

“A Critical Examination of the Biblical Teaching on the Image of God,  
and its Implications for Christian Living”

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
Doctor of Ministry

Submitted by  
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## ABSTRACT

### CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

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The purpose of this thesis is to provide a biblical understanding of what it means to be human. The purpose and intent of God in creating man in His own image is explored. How being made in the image of God impacts one's life and purpose is also considered. In this process, the effects of sin on the image of God, how man attempts to compensate for sin's damage, and how man expresses the image of God as a result of sin are discussed. Finally, the ways Christ demonstrates that He is the exact representation of the divine nature, the work of Christ in restoring the soul, and how churches can more effectively minister to people by being intentional in the area of restoring the image of God are presented.

Abstract length: 130 words.

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## Chapter 1: Discovering the Value of Being Made in the God's Image

**Introduction.** For over two decades, the pastoral ministry of the student has focused upon what Ephesians 4 says the work of a pastor/teacher is supposed be: equipping the saints for the work of ministry. As such, two questions have repeatedly been asked and answered. First, what is the work of the ministry; and second, what is the best way to equip the saints? While various programs and methods have been attempted to address these questions, they have without exception, targeted outcomes of behavior rather than addressing the whole person. They have also been very good at helping individuals achieve certain goals in behavior and attitudes while seldom expressing why such attitudes and behaviors were expected.

In the student's pursuit of a more perfect equipping method he enrolled in the Doctor of Ministry program of Liberty Theological Seminary. The very first doctoral seminar in which he participated was very enlightening. In that seminar, Growth and Development of the Contemporary Minister, Dr. Ron Hawkins discussed the concept of people being made for the purpose of bearing God's image. The "ministry" for which people were to be equipped was not a ministry to one another, but a service to God. And the best way to equip people to serve God was to enable them to bear His image accurately and faithfully.

Since that time the student has spent many hours making personal observations of the lives of others as well as reading the works of scholars, theologians, psychologists, and laypersons regarding the soul and its restoration. This thesis project is a result of that work and reveals his findings. It will also present a new approach to "equipping the saints" that can be used for God's glory in any church.

**Statement of the Problem.** In the development of every human life the question arises in the mind, “Why am I here?” Contemporary American society attempts to answer that question with the hopeless, hapless, and fatalistic answer of evolution. From natural selection and the survival of the fittest, individuals are to believe the propaganda of atheism, that there is no purpose, there is no reason. And when looking around at the condition of society and culture, they may well conclude there is no hope.

But evolution is not the only answer. In fact, it is not even a true answer. The creation account of Genesis 1 and 2 gives a very clear account of why man exists. Chapter 3 of Genesis explains what has gone wrong with humanity; and the rest of Scripture relates the struggle of regaining the original intended condition and purpose of man.

This thesis will explore the question of how recovering man’s created state will affect his relationship with God and others in everyday life. In doing so other questions will be asked and considered, such as:

- What was man’s created state like?
- What effect has sin had upon man’s condition?
- How can the created state be restored?
- What will the restored condition of man be like?
- How will that be expressed?
- How can people help one another in this restoration process?

In addressing these issues, unless otherwise noted, the terms “soul”, “breath of Life”, and “Image of God” will be used synonymously.

**Statement of Limitations.** Because the concepts related to the image of God are so vast and literally affect every aspect of being human, the following limitations have been placed on this thesis:

First, the thesis will consider the above mentioned issues in general terms of “normal” humanity. Issues of mental and physical disability will not be addressed. Though very real and of deep impact to those affected by such, and their families, the variety of disabilities is too vast to be addressed in this thesis. Also, the approaches for coping with, rehabilitating, or otherwise treating these conditions are so varied and at times even controversial that addressing each of them would prove unwieldy. While it should be understood that all deficiencies in the human creature are the result of original sin, and its impact of marring the image of God, it must also be made clear that such deficiencies are not necessarily the result of sin in that particular individual. Jesus made this clear in His encounter with the blind man in John chapter 9. Furthermore, certain disabilities can serve to highlight aspects of the image of God in a way not found among so-called normal people. For instance, a person with Down Syndrome often possesses and exhibits an unconditional, indiscriminating love toward others, thus displaying a very important ingredient in the community aspect of the image of God.

By contrast, issues of giftedness will likewise not be considered in this thesis. While some individuals have demonstrated greater than normal cognitive skills, or are endowed with greater creativity, or in some other way are considered gifted, to seek to develop all individuals to those levels is impractical. At the same time, however, these individuals should not be allowed to use such giftedness as an excuse for not addressing deficiencies in other areas.

Additionally, issues of maturity will not be addressed in depth. Unless otherwise noted, it is assumed that expressions of the image of God are in adults rather than children or teens. Certain aspects of the image of God, such as cognition, develop naturally, to a certain degree as a person matures. Other aspects, such as creativity, are refined and expressed differently as they are influenced by learning, physical abilities, and other factors.

Second, this is primarily a study of the human condition. As such, though cultural nuances and the various disciplines such as fine art, medicine, or psychology may be referenced it is not the intent of this study to explore these matters in depth. When such disciplines are referenced, it will be from the perspective of a western mind. While the image of God is indeed expressed (whether accurately and appropriately or not) in the disciplines of all cultures, such expressions may not be understood or appreciated by those of cultures predominated by the western mind. Any misunderstandings or lack of appreciation for the accurate and faithful expression of the image of God in other cultures that may be detected in this thesis are thus unintentional and should be received as such.

Furthermore, the purpose of this thesis is not to discuss the myriad definitions of the nature of man, to offer a conclusive definition, nor to offer a new perspective. Rather it is in the scope and purpose of this thesis to consider the various aspects of the nature of man – that unique essence that will be referred to as the image of God – and how they relate to man's everyday life.

Finally, the intent of this study is to discover how God expresses Himself in the human creature. This will, hopefully, foster relationships and ministries that further enhance the image of God in man in a God-honoring way. It is not in the scope of this

thesis to provide an in-depth plan of ministry that can be universally applied in other settings (another program), but rather to lay out some principles and perspectives that others may use in developing their own ministries. Because each person carries a unique personality and life experience, each will respond differently to ministry approaches. Thus no single approach to restoring the image of God is adequate for ministering to all people. Rather, this thesis will present a philosophy of ministry that focuses on the goal of a restored image of God rather than simply moving an individual through a series of programs or classes.

**Theoretical Basis.** The theoretical basis for gaining an understanding of what it means to be created in the image of God spans the fields of anthropology, theology, sociology, psychology, and education. It also touches upon government, communications, and the fine arts. In fact, the nature of man, in both his fallen and in his redeemed state, is at the heart of every human endeavor and expression.

Mankind has been trying to understand himself from the earliest days of recorded history. In Psalm 8.4 David asks, “What is man that You take thought of him, and the son of man that You care for him?” and again in Psalm 144 is David’s question, “O Lord, what is man, that You take knowledge of him? Or the son of man, that You think of him?” Even centuries before David, Job asked – in 7.17 of the book bearing his name – “What is man that You magnify him, and that You are concerned about him?”

Sacred and secular thinkers from Plato to Piper, including the likes of Aristotle, Irenaeus, Augustine, Calvin, Kant, Kierkegaard, Niebuhr, Nouwen, and a host of others,<sup>1</sup> have considered the nature of man. These thinkers have used a variety of terms in their attempts to describe the essence of being human: soul, psyche, ego, will, etc. They have

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1. The bibliography includes a sampling of the work of these and others.

also wrestled with the ideas of dualism and reductionism, of whether man is a soul that inhabits a body, or a body that has a soul, or whether there is a soul at all – as if the distinctive essence of humanity were merely a biological or physiological product of man’s unique DNA. As mentioned in the statement of limitations, a precise definition of the image of God will not be offered. However, by looking at the various aspect of the image of God – the creativity, cognition, conscience, community, composition, culpability, and corporeality of man – a better understanding of man’s purpose, and how that purpose can be achieved, will be set forth.

**Statement of Methodology.** “He restores my soul.” This phrase is part of one of the best known passages of Scripture. But the 23<sup>d</sup> Psalm is so well “known” that it is too often not known at all. With these four words, “He restores my soul”, David proclaims the greatest truth of Scripture, acknowledges the greatest yearning of humanity, and testifies of the greatest work of God.

To say that the Lord “restores my soul” is to acknowledge that the soul is in need of restoration. One might ask, then, What is the soul?; What went wrong with the soul?; How is it that the Lord restores it?; What will the restored soul be like?; and How can man partner with God in the restoration process, if at all? Genesis 1.27 states, “God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”<sup>2</sup> Just what it means to be created in the image of God has been a matter of debate among theologians for centuries. The Genesis account also states in 2.7, “Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the

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2. All Scripture quotations are from the *New American Standard Bible*, Updated Edition (LaHabra, CA: Lockman Foundation, 1995).

breath of life; and man became a living being.” Again, the nature of the “breath of life” has long been discussed.

The Bible also teaches that mankind sinned by rebelling against God, bringing about death and marring the image of God in man. Jesus came to reconcile man to God, and in the process to “make all things new”, thus restoring the image of God in man – or at least making it possible so far as can be attained in this life.

Chapter Two. This study will look, first of all, at the soul. Taking the position that the soul is synonymous with the *imago Dei*, a thorough study of the Scriptures and scholarly works will provide an understanding of what it means to be created in the image of God, and to possess the breath of life.

This chapter will address the aspects of the image of God in its pristine, created, condition as the crown of the Lord’s creation. Such aspects include creativity, cognition, conscience, community, composition, culpability, and corporeality. The chapter also considers such ideas as the purpose and intention of God in creating man in His image. Several factors are indeed involved in being made in the image of God, and having the breath of life. For example, the issue of intentionality – creation indicates an intentional choice on the part of the Creator. There is also the issue of purpose – there must have been a reason, or multiple reasons, for that intentional choice.

Chapter Three. Chapter three will look at what went wrong with the soul/image of God. While the simple answer is sin, there are few who truly understand the nature of sin. In this chapter the effects of sin on the image of God will also be examined. Satan’s purpose in attempting to destroy the image of God will be explored, as will his continued

attempts to distort and corrupt the image of God. Furthermore, though man knows something is wrong, he is powerless to fix it. All attempts are futile.

All humans are bearers of the image of God. Yet, because this image is greatly distorted by sin, each person's expression of God's image to others is also distorted. The damaged image of God in man continues to express itself in ways contrary to God's intent. This only serves to compound the problem rather than resolve it. Evidence of this is seen in numerous ways, of which relationships being less than God intended, artistic expressions glorifying man rather than God, and worship of the creature rather than the Creator are but a few examples. Additionally, how the corrupted image of God, in each of its facets of creativity, cognition, conscience, community, composition, culpability, and corporeality is expressed in the lives of people will be considered.

Chapter Four. Both God and man strive to restore the image of God within a person. A non-Christian will seek to find "fulfillment" or restoration of the image of God in a variety of ways, none of which will result in restoration. False religions, psychology, and other human efforts fail to provide the means of restoration, or even to adequately address all facets of the image of God. The fourth chapter will return to Scripture for an understanding of how the Lord restores the soul. Again, the simple answer is the blood of Christ.

God Himself does provide the means of restoring His image within man through the work of Jesus Christ, who alone makes it possible through His redeeming work, and the Holy Spirit who provides the means, bringing about the actual restoration. However, if it were really that simple would not every person who accepts the work of Christ on the cross be immediately and completely restored? While God has decreed it to be so, it is

equally evident that working out this restoration – expressing it in one’s life – is a much more tedious task.

Chapter Five. This chapter deals with what the restored image of God in man will look like. It will also provide a picture of the goal to be pursued in ministering to others. Once the image of God in man has been restored, how it contrasts with what once was will be considered. How the aspects of the restored image of God (creativity, cognition, conscience, community, composition, culpability, and corporeality) reflect the Divine to contemporary culture will also be considered. How a person may express the image of God faithfully and accurately will be explored as well.

Chapter Six. This chapter will address how people can help one another, partnering with the Lord Himself, to restore the image of God/soul. Many churches and Christian leaders fail to help others in the restoration process as much as they potentially could. Sometimes the responsibility is abdicated to God alone for indeed the Scripture says, “*He restores my soul.*”

When churches or individuals do attempt to assist they often fail to help the other person understand the why and the how. Being told simply that “the Bible says so” is no different than the Pharisees demanding allegiance to the Law. Being told that one must follow another’s example eclipses the work of Christ and exacerbates the problem. Helping another individual come to terms with their own deficiencies and then demonstrating to them how Christ meets those needs, satisfies those yearnings, and fills those voids enables that person to find true fulfillment in Christ and in the life He intends for all to have – the abundant life.

Various approaches for accomplishing this task will be examined in this chapter, along with how the church can partner with the Lord in bringing about this restoration. Such ministry of the church will have the development and restoration of God's image within an individual as its foundation and focus rather than programs.

**Review of Literature.** As stated earlier, what it means to be created in the image of God has been a matter of debate among philosophers and theologians for centuries. This is verified by the writings of scholars, philosophers, and theologians throughout human history. The bibliography that follows contains works which, in the day of their original writing, span the centuries.

The literature may easily be divided into secular and sacred. This fact alone gives evidence that understanding the distinctiveness of humanity is not solely a Christian endeavor. Indeed, though not included in this particular study with any depth or consistency, every religion in the world, as well as the irreligious, has wrestled with this issue.

Of the secular, or non-Christian literature on the topic, this student has found the works of Michael Tomasello to be of particular interest. Through his scientific studies Tomasello concludes that there is indeed something unique about being human. On several occasions he seems so close to concluding that there is a soul or image of God in man that one wonders how he misses it. However, his conclusions invariably relate back to man's abilities to communicate—which of course are related to both cognitive and creative abilities, as well as the community aspect of the image of God. Even so, Tomasello does not seem to be opposed to the idea of God, he just hasn't seen Him in science, yet.

The works of many others in the secular realm tend to focus on identifying the essence of humanity without any mention of the Divine, or even a hint of His existence. They appear to be opposed to the very notion of God. It is not hard to see the truth of Romans 1.21 in their conclusions: For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

The Christian literature is very broad in its coverage of the soul. There are both Catholic and Protestant streams of thought, as well as both liberal and conservative streams. Some seem to be enamored with modern science and psychology, and try to make the biblical record fit into the current trend of these fields. This is somewhat evident as early as the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, but seems to be more evident in recent years. Others have very aptly allowed the Scriptures to be their basis of authority while giving consideration to the contributions of science. Thus will also be the approach of this thesis. Among the writers of this caliber are Mark McMinn, author of *Why Sin Matters*; Thomas Boston, who wrote *Human Nature in Its Fourfold State*; Henry Blackaby, author of *Created to be God's Friend*; J. I. Packer, who wrote both *Knowing God* and *Knowing Man*; A.W. Pink, whose more significant works include *The Doctrine of Human Depravity*, and R. C. Sproul, author of *The Soul's Quest for God*.

## Chapter Two: Created in the Image of God

**Intentionality.** When one reads the creation account of Genesis 1 and 2, it is obvious that the Lord is acting out of some sense of purpose and with a particular goal in mind. The creation of the planets and stars, of trees and flowers, of seas and mountains, is not a haphazard or coincidental stream of events. And when God created man, and placed into him His own image, it was not the result of chance. The creation of man was an intentional act of a sovereign God, and creating man in His image was especially so. Gregory of Nyssa wrote, “We become ourselves what we believe our beginning to be.”<sup>3</sup> Thus if one believes oneself to be created of God, one will behave as God’s creation, under His sovereignty, reflecting His glory. But if one believes oneself to be descended from monkeys one will live as unrestrained and filthy animals with no conscience or moral compass.

Intentionality is seen in the expression of God’s conscious choice. Man is not the result of random evolutionary processes. Man did not simply appear in the milieu of creatures, as though God were creating all the animals and suddenly man appeared on the scene. Though contemporary culture has accepted the theory of evolution as fact, along with its arbitrary twists and sporadic turns, Paul Jewett writes there is an “absolute incompatibility of Christian Faith and evolutionism as a world view that has no room for anything but random variation and chance.”<sup>4</sup> Even so, the intentionality of God in creating man in His image is diminished by such double talk as Jewett’s when he writes, “few can now doubt that something which can be called evolution has occurred with

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3. Gregory of Nyssa – *On Perfection* FC58:118.

4. Paul Jewett, *Who We Are: Our Dignity as Human* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996), 388.

respect to both animals and hominids . . . and we can see no compelling reason why God may not have determined on such a means to populate his world.”<sup>5</sup> The biblical account is very clear on the matter of God’s intentionality in Genesis 1.26, where the Lord speaks to Himself and decrees, “Let Us make Man in Our image. . .”<sup>6</sup>

Intentionality is also seen in the decree of God. When God declared, in Genesis 1.26, that He was going to make man there is the strong implication that He not only knew what a man was, but that He also knew what would be the outcome of this creative act. Knowing the outcome, the Lord chose to complete what He had conceived. In fact, the wisdom and sovereignty of God is clearly seen in the conception, design and actual formation of mankind.

Intentionality is seen in the means of creation. The word “created” in Genesis 1.27 is from the Hebrew word *bārā’* and is used in the Old Testament consistently in reference to a new activity.<sup>7</sup> While it may at times be synonymous with the idea of *creatio ex nihilo* (creation out of nothing) it is evident from the parallel passage in Genesis 2.7 that God did not create man “*ex nihilo*”, but rather from the dust of the ground. Even so, the term *bārā’* “conveys the idea of a special activity accomplished only by deity that results in newness or renewing”<sup>8</sup> As Paul Jewett states, “Furthermore, he did not simply command the dust to bring forth but stooped to gather it in His hands that

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5. Ibid. p.376.

6. Genesis 1.26.

7. Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 1 – 11:26 in New American Commentary*, volume 1a, edited by Ray Clendenen (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1996), 128.

8. Ibid.

He might form the man.”<sup>9</sup> Though Jewett’s imagination appears to have led him to overstate the concept, his basic idea is on target. “God’s creative work is highly anthropomorphic in this chapter. He is depicted as an artisan who sculpts the man and the beasts (vv. 7-8, 19) and a builder who constructs the woman (v. 22).”<sup>10</sup> According to Matthew Henry:

Of other creatures it is said that they were created and made; but of man that he was formed, which denotes a gradual process in the work with great accuracy and exactness. To express the creation of this new thing, he takes a new word, a word (some think) borrowed from the potter’s forming his vessel upon the wheel; for we are the clay, and God the potter.<sup>11</sup>

Intentionality is seen in the order of man’s creation. Closely related to the fact of man being created as a result of God’s conscious choice is the matter of when man was created. God could have chosen to end His creative acts on any of the previous five days, or even earlier on the sixth day. He was not constrained, through what had already been made, to create man. The fact that God chose to continue creating indicates that He has something in mind and desires to bring it about. One might even compare the creation order with the preparation Jesus speaks of in John 14.2 – 3. As He has now gone to prepare a place for those who are His, in the process of creation He was preparing a place for man to dwell and exercise his divine purpose in anticipation of that final creative act. In short, if God is going to make something tangible there will need to be a tangible place to put it. By creating everything else before He created man, the Lord insured that from the moment of creation mankind had everything necessary for survival and obedience, or

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9. Jewett, 28.

10. Matthew, 196.

11. Matthew Henry, vol. 1 Genesis to Ruth, Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible, (New York, NY: Fleming H. Revell Company, n.d.), 14.

as Peter writes in II Peter 2.3, “everything necessary for life and godliness”. His grace toward mankind assured an abundance of provision of all goodness and blessing God intended for man to have.

**Purpose.** With just a cursory reading of Scripture it is evident that God has a purpose, or reason, for everything He does. Ultimately, that purpose is to bring glory to Himself, but oftentimes there are intermediate purposes as well. Such is the case with the creation of man in the image of God. There are at least five purposes for which man was created.

**To bear the image of God.** The Lord clearly states in Genesis 1.26 that He is going to make man in His image. Without explaining what that means, the Lord has still given a glimpse into His purpose. That purpose is revealed further in the New Testament, where Paul writes, “Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly.”<sup>12</sup> Colossians 3.6 also speaks of man’s renewal in Christ as a renewing according to the image of the one who created him. More will be said about bearing the image of God in chapters 5 and 6.

**To have dominion.** In the Lord’s declaration of intent to make man (Genesis 1.26) He says, “and let them rule over . . . all the earth.” After man has been created, among the first things that the Lord instructs him to do is subdue the earth and rule over every living thing that moves upon it.<sup>13</sup> B. H. Carroll addresses the issue of man’s dominion over creation thus:

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12. I Corinthians 15.49.

13. Genesis 1.28.

Man was to range over all zones and inhabit all zones. The sea was to be his home as well as the land. The habitat of each beast or bird or fish was of narrow limit.

Man was endowed with wisdom to adapt himself to all climates, protect himself from all dangers, and surpass all barriers. There was given to him the spirit of intervention and exploration. He would climb mountains, descend into caves, navigate oceans, bridge rivers, cut canals through isthmuses. To subdue the earth was a vast commission which called out all of his reserve powers.<sup>14</sup>

According to J. Richard Middleton, “a virtual consensus has been building since the beginning of the twentieth century among Old Testament scholars concerning the meaning of the *imago Dei* in Genesis.”<sup>15</sup> The virtual consensus that Middleton speaks of is a recognition of the “royal flavor” of the creation account in Genesis 1. Man is seen as having a mandate for royal functions, such as ruling, subduing, and managing the lower creatures. This is not to say that God’s dominion and sovereignty are in any way diminished; only that God has delegated to man some measure of responsibility in order to fulfill His purpose in creating man. As Andreas Kostenberger writes, “By placing his image on the man and the woman and by setting them in a particular environment, therefore, God assigns to them the mandate of representative rule.”<sup>16</sup>

Eugene Merrill acknowledges the ancient Near Eastern (especially Mesopotamian) practice by conquering kings of erecting images of themselves in lands they brought under their control.<sup>17</sup> He further states that these images “were to be treated with the same respect the king himself would demand. To deface or remove an image

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14. B.H. Carroll, *Genesis to Ruth, vol. I, An Interpretation of the English Bible*, ed. J.B. Cranfill, (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1948; repr., Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1986), 63.

