

THE EQUIP INSTITUTE

Theme: Christian Engagement

Topic: Theological Anthropology: Introduction

4th Semester / Spring 2025

Introduction

The Equip Institute exists to equip members of Taylors First Baptist Church to think rightly about God and His Word for the sake of living rightly before God in His world. This week begins a five-week study of theological anthropology.

Anthropology Defined

Anthropology in the academic sense of the term concerns the scientific study of humanity, including such phenomena as human behavior, human biology, cultures, societies, and linguistics. Anthropology is an interdisciplinary field that draws on the natural sciences, especially biology, and several social sciences, especially social psychology, sociology, and archaeology. The field of anthropology is considered a social science.

While the field of anthropology offers many insights into human nature and behavior, that is not the sense in which we will be using the term over the next several weeks. Instead, we will be focusing on **theological anthropology**, a term that means the doctrine of humanity. We'll focus on this topic for two related reasons. First, the doctrine of humanity is the defining theological concern of our era. Different doctrines are elevated and debated at different times in church history, resulting in Christians developing a consensus on how best to understand what the Bible teaches about a topic and the ongoing implications of those teachings. We've seen this pattern throughout church history:

- Scripture (100s-200s; 1500s-1600s; 1800s-1900s)
- Person of Christ (200s-400s; 1700s-1800s)
- The Trinity (300s-500s)
- Salvation (300s-400s; 900s-1100s; 1500s-1600s)
- Creation (1800s-2000s)
- End Times (300s-500s; 900s-1000s; 1800s-1900s)
- Humanity (1900s-2000s)

Second, the post-Christian West has grown increasingly confused about what it means to be human, especially since the 1960s. This has been the result of the waning of the Judeo-Christian worldview over the past two or three generations in favor of rival worldviews such as naturalism, postmodernism, and expressive individualism. This confusion is forcing Christians to clarify our beliefs and their implications, which is why the doctrine of humanity is the defining theological concern of our era.

Our Methodology

When we studied basic Christian theology last spring and rival worldviews earlier this spring, we built each week around a group of questions. We'll follow a similar method over the next few weeks. For each of the questions, we will look to particular sources to help us find the answer.

1. What does the Bible say?
2. What has the church said?
3. Where is our culture confused?
4. What can we learn from non-Christian sources?
5. What should Christians believe?
6. How should Christians respond to our cultural confusion?

Theological Anthropology 101

According to the Scriptures, God himself created the first human beings as a special act that marked the culmination of all His creative work. Humans alone were created in the **image of God** and given responsibility to serve as God's vice-regents over His other creatures. These first humans, and all their descendants, were also given a specific nature that included their being **embodied** and **gendered** beings. God intends for humans to **flourish**, and to contribute to the flourishing of the rest of his creation.

Why This Topic Matters

- Genocide
- The sanctity of human life
- Human evolution
- Transgenderism
- Homosexuality
- Misogyny
- Transhumanism
- Racism

Gregg Allison, *Embodied: Living as Whole People in a Fractured World* (Baker, 2021).

John S. Hammett and Katie J. McCoy, *Humanity, Theology for the People of God* (B&H Academic, 2023).

Kelly Kavic, *You're Only Human: How Your Limits Reflect God's Design and Why That's Good News* (Brazos, 2022).

John W. Kleinig, *Wonderfully Made: A Protestant Theology of the Body* (Lexham, 2021).

Katie J. McCoy, *To Be a Woman: The Confusion Over Female Identity and How Christians Can Respond* (B&H, 2023).

Jacob Shatzer, *Transhumanism and the Image of God: Today's Technology and the Future of Christian Discipleship* (IVP Academic, 2019).

Carl Trueman, *Strange New World: How Thinkers and Activists Redefined Identity and Sparked the Sexual Revolution* (Crossway, 2022).

Andrew Walker, *God and the Transgender Debate: What Does the Bible Actually Say about Gender Identity?* (Good Book Co., 2021).

[illegible]

Breakpoint
FORUM LIVE

A New Sexual Revolution

Greenville
SOUTH CAROLINA

April 3, 2025 7-9PM

Register Now
colsoncenter.org/greenville

John Stonestreet
President | Colson Center
for Christian Worldview

Andrew T. Walker, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Christian Ethics
and Public Theology at The Southern
Baptist Theological Seminary

Katie McCoy, Ph.D.
Author