

# Biblical View of Disability



What does Scripture say about disability?

## **All humans are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27, 5:1-2)**

- Regardless of gender, race, physical or intellectual ability, all people are equally made in God's image. Sin and the effects of the fall blur but do not erase this unshakeable basis of the value of all human life. Even after the fall, God prohibits murder and calls humanity to fill and care for creation as stewards because we are all made in His image (Genesis 9:6-7).

## **Disability is part of God's sovereign purpose (Exodus 4)**

- The law protects people with disabilities (Deuteronomy 27:18, Leviticus 19:14) and includes them in the people of God.

## **Inclusion is modeled and mandated by Jesus Christ (Luke 4:18)**

- Jesus' treatment of people with impairments displays God's heart for the excluded. Jesus quotes Isaiah 61 at the start of his Spirit-anointed public ministry: coming to proclaim the good news to the poor, bring sight to the blind, and set the captives free (Luke 4:18). In Luke 14, Jesus sharply criticizes the Pharisees, telling his host not to invite friends or rich neighbors to his feasts (who would repay him in kind) but instead to seek out and intentionally "invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind" (Luke 14:13, 21-23). The Gospel of Luke shows Jesus fulfilling this mission by intentionally reaching out to the margins of society: to women, Gentiles, the poor, and people with disabilities.

## **Disability is not the result of personal or parental sin (John 9)**

- Jesus shows his disciples that disability is an opportunity for God's glory to be revealed. In fact, the man born blind is better able to see Jesus (in both physical and spiritual senses) than the Pharisees.

## **The church has many different members and gifts (1 Cor. 12:22)**

- Diversity is part of God's design, each member exercising their spiritual gifts for the good of the whole. Contrary to our expectations, "some parts of the body that seem weakest and least important are actually the most necessary" (1 Corinthians 12:22, NLT). The church is incomplete without the presence of people with disabilities, who are almost always thought to be weakest and least important. To extend this metaphor, the body of Christ is itself "disabled," lack necessary members, without the presence of people with disabilities. People with disabilities are created in the image of God, included in God's family and the church, explicitly identified as a focus for evangelism and discipleship, and have spiritual gifts which the Christian church needs in order to be healthy and whole.