NOTES

SERIES TAKEAWAY

We are God's masterpiece, created by grace, gifted by His Spirit and called to make good things that serve others and bring Him glory.

EVERY NATION
BRISBANE

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MADE TO MAKE — God's Masterpiece, Created for Good Works

OPENING PRAYER

Father, thank You for creating each of us with intention and purpose. As we open Your Word, help us understand who we are in Christ and recognise the gifts, abilities and opportunities You have entrusted to us. Give us fresh eyes to see how our everyday work, creativity and relationships can reflect Your goodness and serve the people around us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

OPENING QUESTION (OPTIONAL)

Think about something you've experienced, encountered or been part of that someone created which left a lasting impression on you. What made it so meaningful?

This could be a song, a performance, a meal, a space, an experience or even something someone did for you.

WORD

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.
For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.
- Ephesians 2:8–10 (ESV)

Companion Reading:
Exodus 31:1–11

MAIN REFLECTION POINTS

1. Grace gives us our identity before our work.
Paul begins by reminding us that salvation is a gift of God's grace, not something we earn through our performance. This order matters. We don't work to become accepted by God; we work because we have already been accepted through Christ. Our identity is received before it is expressed. In a world that constantly measures our worth through achievement, productivity and recognition, the Gospel reminds us that our value is established by God's grace, not our accomplishments. This also changes how we approach creativity and excellence. We don't create to prove our worth, earn applause or establish our identity. We create from the security of knowing who we already are in Christ.

2. We are God's workmanship, created with intention.
Verse 10 describes us as God's workmanship. The Greek word poiēma carries the idea of something crafted or made, giving us the language of a masterpiece. We are not accidents or afterthoughts; we are God's intentional creation, being renewed in Christ. This is beautifully illustrated in Exodus 31, where God calls Bezalel by name and fills him with His Spirit, giving him the ability to design and construct beautiful things for the Tabernacle. One of Scripture's earliest explicit descriptions of someone being filled with the Spirit of God is of a craftsman being equipped to create. This challenges the way we sometimes separate the spiritual from the creative. Creativity, craftsmanship, design and skill are not less spiritual than preaching, teaching or leading worship. God is interested in what we make, how we make it and the heart with which we make it. Excellence can become a pursuit of recognition, but it can also become an expression of worship.

MAIN REFLECTION POINTS

3. We are created to make good things that serve others.
Paul doesn't stop at telling us who we are; he tells us what we are created for. We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works that He has prepared beforehand. Our gifts and abilities are not simply for personal advancement or recognition. They are opportunities to bring something good into the world around us. Not everyone is called to be an artist, musician or designer, but everyone is called to good works. The teacher, entrepreneur, parent, mechanic, nurse, student, tradesperson and creative all have opportunities to use their abilities to make something better. Sometimes that means creating a beautiful work of art; other times it means creating a welcoming environment, solving a problem, building a healthy team, strengthening a relationship or making someone feel seen and valued. Our creativity becomes an expression of God's goodness when it serves others. We are not simply created to make things; we are created to make a difference.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Identity before achievement: Many of us measure our worth by what we accomplish and how others respond to us. What does it mean to know that we are God's workmanship before we have achieved or produced anything? How might this change the way we approach our work and creativity?

2. Creativity and the Spirit: In Exodus 31, Bezalel is filled with the Spirit of God to create and craft beautiful things. What does this reveal about how God views creativity, skill and craftsmanship? Have you ever considered your everyday abilities and professional skills as things God can use spiritually?

3. Excellence and surrender: Excellence can be an expression of worship, but it can also become a pursuit of recognition, control or applause. Where do you think that tension shows up in our lives? How can we pursue excellence while remaining surrendered to God?

4. Beyond the arts: We often associate creativity with artists, musicians, designers and performers. How might creativity also be expressed through hospitality, parenting, problem-solving, business, teaching or the way we lead people? What gifts or abilities do you have that you might not ordinarily consider creative?

5. Creating environments that impact others: Think about the environments you help create at home, work, church or in your community. How might your presence, gifts and actions help others feel welcomed, valued, encouraged or encounter something of God's goodness?

6. Made to make: What is one good work God might be inviting you to create, develop or contribute in your current season? What would it look like to use what He has placed in your hands to make a meaningful difference in someone else's life?

ACTION POINTS FOR LIFE

This week, put the message into practice through three simple steps:

- Recognise: Identify three gifts, skills or abilities God has entrusted to you. Include things you might not normally consider spiritual or creative.
- Create: Identify one opportunity in your family, workplace, church or neighbourhood where you can use those gifts to make something better for someone else.
- Release: Take a tangible step towards it. Don't wait for the perfect opportunity, the perfect platform or someone else's permission. Start with what God has already placed in your hands.

A challenge for the week: Don't just think about what you are gifted to do. Think about what your gifts could make possible for someone else.

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, thank You that we are saved by grace and that our identity is found in Jesus, not in what we achieve. Thank You that we are Your workmanship, created with intention and purpose. Holy Spirit, give us wisdom, creativity and skill, just as You equipped Bezalel. Help us recognise the gifts You have placed within us and develop them with excellence, humility and surrender.

Forgive us where we have pursued recognition over service, allowed the fear of failure to hold us back, or overlooked the opportunities You have placed before us. Teach us to create things that bring beauty, goodness and life to the people around us. Help us build environments where people feel welcomed, valued and encounter something of Your goodness.

For those who have yet to receive Your grace, may they encounter Jesus and discover the new life You offer. May our work become worship, our creativity become service and our lives become an expression of Your goodness in the world.
In Jesus' name, Amen.