

Henry Ow
 HCC Sermon
 Genesis 1:26-27; 2:5-7

INTRODUCTION

1. Image: Something that you may not know about me is that I enjoy writing instruments.
2. Need: Our treatment of people reveals how much we value them.
3. Subject: God treats people with grace. Why does God value people?
4. Text: Genesis 1:26-27; 2:5-7
5. Preview: We'll look at three reasons why God values humanity.

BODY

- I. God values people because he created humanity with delight
 - A. God delights in humanity by drawing attention to their creation
 1. The word: create is used three times in the text (1:26-27).
 2. God calls the angelic host to watch him to create man (1:26)
 3. Once God creates man, he audits creation (1:31).
 4. God focuses on the distinction between man and animals (2:7).
 - a. I want to draw attention to the word form.
 - b. The next thing I want to point out is the breath of life
 - B. Delighting in people glorifies God.
 1. The opposite of delight would be envy.
 2. Enjoying people gives credit to God for creating someone uniquely.
- II. God values people because he created humanity with a resemblance to Him.
 - A. God created man in the image of God.
 1. Exegetically: The concept: "image of God" occurs only four times in the New Testament. It occurs three times in these two verses. The final occurrence occurs in Gen 9:6.
 2. When Israel heard the word: image, they would have thought idol or statue.
 3. Culturally: The image of God was applied only to kings and not all peoples.
 4. Theologically: We share certain attributes with God (communicable attributes).
 - a. We resemble God's morality.
 - b. We resemble God's spirit. We can experience aspects of spiritual life (Refer to Grudem)
 - c. We resemble God's mental ability
 - i. We exercise logic and reason.
 - ii. We use language
 - iii. We plan
 - iv. We can create art.
 - v. We have physical senses.
 1. Hear and speak
 2. Taste and smell
 - B. God created man to be like him not a clone of him.

1. Moses uses the word: likeness in verse 1:26 to highlight difference between God and man.
 2. Man is made from dust (2:7) while God is spirit (1:2).
 3. Man is gendered (1:27). God has no gender.
 4. Theological: We do not share God's incommunicable attributes
 - a. We are not omnipresent.
 - b. We are not omnipotent.
 - c. We are not omniscient.
- C. Value people because every person resembles God
1. Being made in the image imbues everyone with intrinsic value.
 2. Value the old and the young.
 3. Value the sick and the healthy.
 4. Value the mentally ill.
 5. Value the poor and the rich.
- III. God values people because he created humanity with a purpose
- A. God created all humanity to rule his creation (1:26)
- a. The word: rule is normally used to describe a relationship of a superior over a subordinate (master over servant, administrator over employee, or a king over his subjects).
 - b. The word: rule has the connotation of a kind/compassionate rule. It's does not refer to an authoritarian rule.
 - c. The word: rule also has the idea of putting down opposition. In this case, it would be the idea of opposing anything that would rebel against God's rule.
- B. Exercise rule in your life because we reflect God's image when we do.
1. God exercises his rule by creating order from chaos.
 2. Cultural: Ancient kings would set up images in places to remind people of their rule.
 3. God creates human beings to remind creation of his rule.
 4. Exercise rule in your life.
 - a. Music Teachers
 - b. Manufacturing
 - c. Grandparenting
 - d. Finances
 - e. Gardening
 - f. Spiritual life

CONCLUSION

1. Summary: God values people, so we should value them too.
2. Closing Image: Quote from C.S. Lewis's Weight of Glory.

MANUSCRIPT

Something that you may not know about me is that I enjoy my writing instruments. I

enjoy being able to write by hand on paper. There's something special to it. Nothing seems to replicate it in my opinion. I have different kinds of pens. I have gel roller pens, felt tip pens, ball point pens, and fountain pens. Each pen writes differently and produces different results. When I write in certain notebooks, I write with felt tip pens because it doesn't smear as easily. If I write using a fountain pen, I prefer using a thicker paper. I treat my pens differently though. My fountain pens are carefully stored and maintained. There are some pens because I have so many that I just throw them into my bag. I treat my pens differently depending on their value.

