

CHAPTER 7

Humanity

KEY IDEA

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

KEY VERSE

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, the whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. — *John 3:16*

BEGIN BY RECITING THE KEY VERSE AND THE KEY IDEA TOGETHER AS A GROUP.

LESSON

INTRODUCTION:

Definition of humanity: all human beings collectively; the human race; humankind.

> Biblical humanity maintains as a basis, that:

- Man was created in God's image (Genesis 1:26-27).
- Man is a fallen creature (Romans 5:12), and born in a corrupt state.
- Man has a material aspect (the body) and a non-material aspect, his spirit (Jas. 2:26).
- Though marred by the Fall, man retains remnants of God's image in his non-material nature (Gen. 9:6).

God created everything but the pinnacle of creation was the creation of human beings — beings made in the image of God. Humanity is special, and the Bible is the record of the love story between Creator and Created, between God and humans. From the very beginning of time to the modern day Church, God has loved and pursued his people.

ORIGINS

God is the origin of all life.

Genesis 1:26-31

Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground — everything that has the breath of life in it — I give every green plant for food." And it was so.

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning — the sixth day.

In Genesis 1:1-25 we read of the creation story. But when we come to verse 26 we see a departure from the pattern we have seen in the Creation account.

> Up to this point God has simply spoken a creative word, and that word has brought visible results.

> In verse 26 he says we will “make” the man and woman.

< The creative process for people is different.

^ When God created other living creatures, he made many of them, but now he made only one man and one woman.

How does it make you feel to know that your creation process was more intricate than that of the rest of God’s creation?

> God created man and woman in his image, his likeness, giving the unique quality of personhood – a spirit.

FROM ESV STUDY BIBLE

There has been debate about the expression “image of God.” Many scholars point out the idea, commonly used in the ancient Near East, of the king who was the visible representative of the deity; thus the king ruled on behalf of the god. Since v. 26 links the image of God with the exercise of dominion over all the other creatures of the seas, heavens, and earth; one can see that humanity is endowed here with authority to rule the earth as God’s representatives or vice-regents.

< This is something that was not given to any other part of Creation.

> God separated man and woman from other parts of Creation by assigning them the role of ruling over all creatures.

FROM THE SMART GUIDE TO THE BIBLE SERIES: THE BOOK OF GENESIS by Joyce L. Gibson

God gave the first man and woman freedom, responsibility, and authority. He gave his blessing on the roles they were to assume: reproducing themselves and ruling (having dominion) over all living creatures in the water, in the air, and on the land.

Nobody needs to worry about having worth. Every person has worth because God loves and cares for each one. God places high value on every human because he has given each one dignity and a responsibility to fulfill.

God created humans in his image and gave them the capacity to know him.

> He loved them and planned for them.

FROM THE SMART GUIDE TO THE BIBLE SERIES: THE BOOK OF GENESIS by Joyce L. Gibson

In this first chapter of Genesis, we have God communicating the amazing theme that runs through all of Scripture—his revelation of who he is, who we humans are, and how God and humans can relate.



KEY QUESTION: “How does God see people—the masses of humanity?”

Our Key Verse, John 3:16, states God’s love for us. The Message by Eugene Peterson translates it this way:

“This is how much God loved the world: He gave his Son, his one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed; by believing in him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life. God didn’t go to all the trouble of sending his Son merely to point an accusing finger, telling the world how bad it was. He came to help, to put the world right again.”

Scripture tells us clearly that God loves all people the same. He love the person who is faithful, he loves the most hateful of persons. No matter our nature state, God sees all; he hears all; he loves all.

> Paul understood this concept and he took it on as part of his mission to make God’s love clear to everyone.

ROMANS 1:14-25

I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed — a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities — his eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

Since “the wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people,” this is exactly why *all* people need to be saved.

> In verse 20 we see the phrase: “people are without excuse.” God says he will reveal himself in some manner to everyone.

< An invitation to salvation is offered to all mankind.

How does God see people? —as a beloved creation, children who have rebelled and lost a relationship with their heavenly Father.

THE DEVASTATING HUMAN CONDITION

God created the cosmos and everything in it. He created the earth so that he could be with the people he created. Unfortunately, the first two people — Adam and Eve — rejected God’s vision for his creation, causing sin to enter into their nature and thereby making them unfit for community with a holy God. We see the results of Adam and Eve’s choices in the story of Cain and Abel.

In Genesis 4 (*BELIEVE* pgs 101-102) we read the story of Cain and Abel.

