Candlewood Church



DECEPTION: gods with cheap treats

October 25, 2026 | Glenn Garvin

BIG IDEA

The treat always matches the trick, but the hook is always the same.

SCRIPTURE FOCUS

> *"But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death."* **James 1:14-15 ESV**

Main texts: James 1:13-15; Ephesians 6:11; 2 Samuel 11:1-2; 1 Kings 19:4-8; Ezekiel 18:2-4, 20, 32; Genesis 3:4-5; 2 Kings 17:33; Daniel 4:30-34; Matthew 4:1-11

THIS WEEK IN A NUTSHELL

Tricks wouldn't be tricky without a trickster, and they wouldn't work at all if we weren't so willing to bite. The enemy doesn't need new tricks; he just needs the right bait. He studies us the way a fisherman studies the water, and he matches the treat to our desires, our wounds, and our seasons of life. Today's "new" spiritualities are the same Genesis 3 bait in flashy costumes. But the trickster isn't the only one fishing. Jesus calls us by name, with no hook at all.

THE SERIES SO FAR

- **Week 1** asked, "Who's talking?"
- **Week 2** asked, "Who are we worshiping?"

- **Week 3** showed us "Who we are in Christ."
- **Week 4** asks, "What's the bait, and how do we stop biting?"

THE MESSAGE

Satan starts earlier than we think.
And he always knows what bait to use.

The Bait Has to Match the Fish

Every fish behaves differently. Striped bass, largemouth, smallmouth, channel catfish, rainbow trout, crappie, carp, and bluegill: some like worms, some like smelly cheese balls, and others go for a specialized lure. Depth, water temperature, time of day, and location all make a difference. Trout bite early in the morning below Hoover Dam. Catfish are bottom feeders, so you let the line sink and move slowly along the lakebed.

The treat has to match the trick!

Satan isn't just a schemer; he's a conniver. He drops thoughts, questions, and ideas in tasty little morsels, like a Costco sampler. "Try this," he suggests. He doesn't offer the whole meal; he offers a taste, and the sample does the work.

One: The Bait Is Tailored

James describes temptation with a fishing word picture: we are "lured and enticed by [our] own desire" (James 1:14).

- **Epithumia** (desire): a longing or lust for what is forbidden.
- **Exelkō** (lured): to draw out or drag away; the pull of the line.
- **Deleazō** (enticed): from *delear*, "bait." Properly, to bait a hook or set a trap with bait; **to entice a victim into a moral trap, luring them in through their own selfish impulses.**

The enemy has methods.

> *"Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil."* **Ephesians 6:11 ESV**

- **Methodeia** (schemes): schemes, wiles, craftiness.

> *"...so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs."* **2 Corinthians 2:11 ESV**

- **Pleonekteō** (outwitted): to be taken advantage of.
- **Agnoeō** (ignorant): to be ignorant, to be unaware.
- **Noēma** (designs): thought, mind, purpose, design.

Satan has a plan and a purpose, but we don't have to be caught unaware. Even Jesus' closest friends were offered bait matched to each of them:

- **James and John:** status, the seats at Jesus' right and left (Mark 10:37).
- **Peter:** a kingdom without a cross (Matthew 16:22-23), and later safety by an enemy's fire (Luke 22:55-60).
- **All of them:** arguing over who was greatest at the Last Supper (Luke 22:24), and choosing comfort and sleep in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:40-41).
- **Judas:** money (John 12:6; Matthew 26:15), and maybe a better story he told himself.

Satan never asked Judas to stop loving Jesus.
He just offered him something he loved a little more.

But here's the hope: Jesus told Peter, "Satan demanded to have you... but I have prayed for you" (Luke 22:31-32). **Jesus knew the bait, and He prayed before the hook was set.**

Two: The Water Matters

What's happening around you, to you, and in you? A good fisherman knows that where and when you fish matters as much as what's on the hook.

1. **Time, place, and pace.** David stayed home "in the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle," and was on the roof "late one afternoon" (2 Samuel 11:1-2). Wrong place, wrong time, and too much time on his hands. Who set up the timing on this one?
2. **Season.** Elijah was exhausted, alone, and depressed **right after his greatest victory** (1 Kings 19:4). God's first answer wasn't a lecture; it was a nap and a meal, twice (1 Kings 19:5-8).
3. **Depth: old wounds and family lies.** God told Israel to stop quoting a proverb: "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge" (Ezekiel 18:2).

