

This fall we will do the good and hard work of training our eyes to see the sacred worth of God's creation. On the surface this may seem easy, however, it is anything but. It takes training, it takes community, it takes faithfulness, and it takes grace. In this moment in time, nothing is more critical than doing the work of seeing the image of God in ourselves and our neighbors. This holy work dispels fantasies that we may have created about ourselves or our neighbors which are untrue, unhelpful, and even destructive. So, we invite you into this holy work and we hope that this home study, along with Pastor Paul's sermon series, will guide our worship and our discipleship this fall. Each week on Friday afternoons, we will send a Field Guide Home Study to you via email in preparation for the upcoming Sunday.

Parents, guardians and caregivers, we hope this Field Guide Home Study will be a good chance to journey with your family in faith formation in your home. Sunday school classes, we hope this home study will be helpful as you prepare for worship each week. For those Belmonsters who cannot make it to the Sunday worship service, we hope this home study will be a blessing to you and a good accompaniment while you are away.

If you find this work hard, you are doing it right. May we stay faithful and do this holy work, side by side.

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Week 1 (Sept. 15, 2019)
Creative Living in a Consumer World
Observing Beauty: God made us all 'very good'

If you watch a group of children on a playground, you will observe motion, energy, and beauty. Why isn't this as inspiring as a sunset watched from a national park's most popular scenic overlook? Perhaps it is because we see each other every day that we miss the extraordinary beauty of each other's humanity. It is easy to forget to delight in the mundane beauty of human life. Though it is pervasive and easy to measure our worth upon an outside standard of wealth, contribution, body image or something else, our true worth comes from our Creator. We are made with a deep, sacred worth that names us 'beloved.' It is hard and holy work to claim this and live abundantly in it.

Scripture Readings: (CEB Bible)

Genesis 1:26-28, 31 26

Then God said, "Let us make humanity in our image to resemble us so that they may take charge of the fish of the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the earth, and all the crawling things on earth."

27 God created humanity in God's own image, in the divine image God created them, male and female God created them.

28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and master it. Take charge of the fish of the sea, the birds in the sky, and everything crawling on the ground."

31 God saw everything he had made: it was supremely good. There was evening and there was morning: the sixth day.

Isaiah 43:1

But now, says the Lord—
the one who created you, Jacob,
the one who formed you, Israel:
Don't fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name; you are mine.

Matthew 10:29-31

29 Aren't two sparrows sold for a small coin? But not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father knowing about it already. 30 Even the hairs of your head are all counted. 31 Don't be afraid. You are worth more than many sparrows.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

Questions to Consider:

- +Where do you see God's beauty in those you share life with?
- +How have you seen the image of God in another person? If you are doing this study with a group, name this in the group, or journal it, or send someone a text or post on Instagram or Facebook with a hashtag of: #IseeGodin
- +Now, the harder part for so many of us is seeing the image of God within ourselves; why is that so hard to see our own belovedness?
- +How does our consumer culture measure, judge, and hold us back from knowing our sacred worth? If you are with others right now, take a minute to name how you see Christ, The Spirit and the Creator in others in the group.
- +If we struggle to see our own sacred worth how does that affect our ability to see sacred worth in others? When do you notice sacred worth in others? Who might we treat differently if we looked harder for God's holy threads within the tapestry of their lives?

Spiritual Practices:

- +Reach out to someone and share how you have seen God in them.
- +Reach within and contemplate a list of seven things about yourself that reflect God's image in your life.
- +Post this prayer to your phone or on your refrigerator or mirror. When you see it, look hard to see God in yourself and in others this week:

Bodies beautifully woven together,
I am created in the divine image.
Breath-filled lungs,
You are created in the divine image.
God looks at each of us and can't help but smile.
We are created in the divine image.

Prayer for the Week:*

Creative God,
Your Spirit swept over the waters of creation;
You are sweeping over us now, creating.

Call us away from the distractions of the world
and the voices inside and out that question if we are enough
smart enough
attractive enough
kind enough
good enough

God you created us in Your image and called us good.
Open us to a new awakening, a new beginning,
where we look through the lens of the goodness of Your creation,
experiencing all possibilities in You.

In the name of the Creator who breaths life into us, the Redeemer who gives us new life, and the
Sustainer who holds our lives together, Amen.

*Adapted from Genesis Prayer on Rev-o-lution blog

[Catch the sermon podcast for Sept. 15th, 2019 here.](#) (posted on Monday mornings)