

# creed

divinity + destiny

During this CREED series, we've been discovering and celebrating our humanity. We've focused on Genesis 1:27 which says "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."  
This week we asked the question,

**"How should we respond when our humanity is degraded?"**

Much of the trouble and suffering we experience every day comes from the hands of another human being. We face the challenge to use this suffering as an opportunity for growth in our own relationship with God, our own humanity and the humanity of others.

## Day 1: I've been hurt

**Consider:** How do I respond to people who hurt me?

**Read:** Matthew 5:43-47; Romans 12:17-21; Matthew 5:21-26

**Prayer:** Father, in this life I know people will hurt me and those I love.

Teach me to respond as your Son taught us to respond. Help me not to lose my humanity by responding with anger, resentment and vengeance. May the Holy Spirit protect my heart from contempt and replace it with mercy, justice, gentleness, patience and love. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## Day Two: The True Human

**Read:** John 1:14; I Peter 2:22-23; Matthew 9:22-26

Jesus is the ultimate example of what it means to be human.

He lived the human experience perfectly.

**Consider:** If someone sent you an e-mail asking,

**"How did Jesus respond when people hurt him?"**

**Write:** What would you tell him/her? Write your response in your journal or maybe send the e-mail to yourself or to a friend.

## Day Three: Following the True Human

**Read:** I Peter 2:19-21; John 16:33

I Peter 2:19-21 tells us that we're called to bear up under unjust suffering.

**Consider:** How do you feel about this calling?

**Pray:** Ask the Holy Spirit to create in you the strength to follow Christ's example of loving when you're hurt, rejected and persecuted. Ask the Holy Spirit to bring to mind a person who's hurt you and to show you how to forgive and bless this person.

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, I hear your call to follow your Son's example of loving when we're hurt. I need the Holy Spirit's power to live up to this calling and to love \_\_\_\_\_ (insert the name of the person the Holy Spirit brought to mind). Give me the opportunity to bless him/her this week even if it's just by praying for him/her right now. Father, bless \_\_\_\_\_. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## Day Four & Five: The Opportunity of Suffering

Most of us work hard to avoid pain for ourselves and those close to us. In fact, we often make *that* the point of life and our faith. Is it possible that the way we view suffering and trouble is unbalanced? While none of us wants to struggle and shouldn't go looking for problems, could it be possible that pain has a purpose in our lives?

**Consider:** For what would I be willing to suffer?

**Read:** Acts 5:41-42; Acts 9:15-16; I Peter 4:12-16

**Consider:** How did the first followers of Christ view suffering?

**Consider:** How is it different than how we look at suffering?

**Consider:** Is my attitude toward suffering in line with those verses above?

**Consider:** Would I be willing suffer for God's glory?

**Read:** I Peter 1:6-7; Romans 5:3-5; I Peter 4:1-2

**Consider:** How does God use suffering to perfect our humanity?

**Consider:** How has God used struggles to perfect *your* humanity?

**Read:** 2 Corinthians 1:3-4; Colossians 1:24-29; Philippians 1:27a, 28;

I Thessalonians 1:6-7; I Thessalonians 2:1-2

**Consider:** How have the examples of other believers who managed their struggles and suffering well served to enhance your faith and humanity?

**Consider:** How has God used your struggles as an example to enhance the faith and humanity of others?

**Prayer:** Thank you, Lord, for allowing suffering in my life to bring Yourself glory, perfect my humanity and enhance the humanity of others. My life is yours. Bring whatever will accomplish Your purpose in my life. Your will be done. In Jesus' Name. Amen.