That proverb puts two hooks on one line: **fatalism** ("It's in my blood; why try?") and **family blame** ("It's not my fault"). God's answer: "The soul who sins shall die... **the son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father**" (Ezekiel 18:4, 20), and "Turn, and live" (18:32).

Families do pass down **real patterns and wounds**, but **not guilt or destiny**. Even Exodus 20:5-6 tilts toward mercy: God shows steadfast love "to thousands." And Christ "redeemed us from the curse... by becoming a curse for us" (Galatians 3:13).

Your family history is just a story,
not a life sentence.

Big emotions can be open doors. "Be angry and do not sin... give no opportunity [*topos*, a place to stand] to the devil" (Ephesians 4:26-27). Feelings aren't sins,

but unattended ones leave the door open. (See the Dig Deeper notes, "Leaving the Door Open.")

Three: Today's Bait Comes Promising Cheap Treats

Today's bait comes in flashy costumes: transhumanism, plant medicine, manifesting, and inhuman or even AI companionship. **It's not just an advisor; it's a relationship!** Underneath the costumes are the same promises the serpent made in the garden (Genesis 3:4-5), just in new wrappers:

- **Transhumanism: "You will not surely die."** The promise to engineer our way past death.
- **Spirit guides: "Your eyes will be opened."** Plant-medicine and transcendental "encounters," and **AI oracles**. They whisper promises that require contractual agreements, inviting people to "go to zero" without considering the true cost of the "deal."
- **Manifesting: "You will be like God."** "You can speak your needs into existence."
- **Inhuman relationships.** Whether it's an alchemist 500 years ago trying to grow a little man in a jar (a homunculus), or an AI companion that never disagrees, never needs anything, and never truly knows you (Carey Nieuwhof, *AI and the Future Church*, chapter 14). (See the Dig Deeper notes, "The Little Man in the Jar.")
- **Even in the church.** We are still chasing other gods on the side.

> *"And though they worshiped the LORD, they continued to follow their own gods according to the religious customs of the nations from which they came."* **2 Kings 17:33 NLT**

The Nebuchadnezzar contagion. Pastor Ben Sosa passed along an article by Thaddeus Williams (WORLD, October 2026) about America's "existential crisis of meaning." It's built on the words of a king who gave himself all the credit:

> *"As he looked out across the city, he said, 'Look at this great city of Babylon! By my own mighty power, I have built this beautiful city as my royal residence to display my majestic splendor.'"* **Daniel 4:30 NLT**

"The more self-exalting and sovereign we pretend to be, the worse things go for us and those around us."

Thaddeus Williams

Even ol' Nebuchadnezzar came around after losing his mind!

> *"After this time had passed, I, Nebuchadnezzar, looked up to heaven. My sanity returned, and I praised and worshiped the Most High and honored the one who lives forever. His rule is everlasting, and his kingdom is eternal."* **Daniel 4:34 NLT**

(See the Dig Deeper notes, "The Nebuchadnezzar Contagion.")

"A predictable God isn't God. It's a product."
(Carey Nieuwhof)

The Fisherman With No Hook

This isn't a formula that guarantees life will go perfectly. It's about hope, and about making good choices, one at a time.

Jesus fishes too. "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19). But He hides no hook in a treat. He calls us out loud, by name.

Same enemy, same script, different ending. In the wilderness, Jesus was offered bread when He was starving, a spectacle at the temple, and all the kingdoms of the world. He answered every treat with "It is written," and then He closed the door: "Be gone, Satan!" (Matthew 4:1-11).

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The bait changes, but the hook never does.
- We are "lured and enticed" by our own desires; the enemy simply knows which ones to bait.
- The water matters: our timing, our season, and our family story all shape what we bite.
- Today's "new" spirituality is Genesis 3 in a costume; whether it's a king, an alchemist, or an algorithm, the bait is still "you will be like God."
- Jesus knows our bait, prays for us before the hook is set, and calls us by name.

THREE TAKE-HOME PRACTICES

1. **Name your bait.** What gets me every time? Status, comfort, approval, control, escape?
2. **Know your water: what's happening to me and in me.** When am I most vulnerable? Tired, lonely, angry, grieving, bored, late at night?
3. **Answer with the Word and close the door.** "It is written," then end the conversation.

