Tough Big Idea: You're made in God's image, no algorithm required.
Primary Scripture: Genesis 1:26-27; Psalm 8:3-6
Supporting Scripture: Colossians 1:16-17; Ecclesiastes 7:29

- AI is *everywhere*.
    - It can write your essays. It can generate realistic images of people who don't exist. It can mimic someone's voice so well that you'd think you were actually talking to them. It can compose music, write poetry, hold conversations, and even pass medical exams and bar exams.
- Some of it is incredible.
    - AI is helping doctors catch diseases earlier.
    - It's making information more accessible to people all over the world. It's solving problems that humans have been stuck on for decades.
- But it's also moving really fast.
    - Just a few years ago, the idea of a computer writing a college-level essay or generating a photorealistic image from a text description would have sounded like science fiction.
    - Every few months, it seems like AI takes another massive leap forward.
- And while a lot of that is genuinely exciting, it's also raising some questions that are difficult to ignore.
    - If a computer can write a better essay than you can, what's the point of writing? If AI can create art that looks just as beautiful as something painted by a human hand, does human creativity still matter? If a chatbot can give advice that sounds thoughtful and compassionate, do we even need each other?
- And here's the question underneath all of those questions:
    - **In a world where machines can do so many of the things we can do... what actually makes us human?**
- It's a question that might seem new, like it belongs to our generation, but it's actually one of the oldest questions in the world.
- People have been asking "What makes us special?" since long before anyone ever dreamed of a computer.
- The Bible has something pretty remarkable to say about it.

SCRIPTURE (What does God's Word say?)

- In Genesis, we read about God creating everything: light, oceans, mountains, animals, and everything in between. But then something changes.
- When God gets to humanity, the language shifts. It becomes personal.

26** Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground." **27** So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.* ***(Genesis 1:26-27 – NLT)

- God didn't say, "Let there be humans" the way He said, "Let there be light."
- He said, "Let *us* make human beings in *our* image."
    - It's intentional. It's relational. It's like God paused and said, "This one is different."
- He said, "Let us make them in our image."
    - The very first thing God says about us has nothing to do with what we can produce. It has everything to do with who we reflect.
- Centuries later, King David looked up at the sky one night and basically asked the same question we're asking today: What makes us so special?

3** When I look at the night sky and see the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars you set in place, **4** what are mere mortals that you should think about them, human beings that you should care for them? **5** Yet you made them only a little lower than God and crowned them with glory and honor. **6** You gave them charge of everything you made, putting all things under their authority.* ***(Psalm 8:3-6 – NLT)

- David is staring at the vastness of the universe, and instead of feeling small and insignificant, he discovers the God who made all of this *thinks about us*. He *cares* about us.
- Not only that, but He crowned us with glory and honor and gave us responsibility over His creation.

INSIGHTS (What might this Scripture mean?)

1. You are an image-bearer, not just an information-processor.

- AI is incredibly good at processing information, but when Genesis says we are made in God's *image*, it's talking about something much deeper.
- Being made in God's image means we reflect who God *is*.
    - God is creative, so we create. God is relational, so we long for connection. God loves, so we love. God shows compassion, so something in us aches when we see someone hurting.
- AI can simulate some of those things.
    - A chatbot can say, "I'm sorry you're going through that." But it doesn't actually *feel* sorry.
    - It's recognizing a pattern and generating a response that seems appropriate. There's no one on the other end of that sentence who *cares*.
- If your best friend sends you a text at midnight that says, "Hey, I'm really struggling right now," and you choose to stay up and talk to them, that means something.
    - Not because your advice is better than what a chatbot could give (it might even be worse), but because *you* showed up.
- A real person, who was tired and had school the next morning, decided that their friend mattered more than sleep. No algorithm can replicate that.
    - The difference isn't just about what you can *do*; it's about who you *are*.

