

Sunday school lesson: Dignity

February is Black History Month. It's a month set aside to remember the history of African Americans and to celebrate the ways they've contributed to our culture. I want us to use it as an opportunity for us to talk about dignity.

Let's think about dignity. How do you feel when someone treats you with dignity?

You matter! You're important, worthwhile, special, respected.

All life is precious; we care about animals and plants. But what do you think makes people different than all other life forms?

People are not merely collections of different kinds of cells – we have a soul, an essence that is eternal. We have the capacity to connect with the divine. Why do people matter? Do you think you or others matter because of your job, your bank account, your personality, or the color of your skin?

The first book of the Bible, Genesis, describes how God the Creator made everything and called everything good. And then God makes man and woman, and God calls them “very good” – and the only things that God says are made “in our image, male and female.”

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

And Genesis 2:7 says Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

This concept is called, in Latin, *imago Dei* [pronounced “ee-MAH-go day”], the image of God. It sets human beings apart from the animal world, fits them for the dominion God intended them to have over the earth (Genesis 1:28), and enables them to commune with their Maker. It is a likeness mentally, morally, and socially.

Mentally, humanity was created as a rational, volitional agent. In other words, human beings can reason and choose. This is a reflection of God’s intellect and freedom. Anytime someone invents a machine, writes a book, paints a landscape, enjoys a symphony, calculates a sum, or names a pet, he or she is proclaiming the fact that we are made in God’s image.

Morally, humanity was created in righteousness and perfect innocence, a reflection of God’s holiness. God saw all He had made (humanity included) and called it “very good” (Genesis 1:31). Our conscience or “moral compass” is a vestige of that original state. Whenever someone writes a law, recoils from evil, praises good behavior, or feels guilty, he or she is confirming the fact that we are made in God’s own image.

Socially, humanity was created for fellowship. This reflects God’s triune nature and His love. In Eden, humanity’s primary relationship was with God (Genesis 3:8 implies fellowship with God), and God made the first woman because “it is not good for the man to be alone” (Genesis 2:18). Every time someone marries, makes a friend, hugs a child, or attends church, he or she is demonstrating the fact that we are made in the likeness of God.

People matter because we, and we alone, are created according to the image of God. God is at the center of who we are. That's what gives us dignity—not how talented we are or how productive we are or how much we can contribute to society. Our dignity comes from the fact that God made us in His image.

Which people are made in the image of God? Just the rich ones? The white ones? The educated ones? Every single person! A bank executive, a maid, a pilot, the person who sweeps the floors – even the most lowly person you ever meet – is a king or a queen, made in the image of God.

What can change our status as made in the image of God? Nothing! The status of humans as made according to God's image never changes, no matter what. This is the essence of dignity: We are special, precious, worthwhile because of God's image in us.

In a sermon preached in 1965, Martin Luther King Jr. said, "The whole concept of the imago dei, ... the "image of God," is the idea that all men have something within them that God injected. Not that they have substantial unity with God, but that every man has a capacity to have fellowship with God. And this gives him a uniqueness, it gives him worth, it gives him dignity."

So, if I always remember that all people are made in the image of God, how does that impact how I treat others? (discuss)

And if I remember that I am made in the image of God, might that change the way I think about myself? (discuss)

Let's close our lesson by praying the Lord's Prayer together.

This lesson was put together using:  
[www.spiritualeldercare.com](http://www.spiritualeldercare.com)  
[www.gotquestions.org](http://www.gotquestions.org)



# Faithful Friends

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Today's HOPE (main point): I have dignity because I'm made in the image of God.

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

Genesis 2:7 Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

Psalms 139:13 For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb.

James 3:9-10 With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so.

## **Blessed Assurance**

1. Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine;  
O what a foretaste of glory divine!  
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,  
Born of his Spirit, washed in his blood.

This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Savior, all the day long;  
This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Savior all the day long.

2. Perfect submission, all is at rest,  
I in my Savior am happy and blest,  
Watching and waiting, looking above,  
Filled with his goodness, lost in his love.

This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Savior, all the day long;  
This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Savior all the day long.

## **All Creatures of Our God and King**

1. All creatures of our God and King,  
Lift up your voice and with us sing  
Alleluia! Alleluia!

Thou burning sun with golden beam,  
Thou silver moon with softer gleam,  
O praise Him, O praise Him,  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

2. Let all things their Creator bless  
And worship Him in humbleness,  
O praise Him! Alleluia!

Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,  
And praise the Spirit, Three in One:  
O praise Him, O praise Him,  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

## Great is Thy Faithfulness

1. Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father;  
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;  
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not;  
As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.

Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!  
Morning by morning new mercies I see;  
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided:  
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

2. Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,  
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;  
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow:  
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!  
Morning by morning new mercies I see;  
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided:  
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

## **In the Garden**

1. I come to the garden alone  
While the dew is still on the roses,  
And the voice I hear falling on my ear  
The Son of God discloses.

And he walks with me, and he talks with me,  
And he tells me I am his own;  
And the joy we share as we tarry there  
None other has ever known.

2. He speaks and the sound of his voice  
Is so sweet, the birds hush their singing;  
And the melody that he gave to me  
Within my heart is ringing.

And he walks with me, and he talks with me,  
And he tells me I am his own;  
And the joy we share as we tarry there  
None other has ever known.



## **Just a Closer Walk with Thee**

1. Just a closer walk with thee,  
Grant it, Jesus, is my plea,  
Daily walking close to thee,  
Let it be, dear Lord, let it be.

2. I am weak but thou art strong;  
Jesus, keep me from all wrong;  
I'll be satisfied as long  
As I walk, let me walk close to thee.

3. Through this world of toil and snares,  
If I falter, Lord, who cares?  
Who with me my burden shares?  
None but thee, dear Lord, none but thee.

4. Just a closer walk with thee,  
Grant it, Jesus, is my plea,  
Daily walking close to thee,  
Let it be, dear Lord, let it be.