REFLECTION

Name your bait

- What bait do I bite most easily: approval, comfort, control, escape, status, or "just one more"?
- Where has a small "sample" turned into a habit I never planned on?

Know your water

- When am I most vulnerable: tired, lonely, angry, grieving, bored, or late at night?
- Is there a "rooftop" in my life, a place or time where I keep ending up and shouldn't?

Old lies and family patterns

- Is there a fear or lie I picked up as a child that I'm still carrying?
- What family pattern have I believed I can't escape? What would it mean to treat my history as "a story, not a sentence"?

Open doors

- Is there anger, grief, or unforgiveness I've carried past "sundown"?

The Fisherman with no hook

- When Jesus calls my name, what is He inviting me to follow Him into this week?
- What Scripture do I need ready, so I can answer the bait the way Jesus did: "It is written"?

Satan offers cheap samples.
Jesus offers Himself.

DIG DEEPER: Don't give a place or space

Strong emotions aren't sins. But when we leave them unattended, nurse them, or refuse to bring them to God, they can become an open door. Paul has a word for that door, and the Bible, along with a long line of wise Christians, has a lot to say about it.

"Don't Give Him Room"

"Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil." (Ephesians 4:26-27 ESV)

The word translated "opportunity" (or "foothold") is *topos*: a place, a space, a spot to stand. Paul isn't saying anger *is* the devil. **He's quoting Psalm 4:4 ("Be angry, and do not sin"**) and saying the anger itself isn't the problem; the problem is anger we hold onto past sundown. Kept overnight, it becomes floor space we've handed to the enemy.

Look at what surrounds that verse. Paul is talking about lying, stealing, harsh words, and finally: "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you" (Ephesians 4:31-32). The open door in Ephesians 4 isn't just inside one heart; it's inside a church family.

Emotions Are Not the Enemy

Before we talk about open doors, it's important to say this clearly: God made us with emotions, and Jesus felt them all.

- Jesus wept at His friend's tomb (John 11:35).
- He looked at the religious leaders "with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart" (Mark 3:5). Anger and grief at the same time, without sin.
- He said, "Now is my soul troubled" (John 12:27), and in Gethsemane, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death" (Matthew 26:38).
- Nearly a third of the Psalms are laments: honest, raw prayers of grief, fear, and anger, prayed *to* God.

So the goal isn't to feel less. It's to bring what we feel to God before it festers.

Where Scripture Shows the Door Swinging Open

Anger. Before Cain killed his brother, God warned him: "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen?... sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it" (Genesis 4:6-7). Thousands of years before Paul, God used the same picture: something waiting at the door.

Unforgiveness. Paul urges the Corinthians to forgive a man who had hurt them, "so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs" (2 Corinthians 2:10-11). Paul calls unforgiveness one of Satan's schemes.

Grief. In the same passage, Paul worries that the repentant man "may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow" (2 Corinthians 2:7). Grief isn't sin, but crushing,

isolated grief can be exploited. Paul tells believers to grieve, but "not grieve as others do who have no hope" (1 Thessalonians 4:13).
Bitterness. "See to it that... no 'root of bitterness' springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled" (Hebrews 12:15). Bitterness is anger that has put down roots.
Anxiety. Peter writes, "casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you," and in the very next breath, "Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion" (1 Peter 5:7-8). Anxiety we carry alone and the prowling enemy sit side by side.
Fear. Saul, terrified of the Philistine army, went to a medium (1 Samuel 28:5-7). Peter, afraid by a fire in the dark, denied Jesus three times (Luke 22:54-60).
Envy. "If you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts... This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic" (James 3:14-15).
Shame. The first response to the first sin was hiding: "I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself" (Genesis 3:10).
Exhaustion and hunger. Esau traded his birthright for a bowl of stew because he was famished (Genesis 25:29-34). Satan came to Jesus after forty days without food (Matthew 4:2). Elijah, worn out after his greatest victory, asked God to take his life (1 Kings 19:4). Recovery groups often use the acronym **HALT**: don't make decisions when you're Hungry, Angry, Lonely, or Tired. It isn't Scripture, but Scripture keeps proving it true.

