

THE ARTISAN SOUL

CREATING YOUR LIFE INTO A WORK OF ART

Session 4: Image – Bringing Our Ideas Into Reality

March 1-7, 2020

Since part of our creative responsibility is to move from imagination to image, we need to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ and allow our imagination to once again be the playground of God. ~Erwin McManus, The Artisan Soul p. 119

Hang Out (30 Minutes)

1. Ice Breaker: Remember, everyone has the right to pass on any question. (*Pick one*)
 - What is one food idea that you brought into visible reality? How did it work out?
 - What is something that you purchased that did not live up to your expectations? Explain.

Watch the Video (24 Minutes)

Watch the video if necessary. If everyone viewed the sermon before the meeting, add this time to your discussion.

Discuss (30 Minutes)

It's okay if you don't get to every question. Leaders, guide the group to the questions you think will be most helpful. ***If you wish to do the suggested prayer, please do question #6.***

1. What from Sunday's sermon stood out to you?
2. How does this quote from Erwin McManus help you to understand that you are a creative being? *We artisans are created to transform the invisible into the visible. The creative act is a manifestation of imagination. Everything that exists began as an idea; everything we define as reality began as nothing more than imagination. Reality exists because it was first imagined. The Artisan Soul, p. 93*
3. Talk about the ramifications of believing that God is an all-powerful and all-knowing artisan who creates and directs all things and brings into visible reality the ideas that first arise in the mind of God. Be at peace that this discussion may raise more questions than answers. Often faithfully following Jesus is more about living the questions than having the answers. After reading the three statements below, help everyone look up and then have someone read the following passages: **Jeremiah 1:4-5; Psalm 139:13-16; Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12, 2:8-10; John 15:16.**

Which of the following statements do you think are supported by any of these passages?

- Each of us was an idea in the mind of God long before we were physically conceived and born.
- Before the creation of the world, God predestined who would come to trust in Jesus.
- God has a plan for our lives that includes everything we will think, say, and do.

Explain why each of these statements either gives you comfort, leaves you neutral, or disturbs you?

4. Read the quote by Erwin McManus at the top of the first page and then help everyone look up and have someone read 2 Corinthians 10:3-5.
 - Some have described our thoughts that are harmful or contrary to God's purpose for us as *stinkin' thinkin'*. What is some *stinkin' thinkin'* that you sometimes dwell on too much?
 - If you were to *take captive every thought and make it obedient to Christ*, what would you do to begin to accomplish this?
 - If everything that exists began as an idea in the imagination of someone's mind, talk about the importance of having our ideas shaped by God.
5. Explain why you agree or disagree with this statement: As followers of Jesus, the invisible ideas we chose to bring into visible reality should be those that unleash God's love to others.
6. What is one idea that you have to serve, invite, or give to meet the hopes or hurts of another person? Include in your discussion how you could help bring someone's idea into reality.

Bonus material

Watch and discuss "Create Beauty" by Erwin McManus that is related to Chapter 4 in *The Artisan Soul*. Leaders – this video is posted on your resources website.

Possible Next Steps:

~Taken in part from *The Artisan Soul*, pages 194-195 by Erwin McManus

- Transform the idea you shared in #6 into visible reality.
- Write a manifesto declaring the kind of world you will create.
- Make a list of ideas in your imagination that would make the world better if they became a reality.
- Make a list of what you could do to make your life a closer reflection of the life you long to live.
- Ask some friends which of your ideas they think you have the most potential to make happen.
- Look to see if there are others who share your passion.
- Find a place to serve - find someone or some organization you can serve that moves you closer to living out that passion.
- **Plan a service opportunity to serve together as a life group.**
- Start small and dream big. Make the small changes you can to move your life into an expression of your passions and longings. If you want to be a writer, write articles and share them with your friends. If you want to be a designer, make something for your kids or as Christmas gifts for friends. If you want to do humanitarian work, go on a short-term project to serve the underserved, either overseas or in your community. If you want a new career, begin to volunteer during your spare time to learn a new trade. If you want to change the world, start by making small changes in your world.

Pray (5 Minutes)

Bridging off of # 6 above, pray for the ideas that each of you have to serve, invite, or give to meet the hopes or hurts of another person. Go around the circle and pray for yourself, asking God to help you bring your idea into reality. When you have finished praying for yourself, end with "**Lord, in your mercy,**" then everyone responds by saying, "**Hear our prayer.**" In this way, you all are agreeing in prayer (Matthew 18:19) and making each other's prayers your own. In the weeks to come, encourage each other in the ideas to serve, invite, and give that you each have.