

“Made In the Image of God”
“Know What You Believe” — Part 6
Genesis 1:27

We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. In union with Adam, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God, and under His wrath. Only through God’s saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. Genesis 1:27

1. Who are we as human beings?

- We are more than our bodies, yet we seem bound to them.
- We long for *significance*, and yet we are specks.

When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? Psalm 8:3-4

“We are such insignificant creatures on a minor planet of a very average star in the outer suburbs of one of a hundred thousand million galaxies. So it is difficult to believe in a God that would even care about us or even notice our existence.”
Stephen Hawking

You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet—O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! Psalm 8:5-9

- Humanity also has a moral dimension.

We human beings are a mystery to ourselves. We are rational and irrational, civilized and savage, capable of deep friendship and murderous hostility, free and in bondage, the pinnacle of creation and its greatest danger.
We are Rembrandt and Hitler—Ruth and Jezebel.
Daniel Migliore

Implications:

- To find the answer to who we are, we must consult the Creator!
- The Word of God gives us the best answer found anywhere.

2. What is the source of human dignity and significance?

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them...God saw all He had made, and it was very good... Genesis 1:27, 31

Implications:

- Only human beings are created in the image of God.

- Human beings must be defined in terms of their *relationship* to God, as the image of God.
- Man is part of the natural world, yet in some sense, above it.
- The *material mode of being* was, in God's sight, **very good!**

3. What does it mean to be created in the image of God?

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness... Genesis 1:26

Likeness suggests that we are in some sense to mirror God.

- We are rational beings.
- We are *moral* beings.
- We are social beings.
- We are *artistic* beings.
- We are spiritual beings.
- All of these qualities point to our *uniqueness* as human beings, and reflect the personal nature of God.

Implications:

- The image of God refers to something a human is rather than something a human has or does.
- All other relationships are to be regulated by this one over-arching reality—we are made for relationship with God.

God blesses:

God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

Genesis 1:28

God commands:

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the Lord God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

Genesis 2:15-17

"God speaks to us in words of blessing and command. Like a father, God loves us and has authority over us at the same time. We were created by God to receive His love, and we were created by God to submit to His authority.

And our response will result in either life or death."

Evangelical Convictions (page 73)

Implications continued:

- Nature is not man's slave to be exploited.
- Man is a *steward* of the natural world.
- Man rules under God's authority.
- Because all human beings are created in the image of God, they ought to be *honored* appropriately.
- All human life—at whatever stage of development, from conception to death; at whatever socio-economic status, and whatever level of intellectual capability—is sacred.

- There is nothing more valuable in all of creation than a human life.

4. What is the significance of Adam and Eve?

- Every nation of men was made from one man.

From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. "For in him we live and move and have our being..." Acts 17:26-28

- Male and female in God's image is complete.

The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." Genesis 2:18

Implications:

- Gendered creation points to the essential relational nature of human beings.
- The Genesis account assumes the equal value of men and women. Each is created in the image of God.
- The gendered creation reflects the divine command to be fruitful and multiply.
- Procreation, in the context of marriage, is part of the *goodness* of God's design for human life.
- The culmination of the story of creation, God's declaration and Jesus' affirmation of the same in Matthew 19:3-9, defines God's design for marriage.

"Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate." Matthew 19:4-6

Something to think about:

Do you think that there are more intelligent, more Godlike creatures anywhere else in the universe? What does the fact that Jesus became a man rather than some other kind of creature, say about the importance of human beings in God's sight?