

VOICES

LEARNING FROM OTHERS

VOICES V

In our 2020 VOICES series, we welcome four guests from the larger body of Christ to open God's Word and bring perspective we need. This year's speakers include Jackie Hill Perry, Mark Sayers, Jon Tyson, and John Mark Comer.

1: THE IMAGO DEI / JACKIE HILL PERRY

Read the text: Genesis 1:26-27 and 3:1-7

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made.

He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman

saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

This week, Jackie Hill Perry helped us think about what it means to look vertically to God for our identity and to understand that we are made in His image. Rather than looking horizontally to the tangible things around us to know who we are, we look by faith to God to define us. This gives us purpose, knowing that we were created to love and enjoy God. Because we were made in His likeness, all of our lives are owed to Him. It also means that we matter and have innate dignity. And even though we have believed the same lie Eve believed, that we could become like God without God, Jesus, the image of the invisible God, came to bring restoration and allow us to once again bear God's image. So, we look to Him for forgiveness and as we behold Him, we will be transformed from "one degree of glory to another."

Discussion Questions:

These questions are written for DNA groups, but you can use in any setting, including missional communities. Because they were written for the intimacy of DNA friendships, you may need to adjust for larger groups.

1. Jackie Hill Perry shared that it's much easier for us to look to the tangible world around us to understand our identity rather than to God because looking to God requires faith. What are the tangible things or people you most often look to for your identity or to define you? How do you do that? Share tangibly what that looks like for you.
2. What happened to Eve that marred her bearing the image of God? Deception! She believed the lie that the serpent told her; that she would be like God, knowing good and evil, if

she ate the fruit. Instead, she became unlike God, knowing evil as a sickness in herself. We have the same essential problem. We fail to be like God because we too have believed lies about who we are and who we are called to be. And what's dangerous about these lies is that they often sound similar to the truth. The enemy speaks subtle distortions of the Gospel. What Gospel distortions, or lies, do you often believe about who you are and who God made you to be?

3. The answer is for us to look to God. We must look to God for our identity. And to see God, we must look to Jesus, the image of the invisible God. As we behold Jesus, we with “unveiled faces will be transformed from one degree of glory to another.” Practically, how do you look at Jesus? What intentional rhythms will help you do this? How are you prioritizing those rhythms? How do need to grow in this and how can your community help you?
4. If all humans have been made in the image of God, then every single person bears His image. Who do you struggle to sometimes see as an image bearer of God? How does Jesus view them and how does that change how you view them? Be honest with each other and God and ask Him to help you see others the way He sees them.