

# In His Image

Genesis 1:26-27; Proverbs 24:11-12; Mark 10:46-49

**26** Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, all the earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth.”

**27** So God created man in His own image; He created him in the image of God; He created them male and female.

**11** Rescue those being taken off to death, and save those stumbling toward slaughter. **12** If you say, “But we didn’t know about this,” won’t He who weighs hearts consider it? Won’t He who protects your life know? Won’t He repay a person according to his work?

**46** They came to Jericho. And as He was leaving Jericho with His disciples and a large crowd, Bartimaeus ( the son of Timaeus), a blind beggar, was sitting by the road. **47** When he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene , he began to cry out, “Son of David, Jesus, have mercy on me!” **48** Many people told him to keep quiet, but he was crying out all the more, “Have mercy on me, Son of David!” **49** Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.” So they called the blind man and said to him, “Have courage! Get up; He’s calling for you.”



# Exploration

The world we live in is a broken system. It was not always so. God created the world good (Gen. 1), but when Adam and Eve chose to rebel against God, they invited corruption into the world and the good system God made was broken (Gen. 3:7-24). We see the imprint, the evidence of this brokenness, every time we turn on the news, and through the many reports of crime, war, and disasters (Rom. 8:22). If we are honest, however, we also see this brokenness in more personal ways through our fights and quarrels with our friends, family members, and neighbors (Jas. 4:1-3). As those who believe that Jesus came to redeem the world (John 3:17), we must not turn a blind eye to the brokenness we see in the world. One of the greatest injustices that is commonly overlooked today is the way our culture turns a blind eye to the persecution of the unborn. Today, students will be challenged to acknowledge the corruption present in the system in which they live. We serve a God who refused to turn a blind eye to the injustice present in our world. Though He was just, Jesus willingly embraced an unjust death in order to save us. It is only when we recognize the corruption around us that we will be poised to do something about it. Like Jesus, we must not turn a blind eye to injustice but rather look to Christ for the strength we need to fight against it.

## CONTEXT (GEN. 1:26-27, PROV. 24 & MARK 10)

Today's session focuses on the implications of what it means to be made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27). There has been much speculation about the image of God. Some claim it means that we have reason and morals. Others claim it refers to the fact that we share some of God's qualities (love, goodness, justice), though in lesser measure. What is most important, however, is to note that human beings alone were created in God's image, signifying that God created us for a special relationship with Himself. If all people are image bearers, all people have value and should be cared for, loved, and defended.

The Book of Proverbs, along with Ecclesiastes and Job, is as part of the wisdom literature of the Old Testament. The writer of Ecclesiastes approached the question of the purpose of life from a philosophical or intellectual perspective. He determined to ascertain how happiness might be found, concluding with, "When all has been heard, the conclusion of the matter is: 'fear God and keep His commands, because this is for all humanity'" (12:13). Contrastingly, the Book of Proverbs offers a more practical approach to everyday life. It teaches the believer how to live.

Chapter 24 is a collection of individual sayings and proverbs on various topics related to life. We are not to envy or join with evildoers whose hearts plan violence (vv. 1-2). While evil men plan violence (v. 1), the wise take up the cause of justice. Verses 10-12 challenge us to rescue those who have been wrongly condemned to death. God will hold accountable those who have it within their power to rescue the innocent but instead do nothing (v. 12).

Mark 10 records that Jesus traveled to Judea on His way to Jerusalem and the cross. While in Judea, crowds converged on Him and He began to teach them (v. 1). When some Pharisees tried to trap Jesus with a question about divorce, Jesus affirmed God's design for lifelong marriage (vv. 2-12). He affirmed the value of children by taking them in His arms and blessing them (vv. 13-16). Jesus then challenged a rich young ruler to give all he had to the poor and to come follow Him—a price the young man was unwilling to pay (vv. 17-22). Jesus warned it would be hard for rich people to inherit the kingdom of God (vv. 23-27). He assured His disciples God would bless their faithfulness (vv. 28-31). For a third time, Jesus predicted His death (vv. 32-34; see also 8:31; 9:31). When James and John asked Jesus if they might sit at His right and left hand in His coming kingdom (10:35-41), Jesus responded by clarifying the true nature of leadership (vv. 42-45). As Jesus and His disciples journeyed through Jericho, He met Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, who implored Jesus to have mercy on him (vv. 47-48). The crowd rebuked him, but Jesus called to him and gave him sight (vv. 49-52).