Christians Have Been Talking About This for Centuries

- **Evagrius Ponticus** (4th century), one of the early desert monks, taught that the enemy works through eight kinds of tempting "thoughts" (*logismoi*). His list included **anger** and **sadness** alongside greed, lust, and pride. His teaching later shaped the church's list of the "seven deadly sins."
- **Thomas Brooks**, a Puritan pastor, wrote *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices* (1652), a whole book built on 2 Corinthians 2:11: "we are not ignorant of his designs."
- **C.S. Lewis**, in *The Screwtape Letters*, describes what the senior demon calls "the law of Undulation": we all go through emotional peaks and troughs, and the tempter loves to work in the troughs.
- **Peter Scazzero**, in *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, puts it bluntly: "It's impossible to be spiritually mature while remaining emotionally immature."
- **Dan Allender and Tremper Longman**, in *The Cry of the Soul*, show how our emotions, brought honestly to God, reveal what's really going on in our hearts.

Word of Balance

Not every strong feeling is spiritual warfare. Most of the time, anger is anger and grief is grief: God-given signals that something matters. If you're grieving right now, hear this clearly: your grief is not sin, and it is not a sign of weak faith. Jesus wept too.

The door opens when an emotion is **left unattended** (we never deal with it), **harbored** (we rehearse it and feed it), or **unsubmitted** (we refuse to bring it to God). That's when what God made to *protect* us becomes something the enemy can *use*.

Closing the Door

1. **Name it.** The psalmists didn't hide their feelings from God; they prayed them. "Pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us" (Psalm 62:8).
2. **Don't let the sun go down on it.** Bring it to God the same day, before it takes root.
3. **Forgive, even when it's hard.** Forgiveness slams the door Satan tries hardest to keep open (2 Corinthians 2:10-11; Ephesians 4:32).
4. **Don't isolate.** Grief, fear, and anxiety grow in the dark. Tell someone you trust.
5. **Care for your body.** When Elijah fell apart, God's first answer wasn't a lecture. It was a nap and a meal, twice (1 Kings 19:5-8).
6. **Get help when you need it.** A pastor, a Life Group, or a Christian counselor can be one of God's best tools for closing old doors.

Questions for Reflection

- Which emotion tends to leave my door open: anger, grief, fear, envy, shame, or exhaustion?
- Is there something I've been carrying past "sundown" for days, months, or years?
- Is there someone I need to forgive, so the enemy doesn't get the upper hand?
- Who could I talk to this week about what I'm carrying?

Blue Letter Bible Links

- Ephesians 4 (with Strong's)
- *topos*, place, opportunity (G5117)
- *noēma*, designs, schemes (G3540)
- Genesis 4 (with Strong's)

For Further Reading

- Thomas Brooks, *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*
- C.S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (Letter 8, "the law of Undulation")
- Peter Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*
- Dan Allender and Tremper Longman, *The Cry of the Soul*
- Evagrius Ponticus, *The Praktikos* (on the eight tempting thoughts)



DIG DEEPER: The Nebuchadnezzar contagion

A summary of Thaddeus Williams, "The Nebuchadnezzar Contagion," WORLD Opinions, October 20, 2026. Williams teaches systematic theology at Biola University's Talbot School of Theology.

The Symptoms
Williams begins with how many people feel right now.

- About **one in three Americans** say they're in an "existential crisis of meaning." Among Gen Z, it's **more than half**.
- **37%** say their whole lives feel out of their control. Among Gen Z, it's **52%**.

He calls this "the Nebuchadnezzar contagion."

The King Who Built His Own Kingdom
"Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty?" (Daniel 4:30 ESV)
Nebuchadnezzar stood on his palace roof, looked over the greatest city in the world, and gave himself the credit. Before the words left his mouth, his kingdom was taken from him, and he lived in the fields like an animal until he learned "that the Most High rules the kingdom of men" (Daniel 4:31-32).

Williams says we've built our own little Babylons. He cites Barna research:

- **84%** of Americans believe enjoying yourself is the highest goal in life.
- **86%** say you should pursue whatever you desire most.
- **91%** say the way to find yourself is to look within yourself.

He quotes novelist David Foster Wallace, who described us as "lords of our tiny skull-sized kingdoms, alone at the center of all creation."

