

Body Image
Growth Group Discussion Guide
Embodied, Week 1

Intro questions (spend some time with these, as they will help ease us into our new series)

- How do you feel about the fact that our church is considering **gender identity** in a sermon series? Excited? Nervous? Angry? Skeptical? Curious? Other? Try to answer in one sentence or less.
- Pastor Josh described three things we need when we wrestle with hard questions about how to live (referencing Andrew Walker's book):
 - A source of authority
 - A source of knowledge
 - A trustworthy source
- Where do most people in your sphere look to find these things?
- To what degree do you think that God—speaking through the Bible—satisfies all of these criteria?

1. Read Genesis 1:1-31 (take turns amongst your group members), then discuss the following.

- What do you notice about God's observations as he creates? (See vv. 4, 10, 18, 21, 25, and 31). What does this show us about God?
- What is unique about God's observation after he creates humans (v. 31)? Why does this matter?
- What sets humans apart from every other creature on earth? What have you heard or interpreted this distinction to mean in the past?
- As Josh pointed out in Sunday's sermon, the Hebrew word translated "image" is most often translated as "idol" in the Old Testament Scriptures. It refers to "A visible representation of an invisible deity" (Sprinkle).
 - In what way does this observation help us to understand what it means to be made in God's image?
- As we heard on Sunday, whatever else *image* means, it highlights our "physical embodiment." With this fact in mind, why is it important that the author of Genesis tells us, in v. 27, "in the image of God he created them, *male and female* he created them?"
- In discussing this verse, commentator Phyllis Bird says that biological sex is an "essential datum in any attempt to define the human being." Do you agree or disagree? Why?
- Read Colossians 1:15 and Hebrews 1:3.
 - What light, if any, do these comments about Jesus shed on the idea of our being made in God's image, male and female?
 - Why does it matter that God took on a sexed body and lived a thoroughly human life?

2. The big idea in Sunday's sermon was the following: Your male or female body is a good and essential part of how you represent God in the world.

- How do you feel about this statement?
- What do you think that it looks like to embrace your God-given, sexed body with confidence, as an essential part of bearing God's image?
- What questions or challenges does this idea raise for you?
- As we wrestle with hard ideas like this one, most of us tend to default to either *truth* or *grace*—both of which are vital.
 - Which way do you tend to lean?
 - How can we help one another hold both dynamics in tension throughout this series?

3. Prayer

- If this discussion has raised any pain or struggle, take time to pray accordingly.
- Take some time to share and pray about other needs and concerns that may exist among your group.