



## **Introduction: The Social Imaginary**

All people have particular beliefs about the world, themselves, and how they are to live. These assumptions or presuppositions are often referred to as a *worldview*. In recent years, however, the term *social imaginary* has become a popular way to describe how people understand the world and choose to live within it because it emphasizes feeling and intuition as well as belief.

“...the social imaginary is a somewhat amorphous concept precisely because it refers to the myriad beliefs, practices, normative expectations, and even implicit assumptions that members of a society share that shape their daily lives. It is not so much a conscious philosophy of life as a set of intuitions and practices. In sum, the social imaginary is the way people think about the world, how they imagine it to be, how they act intuitively in relation to it...” —Carl Trueman, *The Rise & Triumph of the Modern Self*

**Main Point: We are called to stand firm on the truths that human life has intrinsic \_\_\_\_\_ and that authentic \_\_\_\_\_ is found in relation to God as our Creator & Redeemer.**

## ***Who Are We?***

### **Intrinsic Dignity**

#### **General Revelation**

- **If God is the \_\_\_\_\_ of all people, there is a general equality of value among all mankind.**

“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, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” —The Declaration of Independence

- **If all human life has dignity, there is a \_\_\_\_\_ human nature that should be acknowledged by all.**

“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.” —Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations)

#### **Special Revelation**

- **God’s \_\_\_\_\_ design for human life shows its dignity.**

Gen. 1:27-28a—<sup>27</sup> So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

<sup>28</sup> And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion

⇒ Man images God in the world \_\_\_\_\_ (rationality, volition), \_\_\_\_\_ (conscience), and \_\_\_\_\_ (through relationships), and in exercising \_\_\_\_\_ (creativity, cultivation).

- **God’s \_\_\_\_\_ work in creating human life shows its dignity.**

Gen. 2:7— then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

⇒ Man is unique among God’s creatures because we are both \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ beings.

Psa. 139:13—For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb.

⇒ God’s work of creating human life begins in the \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Upholding Human Dignity in a Fallen World**

- 1. Christians should hold a robust pro-life \_\_\_\_\_.**

⇒ We affirm the goodness of God’s design for marriage and family as the context in which children should be born and reared and the aged should be cared for (Psa. 127:3, 1 Tim. 5:8).

⇒ We reject the practices of abortion and euthanasia because they promote the destruction of life. They reflect the pagan or utilitarian view rather than the Christian view of life (Psa. 19:6, Lev. 18:21, Rom. 14:7-8).

- 2. Christians should seek to establish the \_\_\_\_\_ in which human life can thrive within society.**

⇒ We affirm the pursuit of technological and societal advancements that improve living conditions and increase the quality of life (Jer. 29:5-7).

⇒ We affirm the pursuit of justice within society and recognize that God has given governments the authority to see that it is rightly administered (Mic. 6:8, Rom. 13:4).

**Key Point: Both nature and Scripture teach us that all human life possesses intrinsic dignity and should therefore be \_\_\_\_\_ and encouraged to \_\_\_\_\_ from conception until natural death.**

## Authentic Identity

### General Revelation

- **Human identity is influenced by both \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ factors.**

“Identity formation involves three key tasks: Discovering and developing one’s potential, choosing one’s purpose in life, and finding opportunities to exercise that potential and purpose. Identity is also influenced by parents and peers during childhood and experimentation in adolescence.”  
—Psychology Today

### Special Revelation

#### *Identity by Nature*

- **We are God’s \_\_\_\_\_-bearers.**

Psa. 139:16—*Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one...the days that were formed for me*

- **We are sinners by \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.**

Gal. 5:19-20—<sup>19</sup> *Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality,* <sup>20</sup> *idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions*

- **We are \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.**

Gen. 1:26b—*...male and female he created them.*

#### *Identity by Grace*

- **We are \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ.**

Eph. 1:7—*In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace*

- **We are \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ.**

Col. 3:9-10—<sup>9</sup> *Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices* <sup>10</sup> *and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.*

## Identity Formation in a Fallen World

### *The Challenge of Authenticity*

“...for us today, that which is authentic is more important than that which is holy, good, or righteous. What is lame and counterfeit, that which corrupts authenticity and keeps us from being real or genuine...is worse than that which is evil, demonic or perverse. It is better to be bad but authentic than to be good but phony.” —Andrew Root, *Faith Formation in a Secular Age*

⇒ We affirm that authenticity is a good thing unless it functions as a \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ of what is true, good, and beautiful.

Isa. 5:20—*Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!*

⇒ We affirm that true authenticity is living in accord with God’s good \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to us.

Psa. 1:1-2—<sup>1</sup> *Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers;* <sup>2</sup> *but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.*

### *The Challenge of Expressive Individualism*

“Expressive individualism assumes the authority of inner feelings in what it means to be an individual, which has a number of implications: To be truly oneself requires behaving outwardly in a manner consistent with those inner feelings...outward behavior that does not match inner feelings indicates that the outward, social self is not a true reflection of the real, inward self...Happiness and human flourishing tend to be identified with the individual’s inner sense of psychological well-being or peace.” —Carl Trueman

⇒ We reject the view that internal feelings and desires are necessarily good simply because they arise from \_\_\_\_\_ us.

1 Pet. 2:11—*Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.*

⇒ While recognizing that there are internal aspects to human identity, we affirm that these are subjective and must be \_\_\_\_\_ in light of the objective aspects of our identity as God’s redeemed image-bearers.

1 Pet. 2:9—*But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*

**Key Point:** Our authentic identity is found in \_\_\_\_\_ who we are in Christ and in \_\_\_\_\_ in accord with what He says is true of us.

## Concluding Thought

How we \_\_\_\_\_ the world to be and what it means to live well within it is formed by what/who we behold.

2 Cor. 3:18—*And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.*



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- **God’s purposeful design for human life shows its dignity.**  
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⇒ Man images God in the world **intellectually** (rationality, volition), **morally** (conscience), and **relationally** (through relationships), and in exercising **dominion** (creativity, cultivation).
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⇒ Man is unique among God’s creatures because we are both **physical** and **spiritual** beings.  
*Psa. 139:13*—For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb.  
⇒ God’s work of creating human life begins in the **womb**.

## **Upholding Human Dignity in a Fallen World**

### **1. Christians should hold a robust pro-life ethic.**

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