
CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH

Kansas City, Missouri

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL • SIX DAYS

By Design:

*The Nature God Gave You, the Nurture You
Choose*

PSALM 139:14 (NIV)

*“I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are
wonderful, I know that full well.”*

Based on the sermon by

Dr. Stan Archie

Senior Pastor & Co-Founder

WEEK OF OCTOBER 4, 2026

Expository. Biblically grounded. Transforming every day.

DAY ONE

WHOSE BIDDING? SUCCESS BY THE DESIGNER'S MEASURE

SCRIPTURE READING

JOB 38:4–7 (NIV)

“Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation? Tell me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone—while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?”

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

Sunday Dr. Archie opened from a tender place. These last months have carried real loss for him and for this church—a pastor gone home to be with the Lord, a longtime friend and member gone too—and grief has a way of asking the question we usually postpone: when my days are finished, what will it have meant to be successful? Not successful in general. Successful at the one thing I was created for.

Then he described a job none of us has ever held. You are hired, congratulated, and told to walk around the office, see what you feel like doing, and the company will arrange itself to support it. No company survives that way, and we know it. Yet we quietly assume the church works like that—that God has no agenda of His own, and that the fellowship exists to support whatever each of us arrived wanting. Dr. Archie put it plainly: would we be doing God’s bidding, or would God be doing ours?

The Lord’s answer to Job is the answer to that assumption. Job had suffered honestly and argued honestly, and God did not rebuke his pain. He asked where Job was standing when the foundation was laid. The question is not a put-down; it is a location. The dimensions were marked, the cornerstone was set, and the morning stars were already singing before any of us held an opinion. We arrived inside a purpose already under way. God did more than hire us into it. He created and designed us for it.

“We did not pick the tools. We did not pick the agenda. We did not pick the objective. Our responsibility is to carry out His purpose, using the tools He gave us, for the reason He gave them to us.”

— DR. STAN ARCHIE

That is why leaders cannot be asked to edit the design. Moses stood between the Lord and a people who wanted to eat what they wanted and go where they pleased, and the day he acted on his own it cost him dearly (Numbers 20:12). The one who stands between the Owner and the people has no authority to overrule the Owner. When this church’s leaders answer a request with “here is what the Word says,” they are not guarding a preference. They are declining to sign what is not theirs to sign.

So the measure of a successful life is simpler than we make it: did I carry out His purpose, with the tools He gave me, for the reason He gave them? This week, before you ask God to bless a plan, ask whose plan it is.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Space is given below each question for journaling or small-group notes.

- 1.** *When I picture a successful life, what am I actually measuring—and how much of that picture came from God’s stated purpose rather than from my own ambitions or comparisons?*

- 2.** *Where have I treated God, or this church, as support staff for an agenda I had already chosen? What was I hoping He would simply sign off on?*

- 3.** *Is there a place where I have been asking a leader—or Scripture itself—to make an exception for me? What would it look like to receive “here is what the Word says” as care rather than as someone’s preference?*

- 4.** *What one plan, decision, or request will I bring before God this week and honestly ask, “Is this Your bidding or mine?”—and am I willing to release it if the answer is mine?*

DAY TWO

DON'T JAILBREAK THE DESIGN: THE HARDWARE GOD SIGNED

SCRIPTURE READING

PSALM 139:13–14 (NIV)

“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.”

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

Sunday Dr. Archie reached for something most of us carry in a pocket. A phone ships with a design, and people have learned to “jailbreak” it—to go inside and alter it so it will accept software it was never built to run. But the day something fails, the manufacturer will not touch it: you tampered with the design, and the warranty is void. Our nature, he said, is the hardware: the way God created us for His intended purpose, settled before any of us was consulted.

David sings about that hardware with real care for the order of things. “You created my inmost being” comes first—the mind, the temperament, everything about a person that no surgeon can lay on a table. Then, “you knit me together.” The unseen self was authored and the body was fitted to it; neither was improvised. And David’s response is praise, not resignation. “Your works are wonderful” is a statement about the Maker’s reputation: when God’s name is on the work, the work is sound.

Dr. Archie told us about an odd little tool that came with the fireplace in his house—not quite a screwdriver, not quite anything else, made to turn exactly one knob. You could force it to pry or to drive a screw. But the more a tool is used for something else, the less fit it is for the one thing only it can do. And habit rewrites memory: many of us grew up in homes where a butter knife had tightened so many screws that nobody remembered it was made for butter.

