

Doctrine of Humanity: Teaching Guide

What Does the Bible Say?

Genesis 1:26-28: God made man in His own image, creating them male and female. He blessed them, instructing them to be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it.

Genesis 2: God placed man in the garden to work and care for it. He granted Adam free will and provided an abundance of fruit to eat, while commanding him not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Woman was created as man's helper.

Mark 10:5-9: Jesus affirms the biological distinction of male and female, and upholds God's design for marriage and sex as exclusively between one man and one woman.

Luke 22: In the Garden of Gethsemane, Christ's suffering and dread reveal His full humanity.

John 6: The Father gives true bread from Heaven, which is the Spirit. Without the Spirit, man is only flesh. Those who come to Jesus receive eternal life.

Romans 8:28-30: All things work together for good for those who love and belong to Jesus. His children are conformed to Christ's image, justified, and glorified in His name.

Galatians 3:28: In Christ, God's children are unified, transcending distinctions such as male and female, while still acknowledging their existence.

1 John 3:1-2: God loves us as His children, adopting us into His family.

What Has the Church Said?

Irenaeus of Lyon famously stated, "The glory of God is the human being fully alive." He opposed Gnosticism by affirming the goodness of the human body, the full humanity of Christ, and the restoration offered by Jesus.

Gregory of Nazianzus, opposing Apollinarianism, insisted that Christ assumed a full human mind, will, and emotions. He argued that Christ's full humanity was essential for the full redemption of mankind. John of Damascus defended icon worship, asserting that Jesus Himself is the icon of the invisible Father.

The Second Council of Nicaea (787) affirmed the use of icons in worship and upheld the incarnation of Jesus Christ, validating the material, visible nature of humanity and the goodness of the body.

How Does It All Fit Together?

First and foremost, Jesus Christ is the perfect model of humanity. He perfectly reveals both God's nature and what humanity was intended to be. His life, death, resurrection, and glorification provide the pattern and power for restoration.

Human identity and purpose exist within the redemptive storyline of Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Glorification. We are made in God's image, male and female, with both body and soul for relationship, stewardship, and worship. While sin corrupted our direction, our physical form remains, and in Christ, we are restored for God's glory. We await glorification with resurrected bodies at Christ's return.

Being made in the Imago Dei grants dignity and purpose. Our vocation in relationships, responsibilities, and worship reflects God's design. Scripture emphasizes embodied faithfulness.

We are psychosomatically whole, with inseparable body and soul except through death. The soul encompasses thought, emotion, and will. Upon glorification, our souls will be united with resurrected bodies.

Humanity was intentionally created with limits, which we should embrace rather than attempt to transcend (rejecting transhumanism). Our creaturely limits foster spiritual formation and dependence on God.

We continue to bear God's image, though marred by sin and death. Our rationality, relational nature, and worth remain, but must be directed back to God for His glory. Image bearers include all humanity; God's children are His redeemed disciples. In Christ, unity transcends concrete distinctions while celebrating individual uniqueness.

Ministry Application

The Church must affirm the strict male-female dichotomy of God's image bearers and uphold God's design for sex and marriage exclusively within one man and one woman.

The Church should firmly oppose transhumanism, affirming that humanity is created in God's image, and that weakness and limitations are to be embraced, not eliminated.

Diversity and inclusion must be embraced in a holy way, distinct from the flawed postmodern approach. The Church celebrates uniqueness and individuality through intrinsic dignity and unity in Christ.

We must proclaim Christ as the perfect model of humanity, calling people to follow, know, and love Him, becoming more fully human in the process.

Believers should be encouraged to remain watchful for Christ's return, anticipating glorified bodies in the new creation.

Preaching and teaching should emphasize the doctrine of adoption, recognizing fellow believers as true family members in God's Kingdom.