

Small Group Questions

Small groups and individuals can use these questions to engage the content of Sunday sermons.



September 17 – October 1, 2023

Made in the Image of God

We often talk about the fact that we are created in the image of God. But what does that mean? What does it say about God, about us, and about how we are to live as God's image bearers?

Then God said,

"Let us make humans in our image, according to our likeness.

– Genesis 1:26

September 17, 2023

The Image Maker

Genesis 1:26-27, Psalm 8

Connect:

Who are you most like – your parents, siblings, or someone else?

Engage:

The Jews were the only people in the ancient world who did not worship idols. They believed that there was only one God and that human beings could not represent this one God in earthly metal, wood, or stone. They thought idols were the product of human invention, not holy essence. So when the opening chapter of Genesis states that humans were made in the image of God, they were not saying human beings were divine physical representations, like an ancient idol. Instead, the author claims that humans are the crowning jewel of God's creation, endowed with the divine spark within.

Read Genesis 1:26-27 and Psalm 8

1. What do these passages suggest about how God views human beings?
2. In light of these passages, how should human beings view God, the creator?
3. God values all people and grants them stewardship over creation. What does God expect of us in our "dominion" or care for creation?
4. Given the status of humanity, is there any justification for marginalizing anyone based on gender, race, sexuality, ability, history, economic background, etc.? How can we be more proactive in valuing others who are different from us?
5. It is daunting to consider that you are God's representative in the world. How does that impact how you live your day-to-day life with family, neighbors, siblings in Christ, and co-workers?

Apply

God asserts God's authority and creativity over all creation. God grants humanity the highest honor by creating us in God's image. This means we are fashioned to reflect God's character and presence in the world.

Think about a person or an issue you find challenging. As God's representative, how can you modify your approach to this issue to reflect more of God's character?

Pray

Share joys and concerns and pray for one another, the church, and the world.

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September 24, 2023

Living as God's Image

2 Corinthians 5:14-20

Connect:

If you had to distill the essence of Christianity down to a sentence or two, what would you include in your description?

Engage:

Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-20. If you have access to the paraphrase THE MESSAGE, read from this version.

1. Many Christians argue about the concept of universal atonement (Christ died for everyone) or limited atonement (Christ died only for those who believe in him.). Based on these verses, what do you think?
2. In 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, The Message says, "One man died for everyone. That puts everyone in the same boat. He included everyone in his death so that everyone could also be included in his life, a resurrection life, a far better life than people ever lived on their own." What does this passage suggest about the abundant life that Christ offers? Why do you think some embrace this gift while others reject or are indifferent to it?
3. We are encouraged to see others from an entirely new point of view. How does this impact how we relate to others? Share a story about how you struggle to see someone or a group of people from a "new creation" perspective. How can small group members and others in your life help you see and relate to this person or group of people with this new perspective?

Apply

As the image bearers of God, we are to creatively generate community and treat each other with love. We are to recognize the divine spark in each other and encourage reconciliation and each other's flourishing.

One day this week, commit to seeing everyone you encounter as carrying the divine spark within them. How did you discover new ways to see every person as created in God's image?

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October 1, 2023

Defacing and Restoring God's Image

Colossians 3:1-17

Connect:

Describe a time when you struggled to discipline your wrath, engage in gossip, or act abusively. How did you overcome this challenge?

Engage:

Read Colossians 3:1-11

1. It says, "put to death . . ." and goes on to list a series of vices. How do these vices relate to the list of actions Paul tells us to eliminate? How do you see these vices as an act of violence, defacing the image of God in the others?
2. Of this list, which vices and actions do you struggle with the most? Practically, what do you do spiritually, emotionally, and socially to "put to death" and get rid of all such things?

Read Colossians 3:12-17

3. Paul goes on to say you should clothe yourselves with positive and productive attitudes and actions. Love, peace, meditation, and gratitude are vital to who God has created us to be. How do these qualities relate to the practical things you suggested in question # 2?
4. Paul also encourages Jesus' followers to "let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." What teachings, stories, or actions of Christ do you find helpful to keep you on track?

Apply

The tragedy of humanity is that we deface the image of God in each other. We judge and marginalize our fellow human beings and wreak havoc on creation. Jesus models what it means to be God's image bearers and restores our relationship with God, each other, and all creation. Now let's live in this new reality!

Paul closes this section by saying, "Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." Reflect on one day last week. How did you meet this challenge of doing everything in the name of Jesus? What were the pinch points or barriers to fulfilling this command?

Pray

Share joys and concerns and pray for one another, the church, and the world.