

# a beautiful design

## WEEK 2

SEPTEMBER 14 - 20

### IN HIS IMAGE

*This study guide should be used the week following the sermon it supplements. If you are using the study guide in your Home Group, be sure to work through the questions on your own before you meet. If your Home Group doesn't meet one week, walk through the guide on your own so that you can stay in sync with the series. For further study, explore the Recommended Resources on our website.*

**RECAP:** Last week we discussed God's work in creation. Because God designed the universe in good order, we can be sure that orienting our everchanging lives around God's unchanging design will result in our good and His glory. When we look to an everchanging world to discover who we are and what our purpose is, we receive a multitude of ideas and opinions. God's design points toward a divine purpose for humanity: to reflect our Creator. Why is it good news that God is Creator? Because He is the fixed point upon whom we can set our eyes for navigation in life.

**MAIN TEXT:** Genesis 1:26-28, 2:18-25

**SUMMARY:** In Genesis 1-2, we see how God creates man and woman and why He creates them. We are created to bear His image and to be in relationship with Him. This is our identity. Being image bearers unites both genders, all races and all ages and provides a cohesive foundation for all of humanity. Man and woman are united together in equal dignity as the only species made in the image of God. They are equally entitled to the privileges of being image bearers and equally responsible for reflecting the God who has created them. When we come to comprehend this view, it leads to a greater understanding of the equal dignity and purpose of men and women, and our hearts should grieve where this dignity is ignored or rejected.

#### GETTING STARTED

Are you more like your mother or father? In what way(s) do you resemble them?

#### DIGGING DEEPER

1. When you consider Genesis 1:26-28, what are some of the unique privileges and responsibilities entrusted to God's image bearers? Why are we called to "be fruitful and multiply"? How do we exercise "dominion" over the earth?
2. Read Genesis 2:18-25. In light of this passage and Genesis 1:26-28, what are some ways that we are to reflect God in the world?
3. What are some of the stereotypical views that our culture holds about masculinity and femininity?
4. Because men and women are created in the image of God, they share many characteristics and gifts. What are some of the attributes men and women share? How do these character traits differ from cultural views of men and women? Why is it important for us to identify and celebrate the ways men and women are united as image bearers?
5. If a friend said to you, "I think being created in the image of God means that people are basically good," how would you respond to them? What Scriptures could you refer to for help?
6. In some cultures—including much of ours—killing the unborn, the elderly, the disenfranchised and those of different ethnicities is acceptable practice. Our world today is diseased with modern-day slavery, human trafficking and sexual exploitation (i.e. pornography, sex slavery, prostitution). Read Psalm 139:12-16. In this passage and in Genesis 2, we see that God is intimately involved with crafting men and women in His image. Why does God's

## FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

**TIME:** Build some intentional time into the rhythm of your week for your household to gather and discuss the value we all have because of who made us. Read Matthew 22:15-22 about Jesus and the denarius. Have your kids look at a coin and whose image it bears. Discuss how the image a coin bears establishes its value and signifies to whom it belongs.

**MOMENTS:** Capture and leverage moments in the course of your everyday life to point out to your family how being an “image bearer” gives every single person value, even those whom it is hard for us to love. How should that affect the way we treat others and battle our own selfishness?

involvement in creating all humans in His image matter? What difference does it make as we interact with others?

7. How do contradictory voices in our culture distract us from seeing each other as image bearers?
8. In what ways do we dishonor the image of God in ourselves and others? What kinds of thoughts, behaviors or attitudes devalue or belittle God’s design for the created order?
9. In *The Weight of Glory*, C.S. Lewis wrote, “There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. It is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit.” If every person is created in the image of God, then every person has value. What “immortals” are hardest for you to treat as valuable image bearers? What type of person might be uncomfortable in your Home Group because of whom your group tends to value? Have you ever been uncomfortable or felt devalued in a group setting?

## NEXT STEPS

- Be intentional about loving people in your workplace, school or home who are typically hard for you to love. Make a list of them and pray for them.
- Confess areas of your life where you have marred or ignored the image of God in others. This may include times when you have bought into culture’s expectation of image or beauty, engaged in pornography or shown hostility toward a person or group of people.
- Commit to memorizing one of the following verses this week:

*So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.* **Genesis 1:27**

*When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?* **Psalms 8:3-4**

- Thank God for creating us in His image. Celebrate the glorious truth that men and women share a common identity and purpose before the Lord.
- Seeing the truth of the image of God should enable us to process the tragic news of this world with a distinct sadness and grief. Pray that God would crush the sinful ways that the world—and we—seek to desecrate the image of God. Specifically, ask that the Lord would bring an end to the widespread acceptance and practice of abortion, sexual exploitation and slavery.
- Ask the Lord to break through the lies we have believed about who we are and refocus our eyes on the “image of God.”