15. J. Richard Middleton, *The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2005), 25.

16. Andreas Kostenberger, *God, Marriage and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004) 33.

17. Eugene H. Merrill, *Everlasting Dominion: A Theology of the Old Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2006), 170.

would be interpreted as an act of rebellion against the sovereign.”<sup>18</sup> Merrill then concludes,

It is obvious that the nature of man (his being an image) was closely connected to his task (to rule). Just as the statue of a king was taken to be the king himself in terms of its representation, so mankind was to be understood as God insofar as he stands in the place of God. God’s rule over the earth and its subjugation to his dominion would be exercised through his image according to his good plan and pleasure.<sup>19</sup>

This dominion that man is to exercise is to be done in the manner in which God Himself exercises dominion—that is with love, grace, and attentiveness, not with selfishness, partiality, or indifference. Merrill further states:

With his fall into sin, man surrendered much—but not all—of his capacity to be the image of God. His reigning became now not one of willing compliance on the part of creation under his charge but an obedience predicated on man’s superior intelligence and resourcefulness.  
... Man’s role as suzerain remained intact, but his ability to enforce it was profoundly inhibited.<sup>20</sup>

Having dominion is essential to being created in the image of God. Nothing else in creation is worthy of ruling over the creation of God, other than Christ Himself. No other creature than man, and he bearing the image of God, could rule over the image of God in man. The exalted place that man often considers himself to have over the rest of creation is indeed legitimate, for man has both the ability and responsibility to rule over the rest of creation. As with everything related to bearing God’s image, being His emissaries to creation, man needs to exercise dominion in such a way that attention is given to the Father and He is glorified rather than man.

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18. Ibid.

19 Ibid.

20. Ibid., 171.

To be recipients of God's blessing. There is no indication that man had yet done anything in Genesis 1.28, yet the Bible says that "God blessed them." Genesis 1:22 states "God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." This is the first occasion of a "blessing," and it is the theological key word linking the history of the cosmos and of humanity with the promises to the patriarchs.<sup>21</sup>

Thus one of man's created purposes is to receive the blessings of God. A blessing is neither earned nor maintained by the efforts of man. It is, however, within the nature and character of God to bless His creatures, chief among them being man. The extent of God's blessings is not detailed in Genesis 1, but one blessing that is immediately evident is the Lord's provision of food. Another blessing that is immediately evident is God's relationship with man—a relationship that is personal and seemingly intimate. Matthews writes, "A "blessing" presupposes a relationship between God and the persons blessed."<sup>22</sup> Many of the blessings the Lord bestows on man are delineated in Ephesians chapter 1. Such terms as "freely bestowed" in verse 6, and "which He lavished on us" in verse 8 make it clear that God is not seeking to withhold blessings but is rather intent on pouring them out on the creatures that bear His own image, on man. Individuals, or even groups of people, may put themselves in a position to forfeit God's blessings, but that does not change the purpose for which man was created, nor does it change God's desire. "The startling reversal of God's attitude toward His world of creatures by the flood exhibits the

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21. Matthews, p.158.

22. Ibid.

enormity of the world's corruption. Nevertheless, His renewed covenant with the world includes these creatures who will again "be fruitful and increase in number."<sup>23</sup>

To do good works. After God created Adam He placed him in the Garden of Eden, which He had planted, to cultivate it and keep it.<sup>24</sup> Man was not created to do nothing; he was created to work and to worship. Work was part of man's purpose in his pre-sinful, pristine, created state. According to Reggie McNeal, "the chores in Paradise were designed to help Adam grow."<sup>25</sup>

Nancy Pearcey describes this role of man as a "cultural mandate", that is, a divine mandate to develop culture. In *Total Truth* she writes:

The lesson of the Cultural Mandate is that our sense of fulfillment depends on engaging in creative, constructive work. The ideal human existence is not eternal leisure or an endless vacation—or even a monastic retreat into prayer and meditation—but creative effort expended for the glory of God and the benefit of others. Our calling is not just to "get to heaven" but also to cultivate the earth, not just to "save souls" but also to serve God through our work. For God Himself is engaged not only in the work of salvation (special grace) but also in the work of preserving and developing His creation (common grace). When we obey the Cultural Mandate, we participate in the work of God Himself, as agents of His common grace.<sup>26</sup>

B. H. Carroll also quotes D. Thomas J. Conant as follows:

The spontaneous fruits of the earth furnish a scanty and precarious subsistence, even to a few; but with skillful labour it is made to yield and abundant supply for the wants of every living thing.

On its surface, many natural obstacles are to be overcome. Forests must be leveled, rivers bridged over, roads and canals constructed, mountains graded and tunneled and seas and oceans navigated.

Its treasures of mineral wealth lie hidden beneath its surface; when discovered and brought to light they are valueless to man till his own labor subdues and fits them for his service. The various useful metals lie in the crude

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23. Ibid, 159.

24. Genesis 2.15.

25. Reggie McNeal, *Practicing Greatness* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 73.

26. Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 48-49.

ore and must be passed through difficult and laborious processes before they can be applied to any valuable purpose. Iron, for example, the most necessary of all, how many protracted and delicate processes are required to separate it from impurities in the ore, to refine its texture, to convert it into steel before it can be wrought into the useful ax or knife, with the well-tempered edge!<sup>27</sup>

Work is not the result of sin; sin only makes it seem like work, laborious. Without sin to corrupt his work, all of man's work was good and God-pleasing. Until sin, man only knew how to work for God's glory. When man sinned and became corrupted his work was corrupted as well, so that man did not do only good works any longer. However, Ephesians 2.10 teaches that doing good works was part of why we were created: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them."

To give God glory. Everything God does is for His glory. Even the eternal punishment of unrepentant sinners is a glory to God as it demonstrates His holiness, His justness, and His righteousness. The Bible teaches in Philippians 2.10 – 11 that "at the name of Jesus every knee will bow of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth" and give glory to God. Thus when God created man He did so in order that man would glorify Him. To enable this, man was created with free will, for true worship and the giving of glory to another cannot rightly occur under compulsion.

Christians of ages past recognized that God's purpose in creating man was for His own glory. The answer to the first question in the Westminster Shorter Catechism states: "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever." Such glorifying of God is accomplished in part simply because of who man is. Through the prophet Isaiah the Lord

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27. Carroll, 64.

said that man was created for His glory.<sup>28</sup> God is also supposed to be glorified through all that man does, as I Corinthians 10.31 says, “Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” Man bears God’s image so that he may more effectively and perfectly glorify His Creator.

**The Image of God.** Several additional factors are involved in this idea of being created in the Image of God. The Hebrew word for image in Genesis 1.27 is *tselem*, which means phantom, illusion, resemblance; hence a representative figure, especially an idol.<sup>29</sup> As creatures who bear the image of God, man is to be an imitator of the divine and reveal God to the rest of creation. Just as an architect is known by his buildings, and an artist is known by his paintings, so we, by bearing the image of God reveal Him to one another as well as to the rest of creation. This role of imitating the Divine is addressed numerous times in Scripture as men are instructed and admonished to “be holy, for I am holy.” The believers of 1<sup>st</sup> century Antioch understood this and sought to live a life of holiness in imitation of Christ, which is why they earned the nickname Christian.<sup>30</sup>

This idea of bearing the image of God in order to reveal Him to others is especially important since the fall, when all of creation was affected by sin. Romans 8 states that all of creation is groaning until the day of redemption and is anxiously longing for the revealing of the sons of God.<sup>31</sup> As a person more faithfully bears the image of God, His work of mercy, love, grace and patience is more clearly seen. Jesus described it

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28. Isaiah 43.7.

29. James Strong, *Abingdon’s Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1984), word 6754 of the Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary.

30. Acts 11.26

31. Romans 8.18 – 22.

thus: "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."<sup>32</sup> It is for this reason that we are to be conformed to the image of His Son.<sup>33</sup> While the true nature of the image of God in man is the topic of this chapter, the effects of sin on the image of God and on man's ability to faithfully bear that image will be the topic of chapter 3.

It is obvious that man does not have all of the attributes of God, and the attributes man has he does not have in the fullness that God possesses them. John Fritzius has stated thus:

The phrase "Our image" didn't refer to God's incommunicable attributes such as Omnificence, Omniscience, Omnipresence, Omnipotence or Divinity, if it did, we would have been gods ourselves. It refers instead to His communicable attributes. He made Adam and Eve as self-aware, reasoning beings that had emotions, imagination and free will. In conjunction with their bodies, they were able to interact with their environment and each other physically, intellectually and emotionally.<sup>34</sup>

But just what is this image of God? As stated in the introduction, just what it means to be created in the image of God has been a matter of debate among theologians and philosophers for centuries. Plato thought of the soul as an individualized instance of the rational essence of the universe.<sup>35</sup> In all the Christian writers up to Aquinas we find the image of God conceived as man's power of reason.<sup>36</sup> A.W. Pink wrote, "Examining the term more closely, the "image of God" in which man was made refers to his moral

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32. Matthew 5.16.

33. Romans 8.29.

34. John Fritzius, <http://www.tlogical.net/gospel.htm>.

35. Jewett, 41.

36. Cairns, *Image of God in Man* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1953). From Middleton, 19.

nature.”<sup>37</sup> Paul Jewett asserts, “The soul, then, is the seat of those endowments given by the Creator that make one human”<sup>38</sup> Erickson writes, “The image of God is intrinsic to humankind. We would not be human without it. Of all creation, we alone are capable of having a conscious personal relationship with the Creator and of responding to him.”<sup>39</sup> The vast majority of interpreters right up to recent times have understood the meaning of the image in terms of a metaphysical analogy or similarity between the human soul and the being of God.<sup>40</sup>

In keeping with this idea of understanding the soul in relation to God rather than by comparison to the rest of creation, the following proposition is made. There are seven characteristics of man for which one can easily either identify a parallel characteristic of God, or which is necessary for the full expression of one of the other characteristics. These seven characteristics, in no particular order, are: cognition, conscience, culpability, creativity, community, composition, and corporeality.

Cognition. Cognition refers to the mental processes of attention, remembering, producing and understanding language, solving problems, and making decisions.<sup>41</sup> For the purpose of this study, cognition will be limited to logical mental processes, or the ability to think in concrete terms, as opposed to the abstract which will be considered in the creative realm. Matters relating to language will be discussed under community.

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37. A.W. Pink, *Doctrine of Human Depravity*, 12.

38. Jewett, 40.

39. Millard Erickson, *Introducing Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001) 165.

40. Middleton, 18.

41. Gregory Robinson-Riegler, and Bridget Robinson-Riegler, *Cognitive Psychology: Applying the Science of the Mind* (Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc., 2004), 2.

Processing facts, drawing conclusions, and understanding how things relate and function are all a part of man's cognitive abilities. Science, technology, and medicine are just a few of the results of man being made in the image of God with cognitive abilities.

Though there are those who claim that man evolved from lower life forms, Scripture reveals humanity as a special, intentional and purposeful creation of God. Yet even evolutionists admit that man is unique from other creatures. Blaise Pascal wrote:

Man is but a reed, the most feeble thing in nature; but he is a thinking reed. The entire universe need not arm itself to crush him. A vapour, a drop of water, suffices to kill him. But if the universe were to crush him, man would still be more noble than that which killed him, because he knows that he dies and the advantage which the universe has over him, the universe knows nothing of this.

All our dignity consists, then, in thought. By it we must elevate ourselves, and not by space and time which we cannot fill. Let us endeavor, then, to think well; this is the principle of morality.<sup>42</sup>

In *The Birth of the Mind* Gary Marcus writes, "Animal cultures are not nearly so diverse as human cultures. Although there are differences between animal groups . . . the overall effects on the lives of individual animals are tiny."<sup>43</sup> He further states, "My own guess is that it is hard to develop a rich culture without a rich communication system."<sup>44</sup> Ken Richardson writes that archeological and evolutionary evidence creates a picture which "starkly portrays the great quantitative and qualitative leap in intelligence that occurred in human evolution, striking a great gulf between us and our closest biological

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42. Blaise Pascal, *Penses*, in *The World's World's Great Thinkers, Man and Spirit: The Speculative Philosophers*, ed. by Saxe Commins & Robert N. Linscott (New York: Random House, 1947), 226.

43. Gary Marcus, *The Birth of the Mind* (New York: Perseus Books, 2004), 27.

44. *Ibid.*

relatives.<sup>45</sup> While most evolutionists fail to look beyond biological factors, Tomasello is close to the Truth when he writes,

The fact is, there simply has not been enough time for normal processes of biological evolution involving genetic variation and natural selection to have created, one by one, each of the cognitive skills necessary for modern humans to invent and maintain complex tool-use industries and technologies, complex forms of symbolic communication and representation, and complex social organizations and institutions.<sup>46</sup>

Tomasello follows with this conclusion: “One reasonable hypothesis, then, is that the amazing suite of cognitive skills and products displayed by modern humans is the result of some sort of species-unique mode or modes of cultural transmission.”<sup>47</sup>

While only God is omniscient, man does have the ability to accumulate knowledge and anticipate the future to a limited degree. It is this ability, primarily cognitive but also interacting with community and creativity, that has enabled man to achieve so much in the development of culture.

The whole concept of education, whether formal or informal, as an expression of the cognitive aspect of the image of God in man is at the root of all culture. Sometimes called cumulative knowledge, the ability to accumulate knowledge from others, even across generations and cultures, process it and combine it with other knowledge to form new ideas or products has a direct effect on science, industry and technology. It also has a bearing on the relationships between individuals, families, and even nations.

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45. Ken Richardson, *The Making of Intelligence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000) 10.

46. Michael Tomasello, *The Cultural Origins of Human Cognition* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 2.

47. Tomasello, 4.

Another part of the cognitive abilities of man is his ability to understand and interact with time. While time is of no consequence to God, He has chosen to relate to man within the confines of time. Memory of past events, and how those events fit into the broader scope of time sequentially is a part of the ability to understand time. Also, the ability to make future appointments and plan events uses the concrete thinking abilities of cognition, but also the abstract abilities of creativity as one considers what is yet to be and make provision for it. Jesus said of the lilies of the field that they neither toil nor spin.<sup>48</sup> In fact while some animals may instinctively prepare for the changing of seasons there is no part of creation that has the ability to plan ahead or consider time in the same manner as man.

Conscience. Ecclesiastes 7.29 says that “God made men upright, but they have sought out many devices.” Being made upright requires being made with a conscience. The term “upright” used in this verse is a translation of the Hebrew word *yashar*, meaning straight, right, or upright<sup>49</sup> and as such speaks of a moral character. Thus when God made man He gave him a conscience that was undefiled and a moral character that was free from sin. In that created state, the conscience was a pure and accurate guide of right and wrong. It was a created endowment of the human spirit whereby the difference between what God commands and what he condemns was perceived. As an endowed aspect of the image of God within man, every person has a conscience. And free from the effects of sin that conscience was the basis of man’s free will.

Conscience has also been defined as “the faculty of recognizing the distinction between right and wrong in regard to one’s conduct coupled with a sense that one should

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48. Luke 12.27.

49. Strong’s.

act accordingly.”<sup>50</sup> Another definition says, “The conscience is that part of every person which, willingly or unwillingly, responds to a universal moral law—in fact, to God’s moral law.”<sup>51</sup> Henry Theissen describes the conscience as “the knowledge of self in relation to a known law of right and wrong.”<sup>52</sup>

As discussed above, the conscience is not a condition of man that is the result of sin, as some may argue. In Genesis 3.22 the Lord speaks of man as “like one of Us, knowing good and evil.” But the knowing in this verse is from the Hebrew *yada*, meaning to know well, to know by experience, to be intimate with. *Yada* would definitely be the result of a sinful condition. Mark Twain once said, “Man is the only animal that blushes. Or needs to.”<sup>53</sup>

The conscience is also the ability to understand and comprehend the rightness and wrongness of a situation before becoming engaged in it. Not only does the biblical evidence indicate that sin is not the originator of the conscience, but quite to the contrary it reveals that sin greatly distorts the conscience. First Timothy 4.2 speaks of the conscience being seared, and Titus 1.15 says that the conscience is defiled—both of these conditions resulting from sin.

Even those who have no background in the things of God have a conscience inherent within them. Before God gave His Law to Moses man had an understanding of right and wrong. In the book of Genesis, particularly in the life of Joseph as recorded

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50. American Heritage Dictionary, (Boston, MA: Houghton-Mifflin, 1982), 312.

51. Jerry White, *Honesty, Morality, and Conscience* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1979), 27.

52. Henry Theissen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B Eerdmans’ Publishing Co., 1979), 162.

53. Samuel Clemens, from the website: [www.twainquotes.com/Blush.html](http://www.twainquotes.com/Blush.html).

there, there are instances of man's conscience at work. When Joseph refused to succumb to Potiphar's wife it was because His conscience would not allow it (Genesis 39.710).

When Joseph later tested his brother with the chalice in the sack it was understood by all parties that stealing was wrong (Genesis 44). Even prior to Joseph, Abimelech recognized the wrongness of having another man's wife (Genesis 20).

The New Testament also confirms the work of the conscience in those who have no knowledge of God or His ways. Paul wrote in Romans 2.14-15: "For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them." In these verses, Paul is indicating that man has a conscience apart from the Law of God. He is insisting that the basic requirements of the Law are stamped on human hearts. Presumably, he can say this because man is made in the image of God.<sup>54</sup> When one understands that even God's command to not eat of the tree in the midst of the garden is in fact a Law from God it must be concluded that the conscience exists even apart from God's earliest instructions to man.

According to Floyd Hamilton:

In the first place from Romans 1.19-21, all men have a revelation from God in their bodies and in the external creation, through which they know that they must worship and glorify God as their Creator and Ruler and must give him thanks. This implies the knowledge of the obligation to do this. In other words, the consciences tell them they must do right and that they cannot escape the moral judgment that it is right to worship and give thanks to the Creator. This moral judgment stems from the revelation God has stamped upon men's minds by nature and in the external creation . . .

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54. Everett F. Harrison, *Romans*, in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 10, Frank E. Gaebelin general editor (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), 31.

In the second place, sin has so warped the souls of men that they reject that revelation in nature which their consciences tell them they must follow so that their minds have become reprobate, and they approve the evil and of course cannot therefore effectively decide what is right (Romans 1.28-32).

In the third place, in spite of this effect of sin on their consciences, the fact that God's law requires worship and thanksgiving is at least written in men's hearts, so that their consciences condemn them when they disobey God's law, as all men do (Romans 2.14-15).

To sum up, Paul's view is that all men have a conscience which is the obligation to do the right and to make a moral judgment as to the right. Because of sin all men need special revelation of God's standard of right and wrong, though there is sufficient knowledge of the obligations to worship God in their hearts to make them guilty of disobedience, even apart from the revelation.<sup>55</sup>

Thus it is seen that man has a conscience—a faculty about him unique in creation that God has granted to enable man to serve the Lord by choice, knowing it is right. But as sin has corrupted every aspect of the image of God in man, so sin has corrupted the conscience, thus providing something other than what God commands and what God condemns as the basis for moral decisions.

Man is no longer in his upright condition, but has indeed sought out many devices. Though this corruption of the Image of God has distorted the conscience, it has not voided its presence or power. Something within man struggles against all his background and environment to declare that an act is right or wrong regardless of the standards that surround him.<sup>56</sup>

In Freudian psychology, the conscience is known as the super-ego. Donn Byrne describes it thus:

When parents are able to teach the child the traditional values of his society and when this moral code becomes internalized so that the child truly believes and genuinely feels the rightness of the values, the superego is said to

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55. Floyd E Hamilton, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1958), 46.

56. White, 26.

have developed. The aim here is not pleasure, but to do the right thing, to be good, to achieve perfection according to a particular moral code. A more familiar term is “conscience,” which refers to a kind of built-in reinforcement process which makes a person self-satisfied when he does right and guilty when he does wrong.<sup>57</sup>

It is not a question, then, of a person having less of a conscience and therefore less free will, but rather an individual’s conscience being so distorted as to render the will incapable of acting with impunity. It is not even a matter of a good conscience versus a bad conscience as much as it is the standard by which the conscience functions. When the Law of God is replaced with any other standard the conscience may be “clear” in relation to that standard, but the will may still be inhibited from operating freely. The apostle Paul proclaimed before the Sanhedrin, “Brethren, I have lived my life with a perfectly good conscience before God up to this day.”<sup>58</sup> The implication is that he had nothing on his own mind to condemn him, that he had been faithful in his conduct toward God in every respect.<sup>59</sup> Thus even before Paul’s conversion to Christ, while he was persecuting the Church, he had a clear conscience. His conscience, being distorted by sin, prevented him from truly having a free will. His ability to choose was limited by the choices his conscience presented to him as being viable. His conscience was using a ritualistic and tradition bound interpretation of God’s law—not that which is truly God’s law—as it’s standard of right and wrong.

Other passages of Scripture also indicate that a conscience based on something other than God’s standard will have the effect of limiting, if not subduing, the free will of

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57. Donn Byrne, *An Introduction to Personality*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1974), 38.

58. Acts 23.1.

59. John B. Polhill, *Acts*, in *New American Commentary*, volume 26, edited by Ray Clendenen (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1992), 468.

man. Speaking to their pre-Christian condition, Paul wrote to the church in Corinth: You know that when you were pagans, you were led astray to the mute idols, however you were led.<sup>60</sup> In the days before the Flood, God saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.<sup>61</sup>

Romans 1.18-32 also addresses this issue of the conscience affecting the will of man. Though it is clear from v.19-21a that man has a conscience as well as an opportunity to base the conscience on the standard of God's truth, it is also clear from v.21b-23 that man exchanged that good and holy standard for a standard of his own making. Upon doing so, man was enslaved by degrading passions and a depraved mind. Other passages of Scripture speak of men being "incapable of innocence"<sup>62</sup> and inverting good and evil.<sup>63</sup>

Paul again addresses this issue of conscience and will (though using different terminology) in Romans 8.5-8:

For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is *not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.* (emphasis added).

Of this passage, Harrison writes:

But for the moment Paul wishes to expose the flesh in its stark reality as being totally alien to God and his holy purposes. He makes the point that there is a correspondence between a man's essential being and what interests him. The

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60. I Corinthians 12.2.

61. Genesis 6.5.

62. Hosea 8.5.

63. Isaiah 5.20.

fleshly are occupied with fleshly things, whereas those who possess the Spirit and are controlled by him are concerned with the things of the Spirit. Paul had already taught (I Cor. 2.14) that the fleshly man does not welcome the things of the Spirit. They are foolishness to him. He neither comprehends them nor desires to do so. His mindset is otherwise. This expression (“to set the mind on”) denotes far more than a mental process. It includes not only concentration of thought but also desire (cf. Phil 2.5ff.; Col 3.2).<sup>64</sup>

And later he writes, “Sinful man (generically understood) is plagued by a double limitation; he neither submits to God’s law nor is able to do so . . . He neither can nor will receive the things of the Spirit.”<sup>65</sup> Certainly it must be agreed that man’s will is at least hindered, if not incapacitated from choosing those things it knows nothing about, or when it does know finds them repulsive because the standard of judgment is defective.

Culpability. Related to Man’s conscience is his culpability, or responsibility.

When God instructed Adam to cultivate the Garden, to not eat of the tree, and to name the animals, He was revealing that man is culpable. Since the dictionary defines culpable as, “deserving blame, guilty”<sup>66</sup> culpability would not be a part of man’s created state. However, the capacity to be guilty, or stated another way, accountability, is a very clear part of man’s nature. For this discussion, then, culpable will refer to man’s ability to receive and follow instructions, and the right to be punished or rewarded accordingly.