CAIN AND ABEL

Cain was the first-born son of Adam and Eve, making him the first human child to be born in the Bible. The Bible doesn't tell us a lot about Cain. Like his father Adam, he became a farmer and worked the soil. But we discover that Cain had a serious anger management problem.

> The story of Cain and Abel begins with the two brothers bringing an offering to the Lord.

< The Bible says that God was pleased with Abel's sacrifice, but not with Cain's.

^ As a result Cain grew angry, dejected and jealous. His anger drove him to commit murder.

This account leaves us wondering exactly why God looked with favor on Abel's offering, but rejected Cain's. *Any ideas? Before going on, why do you think God rejected Cain’s offering?*

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- > The reason why God rejected Cain's offering is a mystery and a point of confusion for some believers.
 - < But we see that Gen. 4:6-7 contains a clue to solve the mystery.
 - < After seeing Cain's anger over the rejection of his sacrifice, God said to him: "*Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.* (NIV)
 - < Cain should not have been angry. Apparently both he and Abel knew what God expected as the "right" offering. God must have already explained it to them.
 - ^ Both Cain and God knew that he had given an unacceptable offering.
 - ^ Even more important, God knew that Cain had given with a wrong attitude of heart.
 - > God still offered Cain a chance to make things right and warned him that the sin of anger would destroy him if he did not master it.
 - < Cain was faced with a choice. He could turn from his anger, change his attitude and make things right with God, or he could intentionally give himself over to sin.

We see the choice that Cain made. The HUMAN CONDITION continues to be one bent toward sin.

Adam and Eve had more children, but those offspring continued inheriting and passing on a fallen, sinful nature. In the New Testament era, Jude, who was both a half-brother and a follower of Jesus, wrote a letter to warn Christians about false teachers who were trying to convince believers that salvation by grace gave them license to sin. Jude notes that these dangerous teachers had "taken the way of Cain," meaning the way of selfishness and greed — demonstrated by Cain's careless, thoughtless offering — and the way of hatred and murder — demonstrated by Cain's slaying of Abel.

FROM JUDE

³ My dear friends, I really wanted to write you about God's saving power at work in our lives. But instead, I must write and ask you to defend the faith that God has once for all given to his people. ⁴ Some godless people have sneaked in among us and are saying, "God treats us much better than we deserve, and so it is all right to be immoral." They even deny that we must obey Jesus Christ as our only Master and Lord. But long ago the Scriptures warned that these godless people were doomed.

By the time Jude wrote this letter, the "faith" (the known and received body of truth about Jesus and salvation through him) had already been fixed and established in the apostolic teaching of the early church, and therefore could not be changed, but it was under attack and in need of defense.

⁵ Don't forget what happened to those people that the Lord rescued from Egypt. Some of them did not have faith, and he later destroyed them.

Jude reminds his readers about their ancestors and how God brought judgment upon them.

> This was from the Exodus account regarding the judgment of those who refused to go into the promised land and, consequently, were sent to wander for 40 years until all the unfaithful had died.

Just a note of additional interest. *FROM ESV STUDY BIBLE*

NOTE: Verse 5 in the ESV reads, "Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe."

*Jesus... saved a people... This may seem puzzling, because the name "Jesus" is not applied to the Son of God in the OT. It is a prime example of the apostolic understanding of the OT, according to which the Son of God, in his eternal divine nature, was active in the world from the beginning of creation, long before his incarnation. Instead of the name "Jesus" some... Greek manuscripts have *ho Kyrios*, "the Lord," and some English translations follow that reading. Most of the oldest and most reliable manuscripts have *Iēsous* ("Jesus").*

⁶ You also know about the angels who didn't do their work and left their proper places. God chained them with everlasting chains and is now keeping them in dark pits until the great day of judgment.

Just a note for your curiosity about this verse:

God had assigned different areas of authority and responsibility to the angels. (Daniel 10:20-21 – the various "princes" are thought to be angels assigned to different nations.)

> Some of these angels did not accept their assigned responsibility.

< These are the ones thought to be Satan and his angels.

^ They have been assigned another place. (See Matthew 25:41)

FROM ENVIDIBLE

Angels apparently were assigned specific locations, as well as responsibilities. Some assume that they left the heavenly realm and came to earth (see 2Pe 2:4).

⁷ We should also be warned by what happened to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and the nearby towns. Their people became immoral and did all sorts of sexual sins. Then God made an example of them and punished them with eternal fire.

