

## Small Group Curriculum • Foundations

---

### WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE HUMAN? • WEEK 4 • GENESIS 1:26-31

Do you really believe that you and **all people** were created by the God Most High in His image (*imago dei*)? If we are honest, sometimes we can access that part of our own identities and, maybe, more often than not, we lose sight of our own identities as image bearers of Christ. And, it is all too easy to lose sight of that identity of those who are different, other, who do not act or speak or value the same things that we do. But *God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female, he created them. God blessed them. . . God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.* (Genesis 1:27-31)

### REMINDERS

- [Awakening 101](#) is March 2
- [Alpha](#), March 6 – April 13
- [Awakening 201](#), March 9 - 23
- Prayer is a powerful avenue to witness God's work—be sure to share prayer requests and praises throughout the week with your small group

#### Past Session Check-In:

- Take a moment and review the application from your last discussion. Ask the group where they were challenged, if they made any commitment for change and/or action, and if they followed through with their decision.

### SLOW DOWN AND PREPARE:

Sit quietly with your eyes closed. Pay attention to your breath—slow it down with 1-3 deep breaths. Take a moment to think of yourself as *imago dei*. Acknowledge and thank God for how He has blessed you with gifts and abilities unique to you—name them in your mind and give Him thanks.

### INTRODUCTION

Remember that in God's creation of the universe and all that is in it, His intention was that it all was GOOD. But because of the freedom to choose to obey Him that He gave us, we opened a door to follow a path that was not God's intention, and humanity has been paying the price ever since and struggling to find our true purpose and a life that is full and meaningful.

Carolyn shared some views from philosophers about what it means to be human. From various thinkers, humans are: rational/can reason; social/build communities and drawn to relationships; have self-reflection; have moral autonomy and can choose between "right and wrong." But she also pointed out that great thinkers in theological terms keep God in the equation of what it means to be human, mentioning both Augustine and Aquinas—God is at the **foundation** of what it means to be human.

# AWAKENING

QUESTION: Briefly, what do **you** think separates humans from other creations of God?

## DISCUSSION

READ: Genesis 1: 26-31, Ephesians 2:10, Colossians 1:15-16

## QUESTIONS:

1. From Carolyn's sermon notes, "We were made to resemble and reflect God's character, attributes, and actions." Thinking over the last 1-2 weeks, share specific examples of things you did that reflect your *imago dei*. If you are willing, share also specific examples where you might have fallen short in your actions, thoughts or words.
2. From verse 28: *Then God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, and the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground."* If we are commissioned by God to steward wisely over the planet, what is most concerning to you at this time in terms of how we are doing as stewards? Share "even the smallest step" that you and your family take to honor this commission. How might the Holy Spirit be convicting you to do more?
3. How much do you own or deny your "foundational intrinsic identity as a beloved creation with divine design? How much do you recognize or ignore the same in others?
4. Carolyn also discussed the "Life's Blueprint" from Martin Luther King, Jr. The message was to believe in your own worth, dignity, significance, and purpose that we were all born with. But the brokenness of this world has a way a building up on our lives and sully the image—it is not as bright and beautiful. But because of Jesus (Eph. 2:10), we can always reclaim that foundational identity. How has knowing and walking with Jesus allowed you to reclaim the original identity that God breathed into you?
5. Keeping the "art restoration" metaphor that Carolyn shared in mind, how has Christ been working on "restoring" you to original beauty? Has He been using a "rough sander" to just wipe it all out; maybe gentle brushes to sweep away some dirt; maybe a scalpel to cut out a dangerous sickness (sin)? In your discipleship walk with Jesus, full restoration takes time and work—what does that look like for you presently?
6. "The grave comes before the resurrection"—how does this sentiment help you (or not) get more connected to your identity as *imago dei*?

## REFLECT (spend a couple of minutes to think on these questions):

1. Considering where you are right now in your life, faith, relationships, and the state of this world, what might be the biggest challenge you face in claiming your true identity as "God's masterpiece"?
2. Is there someone specific in your life where you have allowed yourself to be blind to the fact that they, too, are image bearers of God? Ask the Holy spirit to fill your heart with a new understanding of that person and new eyes to see them as God sees them.
3. Remember that Christ is the "perfect visible image of the invisible God" (Col 1:15). Consider ways that you can follow his example through the next week.
4. Read Psalm 139—identify 1-2 lines that particularly stand out to you, write them down and carry them with you through the next week.