I came across an article about pens that piqued my interest. This article told the story of a pen that many of you have probably used. If you've gone to a DMV, Post Office, or Social Security office and had to sign a form, then you probably would have used this pen before. It's that black pen chained to the desk. That pen is probably a Skilcraft pen. It comes in both the chained and unchained varieties. We treat this 60-cent pen without much care. If we accidentally carry it home, then we don't think about returning it. When we sort out our stationary drawer to throw away pens, it would be the first to go.

But there are some who treat this pen with a great deal more respect. The skilcraft pen had been assembled by blind factor workers in Wisconsin and North Carolina. These pens had to meet government specifications. It must write continuously for a mile. It must write within temperature swings from 40 below zero to 160 degrees Fahrenheit. Here's a description of the original design: brass ink tube, plastic barrel not shorter 4 5/8 inches, ball of 94 percent tungsten carbide and six percent cobalt.

If a Navy pilot got lost, then they would whip out their skilcraft pen to navigate by map. If a medic needed to perform an emergency tracheotomy, then they would search their pockets for a skilcraft pen. If demolition person lost their fuse, then they could use their skilcraft pen to serve as a two-inch fuse. While the skilcraft pen value little to us, in the hands of an expert the skilcraft pen proved to be an asset. They would treat this pen well. One's treatment of a skilcraft pen reveals how much we value it.

This principle applies not only to pens. But it also applies to our treatment of people. Our treatment of people reveals how much we value them. When our internet service goes out, we call our internet provider. If our internet has been out for days, we have some curt words for whoever we're able to get on the lines. After all, you're a paying customer. And you treat the customer service rep as the target of your wrath. You forget that the person on the other line is just doing her job and probably doesn't know how to restore your internet. You value them only if they're able to get the internet up and running. Pronto. You may not value the opinions of a young person because they lack life experience. You ignore their advice to reconcile with someone from church. Don't they know that you have served in the leadership of this church. Don't they know that you've sent three children to college? How can they tell me to reconcile? Bah! You ignore them. At work, the designer needs to finish your revisions to a print so that you can send it off to the manufacturer. But the designer is taking forever. Doesn't he know that we have a deadline to meet. Instead of valuing them a person, you begin seeing them as a tool. You call them asking: "when is it going to be finished?". You send them passage aggressive messages hoping that they get the hint: this is urgent. They are just a tool to finish a

project. A faulty tool at that. Our treatment of people reveals how much we value them. Our mistreatment of people reveals how little we value them.

But when we think of God, he treats people with grace. He ensures that rain falls on both the wicked and the just. He gives wisdom to non-believers to make technological breakthroughs like the iPhone or operating systems for our computers. He ensures that the physical bodies of healthy people continue to function. Why does God care about people? **Why does God value them?**

To answer this question, we will look in the book of Genesis. This morning, we'll be continuing our series in the book of Genesis: In the beginning. Moses wrote the book of Genesis to explain to Israel their history. As they listened to Moses teach Genesis to them, they would discover their story and destiny. Last week, we talked about how God created the cosmos. This week we'll focus on the creation of man. We'll turn our attention to the passages read to us. Genesis, chapter 1 and Genesis, chapter 2. Genesis, chapter 1 and Genesis, chapter 2.

From these verses, we'll see reasons why God values humanity. We'll see three explanations for why God cares about people. Moses provides three arguments for why God values humanity.

Let's talk about the first reason. **God values people because he created humanity with delight.** When God created man, it made him smile. Creating man was something he enjoyed. He didn't create man grumbling. He didn't create man as a chore. He created man with pleasure. **He created humanity with delight.**

We can see that **God delights in creating humanity because he draws attention to their creation.** Moses wants the listener and the reader to slow down when they get to the part where God creates man. He does this in several ways.

He focuses out attention through the repeated use of the word: create. Earlier in the chapter, the word: create is used twice. God created the heavens and the earth (1:1). God created the giant sea creatures and every living creature (1:21). **But in verse 27 in the creation of man, the word: created is used three times.** Look at verse 27. *“So created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female created them.”* Did you count the number? Three times. It’s as though God is saying: Yeah... I created the heavens and the earth. Yeah... I created living creatures. But wait till you see this.