Warren Wiersbe says this about verse 7} *"They did not occasionally commit unnatural sexual sins; they were 'filled with immorality,' giving themselves over to the pursuit of lust. The Greek verb is intensive; 'to indulge in excessive immorality.' This was their way of life—and death!"*

⁸ The people I am talking about are behaving just like those dreamers who destroyed their own bodies. They reject all authority and insult angels. ⁹ Even Michael, the chief angel, didn't dare to insult the devil, when the two of them were arguing about the body of Moses. All Michael said was, "The Lord will punish you!"

Regarding verse 9: This event is not in the OT but see Deut. 34:5-6 and Zech. 3:1-5.

> Whatever story Jude is referring to has been lost in history.

> The point is that Michael understood his own place in God's design and was not flippant about his encounter with Satan.

< He did not place condemnation on Satan, Michael left that to the authority of God.

> Jude was attempting to explain that the false teachers should not deny the authority of Christ as he bestows power to the believers.

¹⁰ But these people insult powers they don't know anything about. They are like senseless animals that end up getting destroyed, because they live only by their feelings. ¹¹ Now they are in for real trouble. They have followed Cain's example and have made the same mistake that Balaam did by caring only for money. They have also rebelled against God, just as Korah did. Because of all this, they will be destroyed.

Who was Cain? Why is he mentioned here?

Who was Balaam? Why is he mentioned here? (See Numbers 22-25; 2 Peter 2:15 and Revelation 2:14)

Who was Korah? Why is he mentioned here? (See Numbers 16 & 17)

¹² These people are filthy minded, and by their shameful and selfish actions they spoil the meals you eat together. They are like clouds blown along by the wind, but never bringing any rain. They are like leafless trees, uprooted and dead, and unable to produce fruit. ¹³ Their shameful deeds show up like foam on wild ocean waves. They are like wandering stars forever doomed to the darkest pits of hell.

¹⁴ Enoch was the seventh person after Adam, and he was talking about these people when he said: "Look! The Lord is coming with thousands and thousands of holy angels ¹⁵ to judge everyone. He will punish all those ungodly people for all the evil things they have done. The Lord will surely punish those ungodly sinners for every evil thing they have ever said about him."

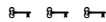
¹⁶ These people grumble and complain and live by their own selfish desires. They brag about themselves and flatter others to get what they want.

The Book of Enoch is an extra-biblical manuscript. Often these writings are attributed to someone who is not necessarily the author. These extra biblical manuscripts claimed authorship is unfounded.

> The book of 1 Enoch is said to be the works of Enoch, the great-grandfather of Noah; that is, Enoch son of Jared (Genesis 5:18).

< This Enoch is also one of the two people in the Bible taken up to heaven without dying (the other being Elijah). (See Genesis 5:24; see also Hebrews 11:5).

> Jude quotes from the Book of Enoch in verses 14-15, but this does not mean the Book of Enoch is inspired by God and should be in the Bible.



The Human Condition has indeed become depraved since the first sin. But our sin nature is no excuse for denying the work of God.

Paul's letter to the Christians in Rome contains a chilling declaration of the extent and consequences of the sin nature that has permeated the entire human race beginning with Adam and Eve and their offspring.

Romans 1:18-32

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible

qualities — his eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.

The “wrath of God” refers to his personal anger against sin.

> Unlike us, God’s anger is not a selfish anger. It is a holy and loving response to the human condition—sin’s wickedness.

> God expresses His wrath for good reasons.

< His power and his divine nature are revealed through his creation, yet he is rejected by people.

^ No one should complain that God has not given sufficient evidence of his existence and character. The fault is with those who reject the evidence.

< People fail to value God above all things. He is to be honored and praised.

FROM JON COURSON'S APPLICATION COMMENTARY

We can fall into this same error as believers. Knowing God, we can fail to glorify Him as God. How? By insisting on our own way, by saying “God, I believe in You, and now I’m telling You what I want You to do. ...

He’s God. We’re not. He knows things we can’t know and sees things we can’t see. ... my part is to talk things over with Him, cast my cares upon Him, and have faith that He will do what’s right—even though I might not initially agree or understand.

> However salvation does not come through what is known about God through nature.

FROM THE TRANSFORMATION STUDY BIBLE

Suppressing God’s truth, and refusing to acknowledge God’s glory, human beings were left without a god, and humans are so constituted that they must worship something. If they will not worship the true God, they will worship a false god, even if they have to manufacture it themselves! This fact about people accounts for their propensity to idolatry. They exchanged the glory of the true God for substitute gods that they themselves made. They exchanged glory for shame, incorruption for corruption, truth for lies.

Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator — who is forever praised. Amen.

Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.

