

## Learning to Be Human

Series: Reboot: Fresh Start for a New Year

Brad Bailey - Feb. 5, 2023

Intro

Continuing in our series... thinking about how we are living our lives. We've begun a new year...and it's a good time to consider HOW we are engaging with this gift of life.

We began looking at how Jesus lived with a central purpose... and that God created everything with purpose. He created you with purpose.

And then we allowed him to speak to us about how to live with priority...so that we can find fulfillment...knowing that we finish what matters most.

Jesus had one defining priority... to bring glory to God... his eternal Father.

**We may falsely think that this reflects God being hurt by our lack of recognizing Him....as if He needs us.**

**We don't give God glory...** He IS the source of all glory... all goodness.

There is a goodness that we all long for...and it exists in God.

He is the source...the center... the source of all that is ultimately true and good.

So when we center our lives in the glory of God...we are aligning with reality...with what is.

God is quite clear in making known that we were created from the beginning *in God's image* that we might reflect that glory in the world. Human life was to multiply and fill the earth so that the knowledge of the glory of God would cover the sea. [1a]

**And God makes clear that something became corrupted at the core...** about what it means to be human.

As many **may recall**...in the Biblical Book of Genesis....Book of Beginnings...

**Genesis 3:1-5, 7**

**Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'"**

**<sup>2</sup> The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, <sup>3</sup> but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"**

**<sup>4</sup> "You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. <sup>5</sup> "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."**

**<sup>7</sup> Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.**

Here we see how the corruption to our human nature comes.

What was inserted? The belief that we could be like God...we could become independent...and we could be the center.

We chose to believe in our own glory.... and found ourselves in a state of shame...of being naked.

If a **misguided pride** is the root...it **leads to shame**...and a **need to make something of ourselves**.

This continues through the story of human nature and God's work.  
Genesis 11... tower of Babel...when the people come together and declare

**"Let us make a name for ourselves." - Gen. 11:4**

**That is the need so many of us feel. We feel a need to make a name for ourselves.** [1b]

**Been working it's way through time. There is a long history of wars between clans and countries...of trying to find power in cultural dominance and control. There are tales of heroes who tap into our longing to make a name for ourselves.**

This past week, my wife and I were watching one of the of the **Mission Impossible** movies (Fallout)...

They have mastered creating scenarios of saving the world...and scenes that are thrilling... physically...but also...heroically.

This one ends with the love of his life...saying essentially...**"I know the world is safe as long as you are out there."** [2]

Awww. What a line. Those are words that should be reserved for God. Yet... if I'm honest... they into my own desire to be such a hero.

The truth is that they reflect something of the corrupted narrative. They take something...particularly in the masculine soul...and distorts it.

They take the character of true courage...and **adds ego into it**... pride. It creates a **heroic "bigger than life" drama**.

**And we do well to pause at the nature of the "bigger than life" story that we are drawn to. It is "bigger than life"...** because we can't find our actual place in life. It's a reflection that we have **been trying to live outside the role we have been given in this life.**

We were given the highest role in creation... but we rejected the role of **the created**...and **want to be the creator**.

**Creating our own image**... is a powerful lure... and never more mastered than **in our "age of image."**

**It has been mastered by Hollywood.**

**And now added to by the nature of Social media. The very term "social media" is telling. We become the images we create.**

And the problem is not with healthy pride and aspiration ...or healthy self-expression... but with the underlying false role of being our own source of glory. [3]

**It's been said, that "Man is the star in our contemporary drama" ....**God may be given a place on the stage ... but only as a kind of co-star or supporting actor to serve our lead role.

And because we are trying to play a role that is not our role as human life, we will never be able to play the part... never fulfill what is required....never be at peace. Always trying to cover ourselves with fig leaves t cover our nakedness.

We will be anxious... because we will never live within your true nature.

As Jesus said,  
**Luke 12:25-26 (ESV)**

***And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest?***

What is he saying?

Well... essentially... you are trying to be what you aren't...you are still trying to be like God.

***We are trying to be like gods...trying to live beyond the human limitations of our finite nature... trying to exercise control we don't have rather than trust God... trying to find glory in ourself rather than in joining in the glory of God.***

We are trying to be what we aren't...

***This is why we live with an emptiness...that feels compelled "to make something of ourselves."***

***I want to become someone....but the truth is that we are someone.***

The tragedy is that we were created with the unique nature of sharing something of God's nature...and being able to join in glory. Human greatness is to share image of God... not create our own image. Our problem is not in being human...but in choosing not to be human.