“The more you use a tool for something else, the less fit it is for its designed purpose. Use it that way long enough, and it will even start to think that is what it was made for.”

— DR. STAN ARCHIE

That is the quiet danger. Misuse rarely feels like rebellion. It feels like being useful. A gift for words gets spent winning arguments. Strength gets spent on intimidation. A tender heart gets spent keeping everyone pleased. After enough years we introduce ourselves by the misuse and call it our personality—while the knob only we could turn sits unturned.

Accepting God’s design, then, is not passivity. It is the decision to stop prying with something made for finer work and to ask the Designer what it was for. Somewhere this week there is a task shaped exactly like you.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Space is given below each question for journaling or small-group notes.

1. *Can I say with David, “I am fearfully and wonderfully made,” and mean it about my own temperament, mind, and body—or is there a part of how God made me that I have been quietly arguing with Him about?*

2. *Where have I been used—or used myself—as a “butter knife for screws” for so long that I have mistaken the misuse for who I am?*

3. *What is one gift or capacity God built into me that is being spent on something other than His purpose? What would using it as designed look like in my home, my work, or this church?*

4. *What do I need to stop forcing this week, and what will I ask God to show me about the specific thing He designed me to do?*

DAY THREE

WRITTEN IN HIS BOOK: DESIGNED FOR THIS MOMENT

SCRIPTURE READING

PSALM 139:15–16 (NIV)

“My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.”

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

Sunday Dr. Archie kept reading in Psalm 139 and slowed down where David moves from the unseen self to the frame—the body, formed in the secret place and never hidden from God. Nothing about it was left to chance: our height, our features, whether we would be born male or female. Then he drew out the part we tend to skim. God was attending not only to who we would be, but to when and where we would come into existence.

Paul said the same to the philosophers in Athens: God “marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands” (Acts 17:26). The generation you belong to and the address you started from were not scenery. They were part of the design. That is hard to believe when the beginning was hard, and Dr. Archie did not step around it. Some of us had a rough childhood, he said—and God was not surprised. That does not make what happened good, and it does not make God its author. It means He formed you with what it would take to come through that particular place, and that His hands were on you the whole time.

“There is nothing about you that was by accident. God was not surprised by where you were born or by what you came through. He knew you needed to be here at this time—so He designed you for this.”

— DR. STAN ARCHIE

The verse reaches the other end of life too: “all the days ordained for me were written in your book.” Dr. Archie spoke honestly about the deaths he has walked through lately. He was not expecting them. God was. There is a strange mercy in not being handed that page in advance—had he known, he told us, he probably would have gotten in the way. Grief is real, and the psalm does not hurry it. But it refuses the conclusion that any life ended outside God’s knowledge, or a day too early for His book.

Then he turned to the days we are living in: the political climate, the pull of social media, deception that passes for normal, evil that no longer shocks anyone. It is tempting to believe we were born at the wrong time—that faithfulness would have been easier in another decade. The psalm will not allow it. God knew this would be the hour and placed you in it on purpose. As Mordecai asked Esther, who knows but that you have come to your position “for such a time as this” (Esther 4:14)?

You are not misplaced. Walk into this week as someone assigned to it.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Space is given below each question for journaling or small-group notes.

- 1.** *Do I actually believe that my birthplace, my family, and my generation were part of God's design—or do I privately treat some part of my story as an accident He has had to work around?*

- 2.** *What hard chapter of my life have I never let God speak into, because I assumed He was absent from it? What might change if I believed He formed me to come through it?*

- 3.** *Where am I living as though I was born at the wrong time—resenting this culture, this season, or this stage of life instead of asking what I was placed here to do?*

- 4.** *If my days are already written in His book, what is one specific thing I will do this week with the time I have been given, for the purpose I was designed for?*

DAY FOUR

CHECK THE SIGNATURE: THE SOFTWARE YOU CHOOSE

SCRIPTURE READING

ROMANS 6:12–13 (NIV)

“Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness.”

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

Sunday Dr. Archie drew the line that makes sense of everything else. Nature is the hardware, and God gave us no options there. Nurture is the software—our capacity to be influenced and shaped toward right or wrong—and there He gave us every option. Free will does not rewrite what we are. It decides what we allow to program us, and therefore whose instrument we become.