The term responsibility can be said to refer to man’s ability to respond. Due in large part to both cognition and conscience, a person must make choices many times every day. These choices are made on the basis of past experience, expectation of results, and other factors, but are not based on instinct. Man’s supposed freedom to make such

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64. Harrison, 89.

65. Ibid.

66. culpable. Dictionary.com. *Kernerman English Multilingual Dictionary*. K Dictionaries Ltd. <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/culpable>.

choices also makes him responsible for the choices he makes. He can be held accountable for his decisions and actions. In fact, to deny accountability for wrong is to deny that person's humanity. Those who attempt to blame society or other factors for a person's misdeeds are, in a subtle way, assigning to that person a less than human status.

Creativity. Creativity is the ability to contemplate something that has never existed before.<sup>67</sup> God is the ultimate Creator in that He contemplated all things before they existed. Indeed all imagination originated with God. Man also has the ability to think abstractly, to process non-concrete ideas, to imagine a future, to imagine options and outcomes that are not based in logic.

In describing human creativity (which he calls thoughts or ideas) David Hume wrote:

To form monsters and join incongruous shapes and appearances, costs the imagination no more trouble than to conceive the most natural and familiar objects. And while the body is confined to one planet, along which it creeps with pain and difficulty; the thought can, in an instant transport us into the most distant regions of the universe; or even beyond the universe, into the unbounded chaos, where nature is supposed to lie in total confusion. What never was seen, or heard of, may yet be conceived; not is anything beyond the power of thought, except what implies an absolute contradiction.<sup>68</sup>

This ability to be creative is expressed through the fine arts and other aesthetic endeavors, in the work of inventors and philosophers, and in the thoughts of anyone who thinks "outside the box". "The way we serve a Creator God is by being creative with the talents and gifts God has given us. We could even say that we are called to continue

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67. Erich Harth, *The Creative Loop: How the Brain Makes a Mind* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1993), 74.

68. David Hume, *Concerning Human Understanding*, in *The World's Great Thinkers, Man and Spirit: The Speculative Philosophers*, ed. by Saxe Commins & Robert N. Linscott (New York: Random House, 1947) 353.

God's own creative work."<sup>69</sup> The creative nature of God is seen in man both in tangible and intangible ways. Though the major portion of God's creative work is that which is recorded in Genesis, He does continue to create with each child that is conceived. Man partners with God in this creative process through the sexual relationship, in order to bring about new life.

Erwin McManus wrote, in *Soul Cravings*, "You were created as a creative being. You were made to grow, to dream, to achieve. Your souls is letting you know you come from God and your life is intended to be God-sized and God-inspired."<sup>70</sup>

Community. An additional aspect of the image of God in man involves community. God has eternally existed in community with Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. When the Lord said, "Let Us make man in Our image" He was communicating with Himself. Communication is, by its very nature, inherently necessary for community.

The American Heritage Dictionary defines communication as "The exchange of thoughts, messages, or information, as by speech, signals, or writing."<sup>71</sup> Furthermore, "communicate" is defined as, to make known, impart, display, or manifest.<sup>72</sup> It is here that cognition and community are interdependent. Because God desires for man to be in community with Him, He gave man the cognitive ability to receive communication from Him. So as God revealed Himself to man, man had the ability to receive and comprehend

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69. Pearcey, 47.

70. Erwin McManus, *Soul Cravings* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2006) "Destiny", entry 23.

71. American Heritage Dictionary, 299.

72. Ibid.

that communication, and thus be in relationship with God. The very act of communicating creates a relationship where none may have previously existed. And in order for community to continue to exist there must also be continuing communication.

While some creatures can exist in a relatively solitary manner, humans were created to live in community. Though the Lord communicated with man, and was thus in community with Him, He also designed and instructed man to be in community with his fellow man. Thus every relationship is designed to be a reflection of the Almighty. After God made man He said, “It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.”<sup>73</sup> Furthermore, the Bible states that no other part of creation could meet man’s need for community, “The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him.”<sup>74</sup> Consequently, God created woman. Woman was created in the image of God, just as man was, but she was also created to be in intimate (spiritually, emotionally and physically) relationship with man. The marriage relationship, and family, constitutes the first human community. Neither man nor woman can exist in a healthy manner without the other.

Selecting a life partner with whom one can share intimately over a long period of time is an innate part of the human psyche, and a key element in the image of God. “A high priority in this stage concerns finding a “significant other”—one who will share life’s joys and sorrows—for better or worse.”<sup>75</sup> There is a significant minority of the

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73. Genesis 2.18.

74. Genesis 2.20.

75. Yount, 66.

adult population that remains single, to be sure, but even they seek out relationships in which they can share deeply of their joys and struggles. In fact, many married individuals have deep friendships with others of the same gender with whom they can grow and share. These deepening relationships require love, trust, commitment, and forgiveness—all attributes of the God who created man in His image. To the degree that a person develops a relationship with the Lord, and weaves these characteristics into their life, to that same degree they will find fulfilling community with others. Concerning community, McManus writes:

Contact with the real world—it’s not optional; it’s essential. We are created for relationship. We are born for community. For us to be healthy, we must be a part of others. Independence is one thing; isolation is another. The more we live disconnected lives, the more we become indifferent to the well-being of others.<sup>76</sup>

Even in a child’s earliest years the greatest need is for community. An infant enters this world absolutely helpless. It cannot protect itself, nourish itself, clean itself, or even move from one place to another on its own. Thus if a child is to have any hope of health and survival there must be a relationship with someone who is both capable and willing to provide for that child’s needs. Greenspan writes of orphans from Eastern Europe who were housed in institutional settings saying they become increasingly self-absorbed, lose the ability to move energetically, and many show severe weaknesses in their cognitive, language, sensory-processing and fine motor skills. “Some fail to gain weight and some even die,” he writes, “without the nourishment of love, a whole variety of developmental skills simply will not blossom.”<sup>77</sup>

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76. McManus, *Intimacy*, entry 5.

77. Stanley Greenspan, *Building Healthy Minds* (Cambridge, MA: Perseus Books, 1999), 54.

With rare exception this community requirement is met by the child's mother, and is often supplemented by the child's father, whether directly or indirectly. This natural provision is the result of God's design for family, and is itself designed as a shadow of His provision for all of mankind.

While in the earliest months of life the infant has a great need for community there is no capacity for a reciprocal relationship. The child is completely ego-centric. Ego-centrism is "the inability to distinguish between one's own perspective and someone else's."<sup>78</sup> The child sees himself as the center of the universe, with everything revolving around him and occurring solely for his pleasure.<sup>79</sup> Yount claims that egocentrism does not mean selfish or conceited, but rather that young children find it difficult or impossible to see things from another person's point of view.<sup>80</sup> Thus egocentrism is not the result of sin, but is simply an underdeveloped sense of the community aspect of the Image of God. Even so, it is very difficult, if not impossible, for parents or others to distinguish the difference between what is an undeveloped image of God and what is a sinful expression of the image of God. This is because young children, though often considered "innocent" by adults, already possess the sin nature that is inherited by all.

Whatever needs the child has—hunger, change of diaper, etc—the child expects it to be met on his terms, on his time schedule, and solely for his comfort. When the child's community fails to meet his demands—regardless of whether the community fully understands those demands—there is great conflict. It is during this stage, though, that

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78. John W. Santrock, *Life-Span Development*, 9<sup>th</sup> edition (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004), 242.

79. Dorothy S. Singer, and Tracy A Revenson, *A Piaget Primer: How a Child Thinks* (New York: Penguin Books USA, 1996), 13–14.

80. Yount, 82.

the child begins to move from egocentrism to socially adaptive behavior. Yount also recognizes that though “Human beings are innately ego-centric,” and that “adults do not learn how to be ego-centric”, they must “learn to not be egocentric”<sup>81</sup> It is during this early childhood stage that such development should begin. As the toddler develops a sense of identity and independence, he will also begin to be more reciprocal in love and trust, though such will still be very much conditioned on the benefits to himself and not unconditional. The sense of love and trust (community), or lack of it, that develops in infancy and early childhood between a child and his parents is the most powerful psychosocial development in this stage of life. The continued development of community in a person is necessary in order for that individual to accurately bear the Image of God.

Living life without meaningful connections is not good because it’s not what God intended for us. Isolation tends to bring with it devastating relational sicknesses. But it’s also not good because we were created for relationship. Living life alone does not accurately reflect the one whose image we bear.<sup>82</sup>

But community goes beyond the family and egocentrism of early childhood.

The first instructions of God to the human couple (Genesis 1.28) involved multiplying and subduing. Nancy Percy states that this means to “develop the social world” and to “harness the natural world.” She goes on to make the bold statement that “This passage is sometimes called the Cultural Mandate because it tells us that our original purpose was to create cultures, build civilizations—nothing less.”<sup>83</sup> Cultures are to reflect the image of God in human interactions.

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81. Yount, 87.

82 Andy Stanley, *Creating Community* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2004), 34.

83. Percy, 47.

Human interaction, as alluded to earlier, requires communication. While other creatures may have a minimal sense of community, and may even communicate alarm, warning, or mating status, mankind is unique in his ability to communicate, thus enabling him to develop cultures. Communicating love, instructions, expectations, appreciation, fear, and a host of other information is all a part of this.

The ability to create carries with it the ability to communicate. A piece of music, a painting, a novel or play, and the design of a building are all the result of creative ability communicated to others. The transfer of cognitive information such as geography, mathematics, and even history is also an example of the ability to communicate.

Mankind's ability to create cultures and build civilizations rests upon this ability to communicate—not just with others in close proximity at a given moment, but even across time and distance. This goes beyond the nominal ability of language, which itself is quite amazing and effective at transmitting cognitive and creative fruit to others. Putting such fruit into tangible messages that can be displayed, manifest, or transferred to others is a unique quality of man. Whether it be through literature, graphic arts, the alteration of environment (including everything from cultivating the ground to building skyscrapers), or other means man communicates to other people and to creation at large “I exist”. In Romans 1.20 says that God has revealed Himself, and the fact of His existence to man through what has been made. In the same way, man reveals himself through his cognitive and creative abilities expressed in communication and community, in culture.

Composition. It is fitting that composition is a synonym for work of art.<sup>84</sup> As one considers the make up of the human person, and the sevenfold Image of God that he bears, one cannot but wonder at the work of art God has wrought in the pinnacle His of creation. Not only is the human race unique among and distinct from the rest of creation, but each individual person is unique within the race as well.

In considering the uniqueness of man among creation it is to be noted that there are a variety of understandings concerning the nature of man. Some understand man's nature to exist in two parts (body and soul), others in the more popular three parts (body, soul, and spirit), or the less popular understanding of four parts (body, soul, spirit, and mind) or even as a unified whole. The weight of biblical evidence, however, indicates that man is a unified whole. While a variety of understandings has existed for centuries, and will most likely continue for centuries to come, some things about the composition of man are inescapable.

Man was created as a living soul. Genesis 2.7 says that after God created man He breathed into him the breath of life and man *became* a living being. The Hebrew word translated in the NASB as "living being" is *nephesh* and is translated in the KJV as living soul. The various aspects of soul, spirit, mind, body, psyche, emotions, will, etc. can all be summed up in the term *nephesh*.<sup>85</sup> Thus the biblical text indicates that man does not merely possess a soul, but he is a soul. Eugene Merrill states it thus, "Whether the New Testament conceives of man as a three part entity (trichotomous) (and we think not), the

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84. work of art. Thesaurus.com. *Roget's New Millennium™ Thesaurus, First Edition (v1.3.1)*. Lexico Publishing Group, LLC. [www.thesaurus.reference.com/browse/work\\_of\\_art](http://www.thesaurus.reference.com/browse/work_of_art).

85. A thorough, yet concise discussion of "nephesh" is found in the article on soul in the *Holman Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1991), 1295-1296.

Old Testament knows nothing of such a concept but rather views man monistically. He does not *have* a body, soul, and spirit but *is* all of these and lacking any portion of it ceases to be a human being.”<sup>86</sup>

Man is not only composed of body, soul and spirit, but the composition of both the soul and the body are also unique to each person. It should already be apparent that the various understandings of the soul are the result of its many aspects. Any entity possessing multiple aspects is likely to have different ones of those aspects dominant or recessive in each manifestation. Even the Lord God is seen as possessing a variety of personality traits and emotions though never changing in the essence of His being. However, His manifestation to Joshua as the Captain of the host of the Lord, His manifestation to the Judeans of the first century AD, and His later revelation of Himself to the Apostle John show differing aspects of His Being.

In the same way, then, the soul of man is the same in essence, while each person also manifests different aspects, and even changing over time. Sometimes this is called a personality, or temperament, which in addition to cognitive and creative abilities, consists of the will, emotions, desires, abilities, and more. The blend of these characteristics and the prominence of some over others is unique in every single person. Dr. Ron Hawkins speaks of thought, volition, choice, feeling, action, and environment as factors that interact to make a person unique.<sup>87</sup>

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86. Merrill, 176.

87. Class Notes from Dr. Ron Hawkins, “Growth and Development of the Contemporary Minister”, Liberty University, May 2003.

One person may be quiet and reserved, another may be talkative and flamboyant. One person may be tenacious another may give up more easily; one may be more cognitive while another is more creative. There are a multitude of traits and characteristics within the human personality, and a myriad of combinations from these traits. Each person is a truly unique creation of God. Each personality, free from sin, has a perfect capability to reflect the nature of God thus the composition of each individual is a vital part of being created in His image.

Corporeality. The body is the visible form of the self in its specific individuality. There is, then, an indefeasible relationship between soul and body.<sup>88</sup> As with the personality, the uniqueness of each person is also seen in their respective bodies. Everything from height, to weight, to skin color, eye color, and hair color, along with a host of other more subtle differences are determined by one's DNA. Other characteristics of a person's body may be a reflection of self expression, or the choices that person has made. Weight lifting or overeating will have an impact on one's physique, for instance. Injuries and disease will also have an effect on the body.

Apart from the uniqueness of each body, however, one must give consideration to the fact that man exists in a bodily form. Since God is Spirit and does not typically manifest Himself in a body (the 33 years of the incarnation excepted) it may seem incongruent for man, having been created in the image of God, to have a body. Even the incarnation of Christ is understood as God becoming man rather than the physical nature of man being understood as man being like God. So how is the corporeality of man related to the image of God?

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88. Jewett, 248.

The connection is admittedly secondary rather than primary. It is the soul of man that possesses the cognitive, creative, community, culpable, and conscience aspects of the image of God. However, these could not be adequately or faithfully expressed without a body. The body is required to give voice to the song of praise and speech to the communication. The body is required to write, paint, build, sculpt, and play that which the Image of God creates. The community expressions of love, encouragement, appreciation, and more necessitate a means conveyance such as a hug, a pat on the back, a handshake, etc.

The culpability, that is responsibility and accountability, of man requires that man be able to cultivate the garden, and exercise dominion over the rest of creation. This is best accomplished with a physical body. Man's responsibility also includes giving glory to God, to worship Him, and this is fulfilled most completely when one uses the physical body to see and observe all that God has created, and hears, tastes, touches and smells the beauty and magnificence of the Lord. When one looks at the majesty of the Grand Tetons or the Alps the majesty of God is reflected. When one tastes the variety of fruits and vegetables God has created there is a recognition of His goodness and provision. Indeed, Romans 1.20 says, "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse." Since God intends to reveal Himself to man through what He has made, it is necessary that what has been made tangible be experienced in a tangible way.

It was very good. Genesis 1.31 says, "God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day." In

seeing that all was very good a few conclusions can be drawn. First, everything was exactly as the Lord intended it to be. Second, and closely related to that, the Lord's sovereign will was fully satisfied, nothing was out of order. Furthermore, because God is good everything He made was also good. This is not limited to, but certainly includes mankind, and the sevenfold image of God in which he was created.

### Chapter Three: The Problem of Sin

If the Word of God and the story of human history ended at Genesis 1.31 all would be well. But that is not the end. It is evident that not everything is very good. Some things seem to be good, but leave a lot of room for improvement. Some things are downright evil.

The Possibility for Sin. Since “Man has sought out many devices”<sup>89</sup> it must be possible for him to do so. Pink writes, “Though ‘made upright,’ he was not incapable of falling; nor did it devolve upon God to keep him from so doing.”<sup>90</sup> The devices referenced in that verse are literally schemes or plots of self-sufficiency and disobedience to authority, in this case specifically the authority of the Lord. Both the invention of anything outside the plan of God, as well as the seeking out of such things, is defiance and disobedience to the will of God and is thus sin. In reference to Adam’s sin in the Garden of Eden, Sailhamer writes that “the temptation is not presented as a general rebellion from God’s authority. It is rather portrayed as a quest for wisdom and ‘the good’ apart from God’s provision.”<sup>91</sup>

The possibility and opportunity for man to seek out many devices is derived from the very fact that man was created in the image of God. Only the first three of the seven aspects of the image of God relate directly to this possibility for sin. The combined characteristics of cognition, conscience, and culpability give man the ability to receive instruction, make an informed choice on whether to follow that instruction knowing the

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89. Ecclesiastes 7.29.

90. A. W. Pink, *The Doctrine of Human Depravity* (Lafayette, IN: Sovereign Grace Publishers, 2001), 23.

91. John H. Sailhamer, Genesis, in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, Frank E. Gaebelien general editor (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), 51.

consequence of disobedience, and be held accountable for the choice he makes. All of this is seen in Genesis 2.16-17 where God clearly commands Adam to not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and admonishes him concerning the consequences if he does. Having been made a rational creature and endowed with freedom of the will he was a fit subject for command, and accordingly was placed under the law.<sup>92</sup>

The conscience not only allows man to make choices between good and evil, but in fact compels him to do so. Man is not an unthinking robot nor a lower creature condemned to act entirely by instinct. “To the extent that he is denied such choices, to that extent he is robot-like—unable to think independently and forced to act only as he is programmed to do—a being deficient in reflecting the fullness of God.”<sup>93</sup>

As stated previously, man is also culpable. When God gave instructions to man concerning the cultivating of the garden and being fruitful, it must be that man was capable of disobedience. If there were no possibility for disobedience, then there would indeed be no disobedience. If man were not capable of failing he would not be culpable for one cannot be held accountable for things which are not possible.

The Prologue to Sin. Though man had a free will and could clearly choose whether to obey or not, he did not at that time have the propensity toward sin that man has had ever since. One would wonder, then, what caused man to make the decision that he did. The community and composition aspects of the image of God played an indirect role here. When Eve approached Adam with the fruit of the tree he immediately found conflict within himself. Though he knew the command of God, and likely desired to obey

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92. A. W. Pink, 19.

93. Merrill, 200.

it, because of his emotions (composition) toward his wife and his desire to maintain a free, open, and intimate relationship with her (community) he chose the fruit of the tree rather than obedience to His Creator. He knowingly and willingly chose conflict with the Lord rather than conflict with his fellow creature, the one and only creature suitable to be his help-mate.

Then arises the question of Eve. She was formed from the side of Adam, bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, and the account of man's creation in Genesis 1.26ff shows that both male and female were created in the image of God. Thus Eve had all the fullness of equality in possessing the seven aspects of the image of God that Adam had. Why then did she disobey? And why was Adam held responsible and not her? The latter question is beyond the scope of this study and has been dealt with by many others, such as Mathews, Merrill, Pink, and Harrison.<sup>94</sup> In short, it is a matter of roles and order established by God and not a matter of ability or nature. The former question is answered in I Timothy 2.14 "The woman was deceived."

Satan's Purpose in Attacking the Image of God. The biblical account of man's disobedience and consequent guilt of sin indicates that the deception was instigated by Satan. As Pink writes, "he had, by implication, slandered God's character; and now he told a downright lie."<sup>95</sup> Matthew Henry wrote, "Satan tempted Eve, that by her he might tempt Adam"<sup>96</sup> that he could be like God. But Adam was already as much like God as

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94 For further study on this matter see Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis*, in the NAC, vol. 1A; Eugene H. Merrill, *Everlasting Dominion: A Theology of the Old Testament*; A.W. Pink, *The Doctrine of Human Depravity*; Everett F. Harrison, *Romans*, in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 10.

95. Pink, 31.

96. Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, n.d.) 22.

God intended him to be. Also known as Lucifer, Satan “was originally created as the highest being above all the moral creatures of God, although an immeasurable gulf exists between him and the uncreated, self-existent, and eternal persons of the Godhead.”<sup>97</sup> Isaiah 14.12-14 shows the purpose and intent of Satan is to become like God. Chafer also writes, “Satan is not aiming to promote sin in the world. He did not purpose to be a fiend, but rather to be ‘like the Most High’”.<sup>98</sup> Chafer’s understanding, then, is summed up this way: “[Satan] is in no way at enmity with the unsaved, and when he aims his ‘fiery darts’ at the children of God, he attacks them only because of the fact that they are indwelt by the divine nature, and through them he is enabled to secure a thrust at God.”<sup>99</sup> Chafer’s understanding may have merit from a logical point of view, and it must certainly be recognized that Satan’s motivations and goals are more wrapped up in doing God harm than in doing man harm. However, the Bible clearly states in I Peter 5.8 that Satan is man’s adversary. The reason Satan is opposed to man seeking to destroy him is that he opposes everything God does.

Satan also opposes the dominion of man over creation for he considers himself to be the ruler of this world. When God created man in His image, to reflect Him to the rest of creation, Satan was likely fraught with anger. “Satan ruined himself by desiring to be like the Most High, therefore he sought to infect our first parents with the same desire, that he might ruin them too.”<sup>100</sup> Part of Satan’s motivation was to take the place of God in relation to man, as Thiessen concludes, “underlying all of this was the ambition to extend

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97. Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Major Bible Themes* (Grand Rapids, MI: Acadamie Books, 1974) 156.

98. *Ibid.*, 161.

99. *Ibid.*, 163.

100. Henry, 23.

his relative sovereignty to become equal with God.” However, because Satan desires to be God, it would seem just as likely that, upon seeing man made in God’s image, Satan thought that man had usurped the place he sought for himself. Thus man is offensive to Satan by the very nature of his being.

Man is also offensive to Satan because Satan sees in man a constant reminder of his own failures. Man was created to be a recipient of God’s blessings. In spite of his sin mankind is offered grace and the continued opportunity to be recipients of the Lord’s goodness. Before his rebellion, Satan had also been a recipient of God’s blessing as is seen in Ezekiel 28.11-19. After his rebellion, however, Satan has become a recipient of God’s wrath rather than His blessings. Yet knowing that God desires to bless man Satan seeks to bring man into a position of forfeiting the blessings of God. While this has the initial effect of depriving man of finding fulfillment in his purpose, it also has the ultimate effect of depriving God from bestowing blessings upon His cherished creation. This scheme of Satan is seen most poignantly in the word of Balaam as recorded in Numbers 22-24.