# Conversation

Allow for time to discuss and for students to share their answers to the following quick response questions. Do not spend too much time here, but use these questions to help introduce the passage.

- › **Share about a time when you witnessed someone being treated unfairly. How did you react?**
- › **How would you react if you found out that injustice was regularly being overlooked in your city or community?**

Between five and six million Jews were killed in Europe during the Holocaust out of a population of nine million. The Holocaust remains one of the greatest acts of injustice in human history. Once the catastrophic toll was counted, many people claimed to be ignorant of what was actually going on in concentration camps around Europe. While we cannot know exactly how much people truly knew about this, we must recognize that God knows. He is fully aware of the injustice that runs rampant in our world. As the only truly just person in the universe, God chose to take on human flesh and embrace an unjust death so that we might be made right before Him (2 Cor. 5:21). Jesus refused to turn a blind eye to injustice, but rather looks it head-on with determination to do something about it. As those who follow Christ, we must not be content to remain in a position of ignorance about the injustice in our world. We must, like Jesus, acknowledge injustice and strive to love and serve those suffering because of it.

## GENESIS 1:26-27

- › **What does it mean to be created in the image of God?**
- › **What are the implications of this truth with regard to how we see, think about, and treat other human beings?**

The fact that God created humans in His image tells us that all people are equal and inherently valuable. The use of the phrase “Let Us” rather than “Let there be” indicates God’s personal and triune involvement in humanity’s creation. The way He created a man hinted that His relationship with human beings would be unique. Many have speculated that “image” refers to the aspects of reason, personality, the ability to make value judgments, and other qualities that cause a human being to resemble God. Most importantly, being made in God’s image allows us to relate to God on a personal level so that we might devote our lives to knowing, loving, and glorifying the One who created us (Isa. 43:7).



# Leader Prep

## GENESIS 1:26-27

What exactly is the “image” of God? Since the Bible teaches that God is Spirit (John 4:24), many commentators believe it refers to the non-material aspects of a person—our moral sensibilities, intellectual abilities, will, and emotions. Based on God’s commands in Gen 1:28, others have suggested that it consists of the role humans are to play on earth—their rulership over the planet and its resources, and secondarily the physical, mental, and spiritual abilities that enable them to fulfill that role. The New Testament teaches that Christians will someday bear the image of Christ (1 Cor. 15:49; 1 John 3:2).

The creation of humanity is the crowning event of chapter 1, as shown by the fact that created is repeated three times. The verb “created” is the same one used in 1:1, referring to a kind of creative activity that only God can do. The term “man” is used elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible to refer to humanity in general, not just males; all people, both male and female, are created in the image of God. People are the only beings that are created in the image of God. The Bible never lumps people into the category of animals. Instead, it separates the creation of people from all other beings and attributes the most privileged roles in creation to humans alone.

## PROVERBS 24:11

Solomon issued a strong command to protect human life: Rescue those being taken off to death. The verb *rescue* can also mean “take away” or “snatch away.” Rescue is an imperative in the original Hebrew. Solomon was not offering a suggestion; he was issuing a command. The expression those being taken off to death describes people in danger of being put to death; the context suggests those wrongly condemned. The wise king knew the Hebrew law dictated that certain crimes be punished by death. Solomon, therefore, was not instructing his people to rescue the guilty. Perhaps to add a qualifier would help us understand Solomon’s intent: “Rescue those innocently being taken off to death.” God expects us to advocate for those facing wrongful death, including the unborn. He likewise expects us to defend and care for society’s most vulnerable—the poor, oppressed, displaced, orphans, and widows (See Deut. 24:17, 21; Ps. 82:3; Prov. 31:8-9; Isa. 1:17).

Solomon continued: and save those stumbling toward slaughter. The word *slaughter* is a strong word that often denotes the literal taking of human life (Isa. 30:25; Ezek. 26:15).