Self-Rule Doesn't Deliver
If being our own god worked, we'd be the happiest people in history. Williams points out that we aren't.

- The American Psychological Association has declared a **"National Mental Health Crisis."**
- Chapman University's Survey of American Fears found that **more than half of Americans live in chronic fear**.
- CDC data showed a **400% rise in antidepressant use** from 1988 to 2011.
- From 1960 to about 2000, Williams writes, divorce doubled, teen suicide tripled, violent crime quadrupled, the prison population quintupled, and births outside of marriage sextupled.

His conclusion: **we've been running "an experiment in self-sovereignty"** for more than 60 years in America, for about 2,500 years since Nebuchadnezzar, and really all the way back to Eden. The results are in. "The more self-exalting and sovereign we pretend to be, the worse things go for us and those around us."

The Cure: Look Up
"At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him who lives forever, for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation." (Daniel 4:34 ESV)

Notice the order. The king **looked up**, and then his **reason returned**. Sanity came back when he stopped being the center of his own universe.
Williams's point is freeing: **because God really is sovereign, we don't have to pretend to be.** The weight of running the universe was never ours to carry.

Not Despair, but an Invitation
Williams doesn't end with hand-wringing. He calls Christians to "double down" on sharing the gospel. Our neighbors who feel meaningless and out of control don't need a better self-help plan; they need to hear that God is far better at running the universe than we are. We get to invite them to bow before "the King of the ages" (1 Timothy 1:17).

How This Connects to Sunday
- **Same bait, new wrapper.** "You will be like God" (Genesis 3:5) became "I built this by my mighty power" (Daniel 4:30), and today it's "look within" and "speak it into existence."
- **The treat matches the trick.** Self-rule promises control and meaning; Williams's numbers suggest it delivers anxiety and fear instead.
- **The water matters.** A king on a rooftop, with everything going his way, was exactly where pride took the bait. So was David (2 Samuel 11:2).
- **The Fisherman with no hook.** God humbled Nebuchadnezzar, but He also restored him. The God who "is able to humble" the proud (Daniel 4:37) is the same God who gave a broken king his mind, his honor, and his kingdom back (Daniel 4:36).

A Word of Balance
- **The statistics are Williams's citations,** and they show trends over the same period, not proof that one thing caused another. **Many factors drive anxiety, divorce, and crime. His argument is theological: these trends fit what Scripture says happens when we put ourselves on the throne.**
- **Anxiety and depression are not proof of pride.** Many faithful believers struggle with mental health, and medication and counseling can be good gifts from God. **The "contagion" here is the cultural belief that *I* am the center, not anyone's diagnosis.**

Questions for Reflection
- Where am I standing on my own "rooftop," taking credit for what God has given?
- What part of my life am I trying to control that only God can carry?
- Which "look within" messages have I absorbed without noticing?
- Who in my life feels lost or out of control and needs to hear that there is a King who is good at being King?

Read It Yourself
- Thaddeus Williams, "The Nebuchadnezzar Contagion," WORLD Opinions
- Daniel 4 (ESV, Blue Letter Bible)

- David Foster Wallace, *This Is Water* (2005 Kenyon College commencement address)



DIG DEEPER: The Little Man in the Jar

For anyone who has seen "homunculus" videos, memes, or characters online and wondered what's real.

If you've spent time on TikTok, YouTube, or anime forums, you may have run into the word **homunculus** (ho-MUNK-yoo-lus): a tiny, creepy, man-made creature, usually growing in an egg or a jar. It sounds ancient and occult. The real story is stranger, and a lot less powerful, than the internet makes it look.

What Is a Homunculus?

Homunculus is Latin for "little man." The idea is that a human being could be **made**, not born, by someone with the right recipe, without God and without a mother.
It is **not** an ancient god, and there was never a temple or religion built around it. It comes from **alchemy**, the mix of early chemistry, philosophy, and magic that flourished in Europe in the 1500s and 1600s.

Where the Idea Came From

The alchemists (1500s). The most famous "recipe" appears in a book called *De natura rerum* ("On the Nature of Things," 1537), traditionally credited to the Swiss physician Paracelsus, although scholars debate whether he actually wrote it. It describes sealing human material in a flask, keeping it warm in a pile of horse manure for 40 days, and then "feeding" it for 40 weeks until it became a tiny, intelligent person. Nobody ever produced one, because it can't be done.