In many other ways Satan seeks to steal, kill, and destroy.<sup>101</sup> He seeks to steal the image of God from man—replacing it with any image other than the image of God. He seeks to steal the dominion from man—making man subservient in bondage to a variety of things, but ultimately in bondage to sin and Satan. The Holy Spirit also addresses this issue through Paul in I Corinthians 12.2: “You know that when you were pagans, you were led astray to the mute idols, however you were led.” Luther addressed this issue well when he wrote,

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101. John 10.10.

By the dreadful example of the first man, it was shown us, with a view to breaking down our pride, what our ‘free-will’ can do if it is left to itself and is not continually moved and increased more and more by the Spirit of God. That first man could do nothing to secure an increase of the Spirit Whose first-fruits he had, but fell from these first-fruits of the Spirit; what then could we, who are fallen, do to secure the first fruits of the Holy Spirit that have been taken from us? Especially when Satan, who cast Adam down by temptation alone, at a time when he was not yet Adam’s ruler now reigns in us with complete power over us.<sup>102</sup>

Satan also seeks to steal the blessings from man, and he seeks to get man to not do the good works for which he was created. He seeks to kill the image bearer, eternally separating him from the Lord. He seeks to destroy the image of God in man by marring it beyond recognition. All this he has accomplished in Adam and he continues to accomplish in individuals today.

Marred, Not Annihilated. That man has succumbed to the schemes of Satan and thereby sinned against God is an indisputable fact of Scripture. Because of sin, the image of God is marred. To mar means to damage, spoil, tarnish, to make unattractive and unappealing. Merrill concludes, “With his fall into sin, man surrendered much—but not all—of his capacity to be the image of God.”<sup>103</sup> Thus the image of God was not annihilated, it did not cease to exist, nor did man cease to bear it, but man can not bear the image of God faithfully. This causes all of life to be distorted; reality does not appear as reality is. Carrying about a damaged, distorted, marred, image of God causes man to oppose the purposes God has for him—to have dominion, receive blessings, do good works, and give glory to God.

All of mankind, indeed all of creation, bears the effects of man’s sin. The image of God in man, however, is not and cannot be destroyed to the point of annihilation. To

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102. Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*, translated by J. I. Packer and O. T. Johnson (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming J. Revell. 2000), 156.

103. Merrill, 171.

do so would violate the purpose of God, the nature of man, and the meaning of the Hebrew word *muth* used in Genesis 3. Annihilation of the image of God would prevent reconciliation, and thus prohibit God from fulfilling His purpose of creating a being with whom He could relate, from whom He could receive voluntary worship, and toward whom he could demonstrate His glory. A.W. Pink addresses the issue of annihilation in relation to man's nature:

The Fall does not result in the extinguishment of that spirit which was a part of man's complex being when created by God: it did not either in the case of our first parents or in any of their descendents. It has, however, been argued from the Divine threat made to Adam, "in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," that such was the case, that since Adam did not immediately die physically, he must have done so spiritually. That is certainly a fact, yet it requires to be interpreted by Scripture. It is quite wrong to suppose that because Adam's body dies not, his spirit did. It was not something in Adam that died, but Adam himself—in his relation to God. . . . In the scriptural sense of the term, "death" never signifies annihilation, but separation. At physical death the soul is not extinguished but separated from the body: and the spiritual death of Adam was not the extinction of any part of his being but the severance of his fellowship with a holy God.<sup>104</sup>

Pink also points out that if the Fall divested man of any of his faculties it would have converted him into another species.

Both the Scriptures and contemporary life are replete with examples of how the image of God has been affected by sin. The discussion of select passages will provide a greater understanding into how the marred image of God impacts every aspect of human life.

The Marred Image in Genesis 3. Genesis 3.7-12 records Adam's (and Eve's) initial expression of the altered image of God. Adam and Eve, unlike any other persons ever, had known God as He really is and His creation as it was intended to be. They remembered what it was like before sin, and they knew it could never be replaced. Everyone else has had a distorted view of God and creation.

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104. Pink, 89.

Awareness of their nakedness and shame touches on cognition, conscience, and corporeality. Sewing fig leaves together to make a covering for themselves is a demonstration of creativity. Hiding from the Lord is an expression of damaged community. Being afraid demonstrates culpability and the emotions of a warped composition.

Of these, the damaged sense of creativity and composition are most interesting. Creativity was given to man to express praise to God, create things of beauty, and find ways of communicating to others of the goodness and glory of the Creator. Creativity was never intended to be used to make a covering for hiding sin and shame. Using creativity in this way, contrary to that for which it was granted to man, is a clear example of the fact that the image of God, though marred, is still present and active within man.

Also, fear is an emotion and is therefore a part of man's composition. However, it is an expression of the damaged image of God. Fear does not accurately portray the Lord to any other part of creation. In every instance in Scripture that a person is confronted with an angel, or God Himself, he is told to "Be not afraid". Proverbs 28.1 also says that the wicked flee when no one is pursuing, but the righteous are as bold as a lion. Furthermore, I John 4.18 says, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love." Love requires community for without community there can be no love except to one's self, which isn't real love. So if (since) love is void of fear, the presence of fear must also indicate a dysfunction of some sort in the community; and the restoration of community, of love, results in the absence of fear.

The Marred Image in Exodus 32. In Exodus 32.1-10 the marred image of God is seen primarily as it relates to worship. Of all the creatures on earth, man is the only one with religion. This sacerdotal aspect of man's nature is due to the conscience and the culpability of the image of God.

Man was designed to relate to God through worship. But since the Fall, man has sought to worship everything except the Lord, thus restoration eludes him. People recognize that something within them is not the way it should be, that something is wrong, but they are at a loss to understand it or fix it on their own. The rich young man who asked Jesus what he must do to obtain eternal life knew that something was lacking within him.<sup>105</sup> Though various religions existed prior to the formation of Israel, the actions of the Hebrew people near Mt. Sinai as recorded in Exodus 32.1-10 give a clear picture of man seeking to "fix" the need for a clean conscience and communion with the Divine. Sin's damage to the image of God not only causes man to have a distorted perception of God and reality, but also deviant passions, and a distraught personality. In this passage the Israelites were not content to wait upon God and their impatience overcame their faith. They commissioned Aaron saying, "make us a god who will go before us", so they made a god of their liking to satisfy this longing of the soul.

Any creative endeavor will reflect the nature of the creator, and so it is that though man has been given creative abilities, whatever a person creates will reflect the nature of man. It is also true that the maker can only make what is known or perceived. Yet because of sin, it is impossible for man to have an accurate perception of God. Thus in any man made conception of the Divine, God is perceived and thus portrayed as having a nature like man's, in ways contrary to His own nature and his character is

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105. Matthew 19.16-22.

misrepresented and maligned. Voltaire once wrote, “If God created us in his own image, we have more than reciprocated.”<sup>106</sup> The contemporary physicist Stephen Hawking, has said, “I think computer viruses should count as life. I think it says something about human nature that the only form of life we have created so far is purely destructive. We've created life in our own image.”<sup>107</sup> Even the gods of Greek mythology demonstrated all the faults and sins of man: lust, coveting, jealousy, partiality and hatred. In other settings God is seen as either angry and needing to be appeased, or compromising, laissez-faire and apathetic. God is also portrayed at times as fallible and untrustworthy.

Man’s distorted perceptions also result in portraying God as having a physical expression (different from incarnation) which is the focus of graven images. The corrupted image of God in man seeks something tangible, something that will appeal to the senses of sight and touch, not something that will appeal to the spirit. The making of a tangible image or idol, however, violates the very concept of man being made in the image of God as it displaces the image as a separate entity apart from man.

The Israelites, in the wilderness, perceived God as a calf of gold. They were not creating a new god, they were simply attempting to restore the image of God by their own reasoning and abilities—another example of corrupted cognition and creativity at work. Their concern for safety, provision, and guidance overcame trust. The foolishness of their thinking overcame obedience to the truth. Thus the making of idols is, at its core, man’s attempt to make another image of God to replace the marred one he bears within himself. But in so doing man is yet again inflicting more damage to the true image of

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106. <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/v/voltaire131520.html>.

107. [http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/s/stephen\\_hawking.html](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/s/stephen_hawking.html).

God by opposing his own created purpose. Mankind has continued to seek the restoration of the image of God through various religions, yet never satisfying the longing within, and never finding the restoration he seeks. Satan also capitalizes on this distorted view of God by attempting to convince man that he is a god, rather than simply bearing the image of God. This is seen in humanism, naturalism, and some religions including Mormonism and Hinduism.

As the Hebrew people were at the foot of Mt. Sinai creating their own image of God, the Lord was giving to Moses, and through him to all humanity, the commandment "You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me,"<sup>108</sup> Other passages warn against the making of images and idols for the Lord is jealous for His own image within man, not cheap substitutes of man's imagination.

In addition to distorted perceptions, sin's damage to the image of God also causes man to have deviant passions. Man's created passion for God is corrupted into a passion for self-gratification. People come to believe that God exists for them rather than them existing for God. They adopt the notion that He should please man rather than man seeking to please Him.

This is expressed in worship as people design their worship according to their own passions and pleasures rather than according to God's prescribed means. Contemporary worship that seeks to satisfy the worshipper rather than the Lord is a logical result of the marred image of God being expressed. This is also evidenced in

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108. Exodus 20.4-5.

Exodus 32.5-6: “Now when Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow shall be a feast to the Lord." So the next day they rose early and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.” It is also evidenced in the sons of Aaron when they offered “strange fire” to the Lord.<sup>109</sup>

While peace, dominion, and recognition may be legitimate pursuits when motivated by a pure heart, the marred image of God in man causes them to be corrupt and expressed in ways that portray God to others in a very inaccurate way. For instance, the pursuit of peace within one’s self, as in Hinduism,<sup>110</sup> rather than the peace from restoration with the Lord is one example of a deviant passion. Another example is when a desire for a restoration of dominion is expressed as a passion for domination, as in Islam, despotism, or even domestic violence. Yet another example is when the legitimate desire to be recognized is twisted into a passion to be worshipped, praised for one’s achievements or honored in place of God as in Mormonism,<sup>111</sup> or even being a workaholic.

Deviant passions are also the reason why people seek to pursue the satisfaction of their own pleasures rather than the pleasures of God. Man’s distorted perspective is at work here too, deceiving him into believing that alcohol, drugs, illicit sex, and other means of physical or mental euphorias are the supreme pleasures of life. Satan used the same ploy against Adam and Eve when he persuaded them to partake of the hidden fruit.

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109. Leviticus 10.1-2.

110. According to *Religions of the World* [Niels C. Nielson, Jr. et al., *Religions of the World*, (New York: St. Martins Press, 1983), 95.] “Hinduism is the religion of tranquility. Tranquility of mind is understood to be also a tranquility of being, a reward for which a Hindu should be willing to sacrifice all else.”

111. See Doctrine and Covenants 132.20.

The same reasoning causes people to believe that God will not allow them to suffer, because God is to meet all of man's needs, passions, and desires. This reasoning assumes that because man is the crown of God's creation that he has become the object of God's worship. When the Hebrews said, "Come, make us a god who will go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him."

The Marred Image in Romans 1. Romans 1.18-32 addresses the idea of the corrupted image of God as the cause for distorted perceptions and deviant passions leading to un-prescribed and unacceptable worship. These verses also lay the groundwork for an explanation in verses 26-32 of how the marred image of God affects interpersonal relationships.

Since the relationship with God that man was created to enjoy was shattered because of sin,<sup>112</sup> people will often seek to restore that intimacy through other, unhealthy relationships. The soul's search for relationship with God causes exploitation of other relationships in a terribly misrepresented idea of love. Thus many are "looking for love in all the wrong places." Some people may even go so far as to use relationships as a replacement for the marred image of God, as a means of restoring a sense of wholeness. Those who do so make their relationships or others in their relationships, their gods and exploit them for selfish motives to fill the vacancy in their own hearts. Furthermore, any relationship wherein one person expects the other person, or the relationship itself to

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112. Romans 3.23 states that the wages of sin is death, Isaiah proclaims that sin separates from God. Other biblical passages clarify the idea that "death" is separation, and life is communion. Thus the death God warned Adam about was a spiritual separation from God and is evidenced by Adam and Eve hiding from Him for they knew Him no longer as they once had.

provide wholeness and restoration amounts to idolatry—worshipping the creature rather than the Creator—as others are put into the place that rightfully belongs only to the Lord.

Marriage is the God ordained relationship between a man and a woman for the expression of unconditional love, forgiveness, intimacy, recognition, and fidelity. When God instituted marriage He prescribed that the relationship be complimentary, heterosexual, monogamous, and permanent. As the foundational creation narrative stipulates, in order to be united with his wife a man is to leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and they will establish a new family unit.<sup>113</sup> Many people will enter into a marriage relationship with the expectation that their spouse, or even the context of the marriage relationship will satisfy the longings of the soul. Such expectations are placing the relationship and or are unrealistic and can never be met. A marriage based on such is doomed to failure. Thus the marred image of God, with its deviant passions, causes people to abandon the idea of a marriage relationship in favor of a host of ungodly relationships, including but not limited to: fornication, adultery, divorce, polygamy, and homosexuality.

Fornication and adultery violate the concepts of fidelity, monogamy, and permanence. Both also, along with polygamy may allow physical intimacy while at the same time preventing true emotional and spiritual intimacy. Divorce violates the principle of durability or permanence that is supposed to characterize marriage. It also foments many other relational issues, especially if there are children in the family, but even when there are no children.

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113. Andreas Kostenberger, *God, Marriage, and Family* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 40.

There are at least three ways in which homosexuality violates the Lord's pattern for marriage. First, homosexuality prevents a relationship from being truly complimentary. God recognized that it was not good for man to be alone so He made a helper suitable for him.<sup>114</sup> The helper was female, not another male. Though both bear the image of God and all the characteristics that accompany it, each has a different role in the marriage relationship as well as in the broader culture. They are to be complimentary to one another, not competing against one another or comparable to one another. A homosexual relationship also subverts the command of God to be fruitful and multiply. Finally, homosexual relationships lack the intimacy, fidelity, and permanence of heterosexual marriages.

Though not directly mentioned here, a variety of diseases are spread through the practice of deviant passions and ungodly relationships. These have a direct impact on corporeality, as well as community. Before sin entered the world there was no illness. A good part of Jesus' ministry involved healing the sick and it appears there is no sickness or disease in heaven. In fact, everyone person's corporeality is affected by sin in that the body ages and fights off various illnesses until the day it succumbs to death, the separation of the image of God from the body.

Just as marriage was affected by sin, so were relationships in and of the larger community and culture. Children are disobedient to their parents, adults fail to show honor to aging parents, neighbors—through coveting and jealousy—wish to deprive one another of God's blessings. With the establishment of the Noahic covenant in Genesis 9, God ordained government for the regulating of human relationships. This is the second

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114. Genesis 2.18.

unit of human community. Having been ordained of God, the law should reflect the character of Christ. But man has set himself up as a wise and sovereign judge and attempts to correct life issues independently of God. This leads to changing standards and disagreements over who will ultimately set the standard and who must obey. Ultimately, chaos and confusion prevail rather than law and order. Human government is also incapable of regulating the heart of man, or constraining the yearnings of the marred image of God. Thus man continued to express community in sinful ways. The result was a dispersion of humanity, separation of languages, and development of different cultures following the tower of Babel debacle.<sup>115</sup> Racism and discrimination of all kinds, as well as international conflicts continue to demonstrate the marred image of God in man. Verses 29-31 list a host of other ways that community is negatively impacted by sin.

Human personality (composition) was designed to interact with God and with other people. Such interaction is greatly limited, however, because sin has separated man from God and from one another. The deprivation of full interaction with the Creator leads to further disruption in the proper functioning of the personality, thus the personality itself is not sinful, but it has been impacted by sin. This disruption in the personality affects both emotions (composition) and physiology (corporeality). The sense of isolation creates fear, jealousy, hatred, selfishness, anxiety, and worry. These emotions can lead to panic attacks, high blood pressure, and other “natural” physiological consequences, as well as self inflicted physiological consequences such as cutting, smoking, drinking, and drug use.

Other means of seeking peace from the distraught personality include the use of medication and psychology as a god, or savior. Medications can be a valid treatment for

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115. See Genesis 11.

physiological or chemical issues, but drugs that manipulate the mind and emotions are little more than a veneer masking the scars upon the soul. Such man-made saviors can, at best, provide only temporary relief for the symptoms of sin, but they never address the root issue and therefore they can never truly satisfy the soul.

Though sinful man relishes the behaviors and attitudes expressed through the distraught personality, distorted perspective, and deviant passion of the corrupted image, people at the same time recognize that all attempts at self improvement are futile. This may result in emotions of despair, leading to depression and other emotions and attitudes that are self destructive, making the problem even worse. Or, in other individuals it may lead to attempts to suppress the image, hide it from view, as if others would be shocked to see the marring because they do not have it in themselves. Some of the ways that people attempt to hide or suppress the wounded, unattractive inner person is by drawing attention to the outer person.

Focusing on the body is like focusing on a dilapidated church building. There is lingering evidence of the original glory it was created to house, for its original beauty, the glory of the Lord was reflected in man through the image of God. But being used for things other than its intended purpose, it has lost its inward, natural beauty. All that is seen and understood now is the ugliness of sin. Many will then dress up the damaged building—displaying and decorating the body rather than the image of God—putting more emphasis on the edifice than on the occupant.

Such efforts are seen in how a person dresses, as already seen in the case of Adam and Eve. It is a cause for immodesty as those whose conscience is weak have no shame of sin and flaunt their bodies with indecency. This only draws attention away from the

damaged image of God rather than restoring it. It also demonstrates a desire to gain a sense of beauty, even though displaced. A beauty derived from the misunderstanding that it is based solely on the outward appearance of a person is never a match for the beauty of holiness. While this has traditionally been an issue for ladies it is increasingly becoming an issue for men as well. Clothing styles, make up, cosmetic surgery, and other excessive attention to fashion and appearance are vain and serve no purpose other than to draw attention to self rather than to the Lord. Elective cosmetic surgery (not those for restoration after an injury) is especially vain in that it is striving to preserve that which is destined to perish and allowing the eternal to languish in neglect.

Even the body itself, the corporeal aspect of the image of God, can play a role in compounding the problem rather than resolving it. Going beyond good stewardship of one's body with an excessive devotion to fitness and health is another form of idolatry, worshipping the creature rather than the Creator. Tattoos, body piercing, cutting, and other forms of mutilation are all a part of these efforts to draw attention to the visible, acceptable, and "improved" person and avoid drawing attention to the inner self. Some of these practices are used to cause repulsion in others so they keep their distance, further inhibiting proper community and defiling the image of God. Even those who have an "innocent" tattoo or body piercing often desire to have the admiration of it from others which leans toward the idol/image worship discussed earlier. In either case, the marred image of God cries out, "Look over here!" thus drawing attention to the demarcations on the body and away from the ugliness of the soul. The lone verse in Scripture that speaks of tattoos, Leviticus 19.28, says, "You shall not make any cuts in your body for the dead nor make any tattoo marks on yourselves: I am the Lord." The Hebrew word translated

here as “dead” is actually *nephesh*, which was discussed in the previous chapter and is most often translated soul. It is therefore legitimate to understand this verse is saying not to participate in these deeds because of your soul, or the hurt of the marred image of God.

In seeking something more attractive than the inner person, many people will attach affection to another person. This warped expression of community is seen in varying degrees of intensity in everything from a desire to meet and perhaps know another person to the extreme of desiring to be like or look like the other person. In some cases this digresses to the point of worshipping the creature rather than the Creator.

This passage in Romans addresses the issue of corporeality as well as community when it mentions murder, which is the destroying of a fellow image bearer. We need to remember what we are told in Genesis 9.6: if we shed our neighbor’s blood, we are guilty because we have slain one who was made in the image of God.<sup>116</sup> Cain was the first to commit this act, but it has been repeated untold times since. The killing of another human being is an expression of hatred, a profound aggression against the image of God. It is ironic that one person can carry the image of God marred by sin to the extent that they would destroy another person bearing the marred image of God.

The Marred Image in Ecclesiastes 2. Man’s corrupted creativity causes him to create things which glorify man and blaspheme God. Man’s sense of community and man’s corporeality are both corrupted through deviant passions. Sin has also had an impact on Man’s ability to think and reason. Pursuing knowledge as a means of discovering God, or worse, in place of pursuing God, is evidence of cognition in the

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116. Paul K. Jewett, *Who We Are: Our Dignity As Human* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co. 1996), 100-101.

marred image of God. Believing that knowledge and understanding will satisfy the longing of the soul will only lead to more questions.

After seeking various false religions and not finding fulfillment man turns to other things. In ancient Israel, King Solomon felt the emptiness and sought to fill the void with all things. As recorded in Ecclesiastes 2.9-17, Solomon pursued power and wealth (v.9), hedonism (v.10), fame and accomplishment (v.11), and wisdom (v.12) only to find that it was all futility and striving after wind. He was trying to kill the pain with stuff that does not satisfy.<sup>117</sup> But Solomon was no different than modern man, for people still try all manner of things to satisfy the soul, except turning to the Creator of the soul. All such pursuits fail because they cannot identify the true nature of the problem. Thus people have indeed become futile in their speculations and their foolish hearts are darkened.<sup>118</sup> The pursuit of wisdom—cognitive ability—was Solomon’s greatest pursuit, and yet it was as striving after wind in regards to satisfying the longing of the soul. Though God reveals Himself in all knowledge if man but recognizes Him, the cognitive cannot be used as a tool to fix the soul. Solomon provides an example of those who abuse the cognitive nature of the image of God in their efforts to fix the image of God in at least two ways.

First, there is the pursuit of knowledge as a means of discovering God. Regardless of whether the conscience and the will desire to do what is right or not, if it is not known what is right the doing of it is impossible. Initially, Solomon sought wisdom so he could

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117. Class Notes from Dr. Ron Hawkins, Growth and Development of the Contemporary Minister, Liberty University, May 2003.

118. Romans 1.21.

better serve God and Israel.<sup>119</sup> During the Enlightenment and the Gilded Age, it was thought that mankind could somehow find redemption through education and reason. E.L. Mascall quotes W.R. Thompson as remarking “for the Victorian liberals, universal suffrage and universal education were passports to Utopia. They believed this because they thought of universal education as the power to attain Truth, and of universal suffrage as the ability to will good.”<sup>120</sup> Those who pursue wisdom as a means of knowing God perceive the problem of humanity as ignorance rather than evil. While there may be recognition of a Divine Redeemer, restoring a right relationship with Him is seen as a matter of bringing out the goodness within man rather than transforming him with a new nature.

