

1. **The only thing God created in his own _____ was people.** People are a special creation: we are not gods of the same essence as the one true God; but we are made in God's image.

- † We can be creative, analytical, logical; we can discern spiritual things; we can make moral decisions and feel moral results in our consciences.
- † We can communicate and be in relationship with God. We need human fellowship too, just as the Father, the Son, and the Spirit have fellowship with each other.

2. **God had a purpose for creating people.** There were four parts to this purpose.

A. God created people to _____ over the rest of creation in God's name [The NIV²⁰¹¹ and NET English translations best reflect the sense of purpose inherent in the Hebrew verb structure].

- † To rule in God's name meant to rule by God's *authority*, by God's *will*, by God's *direction*, and for God's *glory*. People were to rule for God, not in place of God.
- † When God set Adam in the Garden of Eden, Genesis 2.15 NIV says God commanded him to "work it and *take care* of it." People are not to exploit nature, we are to benefit from it and take care of it.

B. God created people to _____ the image of God.

- † The only way filling the earth with people would help us rule in God's name was if we were multiplying the image of God in those people. God invested spiritual life in people and blessed them to procreate that spiritual life in new physical life, in their babies.
- † Because of sin's corruption of our human nature and the curse on the Earth, not everyone can have children today. Also, all children are conceived spiritually dead [with a corrupted nature], such that they need a savior.
- † Since many children are not raised up to know God and live as his image-bearers, we can reproduce God's image by sharing gospel truth with them, then helping them grow [Matthew 28.18-20].

C. God created people to _____ God's character.

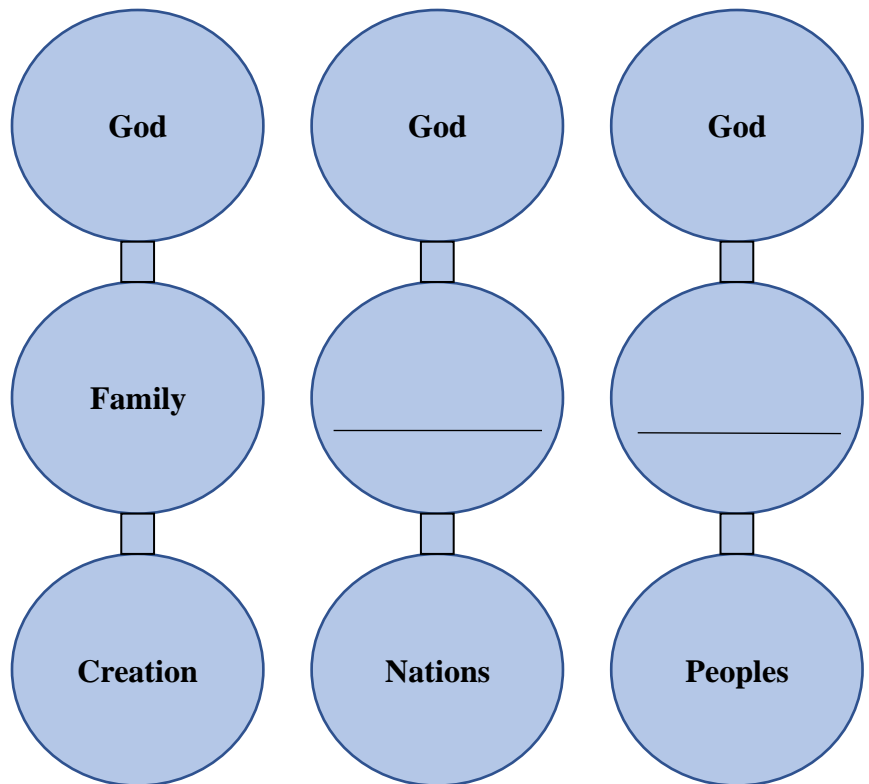
- † Only Jesus was 100% successful at this, being the divine Son of God and a sinless person.
- † When we become Christians, we enter the process of progressive sanctification, which is the Holy Spirit transforming us to be less sinful and corrupted, to be more pure and good like Jesus. As we become more like Jesus, we become more truly ourselves, the people God designed us to be.
- † Our part in this is to stop living in the flesh and to seek spiritual renewal so that we start living as better reflections of God's image.

D. God created people to _____ God in daily life.

- † As people interacted with each other and reflected God's character, they were to represent God in all that they said and did in their daily lives.
- † In the Ancient Near East, an image like a statue represented a king or pagan god. We represent God by sharing his truth and love with others, as we reflect his character in the way we live. In every situation, we should be God's man or God's woman on the ground.

3. God's desire for a representative people has never changed, though how this plays out has. God's character never changes; and God's initial purposes for people never change; but over time, God has provided to his people unique guidance for each historical period.

- † The three circles on the left represent the creation relationship: God as sovereign creator is in authority over the human family. And the purpose of the human family is to be God's image by reflecting God's character, representing God in daily life, reproducing God's image everywhere, and ruling over creation in God's name.



- † When all of humanity was rebelling against God, God selected one family to develop into his representative people. This was the family of _____, which became the nation of Israel. They were to reflect God's character, represent God to each other and the other nations, and reproduce God's image by raising up children to walk with God and influencing foreigners to worship God. They should have grown to rule the nations; they will with Christ as king.
- † Today, the _____ is to reflect God's character and represent God to all the people groups of the world [to all the people who do not know God]. We do not rule people in God's name, but we are supposed to influence culture and law as God's representatives, take care of nature, and reproduce through raising up our children and discipling others to know and walk with God.

4. Every Life is _____, since each person is conceived in the image of God.

- † That is why abortion, suicide, assisted suicide, and murder are all sins.
- † That is why every person, no matter how seemingly unlovable, is important and valuable.
- † *You* have value, purpose, validation, and identity – always, despite the ups and downs of life or your performance in it – because *you* were created [procreated] in God's image.

Reflection Questions

- † How should all this affect our approach to environmental issues?
- † Should evangelism be more of a priority in your life? How could you seek to grow into a teacher and mentor of others [children, youth, or adults] in the church?
- † What should be our most important developmental focus for our children?
- † Can we reflect God's character and represent him well if we do not learn and apply biblical moral teachings? if we are not in relationships through family, church, and the greater community?
- † Why should we take a stand for justice and help the downtrodden? Why should we try to shape society to reflect God's values and truths?