

February 15, 2020

What Are Human Beings?

(7) And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. (8) And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. - (Genesis 2:7-8)

God created human beings to be different from everything else. We were created to have a special relationship with God and to do our work in that relationship. We were to work in a power that was not our own. It is a pretty big job to have dominion over the earth, especially when some of us have a hard time having dominion over a small backyard! A lot of things are at work out there, and it is rather hard to control them.

Genesis 2 describes “a garden eastward in Eden,” where the first human beings were placed, being in union with God (v. 8). There was in humanity that which was of God. “And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being” (v. 7). The term translated as “living being” is the same word that was used earlier to refer to the whales. The man did not become a moving creature and then become a human being. This occurred only in conjunction with God’s special creative infusion of something that was like God—spirit.

The “breath of life” in verse 7 is not the stuff around us that we breathe in and out. God is spirit, and he infused this special creation with spirit. That’s what makes human beings unique, it gives us our special value, and this uniqueness allows us to relate to God and participate in his governing of the earth.

You may feel like you are very far from being in the business of governing the earth. We have accepted an image the world has imposed on us that is in direct opposition to Jesus’ teaching and hinders us from stepping into the dignity of the sons and daughters of God.

It is hard for people to believe that they are spirit-infused beings with such power, privilege, and responsibility. Every human being is a special creation of spirit, living in the hands of God. But what happens, a child comes into the world and is treated as anything but a precious, wonderful creation. One of the hardest things for us to do—and this is true even for Christians—is to keep this preciousness and wonder in our minds as we approach every human being we deal with.

Practice: *To be sure, people do not always look or act like they are very precious. Perhaps they are filled with hostility and quite dangerous to be around. This week take some time to notice the ways that you, and others, guard themselves against being hurt. What strategies are employed? What impact does this have on relationships? How does this hinder our ability to govern our limited spheres of influence for good?*