Small Group Guide: A Special Relationship

Overview

This week's sermon explored why God created humanity. Rather than focusing solely on the mechanics of creation, the message examined the purpose behind it: to reflect and represent God, to rely on Him, to worship Him, and to exercise the free will He gave us in choosing a relationship with Him.

Key Takeaways

1. We Were Created to Reflect and Represent God Genesis 1:26-28 establishes that humanity alone was made in God's image, with a soul and spirit, set apart from every other created thing. This means we carry a unique responsibility to represent God's character and carry out His purposes in the world.

2. We Have Both a General and a Specific Purpose Our general purpose is shared by every believer: to make disciples (Matthew 28:19). Our specific purpose is the unique way God has gifted and positioned each of us to carry that out, whether through ministry, healthcare, retail, volunteering, or any other calling.

3. Worship Is Far Bigger Than a Sunday Morning John 4:23-24 describes worship that is in spirit and in truth, not tied to a location or a single act. Obedience, service, and daily devotion are all forms of worship. With 168 hours in a week, worship cannot be limited to the roughly two hours spent in a church service.

4. Free Will Is a Gift, Not an Accident God did not create us as robots. He gave us the freedom to choose because He wants us to choose Him. Every day presents a decision: to live for ourselves or to live as we were designed to live.

5. Using Freedom to Serve Is an Act of Worship Galatians 5:13 reminds us that freedom in Christ is not a license for self-indulgence but an invitation to serve one another in love. As Matthew 25:40 makes clear, what we do for others, we do for God.

Discussion Questions

Opening Question

- Think of a time you started a project with good intentions but without a solid plan. What happened? What did you learn from it?

Reflecting on God's Design

- Genesis 1:26-28 says humanity was made in God's image. What do you think it means practically to reflect and represent God in your everyday life?
- The sermon drew a distinction between our general purpose and our specific purpose. How would you describe your specific purpose right now? Has that changed over different seasons of your life?

On Worship

- Before this sermon, how would you have defined worship? Has your definition shifted at all?
- The sermon pointed out that we have roughly 166 hours each week outside of a Sunday service. What does worship look like for you during those hours? Where do you feel the most challenged in this area?
- In 1 Samuel 15:22, Samuel tells us that obedience is better than sacrifice. What is an area of your life where God might be calling you to obedience as an act of worship, even if it is difficult?

On Free Will and Freedom

- The sermon described free will as the ability to choose, including the choice to follow God. How does understanding free will change the way you think about your relationship with God?
- Galatians 5:13 calls us to use our freedom to serve one another rather than to indulge ourselves. Where in your life is that tension most real for you right now?
- Matthew 25:40 connects serving others directly to serving God. Who in your life or community might God be calling you to serve this week?

Personal Reflection

- The sermon closed with a challenge to do everything as worship unto God. What is one specific, ordinary part of your week that you could approach differently with that mindset?

Practical Applications

This Week, Choose One:

- **Identify your specific purpose.** Spend time in prayer asking God to clarify the unique gifts and opportunities He has given you. Write down what comes to mind and bring it back to share with your group next week.

- **Expand your worship.** Choose one daily routine, such as your commute, your work, or your time with family, and intentionally approach it as an act of worship this week. Notice how that shift in perspective affects your attitude and actions.

- **Serve someone concretely.** Identify one person in your life or community who has a tangible need. Use the freedom you have to meet that need this week, not for recognition, but as an act of worship.
- **Reflect on your relationship with God.** Ask yourself honestly: Am I choosing this relationship daily, or am I treating it as something that only happens on Sunday? Journal your thoughts and bring them to God in prayer.

Closing Prayer Prompt

Close your group time by praying together. Consider praying specifically for each group member to gain clarity on their specific purpose, and ask God to help each person worship Him genuinely throughout the coming week, not just within the walls of a church building.