There is also the pursuit of knowledge in place of pursuing God. When it is discovered that wisdom and knowledge, the reasoning of man, cannot bring one into a right relationship with God, the pursuit intensifies and becomes an end in itself. Rather than using cognitive abilities to restore the marred image, the image is replaced with reason. Science becomes God.

But far from being the panacea it is expected, human reasoning, and its resulting technology, leads to even greater trouble. Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 1.18, “Because in much wisdom there is much grief, and increasing knowledge results in increasing pain.” While man has accomplished wonderful things with medicine, technology, aviation and aerospace, nuclear physics, and more there are also untold problems associated with much of these advances. Some problems are inherently ethical and moral

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119. I Kings 3.9.

120. W.R. Thompson in “*Science and Common Sense*”, quoted by E.L. Mascall, *The Importance of Being Human* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), 74.

in nature—such as in vitro fertilization or stem cell research. Other types of technology may have problems associated with the fact that they may have been created for good but because man is inherently evil the technology ends up being used for evil as well—such as airplanes and the various facets of the entertainment and communications industries. When asked by Fred Kelley about his feelings concerning the application of airplanes as an instrument of wholesale destruction and human slaughter in World War II, Orville is quoted as saying: "I don't have any regrets about my part in the invention of the airplane, though no one could deplore more than I do the destruction it has caused."<sup>121</sup>

Another problem with unredeemed knowledge is that it makes people arrogant.<sup>122</sup> The corrupted cognitive abilities cause man to think that he has created something new, or that he is the originator of an idea. In reality, all the scientific laws and principles were established by God. Man's discovery and use of them for his own benefit should be cause for giving glory to God,<sup>123</sup> rather than being used to extol the glories of humanity, as is often the case.

The Marred Image in the Book of Judges. The theme of the book of Judges is "There was no king in Israel, each man did what was right in his own eyes."<sup>124</sup> The conscience, having been corrupted by sin no longer has any bearing on what is right or wrong. The Apostle Paul addresses this issue in terms of the conscience being seared with a branding iron.

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121. [www.etsu.edu/math/gardner/wright-brothers/after1903.htm](http://www.etsu.edu/math/gardner/wright-brothers/after1903.htm).

122. I Corinthians 8.1.

123. Romans 1.18-20.

124. Judges 21.25.

Judges also provides an example of corrupt culpability when Barak refused to accept the responsibility of what God has called him to do in Judges 4.<sup>125</sup> Chapter 18 of Judges shows both the creativity and conscience of the marred image of God with the graven images of Micah, and also in the warped culpability demonstrated in the excessive dominion of the sons of Dan.

Conclusion. Time and space prevent an exhaustive consideration of every biblical example of the marred image of God within man. A brief mention of select instances is given below. In general terms, every sinful thought and every sinful act is the result of the image of God being corrupted. Sinful behavior is only the inherent consequence of a sinful nature.

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125. Judges 4.81

## Chapter Four: Jesus Restores the Image of God

A consideration of the effects of sin upon the image of God leads to a bleak outlook. When a comparison is made to what once was, before sin, it is bleaker still. Considering also that man is totally powerless to fix it the outlook appears hopeless. But it is only hopeless so long as man is the only option for an answer. The Scriptures make it very clear that Jesus Christ is the answer to the problem.

The Lord has revealed through the Apostle Paul, in Romans 5.6 that "...while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly." In the succeeding verses it is written that even while mankind was sinful God demonstrated His love for him (verse 8), that man is justified by the blood of Christ and can be saved from the wrath of God that is the penalty of sin (verse 9), and that reconciliation comes through Christ as well (verse 10). Verse 19 summarizes this great truth with the statement "through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous."

Jesus is the perfect image of God. The Gospel of John opens with the claim that the Logos is God.<sup>126</sup> In the thinking of Charles Hodge, "The question of why the Son is called 'The Word' may be answered by saying that the term expresses both his nature and his office. The word is that which reveals. The Son is the *εικων* and *απαυγασμα* of God, and therefore his word. It is his office to make God known to his creatures."<sup>127</sup> Though Hodge does not use the term "image of God" here, his description of the Word as that which reveals, and referencing Christ's office as being to make God known to his creatures, reveals the same concept as the image of God. That Jesus is the perfect

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126. John 1.1-5.

127. Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1960), 504.

revelation of God is attested by John in 1.18: “No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.”

These opening verses of John’s gospel also make some rather clear and important claims about Christ, especially in relation to the image of God. First, “In Him was life.” Though written in Greek and not Hebrew, thus ζωη (life) not חַיִּים (life) this passage, along with I John 1.1-3 make it clear that Christ did not simply possess or bear life, but that He is the source of life. There is no physical life in the realm of created things save in and through Him.<sup>128</sup> This is stated even more clearly in John 5.36, “For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself.” Second, this “life was the Light of men.” That this life is the Light speaks directly to the concept of man walking in darkness and gaining redemption through Messiah<sup>129</sup> and of man’s foolish heart being darkened in sin, needing the light of a Savior.<sup>130</sup> Micah also prophesied, “Though I dwell in darkness, the Lord is a light for me.”<sup>131</sup> Finally, “the darkness did not comprehend it.” This statement connects with the cognitive and conscience aspects of the image of God in man. Because the cognitive abilities are malfunctioning and the conscience is warped the light can not be seen for what it truly is without some assistance. According to John 6.44, God the Father is that necessary assistance: “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.”

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128. J.I. Packer, *Knowing God* (Downer’s Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 49.

129. Isaiah 9.2.

130. Romans 1.21.

131. Micah 7.8.

That Jesus is the perfect image of God, without any distortion or inadequacy, is confidently asserted by the author of Hebrews. Verse 3 of chapter one states, “And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.” The Greek word *χαρακτηρ*, occurring here only in the New Testament, expresses this truth even more emphatically than *εικον*, which is used elsewhere to denote Christ as the “image” of God.<sup>132</sup>

The Radiance of His Glory. In the Old Testament God revealed Himself to man as the God of glory. In both the Tabernacle<sup>133</sup> and the Temple<sup>134</sup> the glory of the Lord was present. Throughout Scripture, the glory of the Lord is synonymous with the presence of the Lord Himself. Isaiah 42.8, and other passages of Scripture, records the Lord declaring that He will not share his glory with anyone else. Thus, for anyone to claim the glory of God is blasphemous.

However, Colossians 1.15 says of Christ “He is the image of the invisible God” and Philippians 2.6 says that “He existed in the form of God.” With these very strong and clear statements concerning Christ, it is evident that He is indeed God in the flesh. As such, the glory of God exists in Christ apart from any other force or factor. He is the source of the manifestation of God’s glory. Though veiled during His incarnation, it rests in Him by His very nature. Indeed, Jesus Christ *is* the glory of God, not merely a reflection of His glory, or made in His image as mankind is.

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132. F.F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), 6.

133. Exodus 40.34-36.

134. II Chronicles 7.1-3.

Christ was revealed in all His glory to Peter, James and John as He was transfigured before them on the mountain. Apart from the clear biblical teaching that Jesus was without sin and could therefore be a sacrifice for the sin of mankind, it is also obvious that He was without sin when His glory was revealed, for where there is sin the glory of the Lord departs. Thus the image of God in Christ was pristine, without any scarring or distortion of sin.

The Exact Representation of His Nature. Being the radiance of God's glory is only one small aspect of Jesus' nature. According to the verse under consideration Jesus is the exact representation of God's nature. Children often bear some semblance of their parents; bearing certain physical characteristics and often some personality traits. Romans 3.24-26 says that God publicly displayed His own righteousness through Christ. But Jesus does not merely bear some semblance of the heavenly Father. He is not a model or an example; He is the exact representation. In John 10.30 He is recorded as claiming "I and the Father are one." Being fully God, Jesus has all the characteristics of God including immutability, life, self-existence, truth, love, eternity, perfect holiness, omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence.

Everything Jesus thought, said, or did was consistent with the nature of God. He loved righteousness and hated lawlessness. He was obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross.<sup>135</sup> He also confronted sin in both the religious and the irreligious.

Upholds All Things. With regard to His omnipotence, the last phrase of this verse states that He upholds all things by the word of His power. This phrase could, just as legitimately, be translated "...by the power of His mighty Word."<sup>136</sup> It speaks to His

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135. Philippians 2.8.

authority as much as it does His strength, if not more so. This Word is unchanging, and declares His power, His sovereignty. He is not dependent upon anything, but everything depends on Him, including a person's eternal destiny. As Paul writes in II Timothy 1.12, "I know Whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day."

The same word that calms the sea, casts out demons, raises the dead, and makes the lame to walk is the same word that keeps the earth spinning on its axis, and causes the crops to bear their fruit, and the seasons to come at their appointed times. It is the same word that pronounces guilt upon sinful humanity and upholds the demand for righteousness established in the Law. In fact, the inerrancy and infallibility of the written word is dependant upon the authority and ability of the Living Word.

"He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together."<sup>137</sup> "In Him we live and move and exist."<sup>138</sup> He is the Sustainer, Provider, and Savior of mankind. He heals the wounded and binds up the broken hearted. Without Him all would perish in a moment, all of creation, moment by moment, is sustained by Him. He carries all things, bears all things, endures all things. If He carried the weight of the world upon His shoulders, I know my brother He can carry you.<sup>139</sup>

The Image of God Portrayed in Jesus. Jesus also has all of the characteristics of man. If Jesus was not human, then surely no one ever has been.<sup>140</sup> Jesus certainly was

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136. Bruce, 6.

137. Colossians 1.17.

138. Acts 17.28.

139. From the song "*He will Carry You*" by Scott Wesley Brown.

subject to the same physical limitations as other human beings, for He had the same physiology.<sup>141</sup> In the area of intellect, conscience, emotions, and responsibility Jesus is also seen as possessing the various aspects of the image of God just as man was intended to, that is, before man's corruption by sin. Because Jesus is the exact representation of God's divine nature, it stands to reason that the image of God would be evident in His life. A study of Scripture does in fact reveal many examples of the image of God being demonstrated in the life and ministry of Christ.

Cognition. Believers are admonished in Philippians 2.5 to "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus." The word attitude is translated from the Greek φρονεω, which means to exercise the mind, i.e. entertain or have a sentiment or opinion, to be mentally disposed more or less earnestly in a certain direction.<sup>142</sup> If a person is to exercise the mind and be mentally disposed in the same direction that Jesus did, it is obvious that Jesus had a mind, thoughts and mental disposition. In this particular passage His thoughts, or attitude, was of obedience and submission. Jesus also taught in the synagogues as well as other settings, and people were astonished at His wisdom.<sup>143</sup> The act of teaching requires communication. It also requires the ability to process and organize one's thoughts in a manner that they are coherent to another person.

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140. Millard Erickson, *Introducing Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 227.

141. *Ibid.*, 225.

142. James Strong, *Abingdon's Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1984), word 5426 of the Greek Dictionary.

143. Matthew 13.54, Mark 6.2.

Luke records that Jesus grew in wisdom<sup>144</sup> and that Jesus' wisdom was greater than Solomon's.<sup>145</sup> Matthew also records a couple of occasions where Jesus knew (perceived, comprehended, understood) the thoughts of others.<sup>146</sup> Such wisdom and knowledge is evidence of the cognitive abilities of the Lord.

Creativity. Jesus possesses some of these aspects of the image of God, such as creativity, to an infinitely greater extent than man for it was through His Son that the Father made the world.<sup>147</sup> He demonstrates that He is the exact representation of the nature of God in that He was active in creation. When the Lord said in Genesis 1.26, "Let us make man in our image" He is giving evidence that all three persons of the triune God were involved in the act of creating mankind. The New Testament bears further witness to Christ's role in creation in Colossians 1.16: "For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him". The author of Hebrews clearly states that "the heavens are the work of your hands"<sup>148</sup> in reference to the Son.

Conscience and Culpability. As seen in Christ, these two aspects of the image of God are more difficult to distinguish from one another than in other people. After being baptized, Jesus was led into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit so that He could be tempted

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144. Luke 2.40, Luke 2.52.

145. Luke 11.31.

146. Matthew 9.4, Matthew 12.25.

147. Hebrews 1.2.

148. Hebrews 1.10, quoting Psalm 102.25.

by Satan.<sup>149</sup> To acknowledge that Jesus could be tempted is to acknowledge His ability to sin, to accept or succumb to temptation which makes him culpable, accountable for His actions. If Jesus could not be tempted because He is God, holy and righteous, then it detracts from Him being accountable for His actions, thus not culpable.

The account of Jesus' temptations in Matthew 4 also demonstrates that Jesus possesses a conscience. He understood that each temptation was not merely a choice between preferences, but clearly a choice between right and wrong. He claims the Word of God as the standard by which His conscience determines what is right or wrong.

Other passages of Scripture also indicate that Jesus possesses culpability and a conscience. Philippians 2.6-8 speaks of how Jesus did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, humbling Himself, and being perfectly obedient. All of these things point to a recognition of what is good, a desire to do good, and accepting responsibility for doing good, or not doing good.

John 6.38-39 records Jesus saying, "I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day." Again there is recognition of what is right, a desire to do what is right, and a sense of responsibility for doing what is right. In the previous chapter (of John's gospel) Jesus also demonstrates His conscience and culpability when He says, "My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working."<sup>150</sup>

On at least one occasion Jesus' conscience is evident with only an incidental connection to His culpability. In Matthew 9.4 He confronts the scribes, saying, "Why are

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149. Matthew 4.1.

150. John 5.17.

you thinking *evil* in your hearts?” Recognizing the evil in someone else’s heart is evidence of a conscience while accepting every person’s thoughts and attitudes to be equally valid is evidence of a damaged conscience. This instance also shows culpability only in that Jesus exercised a responsibility to confront others in their sin. He was in no way guilty of the same sin nor in any way the cause of their sin. But being constrained by love, He recognized a responsibility to confront others in their sin.

Corporeality. That Jesus had a body is an established fact. The apostle John testified that Jesus had a body when he wrote “what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands . . .”<sup>151</sup> and also “the Word became flesh.”<sup>152</sup> He later wrote in I John 4.2, “every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God.” Jesus also claimed to have an earthly body as recorded in Luke 24:39 “See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.”

Having a body means that Jesus got hungry,<sup>153</sup> He experienced thirst,<sup>154</sup> and he got tired.<sup>155</sup> However, because He had no sin, Jesus’ body was not prone to disease nor was it destined to death by “natural causes”. Yet, other than not being molested by sin there was nothing spectacular or unique about Jesus’ body. He did not have a halo over His head to designate Him as the Lord, as many medieval paintings depict. Being of the Jewish race He most likely was of average height, with olive skin and dark hair and eyes.

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151. John 1.1.

152. John 1.14.

153. Matthew 4.2 and Matthew 21.18.

154. John 19.28.

155. John 4.6.

In fact, He was so ordinary as to be overlooked or perhaps even rather unbecoming in His physical appearance. Isaiah's prophecy of Christ describes Him as having no stately form or majesty that we should look upon Him, nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him.<sup>156</sup>

Apart from community, it is Jesus' corporeality that suffered the most as He took upon Himself the penalty for man's sin. When the whip first struck the skin and tore the flesh of Jesus, when the first drop of blood oozed free like a stream through a fissure in a dam, the body of Christ became the visible recipient of all the wrath of God. Though no cancer, no germ, no viral infection could successfully attack that unspoiled body, He willingly submitted it to the violent blows of wicked humanity and subjected His flesh to the leather and iron that He had created. And the marring of sin upon humanity was transferred to His body so that, even as the image of God in man is barely recognizable, Jesus was beaten beyond recognition. Isaiah 52.14 says, "so His appearance was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men." He was distorted and marred so that man could be restored and reconciled. He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed.<sup>157</sup> And He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.<sup>158</sup>

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156. Isaiah 53.2.

157. Isaiah 53.5.

158. I Peter 2.24.

Composition. When Jesus commends His spirit into the hands of His Father<sup>159</sup> He is giving evidence of His composition being of at least a body and spirit. But composition also includes temperament and emotions. What kind of man was Jesus? How much like Him can a person today expect to be? These questions relate to His composition and whether there are any affects of sin upon that composition. While Jesus is an eternal person of the Triune God, this discussion will consider His composition, that is, His temperament and personality, only during His incarnation. “If Jesus was a true human being in the physical sense, He also was fully and genuinely human in the psychological sense. This is seen in the fact that Scripture attributes to Him the same sort of emotional and intellectual qualities that are found in other humans.<sup>160</sup>

One such component of His personality is love. John wrote that God is love.<sup>161</sup> Everything that Jesus did was motivated by who He is. The agape love is the same love of which man was created to be the recipient. Though forsaken by Adam, the human race is granted another opportunity to experience this love as Christ Himself brought it in full force during His life and ministry. The compassion He had for the multitudes (Matthew 9.36), the hungry (Matthew 15.32), the blind (Matthew 20.34), the lepers (Mark 1.41), and the bereaved (Luke 7.13) are all expressions of His love. When speaking with the rich young man in Mark 10.21, Jesus felt a love for him. He declared to His disciples that He loved them in John 13.34, and again in John 15.9. The Scriptures are replete with

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159. Luke 23.46.

160. Erickson, 226.

161. I John 4.8.

claims concerning the love of God, and this love is expressed through Jesus. A few examples would be John 3.16, Romans 5.8, I John 3.16, and Titus 3.4-6.

Another component of Jesus' personality is peace. He is known as the Prince of Peace.<sup>162</sup> In all of the biblical accounts of Jesus, He was never in a hurry or flustered, He never panicked or expressed any kind or degree of fear. He was always at complete peace with who He was, what He was doing, and the circumstances that surrounded Him. The only possible exception would be when He was in the Garden of Gethsemane and He prayed, "Abba! Father! All things are possible for You; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what You will."<sup>163</sup> But on that occasion He was already beginning to be confronted with the horrors of sin, thus affecting the image of God.

Earlier that same evening, as Jesus and the disciples were celebrating Passover, He said to them, "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful."<sup>164</sup> The peace that the Lord gives is different from the world's peace in that it is a lasting peace, not a temporary peace. It is a peace in the midst of and in spite of trouble, whereas the world's peace is a peace that denies or suppresses trouble. The Lord's peace is a peace with no regrets, whereas the peace the world offers is often gained by things which bring greater regret later. Finally, the peace the Lord gives is freely given but the world's peace is often gained and maintained through negotiation and compromise.

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162. Isaiah 9.6.

163. Mark 14.36.

164. John 14.27.

Love and peace are two aspects of the fruit of the Spirit. The others are joy, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control. While Jesus would exhibit each of these by His very nature, a few may be commented on here. In Matthew 11.29-30 Jesus references His own gentleness when He states, “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

Faithfulness is related to culpability in that if a person is faithful they are fulfilling their responsibilities and are innocent of guilt. If a person is unfaithful they are neglecting their duty and have lost their innocence. On at least two occasions Jesus said that doing the work of the One who sent Him was his purpose and sustenance.<sup>165</sup> In His high-priestly prayer Jesus claimed that He had indeed accomplished the work the Father had for Him to do.<sup>166</sup> Self control also relates to culpability, though it is primarily a matter of composition. Jesus’ self control is most evident in resisting temptation.<sup>167</sup> It is also evident on the numerous occasions when He was antagonized by the Scribes and Pharisees. Though He rebuked them with rather strong language at times, Jesus never sought retaliation nor even lost control of His own senses and reasoning.

On at least one occasion Jesus expressed anger.<sup>168</sup> The actions of overturning tables and driving people out would at first appear to indicate that Jesus has lost His self-control. Yet the making of a scourge (similar to a whip) would require some thought and

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165. John 4.34, John 9.4.

166. John 17.4.

167. Matthew 4.1-11.

168. John 2.13-16 places this event early in Jesus’ ministry while the synoptic gospels place it in the passion week.

intentionality. Coupled with the comments of Jesus, quoting Isaiah 56 and Jeremiah 7, it is quite evident that Jesus maintained self control, even though angry.

It is also worth noting what Jesus got angry about. Much can be learned of a person by seeing what makes them angry. In the case above, Jesus was angry at the desecration of that which was holy and at hypocrisy. On another occasion Jesus was angry with the Pharisees for their self-righteousness, their attempts to trap Him, and their hardness of heart.<sup>169</sup>

Grief is an emotion which, like anger, may not be sin but is the result of the sin of others. One example of this is from the passage in Mark referenced above, where Jesus was grieved at the Pharisees' hardness of heart. Jesus also expressed grief at Lazarus' grave.<sup>170</sup> Death, of course, is ultimately the result of sin; if sin had not entered the world Lazarus would not have died, and Jesus would not have had grief on this occasion. But grief is also intricately entwined with the community aspect of the image of God, and love. If there is no love, if there is no relational connection whatsoever with a person experiencing hardship or the results of sin, then grief is minimal, perhaps even non-existent.

In relation to grief, other emotions that Jesus experienced as a result of the sin of others, though not because of any sin in Himself, are frustration and sorrow. Luke records Jesus crying out, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and

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169. Mark 3.1-5.

170. John 11.30-36.

stones those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it!”<sup>171</sup>

Community. As mentioned in an earlier chapter, Jesus has existed in perfect community as Father, Son, and Spirit since eternity past. However, as this discussion is limited to Jesus as the perfect image of God during His incarnation, some examples from that period of history only will be presented.

The inherent presence of community as a requirement for love has already been mentioned. Thus it is apparent that Jesus expressed community with those who were ill or had a variety of other needs. And though He did relate to and meet needs of people who were not Jewish, there is a perceptible difference in the way He related to those of Jewish background and those who were not. According to John 1.11, “He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.” This indicates, first of all, that Jesus came primarily to those of the covenant between man and God, that is, the Jewish people. As Jesus commissioned His disciples He instructed them to go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.<sup>172</sup> Later He claims that His own mission is to the Jewish people: “But He answered and said, ‘I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.’”<sup>173</sup> On that same occasion Jesus seemed reluctant to meet the need of a non-Jewish person,<sup>174</sup> though such reluctance may have been more to draw out the faith of the woman than to exhibit any favoritism.

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171. Luke 23.34.

172. Matthew 10.5-6.

173. Matthew 15.24.

174. Matthew 15.26-27.

The second point from John 1.11 is that His own did not receive Him. True and pure community cannot be experienced when anyone is rejected. But the disability of Jesus to experience full community with His people, indeed with all people, is due solely to mankind's rejection of Him as Savior and Lord, not because of any fault or shortcoming on His part. So again, the sin of man has an affect on the image of God in Christ.

On a much smaller scale, Jesus developed community with a group of twelve men whom He specifically chose as His disciples. His relationship with these men was as varied as the men themselves were. There was one which the Scriptures identify as the one whom Jesus loved.<sup>175</sup> John was also in an inner circle of three, with Peter and James, who seem to have been closer to Christ than the remaining nine. Nevertheless, Jesus developed a sense of community with all of these men in a greater way than He has with any other. It was (is) also Jesus' desire to be in true and full community with not only the twelve, but also with all who follow Him. In fact, it is Jesus' desire that people relate to Him and to one another in the same way that He relates to the Father. This desire is expressed in His prayer as recorded in John 17.11, "that they may be one even as We are" and again in verse 21, "that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us."