We see God delighting in the creation of man because he calls for an audience. **He calls the angelic host to watch him to create man.** Look at verse 26: *“The God said: “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.”* While some believe that the word: us refers to the trinity within the godhead, I don’t think that’s what Moses had in mind. If we read verse twenty-six considering New Testament revelation, one can say that it gives early hints of trinity. I think that Moses intended the us in verse twenty-six to refer to angelic host. It’s as though God is calling a press conference. He calls all those who inhabit the spiritual realm, the angels and discloses what he will do. He wants them to watch Him create man. All the heavenly host would watch as God creates his masterpiece: humanity.

Once God creates man, he audits his creation. He assesses it. In all the other days, God creates, looks, and sees it was good. God saw that light was good (1:4). God saw that the separation of land and sea was good (1:10). God saw that the vegetation was good (1:12). God

saw that the creation of the sun, moon, and stars was good (1:18). God saw that the creation of the living creatures was good (1:25). But after the creation of man, God saw that it was “very good” (1:31). God is saying through Moses: “Yeah... all of creation is good. The light. The sea. The land. The earth. The animals. But you... humans. You... people. You make creation very good.”

There’s one last detail that helps us see that God draws our attention to man. After a fly-over of the creation account in seven days in chapter 1, Moses focuses specifically on the creation of man in chapter 2. Some say that chapter 2 seems to be a repeat of chapter one. But it’s more like chapter 2 zooms into the details of the creation account. On what does Moses focus his attention? He focuses his attention on the creation of man. **God focuses on the distinction between man and animals.** There are two distinctions in chapter 2, verse 7. I’ll point them out to you after I read verse 7. *“Then the LORD formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.”*

I want to draw your attention the word form. You may think what’s the big deal? Well, it’s a big deal. When we think form, we may have in our mind a child taking some play dough and slapping it together. But the word form is used to describe the artistry of potter with a clay. The potter would put the clay on a wheel. Shape it. Form it. He crafts the pottery so that it has not only form but beauty. While animals might be beautiful, there is nothing as beautiful as humans that God has formed and crafted by his own hand.

The next thing I want to point out is the phrase: “breath of life”. You may say: animals have the breath of life. But nowhere in Genesis, does God say that he breathed life into the

animals. But Moses depicts God as breathing life into the humans. God imbues man with the breath of life differently. God says there's a uniqueness to human beings versus animals.

If God shows his delight by drawing our attention to his creation of man, then what should our response be? We should treat people with delight. In other words, we should delight in people. When we delight in people, it gives glory to God. God receives the credit for the person whom he created.

Before I describe what delight might look like for us, I want to give a warning. Maybe warning is too strong of word. I think maybe the better phrase would be "a word of consideration".

The opposite of delight would be envy. We feel jealous toward others because God gave them certain gifts or abilities that we lack. God gives this person the ability to take apart a car engine and put it back together. Someone might feel envious because every time there's car trouble, they need to take it into the shop. We might feel jealous because someone has a gifted intelligence and enters Princeton. But you study hard and it's difficult even to get into a top school in Texas much less an Ivy league school. You may feel envious because writing for another person comes so easily. They combine words together so beautifully. While you have a tough time just cranking out an email. Jealousy is not delight. Envy fails to appreciate how God designed a person. It also leads to a dissatisfaction of how God made you.

Delighting in people gives credit to God for creating a person of value. Yes... you may not be able to break down a car engine and put it back together. But thank God, you have the means to pay them to employ their mechanical skills to get your car back in the road. Yes... you may not be able to get into Princeton. But thank God that he has gifted people with an

intelligence that allows them to think in ways you can't. Yes... writing might be difficult for you. But thank God that there are people who are able to mobilize the English language to inspire and to encourage. God delights in how he created humanity in the beginning. He delights in how he created each and every person uniquely. Since God delights in every person, each person has value.

Let's move on to our second reason why God values people. **God values people because created humanity with a resemblance to Him.** God used himself as a blueprint when he made people. He created human beings to reflect him. Humans share a likeness with God. **He created humanity with a resemblance to Him.**

Moses uses a specific phrase to describe this resemblance. This phrase is the image of God. The Latin phrase for the image of God is the "Imago Dei". **God created man in the image of God.**

The concept: "Image of God" occurs only four times in the Old Testament. It occurs three times in Genesis, chapter 1, verses 26 and 27. Note also how it is emphasized. The first half of verse 27 is arranged in a chiasm. When I say chiasm, think sandwich. We often identify the sandwich by what is in the middle of the sandwich. If roast beef is the middle, then it's a roast beef sandwich. If there's turkey in the middle, then it's a turkey sandwich. In the middle of the first half of verse 27, the phrase: "image of God" is there. What does the term mean?