# Conversation

The unique way God created human beings confirms their inherent value. The implications of this are many and far-reaching. For instance, a fetus is an unborn human being—no serious scientists dispute this claim. In God’s eyes, fetuses are precious—they are people made in His image and created for His glory. Human life, no matter what age, is to be celebrated, protected, and advocated. A Christian view of the world requires us to be pro-life from the womb to the tomb. As Christ followers, we ought to listen to and advocate for the life and well-being not only of the unborn, but of all people. Jesus served those whose needs and struggles were often ignored—single mothers, refugees, the elderly, and minorities. He calls us to do the same.

## PROVERBS 24:10-12

Solomon, son of David and king of Israel, is listed as the author of Proverbs (1:1; 10:1) though this likely involved both writing its content and compiling it from the proverbs of others (25:1). Solomon’s goal in writing and compiling this book was to instill wisdom in his readers based upon the fear of the Lord (1:1-7). Wisdom refers not merely to knowledge, but to the right application of knowledge. In today’s session, we will discuss the right application of knowledge with regard to injustice.

› **According to verse 10, how do most people tend to respond to difficulty or adversity? Why do you think that is?**

› **What does such a response communicate about us? About our faith?**

We tend to let unexpected difficulties paralyze us, verse 10, however, makes clear that this reveals where our trust lies. Those who give up in the face of adversity have a strength that is lacking. In other words, they have looked to themselves for strength to endure rather than to their all-powerful Maker (Jer. 32:17).

› **Look at verse 12. How did Solomon expect his readers to respond to the injustice they saw around them? How should we respond to the injustice we see around us?**

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›› **ITEM 3 (LEADER PACK)** Reference the **Joshua 24:15** verse poster. Discuss how choosing to serve the Lord involves acknowledging and striving against injustice. Discuss some simple ways your group might do this.

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› **Why shouldn’t we view abortion only as a political issue? What are some practical, nonpolitical ways we can fight against the injustice of abortion today?**

God expects us to be advocates on behalf of others facing wrongful death (v. 12), including cases of abortion. Christ calls us to be salt and light in a dark world. If we truly claim to value all human life, it is not enough to protest the legal practice of abortion in our country. In particular, we must support single mothers who’ve been unjustly burdened with the task of raising children on their own. Challenge students to support life-affirming pregnancy centers in your area. Help them think of practical ways to contribute to structures of support for young mothers and even give hope and comfort to those who have given into the devastating choice to end human life through abortion.



# Leader Prep

The word can also describe circumstances in which people do not realize they are heading for ruin and it is within our power to rescue them. The concept can apply anytime we see a person in danger, and certainly may also describe people whose lives are headed toward spiritual ruin if they do not change their actions. We are reminded that people without Jesus face an eternity of punishment. When we share the gospel with them, we provide them a means of escape. We may also need to take loving, corrective action to help other believers who are caught in sin (Gal. 6:1).

## PROVERBS 24:10-12

While innocent individuals were being “taken off to death” (v. 11), some chose to do nothing in such a difficult time. The king had heard some of his people offer the common excuse of claiming to be uninformed. How cruelly the excuse rolled off the tongues of those who had failed to protect the innocent: “But we didn’t know about this.”

This excuse can be understood in different ways. Perhaps the people knew nothing about situations in which the innocent died. After all, news did not travel as fast in ancient days. The Hebrew word translated know communicates personal, intimate knowledge. Therefore, perhaps the people had some awareness of such situations but didn't know the particulars or specifics.

Or, more likely, the people simply didn't tell the truth when claiming ignorance. Perhaps the people knew exactly what happened and chose, for whatever reason, not to get involved. Perhaps the people had both the knowledge and the power to intercede and chose not to do so.

Solomon asked three penetrating questions, all of which had to be answered with a responding “Yes!” Yes, God, who weighs hearts would consider the inactivity of His people as they failed to protect the innocent. Yes, God, who protects your life knew that His people had failed those individuals innocently condemned. And, yes, God would repay a person according to his work, or, in this instance, his or her lack of work (lack of intervention on behalf of the innocent). Here, Solomon used the same Hebrew word for know twice. The people claimed not to know about those unfairly condemned. Solomon communicated that God did know about their inactivity and would punish their idleness. Solomon made it clear: inaction was an unacceptable option.



