

## **Crosswalk Communities Discussion Guides**

### **October 9th**

#### **Icebreaker Questions (Pick at the least one question, but use as many as your group feels comfortable)**

1. When was a time in your life when you would say that you felt the “most alive?”
2. How would you answer this question: “What does it mean to be human?”

#### **Bible Study Questions**

1. How would you respond to someone who says that humanity is just the result of the evolutionary process and are nothing more than more advanced animals? How have you encountered that worldview?
2. The Eastern view is that everything is spiritual and connected. We are one manifestation trapped in human bodies. Have you ever been exposed to that worldview? How would you respond?
3. A popular idea today, specially among millennials, is that we are naturally good people who become most human when we pursue our own happiness. How have you seen that in our culture? Have you seen that in the church? How would you respond to that worldview?
4. Read Genesis 1:26-28: What do these verses say about God’s design in making humans? What do you think that it means to be created in his image. What are the implications for us if humans are made in the image of God?
5. Pastor Michael talked about God including his physical world when he said in verse 31 that it was very good. How does it impact the way that you care for your own body?
6. Genesis 3 teaches that we have been broken due to sin. How does that challenge common messages such as “follow your heart?” How

do we discern then whether a desire is good or a result of our sin nature?

7. What does the Biblical teaching then on humanity tell us about creating a culture for human flourishing? What is our role in making that happen?
8. John Calvin once said that we can’t fully understand God until we understand ourselves. How does answering the question, “what does it mean to be human?”, impact the way that we view God?

## October 9<sup>th</sup> What is a human?

One of the most important questions that we can ask is, “what does it mean to be human?” Answering that question is crucial to knowing what is best for human flourishing. Yet this is a question that many Americans, including those in the church are often confused about. We are going to look at the popular views in our culture and see how they compare with Christianity.

### Worldly Views on humanity

- **Secular view: Humans are the accidental result of the evolutionary process:** This is the predominant view in the Western world. Humans are just the most advanced animals in the evolutionary story. Therefore, they have no special status or meaning.
- **Eastern view: Humans are one manifestation of the divine trapped in a physical world:** The Eastern view (Hinduism, Bhuddism, New Age) all view all life as being divine and humans just being one manifestation. The overarching goal of life is to free ourselves from dependence on the physical world and to reach a sense of unity with the divine presence around us.
- **Modern Individualistic View: Humans are good individual beings who are most fulfilled when pursuing their own path of happiness:** This is the growing view in American culture. Many with this view believe that God has created humans and that the physical is good, but have a very individualistic view of humanity. They believe that humanity is basically good and that our desires are good. One is most human when they embrace their desires and pursue what they believe will make them happy.

### Christian view

- **Humans are given a special status as made in the image of God:** In Genesis 1:26-27, we have God creating humans. They are set apart from the rest of creation as bearing the image of God. Theologians debate about what this means, but one thing is clear is that they were meant to be God’s regents ruling over creation.
- **Humans are created beings with good physical bodies:** In Genesis 2:7, we are told that God made humans as a mix of earth and his breath. Humans are created beings then and not divine as Eastern

religions teach us. In 1:31, God looks at his creation and says that it is very good. That means that the physical world and the physical bodies of humans were not something to be escaped from, but declared to be good. It can be added that in Jesus, God chose to take on a physical body and remained in a physical body following his resurrection.

- **Humans are broken by man’s rebellion:** Genesis 3 tells us of man’s rebellion against God. The result is that sin enters into our world and corrupts our desires. Therefore, when we are left to our pursuit of happiness, it leads in destructive directions.

### Conclusion

The Bible teaches that humans are given a special status as being made in the image of God. Therefore, we should care about issues such as poverty, racism, or abortion. We have been given good physical bodies, so we should care for our bodies. Our humanity is broken by sin, so we should submit our desires to the lordship of Jesus Christ.