

## Session #17: Animal Rights (Session Outline)

*"A righteous man cares for the needs of his animal, but the kindest acts of the wicked are cruel" (Prov 12:10)*

1. What are rights? *"That which a person has a just claim to; power, privilege, etc, that belongs to a person by law, nature, or tradition"* (Webster's)
2. Man is pre-eminent over, and entirely separate from animals
  - o He is created in God's image (Gen 1:26-27)
  - o He is called to be a good steward of animals & rule over them as God's vice regent (Gen 1:28)
  - o All animals are given over into man's hands (Gen 9:2-3; Psalm 8:6-7; James 3:7)
  - o With the fall, man has perverted the proper view of animals: either cruelty to them, or worship of them
3. Are animals important to God? Yes!
  - o God created them and populated the skies, land and seas with them
  - o God commanded man to rule righteously over them and care for them (Gen 1:26,28)
  - o God miraculously protected them through the flood (Gen 6:17-21; 7:1-16)
  - o God shows compassion for them and watches over them (Jonah 4:6-11; Job 38:39-39:30; Matt 6:26)
  - o God commands mercy towards them (Ex 23:4-5,12; Deut 22:1-7; 25:4; Lev 18:23; 20:15-16; Luke 13:15; 14:5; Matt 12:11-12; 1 Cor 9:9; 1 Tim 5:18; Prov 12:10)
4. Why did God create animals?
  - o To praise Him (Psalm 145:21; 148:7,10)
  - o To illustrate God's awesome creativity and beauty
  - o To show our uniqueness in all of creation (Gen 2:19-20)
  - o For our enjoyment and to teach dominion principles
  - o To assist man in his work and for his benefit (Prov 14:4; Gen 8:6-12; 1 Kings 17:1-7; Gen 9:3; 3:21)
  - o As an instrument of: judgment (2 Kings 2:23-25; Prov 30:17; Num 11:4-33; plagues on Egypt); fear (Prov 22:13); correction (Jonah 1:17-2:10); temporary atonement (Heb 10:1-4,11); righteousness (Prov 12:10; Heb 11:33); demonstrating humility (John 12:12-15; Job 40:15-41:34); authenticating God's chosen vessels (Acts 28:3-6)
  - o To teach us (see Handout: "What Animals Teach Us")
  - o Are there pets in the Bible? (2 Sam 12:1-6; Job 41:1-5; Matt 15:25-27; Passover lamb)
5. Do animals have rights?
  - o They have not been granted rights by God, but are protected to some degree just as we are
  - o They are not to be crossbred (Lev 19:19; Gen 1:20-25)
  - o Just as we have legal rights (Thou shalt not kill - right to life), animals have derived protections (legal rights) based upon God's commands
  - o They are to be respected, not abused, since they have been created by God for our benefit and pleasure
6. Current animal rights movement is grounded in eastern mysticism, equating animals with man
  - o "Deep Ecology" derives from mysticism, intuition, New Age, and evolutionary thinking
  - o Belief that man is only an animal and is not intrinsically superior - all species equal to some extent
  - o "Speciesism" - "a prejudice or attitude of bias toward the interest of members of one's own species and against those of members of other species" (Peter Singer)(equality between men and animal life)
  - o Tactics include: emotionalism; misrepresentation of facts; unsupported statistics; legal system; lobbies; intimidation; personal attack
7. What should we do?
  - o Engage the question as it comes up in conversation (don't trivialize it)
  - o Address the fundamental issues (animals not created in the image of God; we are to protect and show mercy towards them; we are not to idolize them or be cruel to them)
  - o Point out the eastern mysticism roots of much of the current movement
  - o Give reasons why God created animals
  - o Resist laws that elevate animals to the status of man