Then he held up a mirror. Years ago word went around that something was wrong with the beef, and people changed their diet overnight. This past month brought a string of food recalls, and most of us first saw them in a social media post—and that was enough. Nobody asked for a second opinion. We believed it, and we acted on it. God, he said, has had His warnings posted for a long time, telling us what will contaminate us and tear us down, and we go on feeding ourselves with the very things He flagged. If sin were food, we would be dangerously overfed. If the Word were food, most of us would be malnourished.

“You saw one post about a recall and said, I am not touching it. God has had His posts up for a long time, telling you what will contaminate you. If it does not have His signature on it, do not download it.”

— DR. STAN ARCHIE

Paul’s language assumes exactly this freedom. “Do not let sin reign” only makes sense if we are able to let it. And notice what sin is after—not new equipment, but ours. The same mouth blesses or cuts. The same mind plans generosity or revenge. Dr. Archie gave us the picture: a car is not evil, but it is the same car whether it carries a family to worship or carries someone away from a robbery. The hardware never changed. The driver’s loyalty did.

This goes back to the garden. The serpent offered no new world, only a new source—knowledge without God’s signature on it, taken because the man and the woman suspected they were missing something. Dr. Archie called it a virus in the fruit, and it has been passed down ever since. We repeat it whenever we open the Bible, dislike what we find, and go looking for a voice that will say otherwise—not to understand better, but to be nurtured by something else.

Some cars will not run on the wrong fuel, and that is a kindness. Before you take anything in this week—a feed, a friendship, a piece of advice, a habit—check for the signature.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Space is given below each question for journaling or small-group notes.

- 1.** *If someone reviewed everything that “nurtured” me over the last seven days—what I watched, read, scrolled, and listened to—whose signature would be on most of it?*

- 2.** *What warning from God’s Word have I known for a long time and still not acted on, even though I change my behavior quickly for far less reliable sources? Why do I trust those voices more readily?*

- 3.** *Which part of myself—my words, my eyes, my money, my time, my influence—has most recently been offered as an instrument of something other than righteousness? What would offering that same part to God look like?*

- 4.** *What is one source of influence I will remove this week, and one God-signed source I will put in its place?*

DAY FIVE

ONE IMAGE, TWO DESIGNS: MALE AND FEMALE HE CREATED THEM

SCRIPTURE READING

GENESIS 1:27–28, 31 (NIV)

“So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.’ ... God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.”

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

Sunday Dr. Archie took us back to the first page and to a question people still argue over: are men made in God’s image, or are women? Wrong question, he said. Humanity is the category God made in His image. Male and female are the two forms of that one category—what he called the archetypes, the originals everything after is patterned on. Neither is a rough draft of the other, and it takes both to show what God intended to display.

Drawing on his years of clinical work, he then described how each design carries a built-in pull that never switches off and has to be managed for a lifetime. Speaking of men and women in general, not of any one person, he gave us two sets of initials. For men, ACE: aggression, control, and ego—the drive to pursue, to protect, and to provide. For women, INE: intuition, nurturing, and esteem—the ability to read what has not been said, to care for a life that cannot yet speak, and a sense of worth carried on the inside. None of these is sin, and none is holiness. Each is equipment, and equipment serves whichever master it is offered to.

Much of the friction between us comes from assuming the other person was issued our tools. Dr. Archie described the wife who says, “If you don’t know why I’m upset, I’m not going to tell you,” and the husband who honestly cannot find it. He described grandsons who call with a one-line request and granddaughters who tell the whole afternoon—not wandering, but painting the picture of an experience. One is hearing a problem to fix; the other is sharing a life to enter. When we grade one design by the other’s strengths, we call it foolish or dramatic. God called the arrangement “very good.”

“Are men made in God’s image, or are women? Wrong question. Humans are made in God’s image, and He made two forms of that one category. You are in my life because you have what I do not have.”

— DR. STAN ARCHIE

This reaches past marriage. Among brothers and sisters in the body of Christ, no one carries the whole image alone. Difference is provision. Still, a design is not a guide. Intuition the Word has not informed is only guessing; drive that is not surrendered to God is only appetite. The tool needs its Maker’s instruction.

This week, thank God out loud for one difference that has been irritating you.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Space is given below each question for journaling or small-group notes.

