



RIDGEPOINT CHURCH • GROW GROUPS GUIDE

Made in the Image

Imago Dei

WEEK 1

GENESIS 1:26–28 • PSALM 8:4–9 • 2 CORINTHIANS 3:18

Andy Owen • October 11, 2026



LEADER PREPARATION

Leader Announcements

- **Thank you for investing in your Grow Group each week!** If you have questions, need help, or are looking for additional resources, visit our Grow Group Leader page: ridgepointwichita.com/growleaders
- **Looking for an easy icebreaker? Grab the NOT JUST SUNDAYS card game** we handed out. Try just a few cards each week—have everyone answer one card, or let people choose between two. It's a simple way to keep building relationships!
- **This discussion guide is exactly that—a guide.** Skip questions, add your own, spend longer on a verse, or adjust it to fit your group. You know your group best! And if you have feedback on these guides, please let us know.

Welcome & Overview (10 min)

OVERVIEW

Week One of the Imago Dei series (October 11) asks: **What are we made for?** AI now answers our calls, screens our job applications, and even offers companionship. That raises a deeper question: what does it mean to be human when a machine might do our job better? Genesis 1 answers that our worth does not come from what we produce. We are made in the image of God, given inherent dignity, and called to represent Him in His world. Using N.T. Wright's picture of an **angled mirror**, the sermon shows that we reflect God's character into the world through our work (Out) and reflect creation's praise back to God in worship (Up).

HOW TO USE THIS LESSON

This 90-minute lesson walks through the sermon's five main points in order, about 12 minutes each. Each point has a summary, the scriptures with an explanation, and discussion questions. Plan about 10 minutes for welcome, 15 for Going Deeper, and 5 for closing prayer. Have the group read each passage aloud from the translation noted (NIV, CSB, or NLT). A small hand mirror makes a helpful visual.



POINT 1 • 12 MIN • UP

We Are Made in God's Image

SUMMARY

The pastor opened with stories of AI in everyday life: an AI assistant transferring a call to another AI, a friend who applied to dozens of jobs and never reached a person, and another whose AI "best friend" gave advice that damaged her relationship with her sister. He is not anti-AI and uses it to edit sermons, but it forces the question: what does it mean to be human? To answer, he turned to the first page of the Bible.

In Genesis 1, God says “Let us,” which many scholars see as an early hint of the Trinity. Creating humanity was the high point of creation. The Hebrew word *adam* means humankind, and the text stresses “male and female,” so both equally bear God’s image. That was radical in the ancient world.

In the ancient Near East, an “image” was a statue placed in a temple to represent a god or a king, like the Sphinx representing Pharaoh’s power. Genesis presents the whole earth as God’s temple. God forbade idols of Himself because He already placed His own image in His temple: us. This gives every person inherent dignity and honor. It roots both our **identity** (who we are) and our **vocation** (what we are made to do).

SCRIPTURE

READ ALOUD **Genesis 1:26–28 (NIV)**

God decides to make humankind in His image and likeness, to rule over the fish, birds, livestock, and all creatures. He creates them male and female in His image, blesses them, and tells them to be fruitful, fill the earth, subdue it, and rule over every living creature.

Explanation: “Image” (Hebrew *tselem*) is the word for a statue that represents a ruler. Humanity is God’s living representative on earth. The command to rule and subdue is a royal assignment to care for creation on God’s behalf, not permission to exploit it. The blessing comes before the work, so our worth precedes anything we accomplish.

SUPPORTING VERSES

- ◆ **Exodus 20:4 (NIV):** God forbids making idols or images. He does not need a carved image because He made a living one.
- ◆ **Isaiah 66:1 (NIV):** Heaven is God’s throne and earth His footstool. The world is God’s temple, and we are His image within it.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 How has AI shown up in your life this past year? Has it changed how you think about what makes humans valuable?
- 2 Ancient readers understood an “image” as a statue representing a god or king. How does that change the way you read Genesis 1:27?
- 3 Why was “male and female he created them” so radical in that world? Where does our culture still struggle to treat both as equal image-bearers?
- 4 God blessed humanity before giving it any work to do. Where are you tempted to find your worth in what you produce instead of whose image you bear?



POINT 2 • 12 MIN • IN

An Angled Mirror: A Royal Priesthood

SUMMARY

The pastor used N.T. Wright's description of humans as "an angled mirror." We stand between God and creation, reflecting God's wise order into the world and reflecting creation's praise back to the Creator. We are not God, but we are made to reflect Him. Holding up a mirror on stage, the pastor showed how it reflects the stage lights toward the audience and the audience back toward the lights. That two-way reflection pictures our human calling.

Wright connects this to our calling as a **royal priesthood**, found in Exodus and 1 Peter. The *royal* part is our mandate to work and rule in the world with God's authority and character. The *priestly* part is our mandate to do everything for God's praise and to point all creation back to Him. In short, we receive from God and work, and we return to God in worship. Psalm 8 shows both sides clearly.

SCRIPTURE

READ ALOUD **Psalm 8:4–9 (CSB)**

David wonders why God would remember or care for human beings. Yet God made them a little less than Himself, crowned them with glory and honor, and made them rulers over His works: sheep, oxen, wild animals, birds, and fish. The psalm ends by praising the magnificence of God's name in all the earth.