And when God entered into humanity...as the Christ... this is precisely what Jesus did... he took the nature of a human....of a servant.

**Philippians 2:7-8**

**He made himself nothing, by taking the very nature of a servant,  
being made in human likeness.**

**And being found in appearance as a man,  
he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death - even death on a cross.**

He became human....and humbled himself... in relationship to the will of God his Father.

And in doing so...he was fulfilling the true nature of humanity.

He was more truly human...because he lived as we were meant to live.

Jesus enters humanity with a different center...to do the will of the Father.

And what we see is life as it should be... life free to be human.

**Jesus teaches us how to be truly human**

Jesus teaches us the freedom to how to fulfill our role

**1. Embrace the virtue of being good...more than great.**

That may sound a little strange.

What I am speaking of ...is the way we create the bigger than life greatness to which we then we evaluate our value.

There is a type of greatness that our world tries to find...achievements that bring public accolades and affirmation.

The problem is that such greatness rarely reflects the true nature of God.

“The fruit of the Spirit is **love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...**” – Galatians 5:22-23

When I look at the world... so many who may be associated with being great (in some form of success)...are not particularly good... that is ...they don't reflect a nature that is virtuous. I have found that I am **more drawn to what is good...than what is great.**

I think what **we need is to go from great to good.**

That may sound a little strange. If you are in the world of business leadership... you may know of a great best selling book by Jim Collins...entitled “From Good to Great.” There he helps leaders with principles that can serve in the success of the business.

I am not contenting with that kind of greatness. But rather with that which is merely great forms of public success.

What Jesus accomplished was the ultimate redemption of the world.

He was the creator born among us... defying... dying so that we could be forgiven...and free. Nothing could be greater.

But... the way he lived **defied a drive for public achievement.**

He lived in public **obscurity for 30 years.**

When he became active in his mission... he chose some local unknowns and stayed close to home. The people even presumed he couldn't be the long awaited savior...because he was a local life... without any fame or fortune.

But Jesus knew that being human was not about such greatness.

Jesus redefines all virtue by that of how we unite with divine love.

The Bible teaches us that God is love.

**So success** is to love like Jesus.

**God so LOVED** the world that he **sent his son.**

**Jesus so loved** that world that he **laid down his life.**

So when it comes to making something of your life... there is nothing more you can make of it than to grow in love.

**Bigger is not simply better.... But rather better is better.**

**I'm reminded of the life of Mother Teresa** - At age 36 her “second calling” took her to Calcutta, India where she took a unique approach in her ministry by “taking it to the streets” and **moving into the slums** to serve God among the poorest of poor. In the midst of something so challenging...there was also something so compelling and contagious. Many joined with her. She was once asked about assisting in the creation of a grandiose hospital that would be named after her. Mother Teresa was asked to think about all of the lives that the hospital could help and how all who entered would see her name. Without missing a beat, her response was quick: “God did not call me minister to the millions, but to minister to the one in front of me.”

In that moment...and many more...she reflected the ability to avoid the lure of “making a name for herself.”

As she so said so powerfully,

**“We can do no great things, only small things with great love.” - Mother Teresa**

This is the freedom which Jesus brings.  
He didn't need public achievement.

When his time drew near to die... he was at peace with what he made of his life...even at just 33 years of human age.

That is his heart for each of us.

That is my heart for each of us.

Most of us assess our lives based on public achievement...but our role is not to be great...but to be good.

And that leads to another point...

## **2. Embrace the natural limitations of this life.**

When we speak of limitations... we might think of something negative.

There are false limitations... psychological... formed falsely earlier in life... by words... circumstances... initial experiences. As such... there are some false limitations...we need to break out of. Many of us need to break out of what is commonly known as our “comfort zones” ...because comfort is a false limitations.

But there are real limitations... within our current state...the are boundaries that can serve to guide us in this life.

Some limits are quite defined... 24 hours in a day. Other limits are more a matter of range... like our energy... needs to be pushed... but there are still very real limitations. We may find ways to work with them to increase some capability... but they remain a real part of our earthly human life.

You have to remember that you are only human. You are not a god. You are not invincible. You are just a human being. You have limits!

You can be all that God wants you to be, but you cannot be whatever you want to be. There are limits in your life.

God is the author of your limitations. He put them there for your good. He did it because he loves you. So rather than fighting your limits, you need to accept your limits.

We have **physical limits**. You can't go six months without food, no matter how much you talk yourself into it. You cannot survive without rest. No amount of caffeine will change that. (I've tried.)

We have **mental limits**. We have FINITE capacity and understanding.

