

How God sees people

“So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.”
Genesis 1:27 (NIV)

Outline of talk by Ray Brown

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Below is an outline of what the talk covers. Please see the corresponding session guide for more guidance on structuring the rest of the training session.

We are made in God's image

So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. – Genesis 1:27

- God created men and women with the gifts and ability to rule over his creation,
- Like God we are rational, moral, creative, and spiritual beings.
- We have intrinsic value and dignity

We are under God wrath

- Adam and Eve rebelled against God their Creator and their legacy remains to this day.
- You and I now naturally suppress the truth of God's existence. (Rom 1:18)
- God gives us over to our futile thinking and our foolish hearts and all that this leads to.
- Not only is God's wrath a present reality. There is also a day in the future when God's wrath will be poured out on those who have refused to turn to him for help (Rom 2:5). So it's really important that you and I see ourselves, and others the way God sees them.

No one is beyond God's grace

- God's solution means no one is beyond his grace. (Rom 3:23-24)
- Through Jesus, God deals with his wrath and puts us right with himself by his grace.
- Even though all have sinned all can be freely made right with God through Jesus' death.
- When you begin to see people the way God sees them, you should want to tell them they can be made right with God and know his love forever.

Transcript of talk by Ray Brown

You are free to use and adapt the content of this talk to suit your context.

How God sees people

Although I was born in Birmingham here in England, I spent most of the noughties, that is the early part of the 21st century, living and working in South Africa. As a black man married to a white woman with four so-called coloured children, it was fascinating to me how different people saw and related to one another in South Africa. For the most part, people were seen as either black, white, Indian, or coloured. People looked at one another through ethnic or racially-coloured spectacles. Of course, things are a little different here in the UK, although perhaps not as much as we like to think.

I wonder how we see the people around us, be it neighbours, friends, family members, work colleagues, or the person you walk past in the street. It is really important that you and I see people how God sees them, especially if they don't know or love him. According to God's Word, we are all made in God's image. And yet, because we have rejected him, he's angry with us. His anger is a dreadful thing and is both a present and a future reality. And yet the wonderful message of the Bible is that no one is beyond his grace. God's grace is demonstrated in his kindness in coming to us in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. God puts us right with himself by his grace and through Jesus paying the price for our rejection.

So how should we view people? Well, first, we should see that we are made in God's image. However you think it happened, the Bible is clear that God is the creator of absolutely everything. The galaxies, the stars, the planets, and you and me. In Genesis chapter one, verse 27, we read these words. "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." Genesis one verse 27. God created men and women with the gifts and ability to rule over his creation, but under his authority and while in loving friendship with him. In Genesis chapter three, we have this wonderful snapshot of God walking with Adam and Eve in a perfect, loving relationship in the Garden of Eden.

So human beings across the world have been created as rational, moral, creative, and spiritual beings, and in order to reflect something of who God is. Therefore, our dignity, value, and rights as human beings all stem from the fact that we are created in God's own image. We have intrinsic value since we reflect something of God's character in our interactions with one another and the world around us. We are made in God's image. But sadly, we are under God's wrath. And that is the second thing we need to know. Adam and Eve, who represented the human race in the Garden of Eden, rebelled against God, their creator. In Romans chapter one, the writer, a man named Paul, explains that the legacy of their rebellion remains with you and me to this very day.

Even though as you and I look out at God's creation, we see reflected in it something of his invisible qualities, his eternal power and divine nature, you and I now naturally find ourselves suppressing the truth of God's existence. The Bible calls this attitude of rejection towards God sin, and explains that it leads to godlessness and wickedness. That is actions that displease and dishonour God, our creator. But the saddest and most scariest thing of all is that it fills God with anger to be treated this way. So we read these words in Romans one verse 18. "The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness." Romans one verse 18.

Three times in Romans chapter one, we are told that God has given people like you and me over to our futile thinking and our foolish darkened hearts. This means that God's wrath is seen in people being allowed to get on with where their futile thinking and foolish hearts take them. When people

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worship created things rather than their creator, be it money, success, or power, or when they abuse and misuse God's good gift of sex and are filled with things like greed, envy, and slander, to name just three of the things listed in Romans chapter one, this is not evidence that God is happy to let people go their own way. It is in fact evidence of his wrath when he gives us over to our own sinful desires. People everywhere are under God's wrath.

But it gets worse, because in Romans chapter two, we read these words. "Because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed." Romans chapter two, verse five. Not only is God's wrath a present reality, there is also a day in the future when God's wrath will be poured out on those who have stubbornly refused to turn to him for help. So it's really important that you and I see ourselves and others the way God sees us. Only then will we value the truth that no one is beyond God's grace. That's the third and last thing we need to understand.

We are made in God's image. We are under God's wrath. And yet no one is beyond God's grace. After spending three chapters outlining the problem, Paul gives us the glorious solution when he writes this in Romans chapter three. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus." Romans chapter three, verse 23 and 24. By pouring out his wrath upon himself in the person of the God-man Jesus Christ, God deals with his own anger by paying our price. He himself puts us right with himself by his grace.

Notice that even though all have sinned, all can be justified or made right with God freely. No one is beyond this special generous offer. No one is beyond God's kindness or grace. With his own blood, with his own life, Jesus paid the price for us to be reconciled to God and to know his love forever. Incredibly, Jesus didn't stay dead. He rose again from death to new life. And in doing so, he opened up the way through death to eternal life for us too, sacrificing everything so that we can live with him as King in his perfect forever Kingdom. With his death and resurrection, Jesus proves that he is the hero of God's story and of our story. If you and I begin to see people the way God sees them, then why wouldn't we want to tell them about God's perfect Kingdom and his free and generous grace?

You are special because God created you to reflect his image. This means you have intrinsic value and deserve to be treated with dignity and respect no matter who you are or what you're able to contribute. And yet God is angry with you for rejecting him as creator and abusing the good things he has created. But the good news is that his kindness means absolutely no one, no matter who they are or what they have done, is beyond his grace or kindness. Anyone can be made right with God and know his love forever. That is how God sees people in the world around us. Is that how you see the people around you? And if so, with God's help, what are you doing about it?

The training video is available for anyone to watch at apassionforlife.org.uk/ibd2-view