Finally, the community aspect of the image of God in Christ is seen as He hung on the cross. As life was being driven from His body, Jesus instructed the disciple whom He loved, "Behold your mother."<sup>176</sup> The traditional role of the oldest son in a Jewish family was to provide for the care of the mother when the husband or father of the house

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175. John 13.23 and John 19.26.

176. John 19.27.

was no longer around to care for the mother.<sup>177</sup> Thus in that one phrase Jesus was fulfilling His familial responsibility as the oldest son to provide for His mother.

Also while hanging on the cross the community that had existed between the Heavenly Father and Christ the Son from all eternity is shattered. Jesus expressed this breach of communion when He cried out with a loud voice, saying, “*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?*” that is, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”<sup>178</sup> Blomberg expresses it thus, “shortly before He dies, He apparently senses an abrupt loss of the communion with the Father which had proved so intimate and significant throughout His life. . . . at this moment Christ bore the sins of all humanity, spiritually separating Him from His heavenly Father.”<sup>179</sup>

Jesus Restores the Image of God in Man. The very same feat that terminated the community between Jesus and the Father made possible a restoration between mankind and the Father. The radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature had to be marred in order that His image within man could be restored. This was accomplished on the cross, yet it continues to be accomplished. As individuals grow in community with Christ the process of restoration continues, so that the image of God becomes progressively more and more as it was created to be. This is also known as the process of sanctification. As II Corinthians 5.21 says, “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” He bore our sin and iniquity on the cross. He died as the perfect, once and for sacrifice for all sin.

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177. Gerald Borchert. *John 12-21*, in *New American Commentary*, volume 25b, edited by E. Ray Clendenen (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2002), 269.

178. Matthew 27.46

179. Craig Blomberg. *Matthew*, in *New American Commentary*, volume 22, ed. by David Dockery (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1992) 419.

The Apostle Paul, writing under the direction of the Holy Spirit, offers a splendid description of this process of sanctification in the second chapter of Titus:

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.<sup>180</sup>

The process of sanctification begins with salvation. Volumes have been written through the years concerning the nature of salvation so an in-depth coverage of it here is not necessary. A few points will suffice for the matter under consideration. First, the New Testament concept of “grace of God” is His beneficial activity on behalf of all humans.<sup>181</sup> Thus there is no discrimination on God’s part in relation to the availability of salvation for Jew or Gentile, slave or free, rich or poor. The grace of God was revealed and personified in Jesus Christ. This appearing was not limited to His birth but refers to His entire life, including His death, resurrection, and exaltation, which accomplished the salvation now offered to “all men.”<sup>182</sup> Second, Jesus is the Savior of all men in that all who are saved are saved only through Jesus. As the Apostle Peter declared, “There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.”<sup>183</sup> Also, though all people have opportunity for salvation through Christ, His grace must be accepted by each individual to be personally

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180. Titus 2.11-14.

181. Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr., *1,2 Timothy, Titus*, in *New American Commentary*, vol. 34, ed. by David Dockery, (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1992), 309.

182. *Ibid.*, 310.

183. Acts 4.12.

effective. Titus 3.7 recognizes that the process of restoration and the beginning of eternal life starts with the justification granted to a person by grace through Christ.

In addition to salvation, this passage from Titus 2 indicates that Jesus provides instruction. This instruction is not merely the imparting of knowledge in a mental exercise. The Greek word παιδεω, the root word translated here as “instructing”, carries the idea of training up a child, educate, discipline, chasten,<sup>184</sup> and thus would involve more than mere cognitive activity. Such discipline is often described in modern psychological terms as behavior modification.

The instruction, chastening, or behavior modification of Christ causes man to deny ungodliness and worldly desires, those things which man uses in an attempt to restore the image of God on his own. This is accomplished through the Lord’s grace which reveals the ugliness of sin that Satan had made so appealing. This grace also reveals the beauty of His holiness and the beauty of the image of God within. The Lord also instructs man to live “sensibly, righteously, and godly in the present age”. Sensibility touches on the cognitive abilities, righteously obvious refers to conscience and culpability, and godliness relates to conscience and community. Believers are also instructed to look for the blessed hope and the appearing of the Christ. Both of these phrases cause one to look forward, and to look to Christ for restoration of all things rather than attempting to bring about restoration through one’s own efforts.

The restoration of the image of God in man is also possible because “He gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed.” To redeem is to remove from the curse or penalty of sin, to set free. But it is also evident from Revelation 5.9-10, I

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184. Strong’s, number 3811, page 54 of the Greek Dictionary.

Corinthians 6.20, and other passages that man was not only released *from* the curse of sin, but was set free *to* become all that He was created to be. In other words, the redemption of Christ not only delivers man from the penalty of sin and the power of sin, but it also delivers to man the freedom and ability to accurately bear and portray the image of God.<sup>185</sup>

The work of Christ in restoring the image of God in man also involves purification. As Titus 2.14 states: to purify for Himself a people for His own possession. The purification of Christ makes one perfectly clean and free from any defilement or defect. This He did so that man, who was created to be in fellowship with God and a recipient of His blessing, would no longer be separated by sin. It is purification that brings about, or achieves, reconciliation. The thought is not that God is reconciled to the sinner, that is, adjusted to a sinful estate, but rather that the sinner is adjusted to God's holy character.<sup>186</sup> This adjustment to God's character is referenced by Paul in II Corinthians 5.17, "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." This passing away of old things includes guilt of the past. As the writer of Hebrews states, "how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"<sup>187</sup> The change in character also makes man zealous for good works, as is seen in the last part of Titus 2.14. No longer in bondage to sin by redemption, and no longer having a rebellious proclivity for sin through purification and reconciliation, the Believer in Christ is exempt from

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185. Romans 8.1-5.

186. Chafer, 63.

187. Hebrews 9.14.

distorted perceptions of reality that entice with sinful desires. The follower of Christ has, instead, a hunger for doing the good works which have been prepared from the foundations of the world.<sup>188</sup>

With salvation man's destiny changes. With instruction man's, understanding changes. With redemption, man's ability changes. And with purification, man's desire changes. These four things occur in that moment called conversion, or justification.

Moving into chapter three of Titus,<sup>189</sup> it is evident that the restoration wrought by Christ involves even more of a continuing transformation. In the first two verses there is a restoration of dominion as there is a proper recognition of authority and proper responses to authority.

Verses 3-6 discuss the restoration of composition in the image of God. It should be noted that verse three is written in the past tense, indicating that a change has indeed taken place. Dr. Ron Hawkins has taught, "we must refuse to be named by the things that are absent. Rather, be named by the things that are present, by the overflow. Don't define yourself by what used to be, but by what is and what will be."<sup>190</sup> The next chapter will shed some light into what life is like when a person is living according to what Christ declares is, rather than living according to the distorted perceptions of reality and the marred image of God that are so familiar to the human experience.

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188. Ephesians 2.10.

189. Titus 3.1-8.

190. Class Notes from Dr. Ron Hawkins, "Growth and Development of the Contemporary Minister", Liberty Theological Seminary, May 2003.

## Chapter Five: What the Restored Image of God is Like

The redemption offered through Christ enables the image of God in a person to be restored. This enablement comes through the release from bondage, but also through the Holy Spirit. Moreover, the Holy Spirit goes beyond enabling to providing a desire for that restoration and the process of sanctification.

When a child is born he is helpless. He is allowed to do things he will not be allowed to do as he grows up. Within that child, though, there is also an innate desire for certain things, like the ability to communicate and to walk. That desire to walk does not mean he will immediately begin walking one day, nor does it mean that when he learns to walk he will never stumble. It does mean that he has a nature that causes him to desire normal mobility and to train himself for it. Such is the Christian life. The new nature of Christ in the believer calls him to press on toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3.12-14).

Paul was forthright when he wrote to the Ephesian church, “Therefore be imitators of God.”<sup>191</sup> Such forthrightness, however, is consistent with Jesus’ own teaching when He said, “Therefore you are to be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.”<sup>192</sup> Other passages of Scripture teach God’s people to “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful;”<sup>193</sup> and to be holy even as God Himself is holy.<sup>194</sup> While these lofty admonitions may sound noble, they may also sound impossible. They are possible, though, because of two very important points. First, the character of God gives assurance

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191. Ephesians 5.1.

192. Matthew 5.48.

193. Luke 6.36.

194. Leviticus 11.44, 19.2, and 20.7. Also I Peter 1.16.

that He will never demand what He has not made possible. Second, there are four simple, Scriptural truths which make progress toward the goal of being like Christ possible.

The first truth is that man is enabled to be like Christ by the grace of God. The grace of God frees man from bondage to sin. While in bondage to sin the desires of the flesh were being served. But Romans 6.14 says, “sin will not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.” A few verses later, in verse 18: “having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.” The grace of God also supplies the strength for godliness. Philippians 4.13 says, “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.” II Corinthians 12.9 says, “My grace is sufficient for you.” The grace of God also equips believers for every good work, and certainly a life of holiness and Christ-likeness is a good work. Grace is not a result of good work, but rather good works are evidence of grace. Finally, it is the grace of God that provides the gifts of His Spirit for service.

The second truth is that believers are empowered for holy living by Spirit of God. Jesus was empowered by the Spirit Who gave Him strength to resist temptation in the wilderness and anointed Him for ministry.<sup>195</sup> Since Jesus was empowered by the Holy Spirit it would seem best for believers today to be so empowered also. Jesus promises that it is to be so in Acts 1.8: “you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.” This same promise includes the granting of boldness and confidence to be His witnesses through the power of the Holy Spirit. Zechariah 4.6 says, “Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ says the Lord

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195. Matthew 3.16 – 4.1; Luke 4.18.

of hosts.” And Paul, writing to Timothy, said, “For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.”<sup>196</sup> It is the power of the Spirit that makes ministry effective for the Spirit grants wisdom in what, where, and how to minister. The Spirit also brings conviction to the heart of others.

The third truth is that believers are adequately equipped through the Word of God for bearing the image of God. When Jesus was tempted of Satan He rebuked Him with the Word of God. The granting of faith and salvation is by hearing the Word of God.<sup>197</sup> It is through His Word that God reveals Himself to man. Believers are equipped with the knowledge of His will through the Word, for indeed it would be impossible to walk in obedience to His will if His will was not known. The purpose of the Word of God is summed up well in II Timothy 3.17: “That the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

The final truth to be considered here is that believers are to be encouraged toward the goal of holiness through Christ’s Church. Jesus loved the church and gave Himself up for her.<sup>198</sup> It would behoove those who claim His Name, therefore, to also love the church. A healthy church provides a great environment for spiritual growth and is a great assistance in the pursuit of being like Christ. The church is also a source of encouragement and comfort. Believers are thus admonished in Hebrews 10.24-25: “let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the

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196. II Timothy 1.7.

197. Romans 10.17.

198. Ephesians 5.25.

more as you see the day drawing near.” The church is also a place for accountability and admonition, as well as providing opportunities to serve and to give.

Thus one sees that an individual who has experienced the redemptive work of Christ, and has been declared holy by Him also has the ability to be holy, and to bear faithfully the image of God in which he was created. That individual’s culpability is also affected at the moment of salvation, for not only is a person enabled to bear the image of God more effectively, and given an innate desire to do so, but that person also becomes responsible for bearing the image the God in a faithful and true way. But the image of God, though restored through Christ, can never be the same as it was before sin—at least not on this side of heaven.

The image of God in man, even in its original, unblemished, created state had some very important differences with Jesus, the very Image of God. Though possessing cognitive abilities, man was never omniscient. Nor has man ever been omnipresent or omnipotent, even before sin marred the image. The image of God in man has always included His corporeality, while the corporeality of Jesus was but for a brief time. Thus, because man never was an exact representation of the divine nature it should be expected that there will remain significant differences though restored by the grace of God through faith in Christ. Because these differences were alluded to in earlier chapters there is no need to discuss them further here. Even when compared to itself, however, the image of God in man will be different than it was at creation and certainly different than it was before redemption. Just what the image of God is like after restoration is worthy of consideration for, as mentioned above, it has become the new responsibility of the believer.

Differences. There are basically two kinds of differences between the restored image of God in man and the image of God as created. First, there are differences which redemption does not restore. Second, there are differences which redemption does restore as far as possible in a fallen world, and which indeed if all creation were restored, these factors would also be restored. Just as there are facets of Jesus' divine nature that were impacted by the sin of others, though He Himself was untainted, there are aspects of the image of God within man that will bear the marks of being surrounded by sin though having been restored.

The one aspect of the image of God in man that is most likely not restored through redemption is corporeality. Because of sin, the body is susceptible to illness and eventually death. In spite of redemption, man is still condemned to suffer various physical ailments and death. Though there are times when the Lord may provide a miraculous healing, or even raise an individual from the dead, such occurrences are rare. The normal experience is that a person who has cancer, cirrhosis of the liver, high cholesterol, a sexually transmitted disease, or some other ailment will still have such ailments after redemption. Scars, deformities, tattoos, etc. are also still very present after redemption. Because the body one is born with is not the same body one has for eternity<sup>199</sup> it can be said that the present body is temporal. Consequently, various issues of health and vitality can be classified as temporal consequences of sin rather than eternal. Redemption will always reverse the eternal consequences of sin, but often does not reverse the temporal. If the community aspect of the image of God has been affected by the severance of a relationship due to murder, or if the cognitive or creative aspects

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199. I Corinthians 15.42-57.

have been affected by drug use (which would arguably be a corporeal issue) then redemption through Christ is not going to be able to bring full restoration.

In considering those areas that may be restored, but still affected by sin in the surrounding environment, community and composition would be at the forefront. One dishonest person, or one person who gossips, or one who is full of arrogance, will have a certain and serious repercussion on all relationships around them, even if others in the relationships are honest, discreet, and humble. If a person commits adultery they will have severely damaged, even destroyed community with a multitude of people innocent of any sin related to the adultery. A thief violates the sense of trust that is necessary for community. In fact, the restoration of the image of God is the basis of all six of the Ten Commandments that deal with one's relationship with others.

The restoration of composition is affected by the sin of others as much as community. If one person behaves in an evil way, then others will experience anger, grief, fear, and other emotions that are not a part of the pristine composition of man at the time of creation. A defiled sense of creativity in one may provoke a sense of shame, or sensuality, or even self-righteousness in others. In extreme cases the effect upon the temperament of another may cause chronic issues of depression, despair, anxiety, or other emotional dysfunctions.

Other aspects of the image of God may also be hindered in the restoration process because of the sin of others. The conscience may be blunted or dulled by exposure to various vices. Conversely, the conscience may be deceived into condemning a believer for things the Lord does not condemn him for. This may occur through the legalism or manipulations of those who espouse a religion based on human traditions rather than a

Scriptural or Christological based “religion”. Creativity may struggle to be restored because of negative peer pressure, the applause of men encouraging decadent ideas.

Cognition can also be negatively affected by the sin of others. For many centuries people were taught that the world was flat. Other false notions have been perpetuated by traditions and those whose desire to control others exceeds their desire for truth.

Finally, the prevalence of the evolutionary theory affects culpability in that it teaches that there is no God to whom man is responsible. Furthermore, well meaning parents can be just as insidious by not teaching their children to accept and fulfill responsibility. In either case, it must be noted that a person’s responsibility to God and others is not changed, but only that their understanding of it, and thus their ability to practice it, has changed.

Progression. While the eternal consequences of sin are reversed immediately upon placing one’s trust in Christ, and consequent redemption, the restoration of the various facets of the image of God is a process. This process of transformation into conformity with the image of Christ continues throughout one’s life and is commonly referred to as the process of sanctification. At the time of physical death, when the person vacates the body and is immediately present with the Lord, the Lord completes whatever may be yet lacking and the person is instantaneously made like Christ. This is commonly referred to as glorification.

The process of sanctification occurs through several avenues. As discussed earlier, a person is enabled to imitate Christ primarily through the work of the Holy Spirit. Additionally, the Word of God, the fellowship and accountability of fellow believers, and an awakened conscience provide support in the process of transforming an

individual into a more faithful image bearer. The Word of God sets the standard of righteousness by which the Holy Spirit convicts and/or encourages. Scripture also provides examples of other believers and how they dealt with various issues in the transformation process, thus providing both encouragement and warning for contemporary believers. Fellowship and accountability of other believers provides differing perspectives on both Scripture and life experience. This provides objectivity at times when a person may be too close to a situation to see it for what it really is. It also provides responsibility at times when the believer may be tempted to justify a sinful response to temptation. Being part of a family of believers also allows a person to demonstrate to others love, service, purity, and other aspects of image bearing.

It must be noted that this process of sanctification, or restoration, of the various aspects of the image of God occurs differently in each individual. In the case of the demoniac from the land of the Gerasenes,<sup>200</sup> there was an immediate restoration of community, corporeality, and culpability, cognition and composition. Previously the man had been living among the tombs, isolated from others which relates to community. Screaming among the tombs was an obvious anomaly of communication, which is evidence of a marred community and cognition. That he needed to be bound (yet was not subdued) also relates to community, but it relates to culpability as well. Distorted culpability is also expressed through the demon's insolent question, "What do we have to do with each other?" The man's damaged corporeality is graphically displayed in that he would cut himself with stones.

After Jesus restored this man, however, he was observed "sitting down, clothed and in his right mind." His composition had been restored because his demeanor was

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200. Mark 5.1 – 16.

changed—he was sitting, showing rest, peace, submission and humility. This also gives evidence of community and culpability being at least in the process of changing. His corporeality was transformed—he was clothed, which shows modesty and the ceasing of cutting shows a sense of preservation and stewardship of the body. And he was restored cognitively—he was in his right mind. In spite of these immediate transformations, this man certainly continued to grow and change in all aspects of the image of God.

Another example of restoration not occurring immediately or even completely in every aspect of the image of God is in the life of Timothy, Paul’s protégé. Timothy apparently had some stomach ailments<sup>201</sup> (corporeality) for which Paul gave some unlicensed medical advice. He also seems to have struggled with compositional, conscience, and cognitive issues,<sup>202</sup> for Paul offers many exhortations and admonitions in that regard.

In contemporary individuals a person may cease the use of tobacco immediately upon salvation, yet struggle for months or years to overcome foul language or coveting. Another may be free from coveting or foul language from the moment of redemption, yet struggle for a time with substance abuse. Both individuals are experiencing an immediate restoration in some areas while also undergoing a more progressive restoration in other areas. Only the Father in His sovereign wisdom and through the work of His indwelling Spirit can account for the path and pattern of restoration in each person’s life. However, let all be warned of the danger of tarnishing community by demanding the growth and restoration in a brother’s life take the same course and speed as their own.

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201. I Timothy 5.23.

202. I Timothy 1.18-19; 4.12ff; 6.11-12; II Timothy 1.6-7; and 2.22-23.

The Restored Image Exemplified. As mentioned above, when a person is redeemed through Christ, they are enabled to faithfully bear the image of God and possess a true desire to do so. There is also a responsibility before God and toward God for bearing His image in a true and faithful manner. This is summed up in the statement, “Therefore be imitators of God.”<sup>203</sup> Still, one must consider how to convey the image of God in such a way that He is properly imitated.

It has already been discussed that man is a responsible being, having culpability. Part of man’s responsibility, in addition to exercising dominion over the rest of creation, is to bear the image of God accurately and faithfully. An individual that is hired as an advertiser for a company is responsible for portraying that company and its products in a true and accurate manner. An advertiser would not have the right, without the company’s permission, to make purple arches for the famous hamburger company instead of golden arches, nor depict the popular green agricultural equipment as being blue. Since believers are, in essence, ambassadors of Christ,<sup>204</sup> the character of Christ must be truly and accurately represented in the Christian life. Because such representation is possible and even desired does not make it automatically so. Four attitudes, conscious decisions related to composition, are extremely useful in fulfilling this responsibility.

The first attitude is to bear the image of God with intentionality. In Deuteronomy 10.12-13 ancient Israel was asked by the Lord (through Moses), “What does the Lord your God require from you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the Lord's commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today

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203. Ephesians 5.1.

204. II Corinthians 5.20.

for your good?” It is a seemingly simple request, yet these things cannot be accomplished by accident. A conscious commitment (stemming from the cognitive) must be made to accurately reflect the image of God, especially in light of the fact that sin has corrupted it. Such intentionality necessitates the forsaking of other things. When certain things are chosen the opportunity for other things is forfeited. If a man chooses to marry a certain girl he cannot also marry another one; the marriage to one forfeits the opportunity for the other. Jesus expressed it by saying, “You cannot serve both God and wealth.”<sup>205</sup> Thus a person cannot pursue both the things of this world and the things of God; or effectively display the image of God while at the same time displaying the glories of self.

Another attitude that facilitates bearing the image of God with the accuracy is humility. The prophet Micah, on the Lord’s behalf, asked the people of his generation, “What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” Rather than walking humbly, the natural (sinful) inclination is to justify one’s sin, expressing pride and self-sufficiency. Attempting to bargain with God for special favors or presuming to assign human perspectives and rationalization to God regarding sinful circumstances is the antithesis of humility. To bear the image of God does not mean to view oneself as being God, for He certainly will not share His glory with another.<sup>206</sup> Rather, the followers of Christ are to view themselves as sons and saints, to be sure, but also as servants of God.

Reverence is another attitude that is beneficial in the effort to bear the image of God accurately. In the Old Testament, the priests were not allowed to touch the Ark of

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205. Luke 16.13.

206. Isaiah 42.8 and 48.11.

the Covenant when they moved it.<sup>207</sup> This was to remind them of the holiness of God and to revere Him for He is not to be treated as common. The image of God is to be treated with at least the same, if not more, reverence and awe as the Ark.

Finally, to fully and accurately reveal the image of God to the rest of creation requires an attitude of transparency. Jesus said in Matthew 5.16: “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” Just as the chimney of a kerosene lamp must be clean in order to be transparent, so the life of a follower of Christ must be clean so that the light of Christ can shine through. Faithfulness in bearing the image requires a life of sanctification, a life unclouded by the sin that so easily obstructs the view of “Christ in you, the hope of glory.”<sup>208</sup> The transparency needed to show the world how to live as man was created to requires both holiness and purity. II Timothy 2.20-21 says, “Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.”

With the enabling and the desire of the indwelling Holy Spirit, and the responsibility enhanced by the four aforementioned conscious attitudes, the image of God in man will not only be restored, but will be evident to all. Thus as each aspect of God’s image within man is considered, a picture of what the restored image of God would look like can be pieced together.

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207. Exodus 25.14; II Samuel 6.6-7.