Every society has people who have no one to advocate for them. God calls His people to do so. Through the prophet Isaiah the Lord announced His displeasure at Israel's neglect and mistreatment of orphans and widows: "They do not defend the rights of the fatherless, and the widow's case never comes before them" (Isa. 1:23).

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# Conversation

› **How did Solomon respond to those who claimed to be ignorant of injustice (v. 12)? Can we claim to be truly unaware of the injustice in our world today? Why or why not?**

› **What does such a response communicate about us? About our faith?**

Verse 11 envisions people being unjustly sentenced to death and calls upon those who fear the Lord not to turn a blind eye to their plight, but to actively and intentionally seek their rescue. A common response to injustice is to claim that we are ignorant of it. After all, if we don't know about the oppression and abuse that others face, then we can't be bothered to do anything about it. Solomon, however, makes clear that while we might convince others that we are ignorant, we will not fool God. Claiming ignorance of a widely known evil is no excuse for not rescuing the victims who cry out to us for help. The gospel gives us clear eyes to see the brokenness of the world we live in so that we might determine to strive against it with the hope of the gospel.

## MARK 10:46-49

› **Why did Bartimaeus cry out for mercy? What does "mercy" here really mean?**

› **Compare and contrast how the crowd responded to Bartimaeus with how Jesus responded to him. What can we learn from His example?**

In that day, the blind were believed to be cursed of God. They were ignored and despised. The crowd saw Bartimaeus as part of the fringe of society, so they tried to quiet him down. But the blind man called even louder for mercy, using a title for Jesus that showed at least the beginnings of faith in Him as the promised Messiah of Israel. Even more shocking than Bartimaeus' persistence, Jesus' welcome of this interruption is telling as it would have shocked the cultural sensibilities of all who witnessed it. Jesus sees, hears, and cares about those whose voices the surrounding culture typically seeks to oppress or silence.

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**GO DEEPER OPTION:** Read Matthew 4:23-25. Challenge students to think deeply about why Jesus healed the sick and ministered to those who were suffering. What does that tell us about His mission? What does that tell us about ours?

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# Leader Prep

In Jeremiah, God warned against inaction: “They have not taken up cases, such as the case of the fatherless, so they might prosper, and they have not defended the rights of the needy. Should I not punish them for these things?” (Jer 5:28-29). The Lord’s words were aimed at those who had the power to help the vulnerable, but chose not to do so. James, the half-brother of Jesus, challenged his readers to take action on behalf of others when it lay within their power to do so. He declared that if they did not, their faith was worthless (see Jas. 2:15-17).

## MARK 10:46-49

Luke records Jesus’ encounter with another citizen of Jericho—Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10). Zacchaeus and Bartimaeus were opposites in one sense—one was very rich (Luke 19:2) while the other was very poor. But the two were the same in that they both experienced a life-changing encounter with Jesus as He passed through Jericho.

The blind in those days had little opportunity to support themselves. They often had to resort to begging. Thus, a blind man begging on the side of a busy road would have been a common sight. The large crowd on their way to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover feast likely would have failed to take notice of him.

When Bartimaeus heard that Jesus was passing by, he cried out: “Son of David, Jesus, have mercy on me!” Son of David was a messianic title based on the promises God had made to David in 2 Samuel 7:11-14 (see also Jer. 23:5-6; Ezek. 34:23-24). Bartimaeus believed Jesus to be the long-awaited Jewish Messiah.

The blind man made a general request that Jesus might simply have mercy on him. Later, when asked by Jesus what he wanted, he made the specific request for his eyesight (v. 51). The crying out of Bartimaeus annoyed the crowd; they told him to keep quiet. Perhaps the crowds believed he meant to ask Jesus for alms. Bartimaeus did not intend to ask Jesus for money, but He knew Jesus to be his only hope to gain sight and to be relieved from his life of begging. Undeterred, and with so much at stake, Bartimaeus cried out all the more, “Have mercy on me, Son of David.”

