

The Image of God Restored

Colossians 3:10; II Corinthians 3:18

Pastor Michael Lynn / West Hampden Baptist Church

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Introduction: This brief series began 2 weeks ago with a consideration of “The Clash of Worldviews” (Secular Humanism & Christian Theism). Last Sunday morning we examined just what it means to be created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27) & then Sunday night we looked at the distorted image of God in man since the Fall. The question: “Is man still *like* God after the Fall?” Though distorted, man retains God’s image as seen in Genesis 9:6 & James 3:9. Yet clearly man is not fully like God as before. Man’s original creation included moral purity or sinlessness. He now has a sinful character which is *unlike* God in several ways. Consider his intellect is corrupted by falsehood & misunderstanding. His speech no longer glorifies God. His relationships are now governed by selfishness rather than love. A good summary of man’s condition can be found in Ecclesiastes 7:29, “*Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.*” But there is hope for the progressive recovering of God’s image; man is still *like* God & still *represents* God. Consider with me the recovering of God’s image, the reflecting of God’s image, & the representing of God’s image.

I. The **recovering** of God’s image > Colossians 3:10

A. The believer in Christ has a new nature:

1. II Corinthians 5:17.
2. II Peter 1:3-4.

B. The believer in Christ has a new (“*renewed*”) mind:

1. Romans 12:1-2.
2. I Corinthians 2:14-16.

C. The believer in Christ has a new “likeness”:

1. II Corinthians 3:18.
2. Acts 4:13 (Christ-like in conduct, compassion, character?).

Summary: The goal of our redemption is found in Romans 8:29, being conformed more & more in moral character to Christ.

II. The **reflecting** of God’s image > Romans 8:29

[Consider again the aspects of likeness to God from last week’s message.]

A. Moral aspects:

1. For the believer – “*perfecting holiness in the fear of God*” (II Corinthians 7:1).
2. For the believer – “*to walk & to please God*” (I Thessalonians 4:1-3).
3. For the believer – “*Be ye holy*” (I Peter 1:15-16).

Summary: “When we act according to God’s moral standards, our likeness to God is reflected in behavior that is holy & righteous before Him, but by contrast our *unlikeness* to God is reflected whenever we sin” (Grudem).

B. Spiritual aspects:

1. The believer’s ability to pray – Hebrews 4:16.
2. The believer’s ability to praise – Psalm 50:23.
3. The believer’s ability to hear (from God) – Psalm 119:18 (& cf. I Samuel 3:9-10).

Contrast: “No animal will ever spend an hour in intercessory prayer for the salvation of a relative or a friend!” (Grudem).

C. Mental aspects:

1. The believer can discern – Hebrews 5:14.
2. The believer can differentiate – Philippians 1:9-11.

Compare: Animals by instinct have built the same nests, dams, etc. for years, “but we continue to develop greater skill & complexity in technology, in agriculture, in science, & in nearly every field of endeavor” (Grudem). Consider – computers to cell phones to watches.

D. Relational aspects:

1. The picture of marriage – Ephesians 5:21-33.
2. The pattern of family – Psalm 127:1-5.

E. Physical aspects:

1. The believer’s present body – I Corinthians 6:19-20 & cf. 10:31.
2. The believer’s future body – I Corinthians 15:43-45, 51-55.

III. The **representing** of God’s image > Genesis 5:3

A. In Scripture:

1. Matthew 5:16.
2. Galatians 1:23-24.

B. In Song:

1. “I Saw Jesus in You.”
2. “O To Be Like Thee.”

Conclusion: We read in II Corinthians 4:4, “...*Christ, who is image of God*” & in Colossians 1:15, “*Who is the image of the invisible God.*” Grudem points out, “In Jesus we see human likeness to God as it was intended to be, & it should cause us to rejoice that God has predestined us to be conformed to the image of His Son (Romans 8:29; I Corinthians 15:49). When He appears ‘*we shall be like Him*’ (I John 3:2).” We ought to marvel at the thought that when the Creator desired to make something in His image & likeness, He created man (unlike all other creatures). This speaks of our dignity as those who bear the image & likeness of God, the Creator. “We are the culmination of God’s infinitely wise & skillful work of creation. Even though sin has greatly marred that likeness, we nonetheless now reflect much of it & shall even more as we grow in likeness to Christ” (Grudem).

How about you this morning? Is that marred image being recovered in you by your salvation in Christ, with a new nature, a new mind, & a new likeness? If not, why not trust Him today! If you are saved, are you reflecting the image of God morally, spiritually, mentally, & relationally? Can others see Jesus in you? How well are you representing the Creator of the universe & Christ the Redeemer? Is it your heart’s desire to sing, “O to be like Thee...”?