In today world of information... We can only process so much at a given time...or our minds begin to shut down. . They can't handle any more.

And of course you have **time limits**. No matter how many time management seminars you go to, you're never going to have more than 24 hours in a day. And you have to sleep part of that time.

The modern world has created an angst that is always fighting the natural boundaries of life. We don't just like to push on them... we can resent them.

When God created this world with day and night...He said it was good.  
The Bible says that we are "wonderfully made" (Psalm 139)... as finite human beings. Our weak and limited selves are wonderfully made.

Our limitations are part of God's design.

And they can serve us.

We see God institute the Sabbath day... it keeps human beings from becoming human doings... but requiring a sacred rest from work...and it keeps us dependent on God. [4]

While religious people over the centuries tended to pile up regulations defining what constituted keeping the Sabbath, Jesus said clearly that God made the Sabbath for us—for our benefit (Mark 2:27).

Just as we find freedom from false limitations... we can find freedom with true limitations.

Jesus...didn't fight his human nature...he embraced it.  
He went through the process of development as a vulnerable life in the womb.  
Jesus... stopped for water when he was thirsty.  
Jesus... is found resting in the boat when others are awake.  
Jesus went to the home of friends when he needed to enjoy the company of others.

And he teaches us to embrace this life's limitations.  
So let us embrace that we were wonderfully created as finite beings... and embrace this life's limitations.  
To put it simply...Human limitations keep us human.

### **3. Embrace the pace of love.**

What is so striking about Jesus...is that when he came... and bore the anointing of God... proving to be the Christ... he was never in a rush.  
He had only three years of imparting to a few others what he was bringing... by way of words and works... and he was **never in a hurry**.

#### **Jesus was busy...but never in a hurry.**

Read the accounts and you will often see the word "immediately" between events.

His sense of ambition was kept simple and centered...and it seemed to create a sense of grace in how he approached his time.

He wasn't anxiously trying to prove his significance by way of some vain public ideas about success. **This freed to live with the pace of love.**

The pace of love doesn't neglect truly significant and sacred responsibilities... but it isn't driven by everything that claims to be important. It doesn't assume that every agenda is a divine agenda...and is able to accept changes.

These people were not interruptions to Jesus, but rather opportunities to demonstrate what the kingdom of heaven looks like.

He seemed to trust that he would know when the time was right to take the next steps.

He didn't see particular needs as simply interruptions....but also as opportunities.

When lives are celebrated... I am struck by those who share what begins with "they took time to..."

To live unhurried is not just about the speed at which we're moving, it's especially about our attitude.

***Hurry is often a symptom of exaggerated self-importance...and the deeper insecurity that is trying to do too much.***

**"Cease striving and know that I am God" Psalm 46:10**

**Closing:**

God is inviting us to be human...truly human.

That is what Jesus came to recover.

Part of recovering a computer that has a corrupted element in it's system...is to remove it and replace it.

In a similar way...Jesus has come to recover our true humanity.

He calls us to stop covering ourselves with fig leaves of our own vain self-importance.

He calls us to stop trying to become someone...and embrace that we were always someone... we had simply rejected that someone.

He is very clear...that he is calling us to come home to the heart and home of God... where we belong.

PRAYER

**Notes:**

1a. God speaks of the inevitable fulfillment that the world will be filled with His glory.

Numbers 14:21

"Yet as surely as I live and as surely as the whole earth is filled with the glory of the LORD,  
Psalm 22:27

All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD. All the families of the nations will bow down before Him.

Isaiah 11:9

They will neither harm nor destroy on all My holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the sea is full of water.

Isaiah 40:5

And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all humanity together will see it. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

Jeremiah 31:34

No longer will each man teach his neighbor or his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquities and will remember their sins no more."

And there is a vanity to those who live otherwise.

Habakkuk 2:13-14

...Is it not indeed from the LORD of Hosts that the labor of the people only feeds the fire, and the nations weary themselves in vain? For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

An excellent exploration of the inevitable plan of God to fill the earth with His glory - What Does it Mean that the Earth Will be Filled With the Knowledge of the Glory of God? -August 26,

2011 by mattperman - [here](#)

1b. Notably, in the next chapter...we hear how God called out Abraham...and said... "I will make your name great..." – Genesis 12:21

2. Actual quote: Julia Meade-Hunt : Nothing happened. Because You were here. And I sleep soundly at night knowing you always will be."

3. The Temptations of the 'Personal Brand' <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/29/opinion/social-media-personal-branding.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share&referringSource=articleShare>

4. Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it. ([Exod. 20:8-11](#))