Folklore cousins. Medieval legends about the mandrake root (said to look like a little person and scream when pulled up) and the Jewish legend of the **golem** (a figure shaped from clay and brought to life) are related ideas, but separate traditions.

Literature. In Goethe's play *Faust, Part Two* (1832), a scholar creates a homunculus in a glass vial. It's a story about the human urge to play God, written as a warning.

Bad science. In 1694, Nicolaas Hartsoeker published a now-famous drawing of a tiny, curled-up man inside a sperm cell. Some early scientists believed every person already existed in miniature, just waiting to grow. Microscopes and better biology put that idea to rest.

Good science. Today, "homunculus" is also a real term in neuroscience. The "cortical homunculus" is a map of how much of the brain is devoted to each

part of the body, drawn as a funny-looking person with giant hands and lips. No magic involved.

Why It's Showing Up Now

The "Russian homunculus" videos. Between 2015 and 2018, a Russian YouTube channel posted about 20 videos claiming to show how to grow a homunculus inside an egg. They're creepy, low-budget, and completely fake: special effects and props, filmed by a theater actor. The first video has over 22 million views, and debunking videos followed almost immediately. They've lived on for years as a horror meme.

Cartoons and anime. An episode of Adult Swim's *Smiling Friends* (2024) referenced the videos and sparked a new wave of interest. In the hit anime *Fullmetal Alchemist*, the villains are called Homunculi, and each one is named after one of the seven deadly sins: Pride, Greed, Envy, Lust, Gluttony, Sloth, and Wrath.

Film. A dark comedy titled *Homunculus*, with occult twists in the plot, premiered at a New York film festival in May 2026.

The short answer: **this isn't an ancient cult coming back.** It's an old alchemical fantasy that the internet turned into horror content.

So Why Talk About It?

Because underneath the creepy videos is a very old idea, and it's the same bait we've been talking about all series.
"You will be like God." (Genesis 3:5)

The homunculus is the dream of **creating life on our own terms**: a person made to order, in a jar, who exists for us. That dream didn't die with the alchemists. Today it shows up in labs and in code: the promise to engineer our way past death, and AI "companions" that are built to be whatever we want them to be.

Five hundred years ago, alchemists tried to grow a little man in a jar. Today we're trying to code one. Same bait.

Even the fiction seems to know how this ends. In *Fullmetal Alchemist*, every attempt to create or restore human life costs the alchemists dearly, and the creatures they make are named after sins. In *Faust*, the homunculus can't survive outside its glass. The stories keep telling the truth: when we try to take God's place as Creator, it never goes the way we planned.

What the Bible Says About Life

- **Only God gives life.** "Then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature" (Genesis 2:7).

- **You weren't made in a jar; you were knit together.** "For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:13-14).
- **God doesn't need us to make life; we need Him to have it.** "He himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything" (Acts 17:25).
- **People bear God's image, not ours.** "So God created man in his own image" (Genesis 1:27). A person can't be manufactured to serve us, because every person already belongs to God.
- **The swap.** Paul describes people who "exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator" (Romans 1:25).

A Word of Balance

- **Not every creepy video is demonic.** Most homunculus content is horror entertainment and internet weirdness. Knowing the truth behind it takes away its power to scare us.
- **Fiction isn't the problem; trying it is.** Watching a story about alchemy isn't the same as practicing it. But if curiosity turns into actually attempting rituals or "experiments," that's a door worth closing (Deuteronomy 18:10-12).
- **Science isn't the enemy.** Medicine, research, and technology can be good gifts from God. The line is crossed when we stop treating life as a gift and start treating it as a product we control.

Questions for Reflection

- Why do you think creepy, "forbidden" content is so fascinating to watch?
- Where do you see the "make it yourself, on your own terms" promise in our culture today?
- How does Psalm 139 change the way you see yourself, as someone *knit together* rather than *manufactured*?
- If an AI companion could be anything you wanted, what would you lose by choosing it over real people?

Sources and Further Reading

- Know Your Meme: Russian Homunculus Videos
- Lower East Side Film Festival: *Homunculus* (2026)
- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust, Part Two* (1832)
- Psalm 139 (ESV, Blue Letter Bible)