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This week at Magdalen Road we were continuing our topical series considering the innate value and dignity that humans have from being made in the image of God. Rather than value and worth being something we have to earn or prove, it's something we naturally have because of the one in whose image we are made.

This week our task was to explore a little deeper the way we treat others and make decisions in light of this innate dignity.

We spent time in Psalm 139 considering the Psalm under John Stott's 3 headings of Creation, Covenant and Continuity.

+ Creation

The language used from v13-16 is especially reminiscent of creation - God creating in the mysterious secret place, the depths of the womb using metaphorical language of potters and clay and tapestry and knitting together. Yes biology is at work (as the Psalmist would know) but the metaphorical language used highlights the fact God is behind it all.

+ Covenant

By 'covenant' we mean knowledge. God doesn't just create - he intimately knows the people he has made (v1-5). Knowing the real you. Wherever we are (v7-10) he is with us - even (v11-12) in the midst of the darkness.

We noted in passing that in the Psalm here God knows and loves, even though the recipient is unresponsive and the knowledge is only one-sided.

+ Continuity

The psalmist shows his own personal history and his current history (and even potential future history) are all joined up. The me of 'then' and the me of 'now' are linked. There is a continuity and a comfort as (v16) the Lord knows what's coming. It wasn't as if at birth he became him, or when the placenta was cut, or at 20 weeks...

Here are some questions for your groups, as always feel free to adapt as needed.

How does Psalm 139 make you feel?

Why does someone have value?

How is God depicted in the Psalm?

How would our society depict God?

What was David's response to the truths in the Psalm?

What does it mean to be known by God in these verses?

When do you need to remember these truths?

What principles do you think Psalm 139 give us as we consider how we treat people?

Where does 'worth' come from?

Do you think fundamentally people are equal? Why / why not?

How can we show that all people have a value from being made in God's image?

Why do you think abortion is so common in the West?