

INTRO

- Are you more like your mom/dad/both/neither?
- Do you think of yourself as creative? Why?

In this series, we want to understand the grand story the Bible is telling from beginning to end: God's Story.

READ

Read Gen 1:26-28; Gen 2:4-9, 15-17

REFLECT

In the Ancient Near East, Kings were often referred to as bearers of God's image holding special authority to carry out the will of the gods. But in Gen 1:26-28, God declares all humankind as bearers of his image and likeness.

Qu: what does being in the image or likeness of someone mean?

IMAGE OF GOD: ROLES

As God's image bearers, we have at least 2 key roles:

1. **REFLECT & RESEMBLE God's character and likeness into the world**
2. **REPRESENT God's rule over creation**

Like an artist's work/children reflect and resemble the artist/parents; or like an ambassador represents a government's will in a foreign nation;

Qu: how do these metaphors help us unpack some more of what our role is as image bearers?
God gives us further clarity.

IMAGE OF GOD: PURPOSE

Read Gen 1:28. God calls us to **FILL** the earth ("be fruitful, multiply, fill") and continue to **FORM** creation into something more ("subdue, have dominion"). In other words, a big part of our human calling is to **build family** and **create culture**.

Qu: why is family building so important to the health of a society? What happens when families breakdown?

The family is the building block of society; as families go, so civilization goes. Building family is pretty specific; Creating culture is deliberately broad. But we gain some insights into the first cultural project for mankind.

THE 1ST CULTURAL PROJECT: GARDENING

Read Gen 2:8,15. God is shown as a Gardener and calls mankind to follow suit.

Qu: how is the picture of us being the earth's gardeners a powerful example of creating culture?

God has provided the necessary **raw materials** and the potential is available in creation but needs to be worked by mankind (2:5). Secondly, our **work or cultivation** is necessary to harness creation's potential. Thirdly, we are to have a **balanced view of the environment**: we aren't to always leave nature untouched but rather to cultivate and look after it well. We don't worship creation or what we create, but rather steward it well as acts of worship.

Finally, **God gives mankind a choice in how they will go about building and creating** this new world (read Gen 2:16-17). Will they continue to trust God as their source of knowledge, or choose independence from Him?

Qu: what are some implications of being God's image bearers as it applies to your: value as a human? Your work/study life? Use of power? choice to live independently from God?

RESPOND & PRAY

- in what way/s does this part of God's Story encourage and or challenge you?
- How will you apply this to your life?
- Pray for one another in light of the discussion.