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## LOVING JESUS, LOVING PEOPLE, PLOWING A COUNTER-CULTURE

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**TEXT:** Genesis 1

**MAIN IDEA:** God defines who you are and why you matter.

### LEADERS:

- Welcome back, everyone! This week we begin a ten-week series on Genesis 1–11 called “Origins.”
- It’s not too late to commit yourself to better Scripture reading habits. Visit the Digital Bulletin for three different plans. One of these is right for you!
- If you’re not serving on an Impact Team, now is the time! Check out the Digital Bulletin to learn more about the teams that make our church function, and how you can be a part of that.
- We’re having a Marriage Workshop on February 18, from 9 am to noon. Whether you’re single, engaged, or married, you are welcome to attend. The cost is \$15 per person or \$25 for couples. Sign-up is on the Digital Bulletin.
- We once again have the awesome opportunity to provide meals over at Servant’s Heart.
  - This ministry provides an introductory trade education that equips young adults with skills to build houses so that they can serve the community in the name of Jesus in north Jersey.
  - Our groups have the opportunity to provide meals for about 30 people at Servant Heart’s Paterson location. Meals should be there by 7:45 pm.
  - There are plenty of dates that need to be filled.
  - Sign up at <https://www.servantsheartnj.org/wpmeals/>.
- Beginning on February 5th, Totowa Middle School ministry will now be available at the 9 am AND the 11:40 services.

### GETTING STARTED:

- Watch this week’s Community Extras Video.
  - **Icebreaker:** What’s the best thing you got someone for Christmas?
  - **Opener:** What did you take away from the sermon this week?
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## IN THE BEGINNING

**Read: Genesis 1:1–25**

- ①  What are some things that you learn about God in this passage?
- ①  What are some things that you learn about the world in this passage?
- ① In this chapter, God repeatedly sees that what he has created is good. Why is it important for Christians to remember this?



## THE IMAGE OF GOD

### Read Genesis 1:26–31.



Why do you think God uses the first-person plural pronoun here: “Let *us* make man in *our* image”?

*Leaders: This has been explained in at least three ways:*

- 1. A plural of self-deliberation, such as when we say, “Let’s see what’s going on”—notice that “let’s” is technically a plural (“let us”). The weakness of this view is that this way of speaking is not common in the Old Testament.*
- 2. God speaking to angels or other spiritual beings. The weakness of this view is that angels are not mentioned elsewhere in Genesis 1, and that the singular is used in the next verse (“so God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them”).*
- 3. A veiled reference to plurality in God. Notice the Spirit has already been mentioned in verse 2.*



In the sermon, we learned that the creation of mankind is set apart as the “pinnacle of God’s creation.” In fact, the text does this by breaking the pattern that we have seen in the other days of creation. What are some ways that the creation of mankind is told differently than the rest of creation?



What does it mean to say that each one of us is created in the image and likeness of God?

## TWISTING THE IMAGE

This week, we learned that human beings fail to live up to our created purpose either by holding too high a view of ourselves, or too low a view of ourselves.

### Thinking Too Highly of Ourselves

Thinking too highly of ourselves means that we assign to ourselves rights and characteristics that belong only to God.



Why is it a bad thing for humans to define their own identity, meaning, and purpose in life?



What are some examples of people defining their own identity, meaning, and purpose?



On the flip side, why is it exceedingly good to let God define our identity, meaning, and purpose?



How have you experienced flourishing by allowing God to define your identity, meaning, and purpose?



### Read Romans 1:18–25

- ①  What does Paul mean by saying that human beings “suppress the truth in unrighteousness”?
- ① How does your own unrighteousness suppress the truth about God in your life?
- ①  The picture Paul paints here is that we, in our fallenness, worship what is created rather than the Creator. What things are you tempted to worship instead of God?
-  How does this passage in Romans 1 relate to what we are learning from Genesis 1?

### Thinking Too Lowly of Ourselves

Thinking too lowly of ourselves means that we deny the importance and dignity given to us by God.

### Read Psalm 8:3–8.

- ① How does the knowledge that humanity is created in God’s image inform how you should think about yourself?
- ① How does this knowledge inform the way you should treat other people?
- ①  What are some ways that our culture devalues people who are created in the image of God?
- ① How can you plow a counter culture by affirming the worth and dignity of other people?

### BIG QUESTION TIME:

- ①  How does the gospel affirm the right view of mankind: not too much of ourselves, not too little of ourselves?

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### PRAYER TIME

Praise God for making you, and everyone else, in his image, to declare his glory to the rest of creation.

Pray that the Lord would open opportunities for you to affirm people’s worth and dignity.

Pray for someone you know who needs to stop either thinking too much of themselves or too little.