



WITHIN: GOD'S STORY OF SAVING OUR SOULS

Lesson 3: Why Are We Worth It?

Objective

Students will understand that humans are valued because we are made in God's image. They will see how God forms us with purpose, knows our weakness, and restores our humanity through Jesus by reflecting on the concepts of IMAGO DEI and YETZER. (You can choose to spell the capital words throughout the text for additional practice.)

Featured Scripture

So God created man in His own image, in the image and likeness of God He created him; male and female He created them. *Genesis 1:27, AMP*

Lesson

Have you ever paused to ask why—out of all CREATION—God considers humanity worth such extraordinary care, patience, planning, and even repair? The Bible doesn't answer that question with flattery or sentimentality, but with **purpose, design, and love** that began before we ever drew a breath.

King David marveled at this MYSTERY:

"What is man that You are mindful of him,
And the son of [earthborn] man that You care for him?
Yet You have made him a little lower than God,
And You have crowned him with glory and honor.

You made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands..."

(Psalm 8:4–6, AMP)

In another Psalm, David reflects on God's tenderness:

"Just as a father loves his children,

So the Lord loves those who fear and worship Him...

For He knows our [mortal] frame;

He remembers that we are [merely] dust."

(Psalm 103:13–14, AMP)

God entrusts humans with great DIGNITY and responsibility—and at the same time, He remembers our weakness. He knows our limits. This is why Scripture continually invites us to depend on God the way a child depends on a good and trustworthy Father.

Two ideas help us understand this love more deeply: **IMAGO DEI** and the Hebrew word **YETZER**.

Throughout this series we've highlighted the *Shema*:

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind... and love your neighbor as yourself." Now we shift our focus to the **affection and VALUE God places on people** within His epic story of love and family.

From the very beginning, God created humans with intention.

"So God created man in His own image,

in the image and likeness of God He created him;

male and female He created them."

(Genesis 1:27, AMP)

SPELLER QUESTIONS:

1. What is the name of the Psalmist who marveled at God's mindfulness for man?

Answer: David

2. What is the name of the humble original substance we are compared to? **Answer:**

Dust

3. .What does God give to people in order to care for His creation. **Answer:** Dominion, responsibility, stewardship

4. What does dignity mean to you?

Answer: (Student reflection; e.g. Being valued and worthy of respect.)

5. What might happen if people forgot or disregarded that humans are made in God's image? **Answer:** (Student reflection e.g. "They might treat them poorly and not care about meeting their basic human needs.")

God created you in His own image. This means you are an **image-bearer of God**.

You may have been told you "look like" or "resemble" one of your parents—but God does not have a physical body like ours. He is Spirit. To bear His image means we uniquely REFLECT His **moral, spiritual, creative, and intellectual qualities**. We can reason. We can imagine. We can choose. We can create. We can love.

IMAGO DEI—Latin for "image of God"—has anchored the belief in human dignity, worth, and responsibility for thousands of years. Humans were chosen to represent God's intentions on the earth, and to STEWARD life on this earth well. This is why Jesus taught us to pray, "*Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*"

Genesis reminds us how this image-bearing life begins:

"Then the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground.
He breathed the breath of life into the man's nostrils,
and the man became a living person."
(Genesis 2:7, NLT)

The name *Adam* literally means "one formed from the ground." Like clay shaped from DUST, humanity is both humble and yet created to brim with possibility.

Scripture often returns to this image—God as **POTTER**, humans as **clay**. In Hebrew thought, this shaping of pottery is connected to the word **yetzer**—meaning formation,

inclination, imagination, or inner impulse. God forms our personhood carefully, intentionally, and intimately.

Clay is FRAGILE and dependent—but in the hands of a master potter, it becomes purposeful. A simple clay vessel can carry water, oil, grain, or light. Our fragility does not diminish our worth; it highlights the skill and care of the One who SHAPES us.

“We are the clay, and You are the potter.

We all are formed by Your hand.”

(Isaiah 64:8)

Scripture is also honest about the fracture that entered the story. The **first Adam** represents humanity choosing the enemy’s lies over trusting the One who made them. Relationship broke—but God did not abandon His image in us.

Instead, He ultimately entered our dust-bound world through **Jesus Christ**, often called the **second Adam**—Adam 2.0. Where the first Adam failed, Christ redeemed. He did not erase our humanity; He restored it. In Christ, the image of God is repaired, re-formed, and renewed—*yetzer being restored and saved*.

“The first man, Adam, became a living person.

The last Adam—that is, Christ—is a life-giving Spirit...

Just as we are now like the earthly man,

we will someday be like the heavenly man.”

(1 Corinthians 15:45, 49, NLT)

In the meantime, we are invited to join our **image** and our **imagination** to Jesus—to co-create with Him.

“We are like common clay jars that carry this glorious treasure within,

so that this immeasurable power will be seen as God’s, not ours.”

(2 Corinthians 4:7, TPT)

One final insight about **yetzer**: it also refers to our capacity to CHOOSE what occupies our inner thoughts. Inner focus shapes outer life. Nothing is created without first being formed in the mind’s eye.

“Perfect, absolute peace surrounds those whose imaginations (yetzers) are consumed with You, because they confidently trust in You.”

(Isaiah 26:3, TPT)

God gave us the capacity to fix our minds on Him and be filled with His Spirit—not because we are perfect, but because **Jesus restored what it means to be human.**

We are dust—yet dearly loved.

Fragile—yet entrusted.

Clay—yet crowned with glory.

And in Christ, we are being shaped into beloved sons and daughters with great purpose once again.

