

Study 1

Topic: Made and loved by God

Sub-theme: Made in the image of God (1)

Sunday date: April 28

Key ideas: part of creation, fearfully and wonderfully made, purposeful therefore having purpose, owned, finite

Key texts: Gen 1-2, Pss 8, 139, Heb 2

Further reading/resources:

- *Richard Bauckham, The Bible and Ecology: Rediscovering the Community of Creation and Living with Other Creatures*
 - *Andrew Cameron, Joined-up Life, 'Creation and Moral Order', 148ff.*
 - <http://aoc2013.brix.fatbeehive.com/articles.php/2106/creation-creativity-and-creatureliness-the-wisdom-of-finite-existence>
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A cow is always simply a cow. It does not ask, "What is a cow? Who am I?" Only man asks such questions, and indeed clearly has to ask them about himself and his being. This is his question. His question follows him in hundreds of forms.'

- Jurgen Moltmann

Read Psalm 8.

What is the question at which the psalmist marvels, and why?

We are very familiar with *being human* - it's our universal experience. But our world is, as Marc Cortez writes, 'plagued with the uncertainty of what it *means* to be human.'

'Who am I?' is a very difficult question. But it seems that we have very few answers even to the much simpler, 'what am I?' And if we can't answer 'who and I?' or 'what am I?', how do we work out 'how am I to be in the world?'

Why don't you take a moment to attempt them:

Who am I?	
What am I?	
How am I to be in the world?	

One of the problems with asking who/what questions about ourselves is that we are the askers. We can't escape outside ourselves and our own nature in order to look at ourselves and our nature!

Can you think of ways in which human nature shapes the questions we ask and descriptions that we offer about our nature?

When we say someone is a 'human being', what do we mean?

Perhaps you might divide your responses into answers that arise generally, and those that come from biblical commitments.

General insights	Biblical insights

Apart from genetics, what is the difference between human beings and other creatures?

Have a go at this table. What other categories would you add?

	Humans	Other creatures
Genetic		
Moral		
Social		
Psychological		

Read Genesis 1:1-31. What do we learn about humans here?

At the end of his work of creation, God declares everything to be 'very good'. What does this mean for 'being human'?

Read Psalm 139. What does this add about *being human*?

Read Hebrews 2:5-18. Jesus is described as being just like his brothers and sisters. What does this tell us?