1. *When I think about the differences between men and women, is my first instinct gratitude or frustration? Where did I learn to see those differences the way I do?*

2. *Which trait in my own design—drive, the need to control, ego, intuition, the urge to nurture, my sense of worth—most often runs unmanaged? What does it tend to damage when it does?*

3. *Who in my life—a spouse, a relative, a co-worker, a brother or sister in this church—have I been judging for not having “my tool”? What does that person see or carry that I do not?*

4. *In what one conversation this week will I stop assuming the other person should already know, or stop rushing to the fix, and instead say plainly what I need or listen to the whole picture?*

DAY SIX

FIXING WHAT YOU DID NOT BREAK: STRENGTH IN THE PATTERN OF CHRIST

SCRIPTURE READING

EPHESIANS 5:25–27 (NIV)

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.”

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

Sunday Dr. Archie told a story from a family trip years ago. They had driven through a wildlife park, and at the end was a walkway beside the big cats. The children were out of the car and running. He looked at the fence, judged how high a lion can jump, and gave one instruction: get back in the car. He was not being controlling, he explained; he knew he could not protect them there. Then he turned it on us. When God says do not go back to that place, He is not trying to control you. He is trying to protect you.

That was his window into strength rightly used—to protect, to provide, and above all to repair. A man’s life, he said, is mostly spent fixing and cleaning up what he did not break, and the worst thing we can teach a son is that he is responsible only for his own messes. “I didn’t do it” may be true, and it is beside the point.

“Jesus had one job: to fix things He did not break. He spent His life doing it, and He was great at it. If you want to understand marriage, look at Christ and the church.”

— DR. STAN ARCHIE

Paul shows what that looks like at full strength: love “just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.” Christ found a bride who was not ready-made, and He did not wait for her to improve. He gave Himself, washed her with the Word, and is making her radiant. That is the pattern for every strength God has placed in any of us. Power in this kingdom is for someone else’s repair. And no one can do it disconnected. As Dr. Archie warned the men, if you disconnect from God, you have nothing to offer her.

The same passage answers another need he named. He spoke of esteem—how much of our worth rides on how we feel we are presenting ourselves, and how we can repeat a kind sentence to the mirror until we believe it, true or not. Ephesians offers something sturdier than self-talk. The church does not make herself radiant; she is presented that way by the One who gave Himself for her. Your worth is not what you talk yourself into. It is what He paid.

Which is why what we feed on matters. Dr. Archie was blunt: entertainment built on dysfunction, on any screen, trains our “algorithm” and wears down our capacity to be who God designed. Next time we take up what the culture is doing to that design. This week, find one thing you did not break, and help fix it.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Space is given below each question for journaling or small-group notes.

- 1.** *Where have I heard one of God's boundaries as control rather than protection? What "fence" has He been telling me to step back from?*

- 2.** *How do I usually respond to a mess I did not make—at home, at work, in this church? Do I say "I didn't do it" and keep walking, and what does that reveal about how I understand my strength?*

- 3.** *What is my sense of worth actually resting on right now—how I feel I am presenting myself, what I tell myself, the appreciation of others? What would change if it rested on what Christ gave for me?*

- 4.** *What is one thing I did not break that God is asking me to help repair this week—and what have I been feeding on that I need to turn off so I am fit to do it?*

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, we come to You as people who did not lay the foundation. The dimensions were marked and the morning stars were singing long before we had a plan, and still we have walked into Your house looking around for what we felt like doing. Forgive us for asking You to do our bidding. Teach us to measure a life the way You do.

Thank You that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. You authored what no one can see in us and fitted our frame to it, and Your name is on the work. Where we have pried with what You made for finer things—where we have been misused so long that we forgot what we were for—show us again the purpose only we can serve.

Lord, You wrote our days before one of them came to be. You were not surprised by where we started or by what we came through, and You are not surprised by the graves we have stood beside in this season. Comfort those among us who are grieving. And give us courage for the hour You chose for us, because You designed us for this.

We confess that we have been careless about what we take in. We have believed lesser voices quickly and Yours slowly. We have fed on what You warned us about and gone hungry for Your Word. Today we offer every part of ourselves to You as instruments of righteousness. Let nothing program us that does not carry Your signature.

Thank You for making us male and female—one image in two designs—and for calling it very good. Heal the places where we have used our differences against each other. Govern our drive, our need to control, and our pride; govern our intuition, our care, and our sense of worth, until every one of them serves You.

And Lord Jesus, thank You for fixing what You did not break. You gave Yourself for a church that was not ready-made, and You are making us radiant. Keep us connected to You, for apart from You we have nothing to offer anyone. Send us into this week to protect, to provide, and to repair—and make us ready for what You will teach us next.

In the mighty name of Jesus, Amen.