SPELLER QUESTIONS:

1. What language is “Imago Dei,” meaning “image of God”? **Answer:** Latin

2. God is referred to as what kind of craftsman? **Answer:** Potter

3. . Name one or two words that describe “yetzer.” **Answer:** imagination, inclination, impulse, pottery

4. What does it mean to you to trust yourself being formed in the hands of the Potter?

Answer: (Student reflection; e.g. God knows how he wants to make you, and He will give you a purpose and capacity to hold it.)

5. What helps you turn your focus and imagination from worry to God when you need peace? **Answer:** (Student reflection e.g. “Remembering that he knows me and formed me, thinking about His qualities.”)

Context Clues

According to **traditional belief**, God revealed the story of creation to Moses. In this view, Moses didn’t invent the account himself; rather, God **communicated the truths of**

creation, humanity's purpose, and His design to him, either through direct revelation, visions, or oral instruction.

This is why Genesis begins with a clear, intentional account of creation: it isn't just a human story—it is considered **God's perspective on how everything began**, given to Moses to record for the people of Israel.

From a practical standpoint, this means that the creation story in Genesis is seen as **both divine teaching and a foundation for understanding human worth, purpose, and the moral order of the world**—ideas like Imago Dei (bearing God's image) and humans as clay in God's hands flow directly from this revealed knowledge.

Incidentally, the rabbis also believe that God showed Moses the letter forms that would be Hebrew so that he could record the words perfectly and share them with the people. Hebrew was one of the **first fully functional sound-based alphabets**, part of a wave of early alphabetic scripts that moved away from picture-based writing. It was simpler and more flexible than hieroglyphs or cuneiform, making literacy and record-keeping more accessible.

Then & Now

Throughout history, nearly every culture has asked, "How did we get here?" and created stories to explain the origins of the world and humanity. Many of these stories describe gods or spiritual forces forming humans to serve divine purposes or maintain cosmic order.

The creation account in the Hebrew Bible is unique. In Genesis, God is personal, singular, and sovereign, creating intentionally by His word. Humans are made in God's image (Imago Dei), giving them inherent dignity, worth, and creativity. Unlike other ancient accounts, humans are entrusted with stewarding creation and representing God's moral and intellectual nature on the earth.

The discovery of DNA in the mid-1900s transformed our understanding of life. DNA is found in every living thing and functions like an instruction book, guiding how cells grow,

function, and work together. Scientists were struck by how precise, organized, and information-rich this code is.

Because DNA is so complex and purposeful, some scientists believe it points to an intelligent Creator who designed life with intention. This has led some scientists to scrutinize whether Charles Darwin's theory of evolution (small changes over millions of years led to humans) can fully explain life, challenging ideas that have dominated science for the last 150 years. For Christians, science helps explain how life works, while faith explains why life matters—and the discovery of DNA can deepen our awe for the God who we believe created humans with wisdom and care (See Psalm 139).

Memorize: Write this on your heart

We are the clay and You are the potter. Isaiah 64:8

Go Deeper (Optional)

- Watch Bible Project's "You're Supposed to Rule the World" (6:16)
<https://youtu.be/YbipxLDtY8c?si=7f9DbdlpTbm8qw6R>
- Watch "Forma Mentis, Forma Mundi—the Creative Power of Yetzer" (6:36)
<https://youtu.be/I5f4wVHIPks?si=G-IXJdS7CDkU9wrO>
- Watch "Context: I Am the Potter" (2:34)
<https://youtu.be/F8tMR-mUE5s?si=Kul6gGezJ4YPB1Lg>
- Watch "DNA as an Evidence for God?" (1:59)
<https://youtu.be/R3OGJdcAsR0?si=OvfoyDw70nSxREA8>
- Listen to the hymn, "All Creatures of Our God and King" (4:30)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IF4p9fgAnvQ&list=RDIF4p9fgAnvQ&start_radio=1
- Read the story behind the song "All Creatures of Our God and King" and the song's author:
<https://fbchurch.org/resource/hymnology-all-creatures-of-our-god-and-king>

Options for Expression (Assignment for Open Spellors)

Choose **one** (or more) of the following ways to demonstrate your understanding of being made in the image of God:

- **Watch the video “Context: I Am the Potter” and write a report about how you feel God has been shaping you.**
 - Think about your personality and purpose. What might your “pot” look like—color, design, function?
 - Give an example of how God has stretched, shaped, reworked, or refined you.

- **Poem / Acrostic / Song Lyrics**
 - Write a poem or song about people being made in God’s image or formed in the Potter’s hand.

- **Sensory activity: Make a batch at home or buy some Playdoh and hold it, squish it, knead it, mold it while you reflect on Jeremiah 18:1-4, and then comment on how holding the clay helped you connect with the idea of God as Potter and us as clay.**
 - “God told Jeremiah, “Up on your feet! Go to the potter’s house. When you get there, I’ll tell you what I have to say.” So I went to the potter’s house, and sure enough, the potter was there, working away at his wheel. Whenever the pot the potter was working on turned out badly, as sometimes happens when you are working with clay, the potter would simply start over and use the same clay to make another pot.” Jeremiah 18:1-4 MSG

Spelling Words to Practice This Week

1. CREATION
2. IMAGE
3. IMAGO DEI
4. WORTH
5. DIGNITY
6. PURPOSE
7. CREATOR
8. FATHER
9. DUST
10. CLAY
11. POTTER
12. FORMED
13. IMAGINATION
14. STEWARD
15. AUTHORITY
16. RESPONSIBILITY
17. ADAM
18. REDEEM
19. RESTORE
20. CHRIST

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