Explanation: Verse 4 asks the sermon's question: what does it mean to be human? Verses 5–8 describe our **royal** role: crowned and given charge of creation. The animals listed represent all of creation, which we are to steward, not exploit. Verse 9 describes our **priestly** role: leading creation in worship. The psalm begins and ends with God's majestic name, so human glory always sits inside God's greater glory.

SUPPORTING VERSES

- ◆ **Exodus 19:6 (NIV):** God calls Israel a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, both royal and priestly.
- ◆ **1 Peter 2:9 (NIV):** The church is a royal priesthood, called to declare the praises of the God who brought us into His light.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 Picture the angled mirror. Which direction comes more naturally to you: reflecting God to others, or bringing your life back to God in worship? Which is harder?
- 2 Psalm 8 says we are "crowned with glory and honor." Is it easier for you to believe you are glorious or that you are small? Why?
- 3 What is the difference between ruling creation the way God intended and dominating or exploiting it? Where do you see each in the world today?
- 4 What does it mean to you to be part of a "royal priesthood" in your ordinary week?



POINT 3 • 12 MIN • OUT

Reflect God to the World: Receive From Him and Work for His Glory

SUMMARY

The first direction of the mirror points outward. We receive all of who God is and put Him on display. The pastor defined glorifying God this way: God's glory is all of who He is on display, and we glorify Him by displaying it.

God's plan is for the whole earth to be filled with the knowledge of His glory, and that happens through His people. Jesus sent His disciples as witnesses to the ends of the earth. We receive God's presence through His Spirit, then make Him known in everything we do, across the street and around the world. "Work" here means far more than a job. It includes kindness to the person in line at Dillons and taking the gospel to an unreached people group. It includes the stay-at-home parent, the teacher, and the surgeon working with integrity and creativity. Work came before the fall, so it is part of God's good design. AI may replace some of what we do, but it cannot replace who we are as image-bearers.

SCRIPTURE

READ ALOUD **Habakkuk 2:14 (NIV) and Acts 1:8 (NIV)**

Habakkuk promises that the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord's glory as the waters cover the sea. In Acts, Jesus promises His disciples the Holy Spirit's power and sends them as His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Explanation: Habakkuk spoke during a time of violence and injustice, yet he looked to a future when God's glory would cover the earth completely, the way water fills the sea. Acts 1:8 shows how that happens: through Spirit-empowered people who carry God's presence outward in widening circles. Genesis 1:28 ("fill the earth") is the same mission. We spread God's image, and with it His glory, wherever we go.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 The pastor defined glorifying God as putting all of who He is on display. How does that definition change the way you think about "glorifying God" at work or at home?
- 2 Where is the "temple" God has placed you to represent Him right now (home, workplace, classroom, neighborhood)?
- 3 What is one small, ordinary way you could reflect God's character this week? What is one bigger step He might be asking of you?
- 4 The sermon said AI may replace some of what we do, but not who we are. How does that truth bring freedom or comfort to you?



POINT 4 • 12 MIN • UP

Reflect the World Back to God: Return to Him in Worship

SUMMARY

The second direction of the mirror points upward. In Bible times, an image in a temple reminded people who was ruling and showed them whom to worship. Humans, as God's image, show all creation what true worship looks like. We were uniquely made to worship God and to point all things back to Him.

The pastor noted that AI can write a nice prayer or plan a sample worship service, but it cannot worship God. Only image-bearers can. Worship comes from the word "worthy": declaring God's worth. Everything that happens to us can become an opportunity to worship, whether through prayer, thanksgiving, or even lament and grief.

SCRIPTURE

READ ALOUD **Isaiah 43:21 (NIV) and Revelation 4:11 (NIV)**

In Isaiah, God calls Israel the people He formed for Himself so that they would proclaim His praise. In Revelation, the elders around God's throne declare that He is worthy to receive glory, honor, and power, because He created all things and by His will they exist.

Explanation: Isaiah 43 speaks to exiles who felt forgotten. God reminds them that He formed them, and that their purpose is to declare His praise. Revelation 4 shows where all history is headed: every creature gathered around God's throne, declaring His worth as Creator. Our worship now is practice for that future, and it gives voice to all of creation.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 Why do you think worship is something only image-bearers, not machines, can truly offer?
- 2 The sermon said even lament and grief can be worship. Share a time when a hard season drew you closer to God.
- 3 What gets in the way of turning everyday moments into worship for you (busyness, distraction, worry)?
- 4 How could you reflect the world back to God through prayer and thanks this week? Be specific.



POINT 5 • 12 MIN • UP, IN & OUT

Transformed Into His Image: Up and Out

SUMMARY

The New Testament continues this theme in Jesus and in Paul's letters. When the veil is removed, we see God's glory and reflect it, and the Spirit makes us more like Christ. Grow Groups describe this as **Up** (seeing and worshiping God) and **Out** (reflecting Him to the world). We do both **In** His image, together. As we work and worship, we are transformed into the image of Christ, who perfectly modeled what it means to be human.