When Israel heard the word: image, they would have thought: Idol or statue. When we were in Egypt, we saw plenty of idols. We saw idols of Ra, Osiris, Isis, Horus. When they heard the full phrase: image of God, they would think: Only one person would be described as made in the image of God. Pharaoh. **Only kings would ever claim the description: Image of**

God. But Moses writes to correct their thinking. No. The image of God is not limited only to kings. Every single human being is made in God's image. The mason. The baker. The carpenter. The mom. The dad. The child. Every single human being would be described as made in the image of God.

What does that mean? What does it mean to be made in the image of God? **It means that we share certain attributes with God.** We call these communicable attributes of God. Let me describe some of the communicable attributes. God exercises logic and reason. We apply logic and reason when we do mathematics. 2 plus 2 equals four. God uses language. We speak to each other using language. God plans. We reflect this whenever we plan to take a vacation. We determine how we will get to a destination. We figure out we'll do when we get there. God has morality. We have a sense of morality. There's an innate sense of right and wrong. People resemble God and have value.

There is a caveat though. **God created man to be like him not a clone of him.** We are not like God in every single way. Look at another word that Moses uses "likeness". It shows up in verse twenty-six. *"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.'"* He uses the word: "likeness" to highlight that while we may resemble God, we are only like him.

For instance, when some says: "you look like your dad". It doesn't mean that you're a carbon copy of him. You may share some features. Maybe you have a pointed nose like him. Maybe you have long face like his. But not all your features match.

Let's highlight some differences that Moses shows us from the text. **Man is made from dust.** That's what chapter 2, verse 5 says: *"then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground"*. But God is spirit. Chapter one, verse two says: *"And the Spirit of God was hovering*

over the face of the waters”. **Note also that man is gendered**. There are men. There are women. Look at the latter half of verse twenty-seven. *“Male and female he created them.”* God has no gender.

Those are some differences we see in the text. But there are also attributes that God has that we don't have. These are what we call incommunicable attributes. We do not share God's incommunicable attributes I'll share just a few. **God is omnipresent**. He's everywhere at once. You and I cannot be in two places at once. If I am in Houston, TX then I am not in San Francisco, CA. We are not omnipresent. **God is omnipotent**. God has power to do things that we cannot. He can create something out of nothing. You and I cannot create something from nothing. That is something only God can do. We are not omnipotent. **God is omniscient**. He knows all things. We do not know all things. If you don't believe me, then do you know what I'm thinking at this very moment? Do you know what the person next to you is thinking? You do not. We are not omniscient. These are ways in which we are different from God.

Although we are different from God, we do resemble him. Since we resemble God, every person has an intrinsic worth. They are valuable to God. If God values people because they are made in God's image, then we should value them as well.

This means that we treat every person with respect because they are made in the image of God. We value the life of the old and of the young. A person has value no matter what state of health they are in. A sick person has equal value with one who is healthy. If a person is thinking rightly or wrongly, their value in God's sight and our sight remains the same. No matter what socio-economic status a person has, they are valuable. We value the poor and the rich.

Each person because they are made in the image of God have an intrinsic dignity to them.

Value people because they are made in the image of God.

Let's move onto the last reason. **God values people because he created humanity with a purpose.** He has a task in mind for humanity. He has a role for people to fill. He has given each person a responsibility. **He created humanity with a purpose.**

What is this purpose? **God created all humanity to rule his creation.** He entrusted human beings with the task of caring for creation. We see this expressed in the ESV with the word: dominion. But in other translations such as the NIV, NASB, or NET, they use the word: rule. Both words carry the same connotation. Man oversees all of creation. We see this in the latter half of verse 26: *“And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”*

The word: dominion is normally used to describe the relationship of a superior over a subordinate. A master rules his servant. An administrator rules his employee. A king rules over his subject. There is the superior over a subordinate. In this case, God puts man in a superior position over all of creation from the living creatures to the earth itself.