2. Your worth isn't measured by what you produce.

- AI has a way of making us feel like we're falling behind.
- If AI can write faster, create more, and produce content around the clock without ever getting tired, it's easy to start measuring our own worth by what we can produce.
    - When we do that, we'll always lose, because a machine will always be more efficient than we are.
- We already live in a culture that constantly tells us our value is tied to our output.
    - Get better grades. Build a better résumé. Post better content. Be more productive.
- AI just turns up the volume on a message we were already hearing.

- In Psalm 8, David says God crowned us with glory and honor simply because of who we *are* to Him.

16 *...for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see, such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him.* ***17*** *He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together.* ***(Colossians 1:16-17 – NLT)***

- Everything was created through Jesus and *for* Jesus.
    - That includes you.
    - Your value doesn't come from your GPA, your talent, your follower count, or how you compare to a machine.
    - Your value comes from the fact that the God who holds all creation together made you on purpose and for a purpose.
    - No AI will ever be able to say that.

3. You were made for choices that matter.

- AI doesn't *choose* anything. It calculates.
    - When a chatbot generates a response, it's predicting what's most likely to be helpful based on the data it was trained on.
    - It has no sense of right or wrong. It has no conscience. It can't wrestle with a moral dilemma or feel the weight of a decision.
- But we can. And that's by design.

29 *But I did find this: God created people to be virtuous, but they have each turned to follow their own downward path.* ***(Ecclesiastes 7:29 – NLT)***

- God created us with the capacity for goodness, for virtue, for choosing the right thing even when it's the more difficult thing.
- We don't always get it right. We make mistakes. We choose selfishly. We hurt people.
- The fact that we *can* choose... that we feel the tension between what's right and what's easy... that's part of what makes us human.
- Even our failures point to something meaningful.
- The reason we feel guilty when we mess up, the reason we feel the need to apologize or make things right, is because we were designed with a moral compass.
- We know when we've gone off course. AI doesn't have that.

- When you forgive someone who hurt you, that means something. When you tell the truth even though lying would be easier, that means something. When you stand up for someone who's being bullied, that means something.
- Not because you calculated the optimal response, but because something inside you, something placed there by God, told you it was the right thing to do.
- AI will never know what that feels like.

ACTION (How could we live this out?)

1. Do something only a human can do.

- This week, I want you to intentionally do something that no machine could ever truly replicate.
    - Write a handwritten note to someone you care about. Have a face-to-face conversation where you really listen. Create something (a drawing, a song, a poem, anything).
    - Something that requires you to be present, to be vulnerable, and to put a piece of yourself into it.
- Before you do it, ask yourself, "Could a machine do this just as well?"
    - If the answer is yes, go deeper.

2. Pray like you're already known.

- This week, pick one moment each day and just say something honest to God.
    - Not polished. Not long. Just real. "I'm struggling with this." "I don't feel like much today." "I don't know what to say, but I'm here." That's it.
    - If that feels too open-ended, start even simpler.
        - Before you check your phone in the morning, just say one sentence. It doesn't have to be pretty.
- And if you want to take it further, write down what you said.
    - By the end of the week, you'll have a record of seven honest moments with God.
- The more you show up honestly, the smaller the gap gets between knowing God sees you and actually living like He does.

3. Tell someone why they're irreplaceable.

- I want you to find one person this week and tell them specifically why they matter to you.
    - A real, specific word that only you could give them, because you know them and you chose to show up.
    - Maybe it's a text. Maybe it's a conversation at lunch. Maybe it's something you've been thinking about someone for a long time and never said out loud.
- It might feel a little awkward.
    - That's okay. Saying something real to someone always costs a little something. That's exactly what makes it different from what a machine can do.
- If that feels like a big step, start smaller.
    - Tell someone in your small group tonight who that person is. Just say the name out loud. Because a decision you said out loud to someone else is a lot harder to quietly forget by the end of the week.

1. That's what image-bearers do. We don't just produce content. We show up for people.