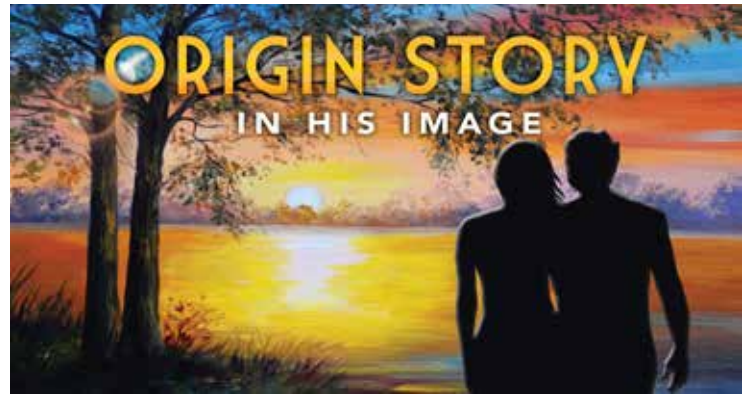


## WEEK OF JULY 30



DAY  
1

### We Were Made With Potential Genesis 2:7-15

Each morning, many of us get ready for work with a slight sense of dread. Maybe you have a really difficult boss, or a tough workload ahead, or a busy day of paperwork. Maybe you are in a season where you have been struggling to find work and you are feeling discouraged about the outlook for your work life.

Or, maybe you wake each day wondering if you were made for more.

Genesis 1 and 2 teach us that God created us with great potential. God tasked men and women with responsibly and thoughtfully cultivating the earth, forming families, and tending the garden. These are big callings! Part of this mandate is, of course, wrapped up in what we do for paid work. But it is so much more than that! It's also how you care for your neighbors, how you tend the planet, and how you serve God through good works.

The idea of calling or vocation can include whatever it is you do to pay the bills, but it also includes being a part of God's redemptive work in the world. This week's devotional will walk you through some of the great potential we have as image bearers.



DAY  
2

### The Potential for Good Works Ephesians 2:10

Yesterday we took a look at how part of being made in God's image has to do with our work. Our work includes God's work of loving our neighbors well, doing the good works for which we were created, and sharing God's love with others.

If we look ahead to the New Testament, Jesus shows us what a life of purpose looks like. As followers of Christ, we should follow him and seek to find our place in the center of God's plan and purpose. *The Message* translates Ephesians 2:10 this way: "He creates each of us by Christ Jesus to join him in the work he does, the good work he has gotten ready for us to do, work we had better be doing."

There is so much joy when you discover your purpose, when you are doing what God wants you to do. For many of us, finding our purpose can feel daunting and difficult, but God uniquely equips us for our purposes. As the verse you read today reminds us, God created us with our gifts and abilities before the creation of the

**He creates each of us by Christ Jesus to join him in the work he does, the good work he has gotten ready for us to do, work we had better be doing.**

world. The book *Rooted: Connect with God, The Church, Your Purpose* says, “God is an audacious God, doing what it takes to turn the world back toward Him, restoring shalom as He intended it to be.” You are part of God’s good works in the world.

**DAY  
3**

## **The Potential for Creativity**

**Genesis 1:26–27,  
Jeremiah 18:1–6**



Do you move through life with a sense of awe and wonder at God’s creativity? It can be overwhelming to visit an incredibly beautiful place like the Grand Canyon or the Alps, but it is equally awe-inducing to sit in your yard and observe a goldfinch, or a butterfly, or the unfurling petals of a flower. Our God is an incredibly creative God.

We, too, are works of art. We are God’s handiwork.

Creative capacity makes us like God. Being made in his image means that we also have the capacity to create. Perhaps you don’t see yourself as an artist, but the work of your hands is an art, too. Caring for children, wiring a house for electricity, planting flowers, cooking a meal—these are all creative endeavors. Maybe no one will see your creativity. Few of us will have our handiwork displayed in a museum! But God sees the creative good you put out in the world. God the great artist sees your creativity because he’s the one who gave you that great potential.

**DAY  
4**

## **The Potential for Rest**

**Genesis 2:2–3, Exodus 20:8–11**

What does sabbath-taking feel like to you? Do you spend each week rushing around before thinking, “This is the week where I am going to finally slow down and finally take a proper sabbath.” And then, when Sunday rolls around, you have groceries to buy and errands to run and things to do, and maybe Sunday night you lay your head down on your pillow and think, “You know what? Next week I’m going to change the pace of my weekend and I’m going to take a true and proper sabbath.”

Sabbath is important enough that God commanded we follow his example of rest. The sabbath is one of the 10 commandments. God tells his people to set aside one day, one 24-hour period, where we need to rest. God had rescued his people from slavery, and he gives them major rules to live by. They had been in slavery for a really long time, so he is teaching them how to live as free people by laying out these values, and sabbath is one of them.

*The end goal of sabbath is not to say, “I practice sabbath,” it’s to apprentice under Jesus to become a person who is marked by an inner spirit of restfulness—a person who is calm, at ease in their own body, unhurried, kind, and present. You will become aware of what God is doing around you, sincerely grateful, emotionally healthy, and delighted by the goodness of your life with God. You will become: A person who is like a rock in a sea of chaos, unmoved by the overwork, overconsumption, and overactivity of our host culture. (Practicingtheway.org)*



# PERSONAL REFLECTION & LIFEGROUP DISCUSSION

*You can always pick any idea from the sermon or the daily readings and biblical passages and talk about those ideas. A good format is to have each LifeGroup member share one idea that was most powerful for them.*

**Day 1:** How are you representing God in the world through your work (paid or otherwise)? Do you feel like God might be calling you to something new?

**Day 2:** What do you think of when you think of purpose? Do you feel like you are fulfilling your God-given purpose? If not, why? Does figuring out your purpose seem daunting?

**Day 3:** Do you think of yourself as a creative person? Where do you best observe God's creativity? What sort of creative work can you be involved in?

**Day 4:** Why do you think God rested on the seventh day? What sort of patterns of rest do you have in your life?