

## APPLICATION

**Discuss the significance and implications of the truth that humans, both male and female, are made in God's image and are blessed.**

- What stood out to you the most in this week's sermon?
- How does God's "blessing" the living creatures, mankind, and the sabbath day make these things special parts of creation?
- How is mankind accountable to the creator for taking care of his creation? How are you fulfilling this role in your own life?
- Since God created plants with seeds in them (Gen 1:11) should we assume the original creation has the appearance of age in it? Was Adam made in adult form? Should this same principal apply to non-living things like rocks and mountains?
- How can God's choice of Israel as his people, from among all the other peoples, shed light on God's choice of humans as his image bearers from among all the other creatures?
- If humans are made in God's image, what does it mean for Jesus to be "The image of the invisible God"? (Col 1:15, 2:9, Heb 1:3) How is he the image we are supposed to be like?

**Read Genesis 1:26 – 1:31. (and Genesis 5:1-3)**

### Inductive Bible Study

- Underline "us" and "our" in verse 26.
- Linked the three "blessed" together however you like. verses 1:22, 1:28, and 2:3
- Reference Genesis 5:1 in the margin.

For Parents: This week is a big topic and can be hard to talk to your kids about. Focus in on what makes your child special! How are they unique? How are they like others? How can they best resemble God/Jesus with their own capacities and limitations? Talk to them about their responsibility around the house or at school. Talk to them about their resemblance to your family, and how all people are a part of God's family because he loves them. Talk to them about how they can fill the Earth with something creative.



### Imago Dei • Session 4

Our world nowadays seems to have a huge problem with what it means to be human. As a culture we seem to be very confused on this topic. There is a slew of issues around relationships, identity, gender roles, and appropriate interactions across all levels of society. Our families and our schools and our workplaces are plagued by these struggles. We are not going to address these issues nor the hot topics that persist in our country today but perhaps we can take a moment and refocus our attention on what God did from the start. Let's read and reflect on how he created us. Let's learn how it is *best* for us to live and thrive. Genesis 1:24-31 paints the beautiful picture of the creation of mankind! God made us, both male and female, to be his image bearers in this world! We are created to represent God and rule wisely over the rest of creation. We are told to be fruitful and increase to fill the Earth. God blesses us in these endeavors. There is so much packed into such a small space here; so much that we can discover and reflect on. Here is the main question we should consider though. How might we take a small step towards living better as his image bearers in this world? Regardless of your politics or views on contemporary issues, how can *you* better bear the image of God? In other words, how can *you* look more like God's perfect image- Jesus Christ. How can *you* take a step towards looking and living like him?

On the sixth day of creation God created mankind in his image. Nothing else in all of creation is made this way. Mankind has some similarities to other parts of creation, but we are uniquely special and set apart in very profound ways too. We are more than mere atoms!

**MAIN IDEA: God created mankind in a position of special relation with him; a relationship where we are his blessed representatives, his beloved creatures, who bear his unique resemblance, are held accountable, and given rule.**

**I. God said let us make mankind in our image and likeness**

This is the first verse of the Bible that strongly suggests that God is an “us”. We find in this verse what some scholars call a majestic plural God. Christians believe that God is triune. That while he is one God, he is also Father, Son, and Spirit. He is one being comprised of three persons. This means that God is a truly relational God. He is a being in constant communion with himself. So, when he makes us(mankind) in his image we also find that we are relational beings too. We are a “we” that is created to resemble another “we”. We are created to be in relationship to each other *and with God*. Other creatures lack this.

**II. Imago Dei**

God doesn’t just make us to be relational beings he makes us beings that bear his special image and likeness! This special quality goes by the Latin term Imago Dei which means “Image of God”. Humans are special apart from all the rest of creation because we are made in God’s image! Even after we sin, we still bear his image. (Genesis 9:6, James 3:9) As image bearers we hear and receive God’s word. We reflect God because we bear his resemblance like a child who resembles his/her parent. (Genesis 5:3, Luke 3:38, 1<sup>st</sup> Cor 15:49)

The Imago Dei is not something that we have in us, or something we can do, or some capacity humans have over all other creatures. The Imago Dei is bestowed upon us by God. It’s God who chooses *us* as his counterpart in this world. It’s God’s choice that humans are created in such a way that their very existence is intended to be in special relationship to God. This is a kind of relationship that no other creature gets. Humanness is not about ability or capacity, but about closeness and relationship with God. It’s about being creatures that have *a special history* with God, regardless of our individual capacities and qualities. This is what the ancient Greek philosophers couldn’t understand because they didn’t know the God of the Bible.

The Imago Dei is best understood as *the relationship God has with us*. Imagination, emotion, morality, consciousness, intelligence, will, passions, liberty etc. are certainly qualities humans have in greater abundance as a group than any other creature. But these are all merely qualities we have identified in ourselves. The Bible tells us what the qualities of being made in God’s image consist of: these are Resemblance (gifted to us by God’s choosing), Rule (responsibility), and Reproduction (filling the Earth biologically and creatively).

Not every one of us will have the full capacity to rule over all of creation. Some people will bear more responsibility than others. Not every person will be as fruitful in filling the Earth. Not every human will reflect God out into creation in the clearest or wisest way. But each of these is what each of us is created for and called to do as best we can. If you are not responsible for acres of land or rivers and mountains, then rule well over your own home. If you are unable to produce children, then fill the earth with love and nourishing and teaching in another way. If you look more like a sinner than a saint, then repent and move in the other direction, walking as Jesus walked. You are not a failure if you are weak or different in these areas.

Males and females are created as equal heirs and partners. We are unique and distinct from each other yet formed in such a way that each longs for the bond which is only found with the other. This union/pairing/relationship of the two different sexes has the special privilege of creating life. What a wonderful mystery! Just like the pattern we saw last session of God separating and then filling on each day, humans are also separate and yet together fill the world with life. Individually we are his image, together we are his likeness.

**The mystery of human life is not only in living but in knowing why one lives. May God help us live in relation to our Creator and each other as image bearers sustained us by his Word and Spirit.**

Evolution, sin, media, possessions, etc. offers no answer to that, because men and women both find their *significance* in bearing his image well. It can be very painful if we each fail to find a way to do this. In the sessions to come we will see how this plays itself out in both the Creation Mandate (Genesis 2) and the Fall (Genesis 3).