

AUGUST 1st and 2nd
GOD'S CREATION HITS HOME

"Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." **GENESIS 1:26-27**

"Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth, on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that...". Can you finish the sentence? Go ahead and dive deep into your US History class. The phrase is "all men are created equal." These words were given 87 years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence. However, the idea of equality under God is nothing new. God's people in our Colonial America just happened to be awakened because of the tyranny of taxes (without representation) and the smug superiority of the monarchy. This created a need for the colonies to declare their independence. Jefferson's words are burned into minds: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights...". We can learn much from what God brings in the Scriptures and use it as a lense for seeing truth more clearly. So, take a road trip with me to see human equality in this devotion. Next weekend we will discuss more specifically the slavery issue. I hope to show you just a small taste of how these concepts contributed to the American Revolution.

Most Christians have a negative view of the Enlightenment of the 17th and 18th Centuries. However, one concept that was emphasized in this philosophy was individual liberty. Here's one name to keep in mind for the next few weekend devotions: John Locke. According to Thomas S. Kidd in his "God of Liberty," Locke "became one of the foremost advocates of republican government, exercising significant influence on leaders of the American Revolution. The philosopher saw people...as equal to each other primarily because of their common creation before God."

Genesis 1 & 2 are majestic pictures of God's perfect creation. What's key here is what some people call "the imago dei," the image of God. God creates humanity last, and it sets humanity apart from all other days of creation. God marks his humans with his image. They carry His worth and value. Make no mistake about it, this does not place humans as equal to God. God as creator is and always has been separate from His creation. But the value and worth of each person is rooted in their Creator, not in their talents, bank accounts, family lines, or ethnicity. God slams the gavel down on his judgment of it all: "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good." This truth informs how we look at our world. As influential and brave as these Founding Fathers were, they don't create these ideas out of thin air. Instead, the push for "equality by creation" began when the world began. Praise God for His great grace and perfect wisdom!

Men, how does the image of God impact our view of the world? We must be honest. We critique people. It's a part of our sinful DNA. We often treat people equally if they've met our conditions. If people love and respect us, then we love and respect them. How far have we fallen from the perfection of Eden! All are made equally in God's image. All have value and worth not because of what they bring to the table, but because God creates them this way. If God gives them their worth, who are we to take it away because of what they've said or done?

Spend some time praying God's blessing on someone that you don't like very much or someone that has hurt you deeply. Ask God to help you have more grace to see them as God sees them...created in His image.

For Further Reading: Galatians 3:23-29