FROM JON COURSON'S APPLICATION COMMENTARY

Because the pagans worshiped animals, they became like animals. Truly, we become like that which we worship. That’s why we are to fix our eyes on Jesus.

Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with

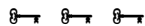
every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

This is a long list of vices. What is even sadder is that this horrible conduct was not due to total ignorance of what God wanted.

- > This was self-willed and rebellious.
- > Their rebellion was so extreme that they actually applauded themselves and encouraged others to join them in their sin.

The fall of man had

- > Exchanged God's glory for idols
- > Exchanged the knowledge of God for self-imposed ignorance.
- > Exchanged man's initial high estate as creatures made in the image of God to one that was lower than the animals.



God knew what they needed and he has a plan. Why? Because He loves us...still.



KEY IDEA: I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

GOD'S LOVE

Despite the sin that has permeated his creation, God remains faithful to his people. In the Old Testament God modeled his love for humankind through his special relationship with Israel. God used a profound and unusual object lesson to illustrate how much he loved the Israelites despite their unfaithfulness. He asked Hosea, a prophet to the northern kingdom of Israel, to marry an immoral woman named Gomer. Hosea would play the part of God; Gomer would play the part of Israel.

The prophet Hosea wrote in approximately 715 B.C. His book records the events from 753-715 B.C. including the fall of the Northern Kingdom in 722.

- > The key personalities are Hosea, Gomer, and their children.
- > It was written to the Northern Kingdom, Israel.
- > Its purpose was to illustrate the spiritual adultery of Israel and God's unending love for His sinful people.
- > In chapters 1-3, God gives Hosea instructions to marry an unfaithful woman and he obeys.
 - < His unfaithful wife, Gomer, leaves him and finds another man.
 - < Hosea is faithful; he finds her, redeems her and brings her back home to him. (3:3).
- > Chapters 4-14 Hosea describes how Israel has been unfaithful to God. God wants Israel to repent and turn from their wickedness.
 - < He wants to restore Israel, however, they continue to disobey and follow their own ways (4:6).

God uses this story to illustrate the unfailing love he has for his people.

- > They, like Gomer, had turned their backs on God.
- > They, like Gomer, proved themselves unfaithful to their commitment to God.

> With indifference and intent, they resumed their old lifestyle.

Hosea mirrors the constancy of God's love. He says in Hosea 14:4: "I will heal their backsliding. I will love them freely."

> In our eyes Gomer did not deserve the forgiveness from Hosea.

< We do not deserve God's forgiveness. But God's love extends beyond the limits of our sinful humanity.

< He wants to restore our relationship with Him.

NOTE: Even in God's mercy he has to put conditions on his people. Hosea 5:15: "Then I will return to my place until they admit their guilt and turn to me. For as soon as trouble comes, they will earnestly search for me."

FROM JON COURSON'S APPLICATION COMMENTARY

Our Father, being infinitely more loving than we could ever be as earthly parents, desires to bless us beyond all we can ask or even think—yet when the blessings He gives turn our hearts from Him, He reluctantly withdraws His hand of blessing in order that we will once again seek Him. The question then becomes not, "Why is God so hard?" but "Why are we so dumb?"

When God "returns to his place" it is because people just don't want him around. Have you ever seen this happen? To a person? To a church? To a country? To a world? Comment:

God's desire that we return to him, love him, and serve him faithfully has not only the reward of forgiveness, but the amazing assurance that "I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be my people."

WHY JESUS

We have established that God loves all people and desires to save everyone. So, why do we need Jesus?

> God's wrath (addressed above in the Romans 1 study) has been tempered through the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross.

< Jesus said: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6)

"No one" comes to God except through Jesus. He has provided the way; therefore, all can be saved through him. Many have been offended these days with Christians believing there is only one way to God, when in reality there should be great celebration that a way has been provided at all! -Bandy Frazer

All and Whoever

One of the special assignments John took on in his Gospel was to share that Jesus' offer of forgiveness and restoration to God for eternity was for everyone. Throughout his Gospel John uses the words "all" and "whoever." We are included in the "all" and "whoever;" therefore God extends his offer of love to us. He "so loves us."

See the list of verses from *BELIEVE* pages 118-120

SEEING PEOPLE AS GOD SEES THEM

God loves us deeply. He also wants us to follow his example in how we treat each other.

FROM Matthew 18:1-14

... He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. And he said: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.

"If anyone causes one of these little ones — those who believe in me — to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to stumble! Such things must come, but woe to the person through whom they come! ...

... "What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off. In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should perish.

In Luke 6:27-36 we are presented with another challenge to love:

"But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also.