The persistence of Bartimaeus drew the attention of Jesus. The cry of a blind beggar stopped the Son of God in His tracks. He instructed His disciples to “Call him.” When Bartimaeus arrived, Jesus asked him what he wanted. Bartimaeus said “I want to see!” (v. 51). We get the impression that Bartimaeus said, “More than anything in this life, I want to see!” Jesus then healed him of his blindness.



As Jesus and His disciples were leaving Jericho (north of the Dead Sea and on the western side of the Jordan River, 17 miles from Jerusalem), a blind beggar named Bartimaeus was sitting by the road. Mark explains that Bartimaeus literally means *the son of Timaeus*.

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Matthew and Luke both provide an account of Jesus’ dialogue with Bartimaeus (Matt. 20:29-34; Luke 18:35-43). Interestingly, only Mark records the man’s name. (Matthew tells us there were two beggars.) What matters more though, is that Jesus valued a blind beggar (that we just happen to know by the name Bartimaeus). Not only did Jesus value Bartimaeus, He focused His attention on him, and rescued him.



# Application

## CENTRAL TRUTH

*Following Christ requires acknowledging and striving against the injustice in our world.*

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➤➤ **ITEMS 1 & 2 (LEADER PACK)** Reference the **Central Truths** and **Timeline** pack items as you reflect on what you've studied so far in Joshua and Judges. Allow students to briefly share what they've learned so far, as well as time to share some practical ways they can advocate for life.

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## NOW WHAT?

- › **How can we fight the temptation of turning a blind eye to injustice in the world today?**
- › **What are some practical ways we might advocate for victims of injustice in the world?**
- › **Along with the unborn, who are some other groups of people our culture tends to silence or ignore? How can we serve and point such people to Christ?**
- › **Brainstorm some ways that we can advocate for the unborn, widows, single mothers, and for needy children.**

Help students to recognize that ignorance is not an option when it comes to the lives of the unborn, the struggles of single mothers, and the lives of children. In our information age, we know too much to pretend to be ignorant. In the last 50 years, the number of children living in single-parent homes has nearly doubled and there have been over 54 million abortions performed in the United States since Roe v. Wade in 1973.<sup>1</sup> As followers of Christ, we must not ignore these facts. We must be deeply aware of these facts such that they cause us not only to mourn but also to act. Christ calls us to take up the cause of all those made in God's image by actively loving them, serving them in life-giving ways, and pointing them to the hope that is found in Christ.

<sup>1</sup> Ertelt, Steven. "55,772,015 Abortions in America Since Roe v. Wade in 1973." LifeNews.com. Accessed May 24, 2016. <http://www.lifenews.com/2013/01/18/55772015-abortion-in-america-since-roe-vs-wade-in-1973/>.



## PERSONAL CHALLENGE

Conclude your group time with these thoughts and encourage students to memorize the verse listed for this session. Memorizing God's Word allows it to dwell in us and allows Him to speak through His Word in our times of need. Also encourage your group to take advantage of the Keep on Digging section in their Personal Study Guides and to take the truths of this section and apply them to their lives.

- › **Dwell:** What will you do this week to advocate for those whose voices are silenced? How will you serve them, love them, and point them to Jesus? Brainstorm a list of ways you could do so. Make plans to put one or two of these ideas into practice this week.
- › **Memorize:** Proverbs 24:10
- › **Pray:** Thank God for sending Jesus to endure God's just wrath for sin on your behalf. Pray that His example would empower and encourage you as you seek to advocate for justice for the people around you. Pray that God would open your eyes to the plight of the oppressed around you and make you a passionate advocate for them.

## KEEP ON DIGGING

Read Psalm 139 and make a list of what these verses tell you about God's knowledge and care for human beings made in His image. When you are done, take some time to consider whether these realities are actively reflected in the way you talk about, think about, and interact with people in your life. What might need to change for you to truly glorify God in your interactions with others?



For an expository verse-by-verse sermon outline/discussion guide that complements this session with a study in Galatians, see [lifeway.com/ETBWIN17JJR](http://lifeway.com/ETBWIN17JJR). For **free** training, go to [MinistryGrid.com/web/ExploreTheBible](http://MinistryGrid.com/web/ExploreTheBible).