Anthropology
The Doctrine of Man

For centuries, many have asked the question, "what does it mean to be human?" The Psalmist, amazed at God's great creation, asks "what is man?" Philosophers and scientists have sought to understand this for as long as they could think.
This issue in particular is one of the most crucial issues in the church at this point in time. Society cannot answer the question "what is a woman?" When you ask someone what qualifies as a human life, they resort to personhood rather than the imago Dei. And usually, because of our lack of education and discipleship, the Church is left clueless and has no idea how to answer these questions.

The Westminster Shorter Catechism: What is the chief end of man?
Man's chief end is to _____ God and to _____ Him forever.

We are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27).

Main Views of the Imago Dei:

- _____ **View:** There are some characteristics in humanity that reflect God's being.

- _____ **View:** Like the triune God who exists eternally in relationship, we are created for community.

- _____ **View:** Based on God's commands to be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it, humanity serves as God's representatives on earth.

- _____ **View:** Humanity should be viewed as a whole. All three above contribute aspects of what it means to bear God's image (2 Cor 3:18, 5:17).

Human Nature: Though we are made in God's image and reflect His attributes, we remain infinitely different from Him. God is Creator; we are created. He is eternal and infinite; we are finite and limited.

Two Major Views of what a Human is…

1. _____**:** Humans are composed of two parts, body and soul/spirit.

2. **_____:** Humans are composed of three parts, body, soul, and spirit.

Something to Avoid: Platonic Dualism
Here is what Plato teaches: Your soul existed before you were made, but when you were born, your soul indwells your body and makes you a person. The whole time you're on this earth, your soul is yearning to *go home* in the upper realm and escape this physical misery here in our bodies on earth. When you die, you will shed your body and will truly be you again when you return to the upper realm.

Plato: Your _____ is your true self and your body does not matter.
The Bible: You are both _____ and _____, and both of them matter.

The Biblical Answer: Human beings are equally composed of both a physical body and an immaterial soul, made in the image of God, to glorify Him. Our image is broken, however, as Christians, we are being restored by Christ to bear His image perfectly. One day, when He returns, we will be bodily raised to do so.

Reflection Questions:

How does the biblical view of being human influence the way you treat yourself and others?

How might you need to change your views on what it means to be a human?