NOTE OF INTEREST FROM MARCUS DORF REGARDING TURNING THE CHEEK:

In that world, people did not use the left hand to strike people. It was reserved for "unseemly" uses. Thus, being struck on the right cheek meant that one had been backhanded with the right hand. Given the social customs of the day, a backhand blow was the way a superior hit an inferior, whereas one fought social equals with fists.

This means the saying presupposes a setting in which a superior is beating a peasant. What should the peasant do? "Turn the other cheek." What would be the effect? The only way the superior could continue the beating would be with an overhand blow with the fist—which would have meant treating the peasant as an equal.

So one should not return an insulting slap, which would lead to escalating violence, thus turning the cheek would be making the continuation of the battle the responsibility of the one who struck first.

If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

"If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

Jesus told his disciples to view other people in a radically different way than they were used to, one that would go against our human nature.

> They were to love their enemies, not only love them, but show acts of kindness toward them.

< They were to answer hate with love.

> They were to deal with others with the quality of love and generosity that God showed to people who were ungrateful and wicked.

> But...Jesus did promise a reward:

< The more they loved with His supernatural love, the more they would become like the Father.

Disciples are to respond to evil with good and with love. Patience and not retaliation is to be the response of the follower of Christ. These are radical words, and they are also impossible to obey. They drive the serious disciple to his knees as he realizes that without the enablement and the grace of God such commands cannot be kept. -Paul W. Bonware

It is so easy to love the lovely, but loving the unlovely is something that most of us, at the very least, attempt to avoid. Think of that one person that fits this standard. How will you look differently at her/him now?

FROM THINK, ACT, BELIEVE LIKE JESUS by Randy Frazee

KEY APPLICATION: What difference does this make in the way I live?

How would life change if we started to see people as God sees them? How would the world change if you and I truly believed the only way for people to enter heaven is through Christ?

We value all human life.

From the womb to the tomb, we place high value on human life. Each person is formed and knit together by God in the womb of their mother (See Psalm 139:13).

We see and treat all people the way God sees and treats them.

... Placing human value on people is totally inconsistent with God’s design.

God looks into our hearts ... When we show equal value to broken, bruised, and abandoned people in our society, God takes note and promises to reward us for such Godlike behavior. Authentic behavior flows from a heart of genuine belief in human value.

What made Christ’s vision for the church so unique was the mixed group of people who assembled at the table for fellowship and a meal at the church service.

In Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise. Galatians 3:26-29

We are compelled to tell all people about Jesus.

Having been a pastor for the past several years in the Hill Country of Texas, I think it’s fitting to share the story of “Choctaw” Bill Robinson, an ordained circuit-riding preacher in the mid-1800s in the Lone Star State. He started at least twenty congregations throughout his ministry. But the unique aspect of Robinson’s ministry, which earned him his nickname, was his faithfulness to preach the gospel to both the white man and the Native American. He showed no favoritism or discrimination toward either. He was responsible for converting new settlers to

Christ, as well as small tribes of Native Americans. “Choctaw” Bill saw all the population of the vast territory of Texas as needing the gospel of Christ.

We can become excited about telling people about a new job, a new baby, a new home, or a new car. While these are all worthwhile experiences, as Christians, we hold the greatest news of all time in our hearts. I don’t intend at all to heap guilt or to put a burden on anyone, but rather to try to inspire us to see how we can revolutionize the lives of people, while fulfilling our ultimate purpose in being children of God.

The apostle Peter exhorts, *“In your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.”* 1 Peter 3:15

By sharing the gospel with all people, wherever we go, we have the opportunity to . . .

- change the world by changing people’s hearts
- change family legacies, as well as generations
- become more loving people, as we learn to value all

If God has his way in our minds and hearts through our obedience, we can accomplish these things, but it will require us to reach out. As Paul writes: *How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”*

There is someone right now in your circle of influence who needs to hear your story of salvation and redemption. God has placed people in your life, and he will bless you with the privilege of seeing them come into his kingdom. Imagine one day a person sharing his or her life story and, at a crucial point, the person says, “And then there was someone who cared enough to share Jesus with me.” Such a testimony, my friend, is the abundant life at its finest moment!

Do you believe God loves all people? Do you see all people the way God sees them? Do you believe God has made salvation through Christ available for all people? If you do, you will be compelled to show respect to all people and love them enough to tell them about Jesus. If we refuse to show respect and love, you and I must face the hard fact that we don’t see people the way God sees them.

These have been some hard words to take in. Below write a prayer asking God to help you love people as He love them. Say “Amen” and mean it!