When we think of “rule” or “dominion”, we think of a dictator or authoritarian rule. But the world doesn't have the connotation of domineer or boss around. **It carries the idea of rule with benevolence.** You rule by making decisions that are best for those under you. Let me give you an example from the movie: Karate Kid. It shows up in the Netflix series: Cobra Kai too. Mr. Miyagi has his Karate student Daniel-san do a series of chores. Daniel must wash the car, then wax on and wax off. After Daniel finishes his car cleaning duties, Mr. Miyagi instructs him to

sand the floor using circular motions. Next, he must paint the fence. Up and down. Lastly, he has to paint the house. Side to side. After finishing these house chores, Daniel feels upset because he has not learned a bit of Karate. But Mr. Miyagi shows him that these chores actually helped him learn basic techniques in Karate to defend himself. Mr. Miyagi directed Daniel to do things that benefited him. He demonstrated wise oversight and rule.

The word: dominion also has the idea of putting down opposition. In this case, God has entrusted human beings with the responsibility of opposing anything that rebels against God's rule. They need to set aside anything that would make the earth unfruitful. Human beings have the responsibility of defending God's rule.

What does it mean for us? **We exercise rule in our lives because we reflect God's image when we do.** When we provide benevolent and caring oversight, we reflect God.

God exercises his rule by creating order from chaos. The second verse of the Bible describes creation as formless and void. It lacked order. But God speaks and creates light. He separates land from water. He tells the earth to create vegetation. He creates the sun, moon, and stars to govern the day and night. All these things provide order. God then creates human beings to be a reminder of his rule.

Why does God do this? **Ancient kings would set up images in places to remind people of their rule.** For instance, a Pharaoh would set up an image of himself in Canaan to remind everyone that he's in charge. Everyone who lives in the area needs to submit to his rule. This could be done in the form of paying tribute. We see this even today. I remember walking into a social security office in college and remember seeing the picture of our president at the time:

George W Bush. The president exercised oversight over federal programs. His image reminded me of that.

God creates human beings to remind creation of his rule. Where human beings lived is where God ruled. They would serve as a reminder to all of creation that God is in charge. Hence, God commands human beings to be fruitful and multiply.

Human beings are valuable because they can exercise rule in their lives. Let me give you some examples of what this might look like. Years ago, I took clarinet lessons. The clarinet can produce different sounds: A, B, C, D, E, F, G. And there are different ranges. But a skilled musician using these seven notes played in such an ordered way that it sounds like a bumble bee buzzing around. Or a skilled musician could play these notes in such an ordered way that it lifts a person's spirit.

Let's talk about manufacturing. In the manufacturing process, you're able to take raw material like aluminum cut it, shape it, weld it so that it becomes the shape of a door to a car. You exercise rule by using different machines and tools to order and shape the metal to do something useful.

Think about cooking. When you cook a meal, you exercise rule by taking various raw ingredients like flour, eggs, and salt. You mix them together carefully and run it through a machine to make noodles. Then you cut up tomatoes and garlic. You toss it into a pot and let it stew to make tomato sauce. You mix the two together to have spaghetti. You exercise rule in the kitchen.

Human beings exercise rule in so many different areas. Parenting. Managing finances. Developing spiritual disciplines. Gardening. Design. Art. When we do these things, we reflect

God's image because we carry out our purpose to have to dominion over all the earth. When we see people do these things, it reminds us that they are valuable. [Could possibly make a move to evangelism...]

Why does God value people? Why does God care for them? Why does God love people? It's because of three reasons. He created humanity with delight. He created humanity with a resemblance to him. He created humanity with a purpose. We should value people because God values them.

Let me close with a reflection on the value of people from C.S. Lewis. Let me read sections from his essay: "The Weight of Glory" (45-46).

It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you can talk to one day be a creature which, if you say it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all only a nightmare. All day long we are, in some degree, helping each other to one or other of these destinations... There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal... But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit – immortal horrors or everlasting splendors... Next to the blessed sacrament itself, your neighbor is the holiest object presented to your senses. If he is your Christian neighbor, he is holy in almost the same way, for in him also Christ vere latitat – the glorifier and the glorified, Glory himself, is truly hidden.

May the Lord help us to value the people around them by treating with love and charity. Let's pray together.