The pastor closed with a personal story. His son Isaac loved nature and animals from childhood, once training free-range guinea pigs to mow the yard, and was a loyal friend who pointed people to Jesus. Isaac earned a biology degree and is going to East Africa as a missionary. He will train pastors and young people in discipleship and work in conservation and creation care. His life shows both directions of the mirror: reflecting God to the world and leading the world back to God.

The series will continue with the fall and Jesus restoring the image, then bearing God's image in relationships, work, our walk with Jesus, and witness.

SCRIPTURE

READ ALOUD **2 Corinthians 3:18 (NLT)**

Paul says that all who have had the veil removed can see and reflect the Lord's glory, and the Lord, who is the Spirit, makes us more and more like Him as we are changed into His glorious image.

Explanation: Paul is contrasting believers with Moses, who veiled his shining face after meeting God (Exodus 34:29–35). In Christ the veil is removed, so we can see God's glory directly. Like a mirror, we reflect what we look at. Transformation is gradual ("more and more") and is the Spirit's work, not our own effort. The image damaged by sin is being restored in us.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 Paul says we become like what we behold. What have you been "looking at" most this week, and how is it shaping you?
- 2 Transformation is gradual and Spirit-led. Where have you seen God change you over time?
- 3 Isaac's calling combines a love for creation with a love for people. What passions or gifts has God given you that could reflect Him to the world?
- 4 Which do you need more right now: more Up, more Out, or more In (community)? What would one step look like?

Going Deeper (15 min)

LIVING AS IMAGE-BEARERS EVERY DAY

Bearing God's image is not just a belief to hold. It shapes how we start our mornings, treat people, use technology, and handle hard days. Here are five ways to put the angled mirror to work this week.

1. Start the day facing God.

A mirror reflects only what it faces. Before checking your phone, spend two minutes looking Up: read a verse, thank God for one thing, and ask Him to help you reflect Him today. What we behold first often shapes the rest of the day (2 Corinthians 3:18).

2. See the image in every person.

Everyone you meet bears God's image, including the cashier, the difficult coworker, the neighbor with opposite politics, and the person experiencing homelessness. Genesis 9:6 and James 3:9 ground human dignity in the image of God. Try silently saying, "You bear God's image," as you interact with people this week. Notice how it changes your tone and patience.

3. Do ordinary work as holy work.

Laundry, spreadsheets, homework, and lesson plans can all reflect God's character when done with integrity, care, and creativity (Colossians 3:23). Ask: "How would God's goodness show up in this task?" Rest matters too. God rested on the seventh day, and Sabbath reminds us our worth is not in output.

4. Put technology in its place.

AI and screens can be useful tools, but they cannot replace human presence. Choose one way to be more fully human this week: call instead of texting, eat a meal without phones, or have a face-to-face conversation with someone who seems lonely. Our presence reflects the God who is always present.

5. Turn every moment into worship.

Practice brief "Up" moments through the day: a thank-you in the car, a prayer for a person you pass, an honest lament when news is hard. Over time, this trains the heart to bring everything back to God.

+ Care for creation.

Isaac's story reminds us that stewarding creation is part of our calling (Genesis 2:15). Small acts count, like reducing waste, caring for a garden, or simply noticing and thanking God for His creation on a walk.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 Which of these practices would be most challenging for you, and why?
- 2 Who in your life is hardest to see as an image-bearer? What might change if you treated them that way this week?

- 3 How has technology made you more human, and how has it made you less human? What boundary might help?
- 4 What would change about your Monday morning if you truly believed your work could display God's glory?
- 5 How can our group help each other live as angled mirrors this week (texts, prayer partners, serving together)?

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Choose one **Out** step (one place to show God's character) and one **Up** step (one daily moment of worship). Come ready next week to share a story of how you saw the mirror work.

FOCUS ON GROUP PROJECT

OUT PROJECT Update

- **Depending on your group's OUT PROJECT**, there may not be much to report each week, and that's okay! The biggest thing is simply keeping us in the loop.
- If you haven't already: **Please let us know what your group has chosen for your OUT PROJECT.**
- As you go: Keep us updated on any significant changes, needs, or progress with your project.
- Need ideas, resources, or guidance? Visit our [Grow Group Leaders page](#) for more help.

CLOSING PRAYER (5 MIN)

Invite prayer requests, then close with this prayer or let a volunteer pray in their own words. Remember to pray for Isaac as he prepares to serve in East Africa.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, thank You for making us in Your image and crowning us with glory and honor. In a world that measures people by what they produce, remind us that our worth comes from You.

Forgive us for the times our mirrors have faced the wrong way, toward ourselves, our screens, or our worries. Turn our faces toward You, and by Your Spirit make us more and more like Jesus.

This week, help us reflect Your character in our homes, our work, and our relationships. Help us see Your image in every person we meet. And let everything that happens to us, in joy or in sorrow, become a way to bring praise back to You.

Bless Isaac as he goes to East Africa to make disciples and care for Your creation. Use each of us to fill the earth with the knowledge of Your glory.

Lord, our Lord, how magnificent is Your name in all the earth. In Jesus' name, Amen.



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