over all of life.**

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The Practical Applications of the Image of God

There are profound implications and applications of imago Dei for the Christian and the church. John Piper highlights the significance it gives to us as human beings offering this definition: “The imago Dei is that in man which constitutes him as he-whom-God-loves.”⁷ Regardless of how the image of God may be distorted by sin, the fact that men and women are still bearers of the image of God shapes our view and action toward others. Six critical areas of application stand out.

- **Evangelism and Missions.** The image of God in every man and woman everywhere gives emphasis to the priority of evangelism and missions. Since humans were created in the image of God and yet are fallen sinners, they

[1] <https://www.esv.org/resources/esv-global-study-bible/the-value-and-dignity-of-human-life/>

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miss out on their ultimate purpose in life — to glorify God by reflecting Him, loving Him, and worshipping Him. Evangelism and missions is God's appointed means to restore us to our original purpose. Moreover, the immortal aspect of imago Dei underscores the urgency of reaching out to those who do not know the Lord Jesus. Their eternal destiny is at stake.

- **Sanctity of life.** No issue since slavery has so divided our nation as abortion. The reasoned voices for life must be heard. Nothing emphasizes and promotes the sacredness and preciousness of life more than imago Dei. It goes to the core of the meaning of life. It means that human life is to be revered and respected. Our stand against abortion is grounded in the fact that abortion is a sin against God as the creator of life and against the human life Dignity. Inherent in imago Dei is the dignity or worth of each individual. This has a profound impact on how we see, relate to and treat others. C. S. Lewis stated it well, "There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal."⁸ Clearly, the image of God in man condemns any type of bias toward, discrimination against, or exploitation of anyone on the basis of skin color (racism), gender (sexism), economic status (classism), ethnic origin (ethnocentrism), or age (ageism) as sin. James 3:9 highlights the dignity accorded to man by pointing out the contradiction of using our mouths to bless God on one hand and on the other to curse people who are made in God's likeness.
- **Sexuality.** The high Christian view of sex is based on the fact that God created man and woman in His image as sexual beings with a commitment to marriage (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:21-25). The sexual union of a man and wife is created for intimacy, fidelity, and faith. The intimacy of marriage also represents the Trinitarian relationship of God and man's intimacy with God. Marital fidelity — one man and one woman as one flesh for one lifetime — is used throughout the Scripture to represent the people of God and their fidelity to Him. By faith, we trust that God's provision for our wellbeing — and our best — restricts sexual intimacy to the bonds of marriage. The implications go to the heart of biblical sexual morality in a world plagued by pornography, premarital sex, extra-marital sex, and homosexuality. One, it distinguishes man from the animal kingdom, for whom sex is merely a biological function devoid of any spiritual meaning, committed attachment, or moral parameters. Two, it warns us of how we dishonor God when we fail to reflect His image by taking sex outside the wonderful and ennobling relationship of marriage. Three, it is a positive guide to flourishing in marriage to the glory of God.
- **Compassion toward others in need.** When we look at other people through the lens of being bearers of the image of God, it is impossible to close our hearts to those who are suffering, poor, or marginalized. In His earthly ministry, Jesus healed the sick, fed the hungry, and delivered those held captive by the demonic. While He was moved with compassion by the temporal needs, He saw that meeting those needs was a bridge to meet the greater need and bring people to salvation. And so it is for us — Gospel-driven ministries of mercy are viable visual representations of the mercy of God and grace of the Lord Jesus.
- **The Church.** Jesus Christ is the image of God (Colossians 1:15); there is a sense in which the church, as the Bride of Christ, is the image of God in Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23). The church, as God's new humanity, represents the image of God by living with one another in shalom (peace), by loving our neighbors as ourselves, and by passionately sharing the Gospel with a lost world.

A robust view of imago Dei is an essential component of a biblical worldview. It informs our understanding of both the purposes of God for us and what it truly means to be human. In a culture that increasingly diminishes the value of man, concluding that the human is merely one more animal produced in a random evolutionary process, it is critical that Christians embrace the biblical account and treat others accordingly, both inside and outside the community of faith.

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CONCLUSION

The Bible teaches that all human life is sacred. We find this in Genesis 1-2. There is simply no way anyone can read these two chapters and come away not seeing that mankind is both the crown of God's creation and the center of God's attention.

- » We can further see that this "sacredness" or "sanctity" of humans when we realize that mankind is the only creature made in God's image (Genesis 1:26-27). This means that as humans we have a spiritual, eternal, moral, and governmental dimension to our lives.
- » Mankind is also the only creature personally formed by God (Genesis 2:7).
- » We also find that mankind is the only creature inbreathed with divine inspiration (Genesis 2:7).

There is Hope.

There is Help.