

WEEK 2

DAY 1: IN HIS IMAGE

Today's Reading: Genesis 1, Genesis 2, Ephesians 4:20-24, Job 33:4, John 4:24, 2 Corinthians 3:18

Before the beginning of time, God had a plan. He laid out the earth's foundations, and in all his creations, he had a prized possession in mind: you and me. God created man in his image. "Imago Dei" is a Latin phrase that means the image of God. You and I, are created in the image of God. Let that sink in! We are made in the image of the one, true God.

As we study scripture, we can understand better that from the first breath taken by Adam to those of us occupying the earth today, we are image bearers of God. Culturally, when describing someone who "looks like their father", we think of a physical resemblance. When scripture says that we are created in God's image, it does not suggest that we resemble God physically, but rather that we spiritually possess an intrinsic and sacred nature. Our resemblance is a functional reality, more than a structural one.

What does it mean to be the image bearer of God? It means that we strive daily to look more like God. We should reflect on him in how we interact with other people, in our thoughts, attitudes, and actions. We are a representative of our Father to everyone around us.

God created us as male and female human beings. He gave us the ability to think, problem solve, have an imagination, and be creative. God also gave us the capacity to love, care for others, and have relationships. God created us for community.

He made us for community and a relationship with him.

- Do you have a personal relationship with God? If not, this is the perfect time to enter into this new relationship.
- How are you reflecting the image of God to those around you? Are you living out the responsibility of "Imago Dei"?

PRAYER:

Lord Jesus, please reveal to me the ways in which I need to grow into a better image bearer of God.

WEEK 2

DAY 2: GOD'S MASTERPIECE

Today's Reading: Psalm 139,
Ephesians 2:8-10

Have you ever been intrigued by a piece of artwork? Have you been captivated by the beauty and the artistry of a painting, a sculpture, or a drawing? Was it something you created, or were you admiring someone else's work?

A few years back, we were able to visit the Vatican in Rome, Italy, where I encountered a piece of art that enraptured me.

As we walked through this place of such ornate beauty, I stopped in my tracks. The sculpture by Michelangelo, La Pietà, was captivating. I was in awe as I stood agaze for nearly half an hour, admiring all the lines and craftsmanship. More than the talent of the artist was the content and concept of his creation. La Pietà is a sculpture of Mary holding her son, Jesus after he was removed from the cross. It is absolutely breathtaking. So many emotions raced through my mind when I beheld a physical likeness of Jesus, my Savior. But I could also relate to the piece from the perspective of a mother, friend, and follower of Christ. I could see the pain, heartache, brokenness, and most of all, I could see the hope of the world.

Whereas I can respect, enjoy, and even admire the beauty of Michelangelo's masterpiece, I often struggle to understand that is precisely how God sees me. We are God's creation, his masterpiece. He loves us, adores us, and created us for a relationship with him and a purpose in this world. When we learn to see ourselves as God sees us, we will begin to live in a way that brings Him honor and glory.

- How do you see yourself today?
- Take a few minutes and list from Psalm 139 how God sees you, and compare your two lists.

PRAYER:

God, enable me to see myself as you see me. Allow me to appreciate the craftsmanship and artistry of your mighty hand in my life.

WEEK 2

DAY 3: YOU ARE CHOSEN AND ADOPTED

Today's Reading: 2 Timothy 1:8-12, Ephesians 1:3-6, 2 Corinthians 6:18, John 1:12-13, Galatians 4:4-5, John 6:44, Romans 8:29-30, Philipians 4:5-7

What does it mean to be adopted? The Oxford Dictionary defines it as "legally taking another's child and bringing it up as one's own." Those seem like simple words on a page, but they mean so much more to the parties involved. Adoption is a lifelong commitment that requires time, energy, and many resources. It takes a giant leap for the parents and an equally large leap of faith for the child--expected to come into a new family and settle in as if it is the way things have always been. Adoption requires a great deal of love and trust. While adoption is a beautiful and life-giving event, it also is challenging. Every earthly adoption is accompanied by a loss. If the child needs a new family, they have lost the family into which they were born. Lots of emotion, pain, and struggle often accompany this.

