

SIX-SESSION DISCUSSION GUIDE

Image-Bearers in a Digital Age

A theological framework
for artificial intelligence

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READ / DISCUSS / PUT INTO PRACTICE

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Faithful in a Digital Age

Six conversations to accompany Image-Bearers in a Digital Age

A simple guide for small groups, Sunday school classes, or a few friends reading Image-Bearers in a Digital Age together. Bring a Bible, the book, and something to write with. No technical background or AI account is needed.

Each session has two handout pages, with space to write beneath the questions and exercises.

A simple rhythm

Allow about an hour: 5 minutes to reconnect, 10 minutes with Scripture and the reading, 25 minutes for discussion, 15 minutes for the activity, and 5 minutes to name a next step and pray. Read the assigned chapters beforehand. Groups wanting a slower pace can take two meetings per session.

For the person leading

Invite honest questions and allow people to pass or write privately. Ask what in Scripture or the reading supports an answer. Use the fictional situations provided; no one needs to disclose personal struggles or another person's private information. The goal is thoughtful, faithful practice, not agreement about every possible use of AI.

The six conversations

1. Who are we? — Prologue and chapters 1–2
2. Power and responsibility — Chapters 3–5; Appendix A
3. Connection and fellowship — Chapter 6; Appendix C
4. Creating and working wisely — Chapters 7–8; Appendix B
5. Serving the church — Chapters 9–10
6. Hope and faithful engagement — Chapter 11 and the conclusion

Who are we?

READ BEFOREHAND

Prologue and chapters 1–2

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 1:26–28; James 3:9; Colossians 1:15

Begin with God and the people who bear his image. Human worth is not something we earn by being clever, useful, or productive.

Discuss

1. What stayed with you from the prologue? How does its picture of increasingly powerful tools help frame the rest of the book?

2. What do these passages say about God’s image? Why does James connect it with the way we speak about other people?

3. The book considers who we are, our relationships, and our calling. How do these aspects of the image of God fit together?

4. If a machine can do a task better than you can, what changes about your work? What does not change about your worth?

Who are we?

Try it together

Imagine a friend says, ‘If AI can do everything I’m good at, what am I worth?’ Together, compose a short response grounded in the passages you read. Offer more than reassurance that people will always outperform machines at something.

This week

Notice one person you are tempted to value mainly for what they produce. Choose a concrete way to treat that person as someone who bears God’s image.

My next step

Prayer and further reflections

Power and responsibility

READ BEFOREHAND

Chapters 3–5; Appendix A

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 1:28; Deuteronomy 20:19–20; Romans 3:23

A tool can extend our abilities without taking over our responsibility. The book's Fruit Tree Principle asks us to consider what we preserve or destroy in pursuing a goal.

Discuss

1. What became clearer about how AI works? What questions do you still have?

2. Read the instruction about fruit trees in its setting. How does the book apply it to technology? What might we lose while trying to become more efficient?

3. How could the same AI tool amplify either care for a neighbor or a desire for control?

4. When AI produces a harmful result, what responsibilities remain with the people who choose, approve, and use it?

Power and responsibility

Try it together

A volunteer wants AI to answer the spiritual questions sent to a church inbox. Use Appendix A to evaluate this specific proposal. Name the people affected, the benefit being sought, and the human work that must remain. Decide whether it needs a green, yellow, or red light, and explain why.

This week

Choose one actual use of technology in your week. Write down its purpose, one possible cost, and who remains accountable for the result.

My next step

Prayer and further reflections

Connection and fellowship

READ BEFOREHAND

Chapter 6; Appendix C

SCRIPTURE

James 3:9 (revisit the image-of-God foundation)

Christian fellowship involves shared life, vulnerability, and care. Consider whether our habits help us participate in that life or make it easier to withdraw.

Discuss

1. What distinguishes the fellowship described in the chapter from an interaction that simply feels comforting?

2. When has technology helped you be present to someone? When has it become a way to avoid the effort of relationship?

3. How might a feed shaped around our preferences affect our willingness to listen to someone unlike us?

4. How could a church respond kindly to loneliness while helping people move toward mutual human relationships?

Connection and fellowship

Try it together

Imagine someone who has stopped attending a small group because a chatbot feels easier to talk to. Plan a response that listens before advising. Name one invitation and one practical way the group could make participation easier, including for someone who cannot readily leave home.

This week

Choose one practice from Appendix C: Scripture reading, meditation, prayer, embodied presence, service, or rest. Make a specific plan that fits your circumstances and involves your own attention.

My next step

Prayer and further reflections

Creating and working wisely

READ BEFOREHAND

Chapters 7–8; Appendix B

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 1:26–28; 1 Samuel 16:12

Consider the purpose behind creative work and the people affected by workplace decisions. Use the three D's: Dignity, Development, and Due.

Discuss

1. How does the book distinguish a creative product from the intention, experience, and purpose of the person making it?

2. If AI helps produce a Bible lesson or illustration, who is responsible for checking what it communicates? What would you need to verify?

3. Where might AI help people develop their gifts? Where might it remove the practice through which those gifts grow?

4. What would fair treatment look like for workers affected by an AI project? Who should have a voice in that decision?

Creating and working wisely

Try it together

A team proposes using AI to draft most customer replies. Apply the three D's: Does the plan respect people's dignity? How will workers develop their skills? What fair treatment is due to workers and customers? Write one change you would require before proceeding, using Appendix B for further questions.

This week

Choose a task you use, or could use, AI for. Identify one skill you intend to keep practicing yourself and one outcome you remain responsible for checking.

My next step

Prayer and further reflections

Serving the church

READ BEFOREHAND

Chapters 9–10

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 1:26–28; James 3:9 (revisit the course’s foundation)

Evaluate ministry tools by the ministry they serve. The class’s three P’s provide a starting point: Purpose, Presence, and Principles.

Discuss

1. Purpose: How would this use of AI serve the Great Commandment or the Great Commission?

2. Presence: Would it make more room for human care, or take the place of that care?

3. Principles: Which biblical convictions and commitments of your church should shape the decision?

4. Where do these chapters draw boundaries around teaching and pastoral care? What would those boundaries mean in an ordinary week of ministry?

Serving the church

Try it together

A family has a new baby, and the church wants to organize three weeks of meals. Make two columns: tasks a tool might help organize and acts of care people must offer themselves. Identify what information is needed, what should stay private, and who will personally follow up with the family.

This week

Write one ‘green light’ and one ‘red line’ for a ministry you know. Bring them to an appropriate leader as discussion starters, rather than treating them as a finished church policy.

My next step

Prayer and further reflections

Hope and faithful engagement

READ BEFOREHAND

Chapter 11 and the conclusion

SCRIPTURE

Revelation 13:11–15, read in context alongside chapter 11

Bring fears and hopes about technology into conversation with Christian hope. End by naming a faithful next step that does not depend on predicting the future.

Discuss

1. Which hopes or fears about AI have changed as you have read the book?

2. How does the chapter help you distinguish the biblical text from speculation about a particular technology? Where should we hold our conclusions carefully?

3. What responsibilities do Christians share even when they disagree about the future of AI or the interpretation of end-times passages?

4. Which idea from the book most needs to become a practice in your life, work, or church?

Hope and faithful engagement

Try it together

Complete this closing reflection: ‘Even though AI ... I trust that ... Therefore I will ...’ Give reasons from Scripture and the book. Invite people to share if they wish, then pray for wisdom and faithfulness in the commitments they have named.

This week

Choose one commitment and a realistic date to revisit it. Ask someone in the group to check in with you about what you are learning.

My next step

Prayer and further reflections