208. Colossians 1.27.

Creativity. Many people claim that creativity, imagination, and the arts are evil. Orthodox Jews disparage photos. The Amish, (and others of their worldview, such as Mennonites, etc.) are often known as “plain people” because they eschew much in the way of art, music, and creativity. Christians who are otherwise intent on developing a biblical lifestyle may, almost unwittingly, form a disconnect between their understanding of God and Christianity and their appreciation for the arts. Of all the aspects of the image of God, creativity—along with composition and corporeality—are seemingly the most neglected in contemporary Christianity. Francis Schaeffer wrote, “As evangelical Christians we have tended to relegate art to the very fringe of life.”<sup>209</sup>

Schaeffer does not accept what is as what ought to be however, and in his work “Art and the Bible” he builds an excellent case for the arts as a vital part of the Christian life. While reminding the reader of the art forms in the Bible—statuary and engravings in the tabernacle and temple, poetry and music in the Psalms, and even hymns in the early church to name but a few—he points out that such art was for the praise of God, but was also the work of men under the instruction of God. He further states that:

A work of art has value in itself. For some this principle may seem too obvious to mention, but for many Christians it is unthinkable. And yet if we miss this point we miss the very essence of art. Art is not something we merely analyze or value for its intellectual content. It is something to be enjoyed. The Bible says that the art work in the tabernacle and temple was for beauty.<sup>210</sup>

Temperament and emotions are the basis of songs, poetry, paintings, and other forms of art. Furthermore, art often addresses, or stirs up the emotions of those who experience it. As all art forms touch upon the emotions, when there was no sin all

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209. Francis Schaeffer, *Art and the Bible*. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Press, 2006), 14.

210. *Ibid.*, 50.

creative expressions were beautiful, stirring only those emotions which are good and right.

The very concept of beauty also indicates that there is a distinction made between what is beautiful and what is not. Though creating something beautiful may not be within the abilities of every person, learning to distinguish what is beautiful certainly is. Before sin entered into creation everything was beautiful, so an ability to make the distinction between what is beautiful and what isn't was not an issue.

As just discussed, creativity is inherently intertwined with composition, but it is equally intertwined with cognition. The mind cannot imagine what it cannot understand, or at least conceive. If a musician desires to compose a new song to express an idea or emotion an understanding of music will be necessary lest there be nothing created but noise. If an engineer desires to design a new machine their must be, at the very least, an understanding of the purpose of the machine and the need it is designed to meet.

The redeemed person, then will be one who has learned to be discerning in regard to music, literature, design, drama, and other expressions of creativity. Creativity will not be given a free reign in the life of a follower of Christ, nor will all forms of art be allowed an audience. Paul admonished the church in Corinth, "We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ."<sup>211</sup>

Creative expressions which glorify man rather than God, which arouse the baser desires or faulty emotions will be shunned. Those manifestations of creativity which reflect the Lord and His nature and attributes are embraced and encouraged. As Paul encouraged the church in Ephesus, "speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and

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211. II Corinthians 10.5.

spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord.”<sup>212</sup> Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs require creativity. Paul also wrote to the church at Philippi, “whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.”<sup>213</sup> When the mind is set on these things the objects and ideas that are created will result in providing a true and accurate portrayal of the image of God in that person’s life.

Cognition. As the image of God in a Believer’s life relates to cognition, several things should be noted. First, the mind should be clear and as objective as possible, not clouded by faulty reasoning. I Corinthians 15.34 admonishes “become sober minded as you ought.” This would include being free from chemical substances such as alcohol or other drugs, but also being free from stress and other factors or emotions which disrupt clear thinking.

Thinking should also be based on truth—a recognition of absolute truth, not deceived by lies of the world—humanism, evolution, etc. This is consistent with the teaching of Romans 12.2, “do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind . . .” Furthermore, the mind should be trained, educated to the highest degree possible, not left to waste away on shallow thinking. “I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you. Do not be as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding.”<sup>214</sup> The renewing and training of the mind requires that some things be refused. A Christian mind demands

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212. Ephesians 5.19.

213. Philippians 4.8.

214. Psalm 32.8-9a.

conscious negation; a Christian mind is impossible without the discipline of refusal.<sup>215</sup> The truth of II Corinthians 10.5, about taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, is just as applicable to cognitive restoration as it is to creative restoration.

The Lord's instruction may come from formal or informal education, but the purpose is the same, to prepare the mind for action, as I Peter 1.13 says, "therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." In preparing the mind for action, one is not only developing the ability to use thinking skills but is also preparing for the opposition of the world against Christ and all that is His. Jesus promised "I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute."<sup>216</sup> Paul reminded Timothy of another goal of instruction when he wrote, "But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith."<sup>217</sup>

For the cognition to be properly developed in an individual, the mind must be set on things of God. When Peter did not have his mind set on the things of God he was sharply rebuked by Jesus.<sup>218</sup> The Scriptures further teach "set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth,"<sup>219</sup> and "the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace."<sup>220</sup>

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215. Kent R. Hughes, *Disciplines of a Godly Man* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 73.

216. Luke 21.15.

217. I Timothy 1.5.

218. Matthew 16.23.

219. Colossians 3.2.

220. Romans 8.6.

Finally, the restored mind must be singular, that is, not divided or wavering. James refers to a double minded man as being unstable in all his ways.<sup>221</sup> And Isaiah promises peace to those who are of a steadfast mind.<sup>222</sup>

Conscience. There is no reason for any person who has been redeemed by Christ to not have a completely restored conscience. The key to man's conscience is the ability to choose right and wrong. Such ability was crippled by sin, but in Christ it has been fully restored. As mentioned in the last chapter, "how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"<sup>223</sup> Not only has the blood of Jesus cleansed the conscience of a believer, but the Holy Spirit has also begun to indwell the believer, to teach<sup>224</sup> and to guide into all truth.<sup>225</sup> Additionally, the Word of God, being "living and active and sharper than any two edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit,"<sup>226</sup> cooperates with the conscience to help the individual make wise decisions. With these resources available, there is no reason for a person to have a defiled conscience. And rather than feeling shame, the person who maintains a good conscience will bring shame to others who revile them for pursuing righteousness, as

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221. James 1.8.

222. Isaiah 26.3.

223. Hebrews 9.14.

224. John 14.26.

225. John 16.13.

226. Hebrews 4.12.

Peter wrote in his first epistle, “keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.”<sup>227</sup>

Though a person may remember the sin of their past, there is no reason for their conscience to be damaged by it. Satan may attempt to defile the conscience of a Christian by reminding them of old sins that have already been dealt with by the blood of Jesus. In such cases, it is important for the Christian to exercise the cognitive and compositional aspects of the image of God and be reminded of the truth of his cleansing and rest in the promises of God, dispelling the fear and the shame. On other occasions a person may defile their conscience by new sin after previously being cleansed by the blood of Christ. In these instances there is a need for renewed repentance and commitment to Christ. If one but avails himself of Paul’s admonition to Timothy, to “flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart”<sup>228</sup> the conscience will remain clear and strong. To do otherwise invites tragedy, or as Paul called it, shipwreck.<sup>229</sup>

As mentioned in chapter two, the religious nature of man is evidence of the conscience. Participation in and devotion to various religions will not, however, allow a person to maintain a clean conscience. There will be a recurring doubt and anxiety that one’s religious practice will be sufficient to achieve the desired goal. Christianity is radically different. The relationship with Christ and the indwelling Holy Spirit enable a person to hold “to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.”<sup>230</sup> When a person has

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227. I Peter 3.16.

228. II Timothy 2.22.

229. I Timothy 1.19.

230. I Timothy 3.9.

been properly instructed in these things they will have a conscience that is clear, clean, and strong, providing a more accurate view of the image of God.

That picture can be most visible when one remembers that corporeality often reflects the condition of the other aspects of God's image. A person whose conscience is defiled will have low self esteem which will be demonstrated corporeally by lack of good hygiene, an emphasis on outward appearances to detract others from looking deeper, or immodesty, which betrays their shame. On the other hand, the person with a clean and clear conscience will have a healthy self esteem which serves as a catalyst for good hygiene, and modest attire without excessive devotion to appearances.

Community. Everyone lives with some kind of community. The community experienced, sought, developed by those with a restored image of God is vastly different from the community without Christ.

The first thing to note is that relationships involving redeemed people are marked by love. Jesus Himself said, "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."<sup>231</sup> Paul recognized the importance of love in relationships when he wrote to the church in Thessalonica, "may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also do for you."<sup>232</sup>

As Jesus demonstrated, love involves both servanthood and giving, as well as forgiving. Of course no relationship can be healthy or last long without forgiveness. When believers practice forgiveness toward others (whether the other is a believer or not) the truest picture of God is being presented, the image is being most faithfully portrayed.

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231. John 13.35.

232. I Thessalonians 3.12.

A relationship cannot include true love without giving. The most popular verse of Scripture proclaims that “God so loved the world that He gave . . .”<sup>233</sup> As Leonard Carmichael once wrote, “You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving.”<sup>234</sup> “If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,’ and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?”<sup>235</sup>

Related to giving is giving of one’s self, or servanthood. To express humility and meeting the needs of others is following the example of Christ and portraying a faithful encounter with the image of God in man. Followers of Christ are, through love, to serve one another.<sup>236</sup>

On a personal level then, the restored image will be seen in friendships that are deeper and more meaningful than those among non-believers. There is no room for factions, partiality, or cliques in the life of a believer. Indeed, a circle of friends in fellowship with one another is seen as a family. In regards to family (the biological kind) husbands and wives will have a deeper intimacy and higher level of trust than the marriages of non-believers. A man that is earnest about portraying the image of God will love his wife as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her. If a lady is intent on portraying Christ she will voluntarily submit to her husband’s loving leadership in the home.<sup>237</sup> This demonstrates a reversal of the damage of sin done to marriage as

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233. John 3.16.

234. [www.quoteworld.org/glsearch](http://www.quoteworld.org/glsearch).

235. James 2.15-16.

236. Galatians 15.23.

expressed in the Lord's decree, "your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."<sup>238</sup> If the image of God is truly being manifest in each spouse's life divorce is non-existent.

Another expression of community being restored is the absence of racism and other types of discrimination. Child abuse and spousal abuse ceases when the image of God is accurately portrayed, in fact, all manner of war—large and small—ceases. One must be mindful, however, that as with other aspects of the image of God, the restoration of community is greatly impacted by the fact that sin is still present in this world.

Language is another factor in showing that the image of God is restored in a person. James wrote of the inappropriateness of cursing a brother who has also been made in the image of God.<sup>239</sup> Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus, "Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear."<sup>240</sup> Part of giving grace to those who hear is to always speak the truth, but as Paul has said, the truth is to be spoken in love.<sup>241</sup>

Another way in which community is restored as a result of the redemption in Christ is the reversal of the curse at the Tower of Babel. In Genesis 11 "the Lord confused the language of the whole earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth." On the day of Pentecost that curse was overturned as

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237. Ephesians 5.22-33.

238. Genesis 3.16.

239. James 3.8-12.

240. Ephesians 4.29.

241. Ephesians 4.15.

“they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.”<sup>242</sup> The response of those who heard indicates that the Spirit was indeed in the process of restoring and reconciling community among all.

“And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God.”<sup>243</sup>

Composition. Variety is the most integral part of composition of mankind. Thus there is no reason to expect that restoration will accomplish the same end result in every person. There are no two people that are exactly alike in temperament and personality, either before redemption or after. Neither is any person before redemption the same as after! Just as the ontology of Adam and Eve changed when they sinned, so the ontology of a person changes when they accept Christ as Savior.

As mentioned in chapter three, fear is an emotion that exists only because of sin. But redemption restores the composition of man by getting rid of sin. The Scriptures make this very clear on at least three occasions: II Timothy 1.7 says, “For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.” I John 4.18 declares, “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear.” Finally, Proverbs 28.1 states, “The wicked flee when no one is pursuing, but the righteous are bold as a lion.” From these verses it is obvious that one universal change that occurs to a person’s composition as a result of redemption is the acquisition of courage, or boldness. This is also evident in

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242. Acts 2.4.

243. Acts 2.8-11.

the lives of the Peter and John and others in the early church, as Acts 4.31 states, “they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.”

Even though one’s demeanor moves in the direction of boldness upon redemption, there are still varying degrees of boldness; not every person will acquire the same amount. Though fear is “cast out” by the love of Christ, because sin still affects the daily experience of every person, there are times when there may still be fear.

In addition to the acquisition of boldness, the believer in Christ will “pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness”<sup>244</sup> along with the other facets of Christ’s composition discussed in the previous chapter. These will develop over a period of time as other aspects of the image of God do, and to varying degrees in each individual.

Culpability. Strangely enough, man is responsible before God and accountable to God whether redeemed or not. There are two important differences, though. First, having been redeemed, a person knows that they are responsible. Prior to redemption an individual is responsible, they just don’t know whom they are responsible to. In coming to Christ for salvation, a person recognizes their sin is against Holy God, and it is He they have offended with their sinfulness. This understanding of whom one is responsible to will serve as a basis for restoring other aspects of the image of God. For instance, knowing that one is accountable to the Lord has an impact on both community and conscience, as well as other areas. When Joseph was tempted by the seduction of Potiphar’s wife he recognized that to succumb to her would be not only a betrayal of his

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244. I Timothy 6.11.

family's values, and that it would be a sin not only to his master, but that it would be a "sin against God."<sup>245</sup>

The second difference is that a person, having been redeemed, is now able to fulfill their responsibilities. As mentioned above, believers are empowered for holy living by the Spirit of God. Though the various responsibilities of man remained even in his sinful condition, that sinful condition prevented him from fulfilling the responsibilities. In the most general terms, man is responsible for bearing the image of God faithfully and accurately, in spite of his sinful condition. As has already been discussed, this is impossible in man's pre-redemption condition. Man is also responsible for exercising dominion over the rest of creation. Yet in an unredeemed state that responsibility was twisted into exploitation and abuse. The redeemed person is going to exercise dominion in a way that exhibits good stewardship and benevolence. One area where this is most noticeable is that of environmentalism. The person who has experienced redemption will seek ways to practice recycling and other means of conserving natural resources, yet will recognize that the earth's resources are for man's use and not to be the object of worship.

A third difference in the culpability of man before redemption and the culpability of man after redemption is the understanding that man is responsible for himself and his actions. When Adam was confronted by God concerning his sin, he denied responsibility and attempted to place the blame on his wife (the woman . . . she gave to me from the tree) and even on God (whom You gave to be with me).<sup>246</sup> The distorted image of God refuses to accept responsibility and bemoans itself as a victim. But redemption causes a

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245. Genesis 39.9.

246. Genesis 3.12.

person to recognize their sin, own it, confess it, and repent of it. In fact, it could be said that accepting responsibility for one's own actions is a necessary part of obtaining redemption.

Furthermore, the redeemed person is going to hold others responsible for their actions. In chapter three, it was pointed out that to deny accountability for wrong is to deny that person's humanity. Those who attempt to blame society or other factors for a person's misdeeds are, in a subtle way, assigning to that person a less than human status. Thus the redeemed person will hold others responsible for their misdeeds and well as their deeds.

Corporeality. As mentioned above, the body is still susceptible to illness and eventual death in spite of redemption. Scars, deformities, tattoos, etc. are also still very present after redemption. Though these effects of sin on the body do not generally change upon redemption, how one cares for the body does. The use of the body also changes when a person comes to Christ, and determines to bear the image of God more faithfully. Romans 6.12-13 speaks to both the care and use of the body:

Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

Followers of Christ care for their body because they recognize that though the flesh itself is not sinful, it does often reflect the condition of the soul. They also recognize that the body the Lord gave them is both a temple of the indwelling Spirit as well as a tool for carrying out their ministry and purpose in life. As such, stewardship of the body is a high priority for the child of God. Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to

idolatry.<sup>247</sup> Poor health may prevent many physical activities that are required for conducting the ministry to which God has called a person. Those activities which accelerate the deterioration of the body will be avoided, while activities that promote good health and long life will be pursued. Abstaining from sexual relationships outside of marriage are not only expressed as the clear will of God,<sup>248</sup> but will also protect the body from sexually transmitted disease. Keeping one's body free from alcohol, for instance, can make the body healthier in itself, but also keeps the body healthy by not exposing it to danger due to poor judgment that results from drinking alcohol. Exercise and diet can also help keep the body healthy and useful throughout the life span.

There will also be positive changes to the body as other aspects of the image of God are further restored through the sanctification process. Compositional factors such as worry and anxiety cause various health problems, and are opposed to the character the Lord seeks to build in a person's life.<sup>249</sup> As faith and trust in the Lord increases there is a corresponding decrease in worry, anxiety, and stress. Consequently there is also the alleviation of hypertension, and other disorders. Proverbs 14.30 says, "A tranquil heart is life to the body, but passion is rotteness to the bones."

When a person is redeemed and the image of God is restored, there is a change in the use of one's body. For a person still in sin, the body is primarily perceived as theirs to do with as these please. Though a person who is uncommitted to Christ may practice a variety of healthy behaviors, their reasons for doing so are for their own benefit and pleasure. But for a follower of Christ the body is a means of expressing the image of

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247. Galatians 3.4.

248. I Thessalonians 4.3.

249. Matthew 6.34; Philippians 4.6.

God. Jesus told His followers to “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”<sup>250</sup> Presenting the members of the body as instruments of righteousness means, among other things, that the body is used to express creativity, cognition, and community in ways that glorify the Lord. The body is used in making all forms of art—from writing to performing. The body is used to carry out the concepts of cognitive endeavors—architecture, mechanization, construction, etc. The body is used to express community—from meeting needs of the less fortunate to giving a hug or holding the hand of fellowship. Believers also recognize the body is a tool for honoring and serving the Lord. “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.”<sup>251</sup> This attitude was evident in Paul’s life as he testifies “I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.”<sup>252</sup>

Spanning the concept of both use and care is how one dresses. Bearing the image of God means that everything a person does is to portray the Lord and draw attention to Him rather than to self. When a person gives inordinate attention to their own appearance and causes others to focus on appearance, that person is drawing attention away from God and toward them. Such a behavior is contrary to both bearing the image faithfully, and to the clear teaching of Scripture. Your adornment must not be merely external<sup>253</sup>

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250. Matthew 5.16.

251. I Corinthians 6.19-20.

252. Philippians 1.20.

253. I Peter 3.3.

The Scriptures also say in I Timothy 2.9 – 10, “Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments, but rather by means of good works, as is proper for women making a claim to godliness. Clothing the body with modesty and discreetness is also applicable to men. The concept carries the idea of not drawing undue attention to the body, or encouraging others to worship the creature rather than the Creator.

Many other points could be discussed concerning the accurate and faithful portrayal of all aspects of the restored image of God in a person’s life, but suffice it to say that as a believer grows in their relationship with Christ, their life will be such that even non-believers will recognize them as saints.

## Chapter Six: Partnering with Christ in the Restoration of the Soul

Since God intentionally created man in His image, man needs to be intentional about bearing that image. Those who have not been reconciled and restored do not bear the image intentionally for they do not even know that they should. They are groping in darkness. But those who have been reconciled to God through Christ are also all too often not intentional about bearing the image of God in a faithful and accurate manner. Perhaps this is because they too do not understand their responsibility in this matter. Perhaps they understand the “what”—they know they are to be like Christ—but they don’t understand the how.

Significance of the Church in Restoring the Image. Because of God’s great mercy toward mankind, one of the aspects of being made in His image is community. And one of the benefits of community is that the followers of Christ can assist one another in understanding and accomplishing the “what” and the “how” of bearing His image. This would obviously also require the cognitive and culpable aspects of the image of God, which He has also granted to man, along with the other aspects of His image. But the most important aspect is community, which allows for people to learn from one another.

The most basic human community for learning is the family. “From the earliest days of the human race in the Garden of Eden the family has been the most important educational agency on earth. It is designed so by God, and the Hebrews never got away from the centrality of the home in the educational experience.”<sup>254</sup> Apart from the family, the greatest community for learning to bear the image of God is the church. “Christ had commanded the church to teach and spread the good news. The followers of Christ were

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254. Kenneth O. Gangel and William S Benson, *Christian Education: Its History and Philosophy* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1983), 21.

to go, make disciples of all nations, baptize, and teach (Matthew 28.19-20).<sup>255</sup> The Holy Spirit, through the writer of Hebrews, penned “let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”<sup>256</sup> Thus it is in the very plan of God for His church to be the community through which the restoration of His image in man is restored.

This concept is affirmed by Henry Cloud and John Townsend:

If you are going to help people grow, you *must* understand the necessity of relationship for growth. Often people in the church who are teaching others how to grow eliminate the role of the Body. In fact, sometimes these people teach that their students don’t need people at all, that Christ alone is sufficient or that His word or prayer is enough. They actively and directly lead others to not depend on people at all.<sup>257</sup>

It is both ironic and hypocritical that those who teach such an erroneous perspective also insist that others recognize the value of their teaching and participate in the learning experiences they have designed in the setting of community. Ephesians 4.11-13 indicates that the Lord does indeed intend for restoration, growth, and development to occur within community. The term Apostle (from the Greek *αποστολος*, which means sent one, one sent on a mission, messenger) must refer to an individual being sent by someone and to someone. Relationship, which takes place in community, is required. The prophet must also have someone to whom to prophesy to. The evangelist must have someone to evangelize. The pastor must have someone to shepherd and the teacher must have learners who can be taught. All of these ministries to which God has called and

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255. Ibid., 77.

256. Hebrews 10.24-25.

257. Henry Cloud and John Townsend, *How People Grow* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2001), 121.

ordained people must be practiced in the context of community. Most of the aspects of the fruit of the Spirit also require community for their development and practice; love requires both a subject and an object, as does nearly every other facet of the fruit.

Leroy Eims wrote, “The ministry is to be carried on by people, not programs. It is to be carried out by *someone*, not by some *thing*. Disciples cannot be mass produced. We cannot drop people into a “program” and see disciples emerge at the end of the production line. It takes time to make disciples. It takes individual personal attention.”<sup>258</sup>

Indeed personal attention was key to the development of followers of Christ in the early Church. Ephesians 4.13-15 speaks of the restoration that occurs through the community of personal interaction. As a result of the interaction of believers with one another, and with those holding the various offices mentioned in 4.11, the people are built up, equipped, and matured in faith and knowledge of Christ. Colossians 3.5 – 17 also highlights the necessity of community in properly restoring the image of God in people’s lives. The reader here is admonished in 3.10 to “put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him” and then 3.16 charges the reader to “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.” Paul’s letter to the church in Thessalonica affirms that not only should the church do restoration in community, but that in fact they actually were doing so (I Thessalonians 5:11).

