



FOUNDATIONS • COMMUNITY GROUP STUDY • GENESIS 1-2

Made in His Image

A guided conversation from the September 20, 2026 sermon by James Drake

SUMMARY

Week two of Foundations moves from what God made to whom he made. Out of everything in Genesis 1, only one creature is stamped with the image of God — us. James Drake said our deepest struggle is that we try to build an identity out of what we do, what we own, or what other people say about us. But a newborn has done nothing, and its parents are undone with love, because of whose image it bears. Your worth is not printed on the far side of your achievements; it is written into you at the source. Identity is received, not achieved.

Being made in his image is a calling as much as a gift. God put the man in the garden 'to work it and keep it' before there was a single thorn — work was part of paradise, not a punishment invented later. Dominion, James said, is not being the boss who puts everything under his feet; it is stewardship. We tend what God owns. And he built rest into the same good world: the seventh day was blessed and made holy, God telling a people who had known only Pharaoh's brick-quotas, 'you are not slaves — your worth is not measured by output.'

Then God said the first 'not good' in a chapter full of good: 'It is not good that the man should be alone.' The word helper, James pointed out, is the same word Scripture uses for God as our help; Eve was taken from Adam's side, to stand beside him as an equal. We were made for connection — a relationship and a role, belonging to God's family and serving within it. And it all runs to Christ: where the first Adam blamed his bride and stood by, the second Adam rescues and holds fast to his, the church. We hold a broken world honestly — 'not the way it's supposed to be' — because we were made for very good, and the God who made it will restore it.

PRAYER

OPENING PRAYER

Father, before we had done a single thing, you made us in your image and called it very good. Quiet the voices that tell us our worth is something we still have to earn. Take us into Genesis as it is, and let us hear who you say we are — made by you, made for you, and held fast even when we fail. Meet us here tonight. Amen.

START

ICE BREAKER

Think of something you were handed rather than something you earned — a name, a family, a gift you didn't deserve. What is one of those you'd forgotten to be grateful for?

GENESIS 1:26-27 (ESV)

Genesis 1:26-27 (ESV) Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

GENESIS 1:31 (ESV)

Genesis 1:31 (ESV) And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

GENESIS 2:2-3 (ESV)

Genesis 2:2-3 (ESV) And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

GENESIS 2:15 (ESV)

Genesis 2:15 (ESV) The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.

GENESIS 2:18 (ESV)

Genesis 2:18 (ESV) Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him."

GENESIS 2:24 (ESV)

Genesis 2:24 (ESV) Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

GENESIS 2:25 (ESV)

Genesis 2:25 (ESV) And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

01 SERIES-AHEAD • WORK BEFORE THE FALL

God gives the man a garden to work and keep before anything has gone wrong. How does that sit next to the way you usually think about your job?

02 SERIES-AHEAD • THE FIRST 'NOT GOOD'

"It is not good that the man should be alone" is the first thing God calls not good, in a chapter that keeps calling everything good. Who do you know who is alone in a way we have all gotten used to?

03 SERIES-AHEAD • NAKED AND NOT ASHAMED

They were naked and not ashamed. What would have to be true for you to be that known by the people in this room?

04 RECEIVED, NOT ACHIEVED

Read Genesis 1:26-27. James said our deepest struggle is trying to build an identity out of what we do, what we own, or what others say about us — yet a newborn has done nothing and is loved completely, because of whose image it bears. Where are you still trying to achieve a worth God says he has already given you?

05 STEWARD, NOT OWNER

Read Genesis 2:15. James said dominion is not being the boss who puts everything under his feet — it is stewardship of what God owns. What has God actually placed in your care right now, and are you tending it as his, or just enduring it as yours?

06 VERY GOOD — AND NOT THE WAY IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE

Read Genesis 1:31. James held up a keepsake that had come home from deployment in pieces — you wouldn't call it 'identifying as broken,' you'd say it's not the way it's supposed to be. Where does the gap between 'very good' and 'not the way it's supposed to be' hurt most in your life right now?

07 YOU ARE NOT A SLAVE

Read Genesis 2:2-3. James admitted he wrestles with rest — he'd rather do than sit still — but God gave a people who had known only Pharaoh a Sabbath to say, 'you are not slaves; your worth is not measured by output.' What would it look like this week to stop, not to recharge for more work, but to remember you are loved apart from what you produce?

08 THE WORD 'HELPER'

Read Genesis 2:18. James pointed out that helper is the same word Scripture uses for God as our help, and that Eve was taken from Adam's side to stand beside him as an equal. How does that reframe what it means to need — and to be — a helper in the relationships you're in?

09 A RELATIONSHIP AND A ROLE — HELD FAST

Read Genesis 2:24. James said where the first Adam blamed his bride and stood by, the second Adam holds fast to his, the church — and that we were made for both a relationship and a role: to belong to God's family and to serve within it. Whether or not you are married, where have you settled for isolation or quiet drift, and what is one step this week toward the belonging you were made for?

APPLY THIS WEEK

Pick one. Do it before you meet again.

- 1 **Receive your worth** Catch yourself this week reaching for worth in a result, a title, or someone's approval. Stop and receive it instead: before you did anything, you were made in God's image and called very good. Thank him for an identity you cannot earn.
- 2 **Tend one thing as his** Name one thing God has placed in your care — a home, a job, a relationship, a corner of this church. Take one concrete step this week to leave it better than you found it, stewarding what belongs to him rather than merely enduring it.
- 3 **Step toward belonging** Take one step out of isolation this week: reach out to someone who is alone in a way we've all gotten used to, or let someone in the group know where you've been drifting. You were made for a relationship and a role — start with one.

Come back next week ready to say what happened, not what you intended.

REMEMBER REMEMBER

- ▶ You were made in God's image before you had done anything — identity is received, not achieved.
- ▶ Dominion is stewardship: we tend what God owns, and work was a gift before it was ever hard.

- ▶ Rest is built into the good world — you are not a slave, and your worth is not your output.
- ▶ 'It is not good to be alone' — we were made for belonging, and Christ holds fast to us first.

Only one creature in all of creation bears the image of God — you. Your worth was written in at the source, not earned on the far side of your achievements.

PRAYER

CLOSING PRAYER

God of the beginning, you made us in your image and called us very good before we had earned a thing. Free us from measuring ourselves by what we do or own or what others say. Teach us to steward what is yours, to rest as those who are not slaves, and to hold fast to one another as Christ holds fast to us. We are yours. Amen.



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