# AWAKENING

5. If your group devotes time to prayer requests, ask for the Holy Spirit to breathe new life into how you see yourself and others as created in imago dei.

## **PRAYER**

Heavenly Father, Jesus Redeemer, Holy Spirit of all Life, thank you for creating us so that we can be in relationship with you. Help us to see with clear eyes our true identities as Your image bearers. Help us to see every person we encounter in the same way. You have been so extravagant in your creation—help us to pause in our busy lives to see it, feel it, appreciate it, and be in awe of it. Give us a new awareness of opportunities to demonstrate good stewardship of your creation. For all that You give and all that You have done, we give you the Glory and Praise for being the creator of all that is good. Thank you for breathing it all into existence.

Amen

## **SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUR GROUP TO CONSIDER**

Check out our outreach page at <https://awakeningchurch.com/outreach/> to explore ways your group can volunteer at our biweekly food pantry, support Foster the City, or join the City Team movement.

---

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

### **Genesis 1:26-31**

New International Version

<sup>26</sup> Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals,<sup>[a]</sup> and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

<sup>27</sup> So God created mankind in his own image,  
in the image of God he created them;  
male and female he created them.

<sup>28</sup> 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.”

<sup>29</sup> Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.<sup>30</sup> And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.” And it was so.

<sup>31</sup> God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

### **Ephesians 2:10**

New International Version

<sup>10</sup> For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

# AWAKENING

## **Colossians 1:15-16**

New International Version

### **The Supremacy of the Son of God**

<sup>15</sup> The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. <sup>16</sup> For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.

## **Psalm 139**

### **For the director of music. Of David. A psalm.**

- <sup>1</sup> You have searched me, Lord,  
and you know me.
- <sup>2</sup> You know when I sit and when I rise;  
you perceive my thoughts from afar.
- <sup>3</sup> You discern my going out and my lying down;  
you are familiar with all my ways.
- <sup>4</sup> Before a word is on my tongue  
you, Lord, know it completely.
- <sup>5</sup> You hem me in behind and before,  
and you lay your hand upon me.
- <sup>6</sup> Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,  
too lofty for me to attain.
- <sup>7</sup> Where can I go from your Spirit?  
Where can I flee from your presence?
- <sup>8</sup> If I go up to the heavens, you are there;  
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.
- <sup>9</sup> If I rise on the wings of the dawn,  
if I settle on the far side of the sea,  
<sup>10</sup> even there your hand will guide me,  
your right hand will hold me fast.
- <sup>11</sup> If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me  
and the light become night around me,"  
<sup>12</sup> even the darkness will not be dark to you;  
the night will shine like the day,  
for darkness is as light to you.
- <sup>13</sup> For you created my inmost being;  
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
- <sup>14</sup> I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;  
your works are wonderful,  
I know that full well.
- <sup>15</sup> My frame was not hidden from you  
when I was made in the secret place,  
when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.



# A W A K E N I N G

- <sup>16</sup> Your eyes saw my unformed body;  
all the days ordained for me were written in your book  
before one of them came to be.
- <sup>17</sup> How precious to me are your thoughts, <sup>[a]</sup> God!  
How vast is the sum of them!
- <sup>18</sup> Were I to count them,  
they would outnumber the grains of sand—  
when I awake, I am still with you.
- <sup>19</sup> If only you, God, would slay the wicked!  
Away from me, you who are bloodthirsty!
- <sup>20</sup> They speak of you with evil intent;  
your adversaries misuse your name.
- <sup>21</sup> Do I not hate those who hate you, Lord,  
and abhor those who are in rebellion against you?
- <sup>22</sup> I have nothing but hatred for them;  
I count them my enemies.
- <sup>23</sup> Search me, God, and know my heart;  
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
- <sup>24</sup> See if there is any offensive way in me,  
and lead me in the way everlasting.