

SHARING SCRIPTURE

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Worship the Creator

For use: Aug 4 - 10

Texts: Psalms 115:1-8, Deuteronomy 10:17-22, Psalms 101:1, Isaiah 1:10-17; 58, Mark 12:38-40.

A recent study suggests that all modern humans descended from a single couple, several thousand years ago. DNA analysis indicates that not only humans originated from a single pair, but most animal species also came from one primary pair of mates. Scientists Mark Stoeckle and David Thaler concluded that the majority of all animal species alive today come from parents that all began giving birth at roughly the same time, conflicting with typical scientific understandings of human evolution. “This conclusion is very surprising,” Dr. Thaler admitted, “and I fought against it as hard as I could.”

The findings show that we are not only similar to every other human tribe, but we also have much in common genetically to every other animal species. Dr. Stoeckle suggests, “At a time when humans place so much emphasis on individual and group differences, maybe we should spend more time on the ways in which we resemble one another and the rest of the animal kingdom.” In a follow-up to their report, Stoeckle and Thaler insist that their findings should not be taken as supporting the creation account found in Genesis. [1]

It just seems logical that we humans—sentient, thinking beings—should offer our worship and allegiance to only one entity: whoever or whatever created us. As Christians we understand that Creator to be the God of heaven and earth, as revealed in the sacred scriptures. This week’s lesson looks at the concept of caring for our fellow humans as an act of worship to our Creator. Those who truly believe that God created us will demonstrate their honor and worship by seeing all humanity through God’s eyes: the Creator loves us equally. Once we grasp that vision, then we can really practice Jesus’ challenge to love our neighbors as ourselves.

This act of worship not only honors God, but it also elevates the worshipper. Sunday’s lesson addresses the principle that we humans tend to reflect the character traits of whatever things we worship. By worshipping the Creator, we are lifted above the chaos of a society guided by human nature, left to itself for moral direction. The Creator gives us an ideal vision of a society motivated by love for others, rather than the selfishness that

results from self-worship and other forms of idolatry. By working to lift up fallen humanity wherever they are, no matter what their national, cultural, or language differences, we take on the nature of the Creator who loves and desires to save us all. Even science confirms that the human family is more alike than we are different.

~Chuck Burkeen

[1] <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6424407/Every-person-spawned-single-pair-adults-living-200-000-years-ago-scientists-claim.html>

For Reflection

Connecting: Check out your group members' six degrees of separation (see https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Six_degrees_of_separation). Excluding your connections through your local church and church school affiliations, see if you can find other links among you. Have a fun discussion as you discover the other ways you are all connected.

Sharing: What is the most compelling reason to reject the notion that religious oppression is endorsed by God?

1. Just as every good parent tries to love all of their children equally, God actually succeeds at this
2. Oppression is only effective as long as the oppressed stay subjugated; when they get the upper hand, watch out
3. On the contrary, God did encourage Israel to subdue and rule over heathen nations in the Old Testament narrative, and therefore we should have a free hand to do so again today
4. God moves hearts only through loving invitations; Satan compels weak humans to follow him
5. We can see the blessings of religious freedom in action in societies that practice strong separation of church and state
6. Other:

Applying: How hard is it to really see all humans, regardless of their national or social standing, as equals? What helps you to consider others as equals, and treat them as such? How is this an act of worship to our Creator?

Valuing: If helping society's poor and marginalized is an act of worship, personally evaluate how well you have worshipped this week. Pray for God to show you practical steps you can take to live a more worshipful life

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Three decades ago, we created this resource for small groups and Sabbath school classes, and it continues to bless so many people worldwide. Thank you for your continued interest in these biblical themes and what they mean to your life and those people with whom you share it.

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Executive Director

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