

Imago Dei

1. Warm Up: You get to build a dream team for basketball or for a movie you're making. Who would be your top two choices and why? What makes them more valuable to a dream team than others? Would you put yourself on that team? Why or why not?

2. Sunday's scripture came from 1 Peter 2. First Peter focuses on the importance of believers bearing up under unjust suffering yet continuing to live well (1 Peter 2:20). In this way, 1 Peter might be called the Job of the New Testament, providing encouragement for the believer to continue on in the way that Jesus has laid out for all His followers. Peter begins by telling Christians to put away some specific negative attitudes and actions. Instead, we are to grow our appetite for the pure spiritual food available in Jesus. Why does that matter? Because Jesus is the long-prophesied cornerstone, or foundation stone, in the new spiritual house which God is building. Jesus is the chosen and precious one. Those who trust in Him are also living stones in this house. They are a holy priesthood, each one, serving in the house with a responsibility to offer themselves as spiritual sacrifices. Read I Peter 2:5-10, as printed on p. 3.
 - a. What is a spiritual sacrifice?
 - b. How do we live out day to day being a spiritual sacrifice? What does it look like?
 - c. Why would Peter use the words "holy priesthood" when describing the people of God?

3. In the Message Bible, Eugene Petersen paraphrases verses 9-10 like this: "You are the ones chosen by God . . . from nothing to something, from rejected to accepted." Most of us spend our entire lives trying to earn acceptance. We seek it from our parents, peers, partners. We seek acceptance from the people we respect and the people we envy. Our desire to be accepted influences the kind of clothes we wear, the kind of car we drive, the kind of house we buy, and even the career we choose.
 - a. Why are we so driven by acceptance?
 - b. How does our need for acceptance affect our relationship with God?
 - c. How does our need for acceptance affect our relationship with others?

4. A multitude of studies in the last forty years indicate that the way we see ourselves determines to a large degree the way we act and react in life. That one's self-perception, self-worth, self-esteem tends to be a governing factor in our life. If we see ourselves as a loser, we end up to a large degree acting like a loser. If we see ourselves as a victim, we tend to let people victimize us. If we see ourselves as

uncreative, we never come up with any creative ideas. If we see ourselves as a piece of junk, we begin to think that we are garbage.

- a. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 10:5 to “. . . take every thought captive and make it obedient to Christ.” Pastor Tandy said, “The image in my brain is as thoughts come into our mind, they should enter a holding cell, like in jail. That’s taking it captive. Then it should be evaluated. Does it honor Christ? Does it honor what God says about me? Is it true?” *Imago Dei* is a Latin phrase that literally means “reflection of God.” How does your reflection look? How do you see yourself? Do you think that’s how God sees you?
 - b. If we have a distorted view of who we are, can people still see an accurate reflection of God in us? Why or why not?
 - c. Tandy shared how subtle messages in her world shaped how she saw herself. Growing up and then working in a denomination that limited women, the messages she received were “you’re not good enough” and “you don’t matter.” Can you identify some subtle distorted messages you have allowed to shape your view of self?
5. Tandy asked us to consider, “How much do you think you are worth?” She said, “I am not talking about net worth, but self-worth. We should never confuse valuables with value as a person.”
- a. What determines our value as a person?
 - b. How much are you worth?
 - c. How should our understanding of the *Imago Dei* change how we see value in ourselves and in others?
 - d. Tell us about someone you intensely dislike. Now try to see them through the lens of *Imago Dei*. How does that change things? How does that feel?
6. Colossians 1:22 (NCV) says, “. . . But now God has made you his friends again. He did this through Christ’s death in the body so that he might bring you into God’s presence as people who are holy, with no wrong, and with nothing of which God can judge you guilty.” Let that sink in a minute; God calls you holy. God says there is nothing of which you are guilty. How would your daily life be different if you lived like that was true? And how do you live that out?

Take this week to reflect on what it truly means to be made in the image of God.

Identify thoughts that need to be held captive.

And go be you . . . as you share Jesus and the light inside you!

1 Peter 2:5-10 New International Version

⁵You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

⁶For in Scripture it says:

“See, I lay a stone in Zion,
a chosen and precious cornerstone,
and the one who trusts in him
will never be put to shame.”

⁷Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe,
“The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone,”

⁸and,

“A stone that causes people to stumble
and a rock that makes them fall.”

They stumble because they disobey the message – which is also what they were destined for.

⁹But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of the One who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. ¹⁰Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.