Not surprisingly, educators have affirmed the practice of the church as it carried out restoration in the context of community. According to John Sisemore, “Changes

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258. LeRoy Eims, *The Lost Art of Disciple Making* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978), 45.

occur in the deeper levels of the mind, heart, and personality when learners engage in an encounter with other persons, the Lord, and with the Bible. When this encounter is significant and meaningful to the learner new ideas explode, new viewpoints open up, daring actions are proposed, and new feelings move deeply.<sup>259</sup>

Since the advent of the internet, however, a new phenomenon has sprung up within Christianity. In spite of the value of personal relationships that has been recognized since creation,<sup>260</sup> there are those who attempt to minister to others with only a virtual community. National Community Church of Washington DC<sup>261</sup> has developed its web presence to the extent that a person can accept Christ, hear sermons, receive Bible teaching through the “evotional”, and even practice stewardship by giving their tithe through electronic fund transfer—all without any true human interaction. The Godfocus Internet Church<sup>262</sup> is an “evangelical, Internet Baptist Church” whose goals are: Bringing people to Jesus Christ, Helping them become more like Him, and Spreading the good news of the Gospel.<sup>263</sup> While this “church” claims to offer a forum for prayer requests, preaching and teaching, and spiritual counseling, all in addition to evangelism, it purposefully does not allow any opportunity for giving or stewardship. Many other efforts at providing ministry through the internet have been and are being made.

Some make a misguided effort to be all the church a person will ever need. Fortunately, others recognize that electronic ministry may supplement the local church,

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259. John T. Sisemore, *Vital Principles in Religious Education* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1966), 25.

260. In Genesis 2.18 God asserts that it is not good that man should be alone.

261. [www.theaterchurch.com](http://www.theaterchurch.com).

262. [www.godfocus.net](http://www.godfocus.net).

263. Ibid.

but can never replace it. One such example is St. John's Internet Church,<sup>264</sup> which describes itself as "the online ministry of St. John's Episcopal Church, an Anglican Christian Church originally incorporated in the State of Alabama." In spite of offering full liturgies of the worship services—complete with midi files of the music—the rector of St. John's also makes it clear that the intent is to be a supplement to one's "real" church. The website states:

I rejoice that we can worship our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ together in our gathering through this electronic online media. It is provided as a supplement to your regular worship. I encourage you to attend the church of your choice and to give your tithes and offerings to your home Church.<sup>265</sup>

Strategies of the Church in Restoring the Image. Through the centuries, various strains of Christianity have employed different ways to partner with the Lord in the process of restoring the image of God in man. One way the community of the church has developed the image of God in man through the centuries, particularly in the cognitive aspects, is through preaching. In his book *With a Bible in Their Hands*, Al Fasol writes:

Our Baptist ancestors found that preaching enriched them intellectually as well as spiritually. Theology was as important to them as business and entertainment have become to us. As a result, the sermon became a time of active mental participation. The preacher read from the Bible and the people anticipated what would follow. If the sermon was doctrinal, for example, they wanted to hear how the Bible supported the preacher's doctrinal stance.

Children learned to sharpen their reasoning skills by listening to sermons. Families typically discussed the week's sermons (usually two on Sunday and one on Thursday) by calling on the children to recite the major points of the sermon, then to suggest how these salient points related to their daily lives, and finally to offer some pertinent personal comments. These exercises in listening perceptively, developing their memories, organizing their thoughts in a clear and logical manner, and communicating these thoughts orally were of tremendous benefit in the mental growth of our ancestors. Thus the sermon was used primarily

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264. [www.religionnet.com](http://www.religionnet.com).

265. Ibid.

to receive a message from God, but it was also utilized as a classroom experience in applied thinking.<sup>266</sup>

Sadly, through the centuries—and especially during the 20<sup>th</sup> century—the church became more concerned with growing and preserving the institutional church than in helping individuals become faithful bearers of the image of God. One characteristic of this philosophy is the use of the term “fully devoted followers of Christ”, or something similar, as a goal of the Christian education ministry of the church. Upon closer inspection, however, such a goal often focuses on certain behaviors rather than the restoration of the soul and the development of the person for the effective bearing of God’s image.

The McLean Bible Church (VA) has a goal of transforming believers into fully devoted followers of Christ. “Specifically, we believe that four spiritual disciplines are essential to becoming a fully devoted follower of Christ. Therefore, we encourage and challenge every believer to practice these four disciplines: Grow in your relationship with Jesus Christ; Connect in biblical community; Serve in your God-given ministry; Share the message of Jesus Christ.”<sup>267</sup>

First Baptist Owasso (OK) is also leading people to become fully devoted followers of Christ. For FBCO “being a fully devoted follower of Christ doesn’t mean you’re perfect. But a fully devoted follower of Christ is easy to identify. You can think of it like this: Healthy Appetite + Healthy Activity + Healthy Choices = Fully Devoted

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266. Al Fasol, *With a Bible in Their Hands: Baptist Preaching in the South 1679 – 1979* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Homan, 1994), 2.

267. [www.mcleanbible.org/pages/page.asp?page\\_id=15760](http://www.mcleanbible.org/pages/page.asp?page_id=15760).

Follower of Christ.”<sup>268</sup> They further explain these components by describing healthy appetite as a hunger for the Word of God and spiritual things, and healthy choices are choices that reflect obedience to God’s word. But perhaps the most poignant example of this preservationist mentality is the description of healthy activity: “For a fully devoted follower of Christ healthy activity is church involvement.”<sup>269</sup>

The local congregations that do attempt to focus on the development of individuals rather than self-preservation often find themselves struggling to do so in a balanced manner and consequently tend to emphasize community to the exclusion of the other facets of the image. This imbalance is seen in the writings of Andy Stanley, pastor of North Point Community Church in Alpharetta, Georgia. He writes, “Small groups are not an appendage to our ministry; they *are* our ministry.”<sup>270</sup> Later, Stanley also says, “To us, whether you are eight years old or eighty, a spiritually maturing person looks the same. He is not someone who has completed a plan or curriculum. He is not someone who has simply acquired more truth. A maturing believer is someone who is continuing to grow in these three distinct relationships.”<sup>271</sup>

Whether a church pursues a preservationist strategy, or an imbalanced strategy that focuses on the person, there are serious delinquencies in the church fulfilling their God-given task of making disciples.

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268. [www.fbcowasso.org/ministries](http://www.fbcowasso.org/ministries).

269. Ibid.

270. Andy Stanley, *Creating Community* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Press, 2004) front of dust jacket.

271. Ibid., 67.

Scenarios for the Church to Restore the Image. If a local church is going to effectively partner with Christ in restoring the image of God in man some radical changes will be necessary in the approach to ministry, the organizational structure of the church, the allocation of resources (people, finances, and time), and the criteria for determining success.

No single model will be sufficient for accomplishing the task of restoring the image of God in people. Each church has different resources, different settings, and differing obstacles to change. A variety of scenarios, each capitalizing on the local church's characteristics, are valid. Just as the uniqueness of each individual is the result of their composition, so each church setting is unique according to its composition.

Approach to ministry. The one factor that is most consistent across all settings and resource levels is the approach to ministry. In order to restore the image of God—the cognition, conscience, culpability, creativity, community, composition, and corporeality in man—the church, as it partners with the Lord, must develop the intentionality and purposefulness the Lord demonstrated when He created man. This will require more effort and energy than some churches are accustomed to expending.

Across all aspects of the image of God there is very little intentionality on the part of the church toward developing or restoring. Many churches lack initiative and the ability to be pro-active. Those ministers who do attempt to take initiative and be pro-active are often reigned in by well meaning lay persons.

When a congregation has determined to be purposeful and intentional about restoring the image, each area need to be addressed in order to train Believers to accurately and faithful bear the image of God.

Cognition would be addressed mainly through the educational ministry of a local church. While nearly every church has some form of Christian education program, there is typically very little intentionality to it, or evaluation of it. People may expect to learn something in a Sunday School class, or small group, but very few expect to be truly challenged intellectually. Looking, for example, at the fifty top bestsellers in June of 2005, it is easy to infer that Christianity is a mile wide but only an inch deep. Christians are interested in marriage, depression, politics, and pornography but are not inclined to read about the character of God or explore the contours of theology. Simply put, believers do not buy works that plumb the depths of doctrine.<sup>272</sup> Sermons in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century are typically characterized by popular psychology and self-help topics. Most curriculum series require little more than repeating short answers found in the text. Most lessons are designed so that any warm body, and willing participant can “teach”. Critical thinking skills—the use of logic, rhetoric, or other forms of real intellect—within the church setting are absent from the expectations of laypersons and clergy alike. “We have assumed that if people come to church often enough, they will grow. We've got to be much more intentional than this.”<sup>273</sup>

One scenario, then, is for the local church to re-think its Christian education program. Before being allowed to teach, a person should be tested for a certain level of proficiency in biblical truth and doctrinal integrity. They should also be trained in critical thinking skills, and teaching methods. If you want to disciple those you teach, then you must help them to think clearly: not merely to parrot your answers, but to weigh evidence, to ask questions, to analyze the answers of others, to confront the status quo

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272. *What do the Christian Bestsellers Say About Christians?*, [www.kairosjournal.org](http://www.kairosjournal.org).

273. Reggie McNeal, *The Present Future* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass, 2003), 80.

with God's Word.<sup>274</sup> Expecting people to participate by assigning portions of a lesson to them or requesting the completion of an assignment can increase the restoration of cognitive abilities while at the same time re-enforce biblical truths.

Rather than simply teaching to the felt needs of the people, and on their level, the Christian education ministry actively needs to assess the weaknesses of the people and then call them to a higher level of understanding and cognition. In addition to biblical content, the curriculum should also include theology and apologetics.

In recent decades many churches have developed an assortment of recovery groups to minister to people with a variety of addictions. While these groups may be very beneficial in helping to overcome the addiction and making better lifestyle choices they are not designed to cleanse the conscience from the guilt of the past. Biblical counseling has also become a major component of ministry in some churches. These tend to be more helpful in cleansing a person's conscience from the guilt and shame of the past.

To truly have a clear conscience, though, a person needs not only to accept the cleansing from sin committed in the past, but must also be free from guilt in current choices and behaviors. This begins with a renewing of the mind so that their understanding of what is right and what is wrong is consistent with biblical teaching rather than the world. Second, a church should provide opportunities for a person to serve in ways that keep the conscience from becoming defiled again. Since pure and undefiled religion, according to James' epistle, is to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world,<sup>275</sup> the church ought to encourage participation in

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274. William R. Yount, *Created to Learn* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1996), 8.

social ministries such as crisis pregnancy centers, homeless shelters, food pantries, etc. Conducting voter registration drives and encouraging participation in the political process would also be a way of helping members maintain a clear conscience in the area of rendering to Caesar the things that are Caesar's.<sup>276</sup> These ministries and activities also involve the area of community, which will be discussed more below.

Also blurring the line with conscience is culpability. Members of a church need to understand their responsibilities to one another and to God. As might be expected, this would require the church to teach and practice a biblical form of church discipline. For the church that desires to participate in restoring the image of God in man, stewardship and a proper understanding and practice of environmentalism are areas that need to be addressed as well.

Many churches have some form of music program. Unfortunately, they also often rely on the musical abilities of those within the congregation. Rare is the congregation that intentionally works to develop the musical, or other artistic abilities of its members. W. L. Howse, in his contribution to *Vital Principles in Religious Education* (Understanding Changing Concepts) gives the tasks of each of the Church Program Organizations. Two of the tasks listed for the church music ministry are: teach music and hymnody, and train persons to lead, sing, and play music.<sup>277</sup> Of the six tasks that Howse lists, these two would accomplish the most in restoring the creative dimension of the image of God, and yet these two are also the most neglected in contemporary churches.

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275. James 1.27.

276. Matthew 22.21.

277. W. L. Howse, *Understanding Changing Concepts, in Vital Principles in Religious Education*, edited by John T. Sisemore (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1966), 61.

Equally troubling is that few churches give any consideration to the aesthetic nature of music. Frank Gaebelein has written, “there is in the music used in evangelical work much that is trite, sentimental, and even vulgar.”<sup>278</sup> He continues, “to a cultivated taste much that was played and sung in conjunction with the presentation of the Gospel was aesthetically disagreeable.”<sup>279</sup>

Church buildings of past centuries often testified of the creative level of their designer and glorified God’s magnificence and majesty through art and architecture. Modern church buildings, by contrast, are very austere, lacking character or expression.

Many churches offer opportunities for creative expression among the children, but as a person matures they are often expected to “do away with childish things”, as though creativity were childish. The church that is fully participating in the restoration of God’s image will encourage creativity and promote the discernment necessary for creativity that glorifies God. Such non-conformist, out of the box thinking will have revolutionary implications for the church.

Sherwood Baptist Church of Albany, Georgia,<sup>280</sup> has taken seriously the role of partnering with Christ to restore the image of God, at least in the area of creativity. The popular 2006 film “Facing the Giants” is a production of Sherwood, as well as their first production “Flywheel”, and a soon to be released film, “Fireproof”. While not every church has the capability to produce full-length feature films, every church can enhance

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278. Frank Gaebelein, *The Pattern of God’s Truth: The Integration of Faith and Learning* (Whittier, CA: Association of Christian Schools International, no date), 71.

279. Ibid.

280. [www.sherwood.net](http://www.sherwood.net).

its ministry in the arts and creativity through drama, including skits by a youth group or the most basic of Christmas plays.

As mentioned above, many churches already give attention to community. The common name for this among Christians is “fellowship”. The common expression of fellowship is not quite a biblical expression of community, however. First, some churches place the value of fellowship above the value of sound doctrine. Second, fellowship may be based on factors other than the common faith in Christ. And finally, though closely related, is that commitment to the community is much more shallow than many would be willing to admit.

To adequately restore the image of God in man, relationships must be built on truth and sound doctrine. For instance, marriage is the most intimate of human relationships. If the foundation of marriage is the eternal truths of God’s word the marriage is strong and the relationship secure. But a marriage based on a mere legal contract is subject to changing whims and winds of culture. Modern society is now pressing for marriage to be legal between two people of the same gender, which is not a biblical portrayal of community. When marriage is based on love it is doomed to failure because the passions of one or both partners will inevitably change over time, especially when the other is being “unlovely”. Churches that hope to partner with Christ in the restoration of the image of God in man must teach and promote community based on truth, and in a practical way endorse and advocate marriage and family relationships that portray the relationship between Christ and the church, among other expressions of community.

Some churches that appear to have great fellowship have that reputation only because of the homogenous nature of that congregation. If a person of another race or ethnic background, or of another social class or sub-culture were to attend there would be a distinct and noticeable tension in the fellowship. Over 120 years after the civil war, more than 20 years after the Civil Rights Act of 1964, a church member of a small rural church in Missouri saw a young African American man in the worship service. She asked her pastor, “Who is the darkie, and what is he doing here?”<sup>281</sup> The pastor (author) replied, “His name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I suppose he is here to worship, just like the rest of us!” Fortunately, that lady later grew to understand true community and became a force for positive change in that congregation. Churches that are segregated by race, economics, or any other factor are not adequately promoting true community. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.<sup>282</sup> Jesus said, “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same.”<sup>283</sup>

True restored community is also a strong community. Fellowship in a church that is broken because of musical preferences, décor of the facilities, or other issues rooted in pride other faulty reasons of self indulgence demonstrates that it is not true community.

A local church can promote true community by fostering a healthy Sunday School or small group ministry. Marriage and family classes also aid in developing community

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281. An experience from the author’s own life, details not given to protect the individuals involved.

282. Galatians 3.28.

283. Luke 6.32-33.

in the broader congregation. Mission trips have a fringe benefit of strengthening community. Evangelism is evidence of a strong community as it demonstrates a desire to bring others into the community of faith. A church that intentionally overcomes pride and prejudice and sees all people as one will do well in helping others restore the image of God.

As a church sets out to partner intentionally with the Lord in restoring the image of God in people, the leadership must be very careful about their motives and the goals they are actually trying to achieve. Unfortunately, it is in this area that many well-meaning leaders go astray. It must be remembered that the goal is to help others conform to Jesus, not conform to one another, or to a particular leader's perception of Jesus.

Because composition refers to personality, temperament, emotions, etc. it should come as no surprise that restoring the compositional aspect of a believer has almost nothing to do with outward appearance. In fact, other than affecting the modesty of one's attire, and perhaps some very basic hygiene issues, there is no direct correlation between outward appearance and compositional restoration. Nevertheless, human nature looks on the outward appearance of man, though the Lord looks on the heart.<sup>284</sup>

Certain hairstyles or regulations concerning facial hair have nothing to do with being like Jesus. Wearing a certain style of clothing also has nothing to do with being like Jesus. But this will be discussed more with corporeality below.

The personality and emotions of Jesus were characterized by the fruit of the Holy Spirit as listed in Galatians 5.22 – 23: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control. Holiness, or sanctification, and purity were also

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284. I Samuel 16.7.

vital aspects of His character. These then, are the character qualities that will become evident as a person is restored.

A person is enabled to imitate Christ by the grace of God, and empowered to imitate Him by the Spirit of God, both of which the church can do little about other than proclaim these truths and call on people to respond in submission and obedience to Christ. However, a person is equipped for imitating Christ through the Word of God, and the church can play a vital role in sowing the word into the heart of a believer. A person is also encouraged toward imitating Christ through the ministry of a local church. Whether it be the community, the cognitive challenges, the creative opportunities, or some other aspect of the church's ministry, there is encouragement and strength in treading the faith journey with others.

In the previous chapter it was mentioned that there are temporal, as well as eternal consequences to sin; and that restoration of the body may or may not occur until the day when believers are given their resurrection body. While that discussion focused on reversing the effects of sin upon the flesh, the church can play a role in the restoration process by bringing people to a place where they give attention to the preventive side of bodily health.

Any church can include in the scope and sequence of its Christian education program teachings concerning health, nutrition, and care of the body. Such programs as First Place® or Weigh Down® can easily be provided in even the smallest congregations. Some churches provide extensive (and expensive) facilities for health, fitness, and athletics. Smaller churches may provide a few pieces of donated exercise equipment in a spare Sunday School room, or even assist in organizing a group from the church to go

“mall walking” together. At least one church provides medical equipment such as hospital beds, wheel chairs, or crutches, to people recovering from illness or injury but lacking the insurance or other means of obtaining the needed equipment.<sup>285</sup>

There are numerous scenarios for a church to develop as it partners with the Lord to restore the image of God in those people it ministers to. Each scenario will be different. Each scenario will be determined by the community needs, congregational needs, financial and people resources, and facilities. Ultimately, however, each scenario will be determined by the leadership of the Lord for that congregation.

Organizational structure. There is been a tendency for churches in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to organize their staff and ministries either by age groups (Preschool, Children, Youth, Adult, and Senior Adult ministries) or by program (Christian Education, Music and Worship, Missions and Evangelism, etc.). A few churches have tried to develop some sort of hybrid between these two. However, unless great care is taken and constant attention is given, such an organizational structure drifts toward institutional preservation.

Another organizational model may better structure the local church for its ministry of restoring the image of God. Such a model would address each of the facets of the image of God in man and focus on restoring that aspect to full Christ-likeness in all individuals within the congregation. Such a model would align the various ministries as given below:

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285. The C.A.R.E. ministry of Santa Fe Trail Baptist Church, Boonville, MO operates with donated equipment that is loaned to individuals who make a small damage deposit. When the item loaned is returned in good condition the damage deposit is returned to the person.

<u>Aspect of Image</u>	<u>Ministries</u>
<b>Cognition</b>	Sunday School, Discipleship, Apologetics, Christian Ed. Academics/Christian School – if a church has one
<b>Creativity</b>	Creative Arts, Music, Drama, Crafts
<b>Community</b>	Outreach, Evangelism, Small Groups, Hospitality
<b>Conscience &amp; Culpability</b>	Missions, Social, Moral, and Ethical Concerns – food pantry, clothes closet, crisis pregnancy center, recovery groups, etc.
<b>Composition</b>	Counseling, pastoral care
<b>Corporeality</b>	Recreation, Health and Nutrition, Weight Loss, etc.

Because churches tend to be resistant to change, especially dramatic change, this model has not yet been tested. When a church does choose to adopt such a model, it will most likely take a minimum of three to five years to determine whether it is truly effective and practical.

In smaller churches, some of the aspects will need to be combined. Even in larger churches there will need to be a recognition that one aspect often influences another, requiring a great level of cooperation between two or more of the divisions. For instance, a church daycare or after school program would require cooperation between cognitive, creative, and community, primarily; but also having input from corporeal and at times from the other three as well.

Allocation of resources. With the adoption of the new model will come a complete re-allocation of resources. People resources will be affected and staff and volunteers are trained to approach their respective ministries from the perspective of restoring the image of God in their fellow believers. Financial resources will be re-allocated as well. Churches that have made Christian education a budget priority at the

expense of the music ministry will need to recognize that the creative aspect of the image of God is equally important as the cognitive. Furthermore, the conscience and culpable aspects, for example, are as valid as the cognitive and creative, so the various mission endeavors and social ministries would have equal footing the other areas in budget allocations.

Allocation of capital resources—facilities—would present a unique challenge. Because buildings are very expensive, and not often easily (or inexpensively) renovated, some ministry areas may not have ideal facilities for several years. However, the new model allows for more freedom of ministry expression. For instance, everything in the Conscience/Culpability area could be conducted “off campus”, in fact they should be.

Criterion for success. Older models of church ministry, even when focused on people rather than institutional preservation, tend to focus on crowds rather than individual persons. The old adage of baptisms, budgets, and buildings is cold and impersonal, yet it is a fitting description of how most measure the level of success. This is not however, how Jesus measured success. He never baptized anybody,<sup>286</sup> He never adopted a budget, and He never built a building.<sup>287</sup> Jesus’ focus of ministry and measure of success was reconciling man to Himself<sup>288</sup> For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we

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286. Water baptism is in mind here. According to Luke 3.16 Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire.

287. Jesus was a carpenter before He began His ministry, and theoretically could have built a building in His earlier life. IF He did, the evidence is even greater that it was not a measure of success for it is never mentioned in any way in Scripture, certainly not as any part of His ministry.

288. II Corinthians 5.18-19.

shall be saved by His life. And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.<sup>289</sup>

When the church focuses on these seven aspects of the image of God in man, and when those aspects are brought in conformity with the image of Christ, then those who are ministered to can declare with David, “He restores my soul!”

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289. Romans 5.10-11.

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Bachelor of Arts, Southwest Baptist University, 1985.

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Licensed to Ministry: June 1982, First Baptist Church, Washington, MO.

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Pastor, Cedar Grove Baptist Church, Warsaw, MO, 1985-1987.

Pastor, Kidder Baptist Church, Kidder, MO, 1987-1991.

Pastor, Santa Fe Trail Baptist Church, Boonville, MO, 1991-2000

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City Council, Kidder, MO - served one term of two years.

Community Advisory Board, Kemper Military School & College.

Committee on Convention Preacher, MBC, 1992.

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