

Way of Discipleship Small Groups

Bible Themes 2: Made in God's image



Touching base (5 minutes)

Open in prayer as is helpful for your group.

If this is your first session take time to introduce yourselves and set any ground rules you want to for your time together.

If you met previously take the opportunity either as a group or in pairs to check in with each other about how your response from last time has gone.



Introduction: This session is one of several on great themes that run through the Bible. In the book 'The Drama of Scripture' the authors write this: "Imagine that the Bible, with its 66 books, written by dozens of human authors over the course of more than 1000 years, is a grand cathedral with many rooms and levels and a variety of entrances....You can, for example, enter the Bible through one of the gospels....If you want to gather a sense of the cathedral as a whole, you face an important question: where is the main entrance, the place from which you can orient yourself to the whole? The cathedral of the Bible has many themes." By looking at its themes we can begin to get a sense of how to "enter" the Bible.

Opening question(s) (5 minutes)

What is a human life worth? Why?



Understanding the information (20 minutes)

Share these thoughts in your own words or read them together:

What is important that we understand about how the story of the Bible describes God's hope and purpose for human beings?

Being in God's image means being made for relationship with God and each other. "Then God said, 'Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness'... So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." (Genesis 1: 26-27)

At the heart of imaging God is being made for relationship – with God and each other. The Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone.'" (Genesis 2:18)



Being in God's image means being His representatives and knowing our primary task. "God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.'" (Genesis 1:28)

God gives humans enormous power to image Him in the world - intelligence, creativity, leadership, and ingenuity - and God gives Adam and Eve a world inherent with possibilities: Minerals wait to be mined for metal instruments; plants grow to be cut for food or herbs; animal skins can be converted into human clothes: trees to be made into furniture, houses, cities, books, musical instruments. This is the main human task and has been called the "cultural mandate". To fill the earth, not just with babies, but with music, creativity, technology, learning, art, architecture, parks, photography.

Understanding this creational task can help us to see discipleship as not just being about personal worship and morality, but about changing and developing the world that the Lord of everything created.

Being in God's image reflects the dignity and authority of human beings. "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.... He brought (the animals) to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name." (Genesis 2: 15, 19)

The creation of human beings is the climax of God's work – we are named as "very good" in the story. This underlines how to be made in His image is to grant incredible dignity to each person. Psalm 8 wonders at the incredible responsibility and worth God gives us, asking, "...what is humankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them? You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honour. You made them rulers over the works of your hands you put everything under their feet..." (Psalm 8: 4-6)

The story of the Bible starts and ends here – with God wanting to restore each human by being "renewed...in the image of the creator" (Colossians 3:8-13), and eventually ruling with Him once again.

Discuss: Made for relationship, representative, first task, with dignity, authority...to reign with Christ once again...What aspects of being made in God's image do you want to grow in?

Reading the Bible (15 minutes)

Read Genesis 1: 26-28 in which God gives us our first task.

Discuss the Discovery Bible Study questions:
What does this passage teach me about God?
What does this passage teach me about people?
How does this passage call me to obey God?
What might I do in response to this this week?



Seeing how it looks in real lives (10 minutes)

There is no video, but you are invited to discuss your experience of how seeing ourselves as made in God's image can affect our daily work and life. How have you joined in with changing and developing the world God has made?



Responding to God's leading (5 minutes)

Give people an opportunity to think about, "What might God be showing me and how might I respond?" They may like to write this down and/or share it with the group and/or share it with one other person. A friendly question is to ask each other, "Is there anything that would be helpful to ask you next time?"



Group prayer (5 minutes)

Dear God,
how honoured we are to be created in your image.
In this we are set apart from the rest of creation.
You have made us to be like you from the beginning.
We live life to the fullest,
whether at work or at rest,
whether in the world or at home,
when we imitate you.
Help us to live this day
so that your image may be visible through us.
Amen.





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