Adoption into God's family is different. We lose nothing, and gain everything. Christ fully bore the loss, and made a way for us to be grafted into the family of God. When we place our trust in Christ, we walk away from the deadly consequence of our sin. We exchange separation and death for peace and eternal life with God. This doesn't mean our lives will be trouble-free or without pain. It means that the indwelling presence of God provides peace that passes all understanding and helps us navigate this broken world in a way that glorifies our Father in heaven.

- Have you been adopted into God's family? If not, what is your hesitation?
- How are you representing the adopted name God gave you, His child?

PRAYER:

Lord, allow me to see the importance of being adopted into your family. Show me ways in which I can represent your name well. Thank you for adopting me and calling me your own.

WEEK 2

DAY 4: CREATED FOR A PURPOSE

Today's Reading: Jeremiah 1:4-10, Jeremiah 29:11, 1 Peter 2:9-10, Romans 8:18-30, Proverbs 16:4, Acts 13:36, Colossians 1:16, Ephesians 2:10

Have you ever wondered, "why am I here" or "what is the purpose of ____"? There are many times in our life when we will not understand why we are in a situation or what purpose we are serving at a specific time. But we can remain at ease knowing the God of the universe knows holds those answers, and has a plan for you.

God's sovereignty does not mean He is orchestrating evil in or around you. Sin entered the world in the Garden of Eden, and we live in a broken, sinful world by result. God's sovereignty is manifest by His ability to work around all those things that look like destruction to us, and bring redemption and restoration into our lives for the ultimate good of the Kingdom of God. When we learn to submit to His authority and follow Him completely, we can trust He will guide us through the difficulties and create beauty from ashes.

You may ask, "what part do I play in God's Kingdom"? God has a plan for each of us, and it looks different from person-to-person. Our specific "purpose" or "assignment" today may only be for a season, changing as life goes on. So, how do we find our purpose?

The best way to discern what God has called you to is through obedience to Him: spending time in His Word, praying, living as part of a community of believers known as the Church. We must connect with Him in order to hear him. Sometimes we might wish for a roadmap that outlines the path from start to finish. God has called us to relationship where He reveals each step as it comes. Our job is to walk in faith, step-by-step, trusting that His ways are best.

PRAYER:

Lord, help me trust you to take each step you ask me to take.

WEEK 2

DAY 5: WHO AM I?

Today's Reading: 1 Samuel 16:7, Romans 5:8, Romans 8:31-39, Ephesians 2:4-5, John 15:15, Galatians 5:1, 1 Thessalonians 1:4, 1 John 3:1, Galatians 3:26, Romans 8:17

Much of our cultural landscape serves as ripe ground for comparison and competition. We look at social media, and see other people's lives, edited and filtered to show the very best! We question why we don't look like that or why our lives are not post-worthy. As believers, we err by putting ourselves down and allowing others to assign our value. We have immutable value and worth that is not dependent on success or worldly standards. Our value is found in Christ. In moments of doubt, we can invite the light of God to override the darkness, fear, and failures.

As we have sought to answer the question, "who am I" this week in Scripture, I'm prayerful we are starting to see ourselves through the eyes of our loving Father. We are loved by God, the Father, so much that He sent His Son, Jesus, to die for us. If we are in Christ, we are His cherished children. God wants us to His love for us, that welcomes us as adopted children and co-heirs with Christ.

God wants us to find our value in Him. Through Him, we can love others, and also ourselves. We find our purpose in Jesus. He invites us to step forward each day in relationship with Him. We are His chosen family and we can find peace and comfort knowing who we are and whose we are.

PRAYER:

Lord Jesus, help me to rest in the knowledge that you love me. I am your child, whom you cherish, adore, and value. Father, may I come to know you more every day.